

## **Live Like You Have a Savior**

Luke 2:18-20; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; January 5, 2014

### **The Good News of Christmas *for* After-Christmas**

After the events of the birth of Jesus, the shepherds ‘went back’ to their everyday lives (Luke 2:20). What did the day after Christmas look like for them and what should it look like for us? The good news of Christmas is the good news of a Savior for sinners. (Luke 2:10-11; Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Isaiah 43:11) If we have received Jesus and His righteousness, then we are to rest in this glorious reality every day of our lives. We are to live like we have a Savior! What does that look like?

### **Draw near to God.**

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will draw near to God? Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we can come to God with confidence, no matter what.

*<sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)*

### **Confess your sin.**

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will confess our sins to God and others? Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we need not fear the exposure of our sin and we can be confident that God will always forgive.

*<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)*

### **Forgive as you’ve been forgiven.**

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will forgive others? Because if we have a Savior from sin, then God forgives us and it is only reasonable that we would forgive others.

*<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)*

### **Fight with peace and humility.**

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will fight sin with peace in the face of constant failure? Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we will never be condemned for our sin.

<sup>21</sup> I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, <sup>23</sup> but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. <sup>1</sup>Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 7:21-8:1)

### **Be patient with sinners.**

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will be patient with others? Because if we have a Savior from sin, then the fact that He is patient with us in light of our ongoing sinfulness should result in our being patient with others in light of their ongoing sinfulness.

<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— <sup>11</sup> a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. <sup>12</sup> So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (Colossians 3:9-13)

### **Preach to yourself.**

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will preach to ourselves the truth that ‘I have a Savior’? Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we need to constantly remind ourselves of who He is, what He did, and what He promises since we are constantly tempted to lose sight of Him.

*For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)*

I have a Savior ...

- Who created the world so that we could find our help and happiness in Him.
- Who reveals to us the unseen God.
- Who lived the life I could never live.
- Who died the death I deserve to die.
- Who rules over all things for the good of His people and the glory of His name and offers a gift of righteousness to sinners and is sovereignly and graciously building His Church.
- Who will return one day to judge all men and reward with heaven or hell.
- Who will one day restore this fallen world and establish a new heaven and new earth full of righteousness, joy and peace forever.

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### The Good News of Christmas *for* After-Christmas

After the events of the birth of Jesus, the shepherds 'went back' to their everyday lives.

The *shepherds went back*, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (Luke 2:20)

What did the day after Christmas look like for them and what should it look like for us?

When the shepherds finally went to sleep and woke up the next day, what do you think went through their minds?

How did their life change?

The good news of Christmas is the good news of a Savior for sinners.

<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you *a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*. (Luke 2:10-11)

She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name *Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*." (Matthew 1:21)

And *there is salvation in no one else*; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; *no one comes to the Father but through Me*. (John 14:6)

"I, even I, am the LORD, And *there is no savior besides Me*. (Isaiah 43:11)

If we have received Jesus and His righteousness, then we are to rest in this glorious reality even day of our lives. We are to live like we have a Savior!

What does that look like?

### Draw near to God.

At the beginning of each year, Christians often renew their efforts to read the Bible and pray.

What keeps us from coming/drawing near to God?

What is the burden on Pilgrim's back in The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan?

‘As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den,<sup>3</sup> and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, “What shall I do?”

‘Now I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, “What shall I do to be saved?” I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, and he asked, “Wherefore dost thou cry?” He answered, “Sir, I perceive, by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.”

For all of us have become like one who is unclean,  
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;  
And all of us wither like a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (Isaiah 64:6)  
For my iniquities are gone over my head;  
As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. (Psalm 38:4)

One of the most important questions to answer is: what will I do with my guilt?

*Guilt is one of the most paralyzing and debilitating forces that ever attacks our humanity.*  
—R.C. Sproul

What difference did it make for John Bunyan to be able to say ‘I have a Savior’?

*The best prayer I ever prayed had enough sin to damn the whole world.* – John Bunyan

So how could Bunyan pray?

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.* <sup>15</sup> *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.* <sup>16</sup> *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)*

‘One day as I was passing into the field . . . this sentence fell upon my soul. Thy righteousness is in heaven. And me thought, withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand; there, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, he wants [=lacks] my righteousness, for that was just before him. I also saw,

moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself.' (John Bunyan)

'In Passion Week, as I was reading Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect – "That the Jews knew what they did, when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering." The thought came into my mind, What, may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an Offering for me, that I may lay my sins on His head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer. Accordingly I sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of Jesus; and on the Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on the Thursday that hope increased; on the Friday and Saturday it became more strong; and on the Sunday morning, Easter-day, April 4, I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips, 'Jesus Christ is risen to-day! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!' From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul; and at the Lord's Table in our Chapel I had the sweetest access to God through my blessed Saviour. (Charles Simeon)

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will draw near to God?

Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we can come to God with confidence, no matter what.

Remember that you have a Savior and draw near to God!

### **Confess your sin.**

One of the hardest things to do is to receive correction and admit that we were wrong. Why is this?

Prussian King Frederick the Great was once touring a Berlin prison. The prisoners fell on their knees before him to proclaim their innocence – except for one man who remained silent. Frederick called to him, 'Why are you here?' 'Armed robbery, Your Majesty,' was the reply. 'And are you guilty?' 'Yes indeed, Your Majesty, I deserve my punishment.' Frederick then summoned the jailer and ordered him, 'Release this guilty wretch at once. I will not have him kept in this prison where he will corrupt all the fine innocent people who occupy it.'

There is something about the gospel that should free us from having to defend ourselves.

English evangelist George Whitefield (1714-1770) received a vicious letter accusing him of wrongdoing. His reply was brief and courteous: 'I thank you heartily for your letter. As for what you and my other enemies are saying against me, I know worse things about myself than you will ever say about me. With love in Christ, George Whitefield.'

The gospel is meant to free us to confess our sins with hope.

<sup>8</sup> *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.* <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* <sup>10</sup> *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)*

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will confess our sins to God and others?

Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we need not fear the exposure of our sin and we can be confident that God will always forgive.

Remember that you have a Savior and don't be afraid to confess your sin!

### **Forgive as you've been forgiven.**

Another thing that is often hard for us is forgiving those who sin against us.

A man who was telling his friend about an argument he'd had with his wife commented, 'Oh, how I hate it, every time we have an argument, she gets historical.' The friend replied, 'You mean hysterical.' 'No,' he insisted. 'I mean historical. Every time we argue she drags up everything from the past and holds it against me!' (IBP)

So how do we forgive?

We have to come to grips with God's forgiveness of us.

<sup>31</sup> *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.* <sup>32</sup> *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)*

On July 3, 1988, the navy cruiser USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian airliner with 290 aboard. All died. The ship's captain mistakenly thought they were under attack by an F-14 Iranian fighter. At the time, public opinion polls showed that most Americans opposed paying compensation to the victim's families because of the cruel treatment of American hostages in Iran years before. But President Reagan approved compensation and when he was asked if this might send the wrong signal he said, "I don't ever find compassion a bad precedent."

God has set the precedent of compassionate forgiveness. If I refuse to forgive although I have been forgiven by God, I imply that the sin against me is either too great for Christ to forgive or greater than any of my sin against God. (see Matthew 18:21-35)

"[The 'wretch' who has been saved by grace] believes and feels his own weakness and unworthiness, and lives upon the grace and pardoning love of his Lord. This gives him an habitual tenderness and gentleness Spirit. Humble under a sense of much forgiveness to himself, he finds it easy to forgive others." (John Newton)

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Because if we have a Savior from sin, then God forgives us and it is only reasonable that we would forgive others.

Remember that you have a Savior and forgive those who have sinned against you!

### **Fight with peace and humility.**

One of the things that can burden us is the thought that we should be further along in spiritual maturity than we often find ourselves to be or that we should have overcome by now some particular sin.

‘But his friends rebuked him as well. For example, he had the bad habit of speaking as if he were very angry about mere trifles. One day at a Mr. Hankinson's house he became so irritated at how the servant was stoking the fire that he gave him a swat on the back to get him to stop. Then when he was leaving, the servant got a bridle mixed up, and Simeon's temper broke out violently against the man.

‘Well, Mr. Hankinson wrote a letter as if from his servant and put it in Simeon's bag to be found later. In it he said that he did not see how a man who preached and prayed so well could be in such a passion about nothing and wear no *bridle* on his tongue. He signed it "John Softly."

‘Simeon responded (on April 12, 1804) directly to the servant with the words, "To John Softly, from Charles, Proud and Irritable: I most cordially thank your, my dear friend for your kind and seasonable reproof." Then he wrote to his friend, Mr. Hankinson, "I hope, my dearest brother, that when you find your soul nigh to God, you will remember one who so greatly needs all the help he can get" (Moule, 147) (John Piper on Charles Simeon)

How did Charles Simeon handle this? I think he went back to his conversion.

‘In Passion Week, as I was reading Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect – "That the Jews knew what they did, when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering." The thought came into my mind, What, may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an Offering for me, that I may lay my sins on His head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer. (Charles Simeon)

"With this sweet hope of ultimate acceptance with God, I have always enjoyed much cheerfulness before men; but I have at the same time laboured incessantly to cultivate the deepest humiliation before God" (Charles Simeon)

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*of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.* <sup>24</sup> *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?* <sup>25</sup> *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.* <sup>1</sup> *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 7:21-8:1)*

Why does living like we have a Savior mean, practically, that we will fight sin with peace in the face of constant failure?

Because if we have a Savior from sin, then we will never be condemned for our sin.

Remember that you have a Savior and fight humbly on against your sin and be at peace!

### **Be patient with sinners.**

One of the things we have a problem with is the ongoing weaknesses and sins of others.

*'I have been thirty years forming my own views; and, in the course of this time, some of my hills have sunk, and some of my valleys have risen: but, how unreasonable within me to expect all this should take place in another person; and that, in the course of a year or two. (John Newton)*

*"I endeavor to walk through the world as a physician goes through Bedlam [the famous insane asylum]: the patients make a noise, pester him with impertinence, and hinder him in his business; but he does the best he can, and so gets through."*

*<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— <sup>11</sup> a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. <sup>12</sup> So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (Colossians 3:9-13)*

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Because if we have a Savior from sin, then the fact that He is patient with us in light of our ongoing sinfulness should result in our being patient with others in light of their ongoing sinfulness.

Remember that you have a Savior and be patient with the ongoing sin and weakness of others!

### **Preach to yourself.**



We must preach the truth to ourselves and listen to what we preach to others.

We must know ourselves as the sinners we are and be certain of our Savior at the same time.

‘I have turned over my sermons and my many labours for the Lord, but there is scarce one of them that I dare to think of without tears – they are all marred by sin and imperfection. As I think of every act I have ever done for God, I can only cry, ‘O, God, forgive the iniquity of my holy things!’ (Charles Spurgeon, MTP, vol 53, p. 329)

Spurgeon once expressed his assurance of salvation in this way. He said that he could grab on to a cornstalk and swing out over the fires of hell, look down into the face of the devil, and sing, “Blessed assurance Jesus is mine!”

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- Who will return one day to judge all men and reward with heaven or hell.
- Who will one day restore this fallen world and establish a new heaven and new earth full of righteousness, joy and peace forever.

“Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God’s grace, nor are your best days ever so good that you are beyond the need of it.” — Jerry Bridges, *Discipline of Grace* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994), 18

Remember that you have a Savior in Jesus and live like it!