

September 2001: The Wonder of the Gospel

by Aaron Greenway

When we try to think of the greatest, most precious things in life, *love* is what comes to mind for many of us. Over the past several weeks, I have been reminded of the simple truths found in the Scripture, the truths that even a young child can understand.

What am I speaking of? I speak of the Gospel, which is translated as “Good News”. Many have had ideas as to what the Gospel is. In this newsletter, I hope to remind all of us of the greatest love story of all time.

To give a couple of illustrations...not too long ago, I went to a movie called *The Princess Diaries* with Julie Andrews and Anne Hathaway, all about a young girl from San Francisco whose grandmother was the Queen of Geneva, meaning the girl was to be the next princess and one day rule the kingdom. The Queen made the trip all the way to the United States to hold out an invitation to her granddaughter. But this awkward, clumsy, unpopular, young lady obviously wasn't up to the job of ruling a country. She ended up accepting this great responsibility and her life was turned upside down. In the movie this girl started out as what we call a “nerd” and ended up looking beautiful. And it was because of the love and the commitment of her grandmother. Hasn't our God in Heaven made a long trip to give us an eternal inheritance?

In a more realistic illustration, a father and mother just recently and unwillingly gave up their young son to the whims of a drunk driver. Called at Three O'clock in the morning, this young man, John, went out to help a friend who was drunk and bring him home. In the process he was struck by another drunk driver and was taken home to Glory. Even now, my heart grieves for this family. Didn't the Father give up His only Son for our eternal inheritance?

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The Father is the KING of the universe, the same universe that He created. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, was crowned with absolute glory and honor. He has ruled with His Father for all of eternity. And one day, the Son gave it all up. He went on a very special mission and became *human* (John 1:14). He was born to a common woman and laid in an animal's feeding trough (Luke 2:1-7). He grew up and lived a perfect life. He never made mistakes (Hebrews 4:15). And when he started his preaching ministry, He took along a ragtag team of First Class *bozos* referred to as His disciples (Mark 3:14). He preached the coming of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:17), performed miracles (John 2:1-12), healed the sick (Luke 7:1-10), restored the deformed (Mark 3:1-6), cast out demons (Luke 8:26-39) forgave the wicked (Mark 2:5, Luke 7:48), and even raised the dead (John 11:38-44). However, one of His disciples ended up betraying Him and Jesus fulfilled his eternal destiny. He was arrested, nailed to a cross and He bore your sin and my sin. Three days later, Jesus conquered death and the grave when He rose from the dead. After spending time with His disciples and friends, explaining to them the Scriptures and why He died, He ascended into Heaven and again sits at the right hand of His Father. He awaits His Father's signal to return and rule the earth.

All of this is the closest thing I can come to the idea of God giving up His own Son, the idea that God watched His Son die a ruthless, humiliating death on a Roman cross. I cannot imagine losing a son. In the words of my own mother, "It is hard to lose a parent but even harder to lose a child." To those of us who have lost children, this is only but a taste as to what the Father went through giving up His Son to the impulses of sin, sinful man, and the devil. The thing is, Jesus didn't have to do this. He could have rejected the mission. More than twelve thousand angels were on standby in case He wished to be rescued from the cross (Matthew 26:53). But where would that have gotten us, had He done such a thing? This is the good news! This is the hope for the entire world! This is what we Christians live for! We live to literally perspire the essence of the good news, that God became man to reach man. God died for man to reach man. And God today intercedes on our behalf (as well as the interceding of the Spirit) so our salvation is always secured. What an incredible comfort!! What more could we ask for? What further proof do we need that God loves us?

So when we present the Gospel to others, what do we tell them? We tell them that they are

sinner, and that God committed the ultimate act of love and gave up His only Son so they can be forgiven. I think we take this for granted too many times and yet it is the very power that captures us and sustains us. The cross is the very thing that draws people. The cross jars our lives out of any hint of complacency the closer we get to it. The love of God cannot be reproved, denied or mocked, because it is the love of God that melts us away until we are submitted to Jesus, freeing us from our bondage and any power that the devil has over us.

Is this Gospel worth talking about? Jesus thought it was. Is the Gospel worth sharing? Paul did. He went to the ends of the earth to do it. Is the Hope we have worth opening our mouths? The Apostle John did. That hope is that Jesus is coming again. Jesus equals hope. There is no hope outside of Him. Can we be softened enough to again see and appreciate the simplicity, the beauty and the utter glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Can we again have our eyes opened to the incredible story of a glorious, eternal God becoming a lowly, dirty human being? Because, the day that that happens, no one will be able to convince us otherwise and no one will be able to shut us up. May God burn in our hearts a symbol of the cross and a love for His Gospel!!