

The Gospel Truth (Easter 2012) – Prov 16:25

Ps 139 (p.522); As you do, let me add my welcome to those you’ve already received
My name is Rob Willey, I’m the SP here at HBC, and I’m glad you’re here
Easter is a very important and very special occasion, when we celebrate the resurrection
of Jesus from the dead; That’s why we sing and declare – He is risen!

And it’s at that point, based on church tradition, where audience participation comes into
play; When I say, “He is risen,” you’re supposed to say – He is risen indeed!
So let’s try that again – He is risen! (He is risen indeed!)

- But let’s be honest – not all of you believe that, do you? (**Intro**)
Some of you don’t believe that’s *true*; Or right
Or if it is, you don’t think it has anything to do with you

The problem is, it does; And your lack of belief, or indifference – has dire consequences
B/c the Bible says in **Prov 16:25** – *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end
is the way to death.*

There’s a way that *seems* true, there’s a way of looking at the world you may *think* is
right, but it ends in death – spiritual death
As in separation from God, in the throes of hell, forever and ever

Or as Jesus said it – *The gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and
those who enter by it are many. [But] the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads
to life, and those who find it are few.* (Mt 7:13-14)

- As much as I’d like to think otherwise, it’s likely that some of you are among the many
You’re going through life, headed for destruction (**bridge out**), and you don’t even
know it; You’ve completely missed the “bridge out” signs

Maybe b/c you don’t *know* the truth; Or you haven’t bothered to look for it
Or if you have, you don’t believe it b/c it doesn’t seem *right* to you; It’s not what you
want to be true; It doesn’t fit your life, or your pleasures, or the path you’re on

Which at the end of the day, or the end of your life – doesn’t matter
It doesn’t matter what you *think* is true, or what *seems* true; That doesn’t change the fact
that you’re headed for a cliff
What matters, is what *is* true; What matters, is the *gospel* truth*****

And I want to take the next few minutes to tell you what that is – in hopes that you’ll
believe it, and heed it, and trust it; Starting with this . . .

God made you, and knows you (Ps 139:13,16)

That’s the first part of the gospel truth; That’s where it all begins; The God of the universe
made you, and knows you
IOW you’re not a product of chance; You’re not just a collection of molecules
A mass of particles that happened to gather from the far reaches of the universe at this
particular point in time, to comprise *you* – poof!

Not at all; You’re a known, intentional, and unique work of the living God
That’s essentially what King David says here in Ps 139, v13

*You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. [14] I
praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

That’s you; You can and should be saying the same thing
God didn’t just make Adam and Eve, and then step back to let nature take its course – he
also made *you*; Knitting you together in your mother’s womb, in awesome fashion

- He made you, and *knows* you; Like David says in v16
*Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*
Implying that he not only knows the *number* of your days, but their *content* as well
They’re *written*, as in accounted for and described, every one of them, by God
He wrote the book on your life; Which means he knows you inside and out, in addition
to having made you
That’s the gospel truth

But it doesn’t stop there; He also . . .

God loves you, and wants to bless you (Eph 2:4)

In fact, Eph 2:4 says that God loves us with a *great* love
Not a paltry love; Not a piddly love; Not a small love; But a great love
In fact, *we love because he first loved us* (1 Jn 4:19)

God loves you; He cares about you, he feels for you, and he wants to draw near to you
Just like a good but imperfect **earthly father** loves his *kids* – how much more does our
heavenly Father, perfect in every way, love us? Way more

- So much so, that he wants to *bless* you
He wants to bless you with his presence, his provision, his protection, and his power
It’s true; He’s not like some far off *absentee* dad, sending money when he takes a
notion; He wants to bless you with himself, his *presence*

Like Jesus says in **John 14:23** – *If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father
will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*
God loves you, and wants to bless you with his presence

And his provision; The Apostle Paul says in **Ph 4:19** – *My God will supply every need of
yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
With all that’s found *in* Christ, and all that comes *through* Christ and from Christ – God
wants to bless you with his provision*****
And protect you from the evil one (Jn 18:15), and empower you to live for him (Ph 4:13)
God loves you, and wants to bless you; That’s the truth

The problem is . . .

But your sin isolates you, and kills you (Is 59:1-2; Rom 6:23)

God made you and knows you; God loves you and wants to bless you . . .
But your sin isolates you, and kills you

Much like those in **prison** are isolated from the freedoms and privileges of the general
population; Or someone in **solitary confinement** . . .
Is *further* isolated for their bad behavior

That's what your *sin* does to you; It isolates and separates you from the very one who loves you; And therefore keeps you from receiving his blessings

Like the prophet Jeremiah told the people of old – *Your iniquities have turned these away* [these blessings of God], *and your sins have kept good from you.* (Jer 5:25)
And **Isaiah** said – *Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; [2] but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.* (Is 59:1-2)
Your sin, the bad things you do, say, and think; And your sinfulness, your propensity to do wrong – isolates you from God

- And as if that's not bad enough, it kills you while it does (**Rom 6:23**)
B/c the wages of *sin* [the consequences of sin] is *death*
And *death spread to all men because all sinned* (Rom 5:12)
So your sin is killing you, whether you know it or not
It's killing you *outwardly* – in that you're wasting away and decaying the Bible says . . .
And *inwardly* you're already dead – *dead in your trespasses and sins* (Eph 2:1)*****

Every single person who's still in their sin, who hasn't been forgiven – is separated from God, isolated from his best, spiritually dead, and facing destruction

The good news is that . . .

So Christ died for you, to save you (Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 3:18)

Here's how it works; At Christmas, a little over 2000 years ago, God became flesh and lived among us for a time; Until he died and rose again, 33 years later, at Easter
God became flesh at Christmas, to die at Easter

And did so, to take your sin upon himself, and save you from the destruction of eternal death and separation
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, the cross the Bible says (1 Pet 2:24)
And *for our sake he* [God the Father] *made him* [God the Son] *to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him* [i.e. in communion with him, as one with him] *we might become the righteousness of God* [we might be saved]. (2 Cor 5:21)

Or as **Rom 5:8** says – *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* He died in your place, sinner that you are, so you wouldn't have to
And took your sin upon himself, to save you from the consequences, and bring u to God

That's **1 Peter 3:18** – *Christ also suffered* [in addition to our *own* suffering] *once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God*
That he might save us; That he might “bridge” us to God

That's the core of the gospel truth – that in your sin and isolation, God actually took on flesh, and died for you, to make a bridge to himself*****

But he didn't do so, that you would *continue* in sin, and live for *yourself*; Rather . . .

That you might die to sin, and live for him (Rom 6:12-13)

Christ died for you to save you, that you might die to sin, and live for him
And I want you to see that in your own Bibles; Rom 6:12-13 (p.943)

Having just established that through faith in Christ, we're alive, we're saved . . .

Paul says in v12 – *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.* [13] *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.* [14] *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

In Christ, the power of sin is broken in your life – your chains are gone

The *presence* of sin may remain, nagging at you and tempting you, but not the *power* of sin – it has no *dominion* over you; Why? B/c we don't live under the law anymore
We don't live under that old way of redemption through repeated, *imperfect* animal sacrifices; Sacrifices that actually *fed* the power of sin
Rather, we live under grace – the *new* way of salvation through Christ's one, *perfect* sacrifice; A sacrifice that actually *defeats* sin

And the point is, we should live like it; In being brought from death to life, you're not saved to *sin*, but to righteousness; To do good; To live for *him*
To present yourself to God, as an *instrument* of righteousness – a means by which he can influence the world, and receive the glory due his name; IOW it's not about you
Christ died for you and saves you – so that you might die to *sin*, and live for *him*

But none of that applies – his death, salvation, his blessing; None of it, unless . . .

If you believe, repent, and receive (Mk 1:15)

God made you, knows you, loves you, and wants to bless you
But your sin isolates you, and kills you; So Christ died for you, to save you
That you might die to sin, and live for him; If you believe, repent, and receive
That's the gospel truth; And I want you to watch this video, to see it at work
(**God@Work – Criss and Sharon Knott**)

- Whether you're looking for the truth, or fighting the truth . . .
If you believe in Jesus, and what he did to save you . . .
Namely, that he died on a cross to bear your sins and your condemnation, so you wouldn't have to . . .
And then rose again that first Easter so that you could too – both spiritually *and* physically some day; If you believe that, if you believe in *him* . . .

And *repent* of your sins – i.e. you *confess* them to God, *ask* him to forgive you, and commit to *turn* from them . . .

If you believe, and repent, and *receive* Jesus into your heart and life as Lord and Savior, dying to sin and living for him . . .
You too can be saved – just like Criss and Sharon; You too can be reconciled to God
Forever the recipient of his provision, protection, power, and presence – within you

But (**Mk 1:15**) you have to *repent and believe in the gospel* like Jesus said
The gospel truth

- And I'm going to give you an opportunity to do that, right now
An opportunity to confess your belief, repent of your sins, and receive Jesus into your life as Lord and Savior

Pray – If I’ve been talking to you as if you’re the only one in the room, and you need to
surrender – don’t flirt with disaster any longer
Don’t ignore the “Bridge Out” signs any more, hoping the cliff isn’t real
Just call out to the Lord in the quietness of your heart, right where you sit, and say
something like this . . .

“God, I believe – I believe that when Jesus died on the cross, he died in my place for my
sin, so I wouldn’t have to; And then rose again so I could too; I believe
And I admit that I’m a sinner Lord, and I’m sorry for it; Please forgive me; Forgive me
of the penalty and punishment I deserve; I commit to live your way
So come into my heart and life now – I receive you as Lord and Savior, to live for you
from now on; I believe, I repent, and I receive”

As we continue in prayer, I want to pray for you, if you just prayed with me
Would you just raise your hand and look at me, and wait for me to acknowledge you?
I want to rejoice with you, and pray for you; Is there anyone?

- Thank you Lord, for the power of your gospel, the gospel truth – to save souls, forgive
sins, and give life
Bless and keep each and every person who just surrendered theirs
Give them an increasing desire to know you, love you, serve you, and worship you

God bless you; We praise God for you
And it’s only fitting on this Resurrection Sunday, that we stand and *worship* the One
who saves, with a passion that fits the occasion