

*Bad News, Good News*  
Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:21  
Reading: Romans 5:6-11 (Reader?)

Bethany Baptist Church  
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...pray...

I am *sad to say* I don't believe that everyone *in this room* is ***in Christ***.

Yet I'm *convinced* that ***no one*** in this room who ***turns to Christ*** will be ***turned away*** disappointed.

Your relationship to God is *life's most important issue...the ultimate question*.

**Don't you even *think* about dying before I tell you these six truths (2 more this morning)!**

*Last week:*

- 1. God owns you.**
- 2. You disowned God.**

*This morning:*

- 3. God judges sinners.**
- 4. Jesus died for sinners.**

*Next Sunday, Lord willing...*

- 5. Jesus lives again (*now*).**
- 6. You must choose.**

First, a *brief review* of these first two truths:

Here is the ***first fact*** that everyone needs to hear about God: *God made you*. He made you *personally*. He made you in His *own image*. Because He *made* you, He *owns* you. Because He *owns* you, you are *accountable* to Him.

***Next truth:*** You *disowned* God. God is your *Creator-King*, and you are a willful *rebel*. You *break* His laws. You *make* your *own rules*. You put Him *off*. You *pretend* He doesn't *care* or doesn't even *exist*. You're a *rebel!*

**What will the righteous "*King of Creation*" do with a *rebel*...?**

## **Bad news first: God judges sinners.**

1. The *moment* you were born, you were handed a *one-way ticket* to the *grave!* I don't know what your **ETA** is, but I know you're *going*.
  - a. Turn w/ me to **Heb 9:27**. "*appointed*" The NT's vocab & grammar here is simple & clear – your *death* is an *ever-present reality*. God has **penned** in (not *penciled in*) your *death* in your appointment *calendar*.
  - b. **OBTW** -You only die *once*. *Reincarnation* is a baseless myth (deceptive *lie*). There are *no return tickets* from death.
  - c. But that's not the *whole story* (some *wish* it were). Something happens *after* you depart this life. → **Judgment**. Read carefully: God *judges* every *woman & man*.
  - d. **OBTW # 2** – Death is not *annihilation*. You will *consciously* meet God in judgment when you depart this world.
  - e. Do you remember what the Bible says about our *moral condition* before our *Maker*?
    - i. God is *King & Judge*. You are *rebel & transgressor*. **All have sinned & fall short of the glory of God**.
    - ii. Your King is going to *catch up* w/you & *judge* you!

2. This simply *isn't* debatable! Your Bible portrays God as *mankind's Judge* from **OT** to **NT**. Listen to this review of biblical claims that God is humanity's judge:
- a. **Gen3:1-19** – Even though they only have *one rule* to keep, *Adam & Eve* break it. The entire *human family* is marred. The *first Garden* becomes the *first Courtroom* as *God* judges the *Tempter & Eve & Adam*. All mankind...all creation, *suffers*.
  - b. **Gen 18:25** – *Abraham* knew it: “*Will not the **Judge of all the earth** deal justly?*”
  - c. **Psa 1:5** – The *psalmists* said it: *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the **judgment**...*
  - d. **Psalm 50:6** – *And the heavens declare His righteousness, for **God Himself is judge**. Selah.*
  - e. **Matt 10:28** – *Jesus* taught it: “*Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather [fear **Him who is able to destroy both soul & body in hell.**”] 2X*
  - f. **Heb 13:4** – The *writer of Heb* warned about it: *...fornicators & adulterers **God will judge**.*
  - g. **Jas 4:12** – The *Apostle James* recognized it: *There is only one Lawgiver & **Judge**, the One who is able to save & destroy.*
  - h. **Rev 20:11** – The *Apostle John* saw it coming at the close of the Millennial Kingdom and on the threshold of the New Heavens & earth: *...and the dead were **judged**...according to their deeds (2X)*

3. It is *undeniable & unavoidable*. *God judges sinners!* I'll bet you've got some *questions* about that. I've got **4** you should be *asking*:
- a. *First*, I'm going to *re-frame* the truth we've already stressed. It's just too *crucial* to ignore (**Q1**): *Will God judge your sins?*
    - i. **Yes, He will.**
    - ii. I'll simply *restate* the vs. we considered a moment ago: *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once & after [death] comes judgment.* (Heb 9:27)
  - b. **Q2:** *Does God have the right?*
    - i. Isaiah wrote, "*Woe to the one who quarrels w/his Maker – an earthenware vessel among the vessels of the earth! Will the clay say to the potter, "What are you doing?" or the thing you are making say, "He has no hands?"*"
    - ii. Friend, He *made* you, He *owns* you, ...yes, God has the *right to judge* you.
  - c. But...*Is God's standard too high (Q3)?* It is *high!* **Mt 5:48** – (Jesus) "*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*"
    - i. Can't God *ease off* on that...?
    - ii. **No**, God judges you by *Himself – holy perfection!* He *must*.
    - iii. What happens to *perfect*, the moment perfect accepts a *moral flaw*, or *compromise*? Just like a *white carpet* shows the *smallest black stain*, if God lowers the *standard* for us, **He** won't be *perfect*. He'll be an **unjust judge**. An *unholy* God.

d. **Q:3** *What is God's just sentence on unrepentant sinners? **Hell.***

- i. Read **Mt 10:28** - And do not be afraid of those who *kill the body* but are unable to *kill the soul*; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both *soul* and *body* in hell.
- ii. Hell is *eternal & conscious & painful* existence *separated* from everything that is *gracious* about God.
- iii. You might say – “*Who cares - I'm already not living w/ God!*”
- iv. **Careful** that isn't really true! If you are *in this room*, even though **not in Christ**, you still enjoy **unimaginable** (often **unappreciated**) *blessings* from God, *every moment*. But you **won't** have them in *hell* – *not one little blessing – not ever again...* ☹

4. God *made* you. You *rebelled* against Him. God's *punishment* for your *rebellion* is *death & judgment*.

- a. **Hey** – “*I thought this Gospel stuff was **good news!***” Where's the *good news* in *judgment*? Where's the *love...!?! I came to church this morning to get some **air pumped in my tires!***
- b. That's the *dilemma* of the Gospel, young friends! If *this* is all you know (these *first 3* truths – God is your *King*, you are a *rebel*, your King will *judge* you), it's **not** good news – yet. But *good news* is coming – *mercy* is coming, *love* is coming!

And so the Gospel's *fourth* truth is *good news!*: **Jesus died for sinners!**

1. Listen carefully while I introduce the *more good news*: [Every sin has to be *paid for*. But **not** necessarily by the *sinner himself!*] **2X**
2. **Turn w/ me in your NT to 2 Cor 5:21** (p.287). *God made Christ who*
  - a. There are only **3** characters in this *life-changing drama* we just read together v.21: *God & His Son & sinners*.
  - b. God's Son, Jesus, lived a perfectly *righteous life*. But all of us were born in our *sins*.
  - c. Then God caused His Son to *become* (take on) someone else's *sin!* And to be *completely punished* for it.
  - d. But that's *not all!* If Jesus is *sinless*, He is *righteous*. God, somehow, made it possible for repentant sinners to be credited with the *righteousness* of His Son; to have it *indelibly inscribed* in the repenter's *moral ledger*.
  - e. Don't you *see* it – this is *incredibly great news* (**repeat 5:21!**)!?!)
  - f. I want to *start* from here, and explore **3 more huge ideas** w/ you: *atonement & substitution & Jesus Christ*.

3. *First* huge idea: **atonement** defined.

- a. **Atonement**, or *to atone*, means to *pay the price* of an offense. To *satisfy* God's justice. So, what *pays* for sin?
  - i. Turn w/ me to **Heb 9:22**. Do you *see* it? *Blood* (*death*) pays for sin. The *currency* of atonement is *blood*.
  - ii. *Atonement* is related to the idea of *redemption* – *buying* something for a *price*. In the **NT** *redemption* is *slave-market* language. Christ is paying the *price* (currency is still *blood*) to *redeem* you out of the *slave market* of sin.
  - iii. *Atonement* means to *pay* the price of sin. We live in a culture that *prizes* paying its own way – but *young friend*, you *don't want to* stand before the Judge and *pay this* ticket yourself... Jesus offers to pay it *for you!*

4. *Second* big idea (join me in **Mark 10:45**): **substitution** defined.

- a. Jesus has just declared His mission, and his mission is *substitution*. We know what that is: *one* in place of *others!*
- b. It happens all the time in *sports*. Players are *sub'd in* off the *bench* or out of the *bull-pen*.
- c. In the American *War Between the States*, *conscripted* (drafted) men were allowed to find (pay) someone else to *take their place*. Perhaps that man would *march off* to battle & **die** in your place.
- d. In the **OT**, God specified that offerings of *bulls & rams & goats* would symbolically *receive* the sins of the *worshiper*, and be *sacrificed* in the place of *guilty men & women*. It was meant to be a *preview* of *atonement* by *substitution*.
- e. *One in the place of another*. But can *anyone* be found to pay for *your* sins...?



5. *Third* eternally enormous idea: **Jesus Christ** identified. Who *is* Jesus, and why is He *good news*?

a. Jesus is **God**. The NT *Gospel of John* begins the story of Jesus like this: *Before the beginning began, the Word existed, and the Word was w/God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and pitched His tent in our midst.*

i. That's *Jesus Christ!* *Jesus is God in flesh*, in our camp!

ii. And because He's God, He's *perfect* – Jesus has *no sin* of His own to pay for.

b. Yet Jesus is also **man**. Being a man causes Him to be *sympathetic* to your needs & failings. Being a man also means He's qualified to *represent* you (to *substitute* for you). Before someone can *sub* for you on the *soccer field*, they've got to be on *your team*. *Jesus is on your team*, friend! Being a man means that Jesus *died*. He was *crucified* (*executed* on a cross) and on that cross died as a *sinless substitute* for sinners like us.

- c. Jesus is the *Savior*!
- i. **John the Baptist** pointed to Jesus and said, “*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*”
  - ii. **John the Apostle** wrote, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.*
  - iii. **Jesus said**, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*”
  - iv. Again, here is the *short version*: Jesus died on the *cross* to *pay (atone)* for the *sins* of others, *in their place*. Could that be *you...!?!*
- d. Jesus is *Lord*. This is *the* fav title for Jesus in **NT**! It’s related to the idea of *King* & of *God*.
- i. You don’t *bargain* w/ Jesus & you can’t *come* to Jesus as your *substitute* & *Savior* w/o coming to Him as your *Lord*.
  - ii. The dangerous idea that Jesus will *save* you but allow you to live any *sinful* or *careless* way you *choose*, simply doesn’t exist in your **NT**. He came to *save* you & to *sanctify* you & to *rule* you.

6. Those **3** huge ideas – *you do the math!* **Atonement + Substitution + Jesus (God-man, mankind’s Savior & Lord).**
- a. **Add ‘em up** - did you get the *right answer*?
    - i. Jesus Christ, *dying* on the cross, *bearing* your sins, being *punished* in your place, *paying* your penalty, *adds up to* the *only way* your sins can be *paid* for & God’s *judgment* on you *satisfied*,...
    - ii. & therefore the *only way* you can gain *eternal life*, and the *only way* that *love & joy & purpose & peace & hope* can be yours! Now, & *forever*.
7. I’ve explained at length that God is a *holy Judge*, who can’t leave sin *unpunished*. The cross is **a** place where sins are *punished*. The cross tells us that God is uncompromisingly *holy & just*.
- a. What *else* does the *Cross of Jesus* tell you about God...?
  - b.** God is *love*. He is, at the same time, both *holy* and *loving*.
    - i. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only...*
    - ii. *But God demonstrated His own love towards us...*
    - iii. *God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on our...*
    - iv. *He loved us & sent His Son to be the propitiation for our*

**God is Creator-Judge. You are a rebel. The King judges rebels. But Jesus died in the place of rebels.**

*What truths make up these biblical promises we call the “Gospel”?*

**God owns you.**

**You disowned God.**

**God judges sinners.** (These first 3 truths sound a lot like bad news!)

**But Jesus died for sinners.**

**Jesus lives again.** (Next Lord’s Day)

**Leaving you w/ a choice.**

*...pause...*

Have you been *thinking* about this – this past *week* (maybe *longer...*)?

God has the *answer* for your greatest need. He lovingly *sent* His Son Jesus to *die*, to *bear the punishment* deserved by sinners like you & me.

God *raised* Jesus from the dead & He’s *alive today* to offer you *forgiveness & eternal life*.

**Your part** is to *believe* that Jesus died for you, to *turn* to Him & to *trust/follow* Him as your *Savior & Lord*. **God’s part** is to *accept* you & give you a new *heart/life*. ...*forever*.

He’ll do *His part* if you’ll do *yours*!

So you *must choose*: *your way* or *His*. Please stop *putting Him off*. He is a *loving Savior* – please, *follow Christ*.

*...pray...*

**Response:**

**Christian**, *rejoice* in God’s love for you, *mediated* through Christ’s cross!

But again, is there *someone in your row* who needs the Savior? *Pray for her/...him*.

**W/o Christ?** May I *meet w/you*? Let’s talk about your *soul*.