

“The Very Good News”
Ephesians 2:4–10; Revelation 21:3–5
Rev. Bobby Parks
March 18, 2018 • Morning Sermon

We are seriously praying for a Great Awakening in our country which really, seriously needs it. Ephesians 2:1–3 says [1] *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins* [2] *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—* [3] *among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

Ephesians 4:17–19 says [17] *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.* [18] *They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.* [19] *They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

May God add His blessing to the reading of His Word.

I heard a story of a teenage boy who was tired of studying, didn't like school, and so he told his dad, “I'm dropping out of school because God has called me to preach.” The dad said ‘Son, you can't be a preacher until you know the Bible.’ The son said, ‘I know the Bible.’ The dad said, ‘Okay, tell me the story of the Good Samaritan.’ The boy said ‘Oh I know the story of the Good Samaritan. He was riding along on his talking donkey and he had this long flowing hair. As he rode underneath the tree his hair got caught in the branches and he was afraid he was just going to get stuck there because the donkey just kept going. This lady named Delilah climbed up in the tree with these shears and cut his hair which was a relief but he fell out of the tree and landed right in the middle of a burning bush. He would have burned but it started to rain and it put out the fire in the bush. But it rained and rained for forty days and forty nights. Then a big flood came up and he was about to drown but a big fish came and swallowed him up. He was in the belly of that fish for three days and then the fish spit him out onto the shore and they picked him up, bit by bit, twelve baskets full.”

Unfortunately that story illustrates there are a lot of people today that know just enough of the Bible to get themselves in trouble, to be dangerous. They mix it up and mix the stories up. We who know Christ and are in a church who preaches the Word of God, hearing it taught in our Sunday school classes, on Wednesday nights, in our small groups, who know the Scriptures that we have the opportunity to proclaim and tell people the truth of God's Word so that they understand His grace and can be saved.

We understand that God has chosen some people to be saved and the first point is that God has a commitment to save His people. He will save His people from their sin. He is determined to save His elect and He will do whatever actions necessary to save them. Sometimes He does this through supernatural means. In Acts 10 we hear of a story of a man named Cornelius.

Acts 10:1–2 says [1] *At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort,* [2] *a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.* Here we see Cornelius was a Roman soldier, not yet converted to Judaism or a Christian but God had given a certain amount

of light to him and therefore he was praying continually to God. What did God do for this man who was seeking?

Acts 10:3–6 says [3] *About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.”* [4] *And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?”* And he said to him, *“Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.* [5] *And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter.* [6] *He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.”* So here we see a supernatural occurrence when God gave him this vision of this angel and then went to Peter bringing along some men with him.

I will summarize the rest of the story for the sake of time. God gave Peter a vision where a sheet was let down from heaven with all kinds animals in it and God used this vision which he gave to Peter twice, to teach Peter the lesson that the Gospel was not just for the Jews but it was for everyone, including the Gentiles. So when this man and his servants arrived at the home where Peter was staying and said ‘You need come talk to our master’ Peter willingly went because of what God had done to prepare him before that. When Peter got there he preached the Gospel and not surprisingly Cornelius and all his household believed the Gospel and were baptized. So in this case we see that God used supernatural means to get the Gospel to someone who really wanted to hear it.

Supernatural aspects still occur in some places today where the Gospel is not as free to go. There are countries politically that do not want churches, Christians or missionaries there. So there are places where people don’t have access to this wonderful book that we take for granted every week. They need to hear the Gospel and so God sometimes does unusual things to get the Gospel to them.

I knew a man named Henry who worked among the Muslim people in North Africa and the Middle East. He was telling us about an incident where they were trying to get the Gospel into one of these closed Muslim countries so they loaded up the trunk of their car with boxes of Bibles to see if they could get through. They knew someone in one of the cities there that they were going to try and give these Bibles to. When they stopped at the border the border guards looked to see what was in the trunk and seemingly were just blinded to what was really there and just let them go on through. So they went on and as they were driving down this really deserted road in this desert area and the car kind of sputtered and came to a stop. They tried to see what was wrong with the car but couldn’t see anything wrong. They stood there scratching their heads and hadn’t seen anyone for a long time. All of a sudden off in the distance they saw some movement near these hills and mountains as though someone was coming in their direction.

As it got closer they saw that it was a man riding on a donkey. He was coming toward them and when he got to them he said ‘Do you have the books?’ They said ‘What books?’ He said ‘The books about God for I was told to expect them and I have people who want them.’ They said ‘We have those books.’ They opened up their trunk and loaded what they could onto the donkey as they strapped them on and he said ‘Thank you very much’ and off he went back in the direction he came from. They looked at each other with a pretty good guess of what would happen next for they got in the car and it started right up immediately and off they went to the next destination.

Of course, God can do whatever He wants to do but that’s not the way God normally works to get the Gospel to people, especially in places like the United States where we do have the Bible accessible and pulpits where we hear the Gospel preached. We have radio programs, internet, TV and all kinds of options to be able to hear the Gospel but the norm is that God

usually works through people to reach other people. He works through people like you and me to reach people like you and me.

I am so thankful for Larry Thompson who was a friend of mine in college who came into my room one day and shared the Gospel with me. I had heard the Gospel growing up but somehow it went in one ear and out the other but it wasn't until Larry came to me and simply explained the Gospel to me that I became a Christian. We know from Romans that in order for people to be saved they need to hear the Gospel and believe it. It is such a joy to be part of that process of when someone comes to faith in Christ and then to continue to grow in their faith after that. I know that many times when we sit down with someone and share the Gospel with them we would like to see them come to Christ at that point but generally it's a process.

Pastor Reeder likes to say that salvation is an event that happens in a point in time but it is generally preceded by a long process that brings people to that point. Evangelism is that process and that process is generally not just one conversation but it is talking to people over and over again and we should be joyful to be even part of that process. God usually accomplishes the saving of people through ordinary means. In I Corinthians 3 Paul describes the more normal process that God usually uses to get the Gospel to people.

I Corinthians 3:6-7 says *[6] I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. [7] So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.* In other words, God is the One who saves people and not us but we are part of that process by planting those seeds and sometimes just watering those seeds. We sometimes like to be there when the harvest takes place but that is not always our role.

When we were living in South Africa there was a family who brought their kids about two thirds into a school year as they joined the little Christian school our kids were in. I didn't get to really know the parents but I knew the daughter because my daughter became very good friends with her. At the end of the school year they asked if they could take my daughter with them on a little vacation to the lake. They would be camping and then after a few days we would come pick her up but spend a night and have a little time together. The dad and mom were named Brian and Susan.

So we arrived at the camp and Brian and I went into town to get some charcoal, cokes and stuff that we needed for our cookout. I made an assumption because his kids were at a Christian school that the parents were Christians so I asked him "Brian, when did you and Susan become Christians." He corrected me very quickly and said "Susan is the Christian, not me." He made that pretty emphatically and so I then blurted out "Well why not?" He said "I don't know, no one ever asked me that before." I thought "Well I've never asked anyone that before either." But he did say "I'll have to think about that." We got what we needed for the cookout and went back to the camp and cooked our food.

Later, while we were sitting around the fire talking Brian said "I have an answer to your question." I thought he was talking about the current conversation and I said "What question?" He said "The one you asked me in the van a couple of hours ago." I thought, "that question" and said "What is your answer?" He said "I think my problem with Christianity is that I see a conflict between science and the Bible." I told him I had some books that dealt with that and he told me he would be interested in reading them. After we got back I loaned him some of my books and it took him a while to read through them because some of them were pretty thick and he eventually changed his views on creation where he became a six day creationist but he wasn't a Christian at this point.

I invited him to come to a four week investigative Bible study in my home with some other men who were not Christians and at the end of that study he could tell you exactly why Christ came to earth, who Christ was, what it means to become a Christian, what the cross was all about and he had all the facts in his head. I said to him 'Would you like to receive Christ?' He said 'No, because He would want to change my life and I don't want it to change because I like it the way it is.' Wow, what do you do with a person like that?

To fast forward we continued to do things with that family over the next year and a half and one night Brian's wife was out of town so we invited him and his kids over for dinner. During dinner he said 'Did you know that I quit smoking recently?' I said 'No, I hadn't heard that.' He said 'I also quit drinking alcohol a few months ago.' 'I didn't know that either.' He said 'I bet I'm the cleanest living non-Christian you know.' He knew where he stood, didn't he? I said 'You're definitely the only six day creationist I know.'

Fast forward six months later and I get an email from him on a Friday night that said 'the pressure was so great (later he recognized as the convicting of the Holy Spirit) this morning that I left work early, went home and said to Susan (his wife), 'I need Christ' and we got down on our knees and I prayed to receive Christ.' His life was changed. He has been leading mission teams to other countries, his wife is a principal of a Christian school and he is doing all kinds of things for the Lord. It is just so exciting to see. God uses a process to bring people to Christ.

Reaching Muslims also doesn't have to be done supernaturally. Some years ago we were a part of this project that had to do with these ferries that went across the Mediterranean, from North Africa to northern ports like Spain, southern France, Italy and so forth. The one we were a part of was the one that went to southern Spain. We would put all kinds of literature in plastic bags that included a New Testament in Arabic and French which were the languages they spoke in Morocco, a Jesus video, cassette tapes and children's literature. The exciting was to see the excitement on the faces of these Muslim men when they would see what they were getting in these bags. When they saw the New Testament they would say 'Is this the New Testament?' and we'd say 'yes' and they would immediately find a place to sit and start reading it. They had heard about the New Testament and about Jesus but they had never had an opportunity to read one. Not all of them did that for some spit in our faces and cursed at us but there were so many who were open in whom God was working which was an exciting thing to see.

In these bags of literature we had to put four slips of paper. Some would connect them with Transworld radio. One of them was an address they could write to and get information on Bible correspondence courses. We heard a story about a man in Morocco who went to visit one of his friends and his friend was in the kitchen making coffee. The man saw on the coffee table in the living room one of the New Testaments and wasn't sure what it was. When he picked it up and realized what it was he quickly stuck it in his coat pocket and yelled to his friend in the kitchen, 'I remember something I have to do so I've got to go' and he walked out real quickly.

When the man got home he opened the New Testament and read the entire book of Matthew in one sitting. At the end he said 'Wow, this Jesus is amazing!' Then he said it was like this voice came in his head and said 'but why did you steal it?' He ignored that in his head and went on to read the book of Mark which he read in one sitting. He said 'Jesus is really wonderful' and again it was like he heard this voice in his head that said 'why did you steal it?' He called his friend and said 'I need to come back to see you.' His friend said 'ok.' When he got to his friend's house he said 'I have a confession, when I was here earlier I stole your little book because I always wanted to read this.' The friend said 'do you see this little slip of paper here? If you write to them they will send you your own copy' which is what he did. He began to

enter into correspondence with them and became a Christian through reading God's Word. There is an example of the power of God's Word and also means that people use to get the Gospel to others.

That brings me to my second point which is God's transformation of those He saves. What were the people in Ephesus like before Paul preached there? We know it was a free city. Rome gave them a lot of self-governments. It was a trade center. It was a very wealthy city. There was the worship of Diana who was a fertility goddess so there was cult prostitution involved in the worship of that goddess. So it was an area of a lot of materialism and sexual promiscuity. Sounds a lot like where we live today, doesn't it? Some things never change. In Ephesians 2:3 Paul says we're all (mankind) like this as he is describing the Ephesians. They were spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins and had habitually walked in those sins for years, following the ways of this world. They were led by the prince of darkness which we know to be Satan. They lived in disobedience to God, carrying out the passions of their flesh, darkened in their understanding, had a hardness of heart and were given over to sensuality.

Ephesians 4:17–31 says *[17] Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. [18] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. [19] They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. [20] But that is not the way you learned Christ!— [21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

[25] Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. [29] Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Paul is pretty much telling us here what life is like apart from Christ. Things today are no different than what they were back in Paul's day. Many have rejected the Gospel. They have suppressed the truth about God and we see that in Romans 1. They are ignorant in all their ways. Hebrew 5:14 says *[14] But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.* Those who constantly practice and use God's Word (solid food) they are able to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil. I think the corollary is that people who don't know and don't practice God's Word are not able to distinguish good from evil. We see this in another part of Scripture as well.

Proverbs 28:4–5 says *[4] Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law strive against them. [5] Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.* People praise the wicked because they have forsaken God's law. They don't understand God's Word. We shouldn't be surprised by the things we hear on TV. Just because someone is famous doesn't give them insight into God's ways. We shouldn't be surprised when people call good evil and evil good. When we hear things that are flat out wrong

Biblically speaking or against the church or negatively against Jesus Christ, rather than hating those people those comments should be a trigger for us to pray for them, to have compassion on them and to desire to lovingly and graciously engage in a conversation with them to help them see the truth.

The truth did come to those in Ephesus and what did God do? He is bringing grace to sinners to transform them to be like Jesus. Ephesians 2:4–7 says [4] *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.* He is still doing this today when He changes someone. He is changing people to bring glory to Himself.

I have found it to be so exciting to be talking to people about Christ and seeing God work, often times slowly, but eventually bringing them to faith in Christ and seeing the kinds of changes that He makes in them. While in South Africa, I also met Dick who was related to Brian and Susan via marriage. Franklin Graham came to Cape Town for a Crusade so we had a businessmen's breakfast so they introduced me to Dick to take him to the breakfast. Dick was in the business of putting mufflers on cars and had his own shop. He used to be a motorcycle racer. One of the things people learned to do who were in the car industry in South Africa was to cheat the tax man to make more money for themselves. It was very simple. If people paid with a check or credit card there was a paper trail so they had to pay the business tax but if they paid with cash he could simply stick the money in his pocket, pretend the transaction never happened and he would avoid having to pay a tax which was high. So when people came in to get their mufflers they would ask him his cash price which was generally lower and this was a common way people did things there.

I took Dick to the Franklin Graham breakfast. On the way home afterwards I asked Dick "What did you think of his message?" He said 'It was good.' I said 'Have you ever made a commitment to Christ?' He said "Oh yeah I'm a Christian." His sister in law told me the day before that he was not a Christian but I didn't dispute that with him and just took his word for it. I invited him to a monthly breakfast we had for businessmen which was a fellowship interaction time and he started coming to that. About four months after he had been coming to that he did become a Christian. His life just changed radically.

One day he was giving his testimony and said 'The day I met Bobby Parks he asked me if I was a Christian and I told him that I was. Now I realize that I didn't even know what a Christian was back then but now I do know.' It showed that he was one because when people came to his business and say 'what's your cash price' he would say 'I only have one price now and it doesn't matter how you pay.' At first, they would say 'why are you doing that?' He would answer 'Because I'm a Christian now and I want to be honest.' People couldn't believe it. They thought he would go out of business if he didn't give a cash price and his business actually grew and prospered if you can believe it. He had to hire more staff it was doing so well. Other men had started coming to our Friday morning fellowship because they had heard of the change in Dick Bates life. It was such a change that he would be an honest businessman that they would have to go check it out. So we had a steady stream of those in the auto industry because of Dick, coming to that meeting over and over again. Dick had no training in evangelism yet he was just simply sharing what Christ was doing in his life.

It reminds me of the story of the man in John 9 who was born blind. They were giving him a hard time about giving glory to Jesus. The Pharisees were criticizing Jesus for they said He was a sinner and the one who was healed by Jesus said 'whether He is a sinner or not the one thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.' That was the kind of testimony that Dick Bates was giving. Jesus had changed his life and that is something we can all do. God saves us and changes us by His grace.

This brings me to my third point which is God's offer sounds too good to be true. It is free but it is true. I want to compare Christianity which is grace based to a works oriented religion. We could use many where works are concerned but I'm going to use Islam. I'm not using them to be critical of them because I've had nice neighbors that were Muslim. In talking with many Muslims I've learned some things about them. Here are some things. As a Muslim you must consistently fulfill the five pillars.

The first of those pillars is faith. That is you have to confess the faith that you believe there is only one god named Allah, Muhammad is his prophet and you should do that often, daily. The second pillar is prayer, more specifically daily prayer. You have to pray five times a day at specific times and generally pray in a language you don't understand – Arabic. The third pillar is charity and that means you're required to give alms to the needy. The fourth pillar is fasting and that happens during daylight and all during the month of Ramadan and the fifth pillar is the Hodge which is the pilgrimage to Mecca, if at all possible.

Here is the interesting thing, for never at any time are you considered to be in a personal relationship with god for he is considered too high, too holy and too much above us. He is only to be worshipped and obeyed. So even if you do all these five pillars and do them consistently making no mistakes you have no assurance you will be with god in heaven when you die. They say that Allah can decide in the end and you can be doomed. That is a holist and sad state to be in for no matter what you do there is no assurance.

By contrast, what do we offer people? We offer people grace. We offer people really good news and that there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. It is all been done by Christ and He has done everything necessary for us. The whole Trinity was involved. God the Father planned our salvation. Jesus purchased it with His blood and the Holy Spirit applies it to us. Once we become Christians Christ lives in us. We have a personal relationship with a God who created us. He loves us, cares for us and is committed to transforming us into the likeness of His Son, Jesus. He has given us everything we need for our good, including those things that some people don't think are good but are good and for His glory. That is Good News.

Take the Ten Commandments. Boy the Ten Commandments are really bashed in our culture today and many people misunderstand them. The Commandments were never given as a way for us to keep them to earn our way to heaven. We know that's not so. We know that the only way we get to heaven is through Jesus. They were given for our good individually and for our society. Think about how much better our city, state and country be if everyone obeyed the commandment 'do not murder.' We see on the news recently some of the high profile murders that have taken place in our country and not to mention what happens around the world daily. Think of the tax money, the court costs, the ambulances, lawyers' fees and the list goes on, that would be saved if there were no murders. It is almost in calculable and how would you even figure that out? Plus, all the heartache that would be spared in families because of all the murders.

How about the commandment 'do not commit adultery.' Our nation is wracked with sexual sins that lead to disease, emotional baggage and divorce. Think of the immeasurable

heartache that takes place in families because of adultery. How about the commandment ‘do not bear false witness.’ In other words, don’t tell lies. Think of how much better our country would be if everyone told the truth. How about the commandment ‘honor your father and mother.’ I’m sure some of you parents wish that was obeyed more. How about the commandment ‘do not steal.’ Think about the huge economic costs and the distress here.

How about the commandment against coveting. People probably think ‘what’s the bad thing about coveting because that’s just people wanting something.’ It is wanting something you shouldn’t have or don’t deserve. Here is an interesting statistic. 99 percent of crimes are motivated by money or sex but those crimes motivated by money out number all the other by a ratio of 4 to 1. Coveting leads to all kinds of criminal activities. How much better our lives would be without coveting and if we obeyed the Ten Commandments.

We have a message which is Good News. It is a message of grace for individuals and for our society, for even these laws that God gives us are for our good. Think of the benefits and joy of being in Christ. Christ is the Good Shepherd who cares for me. He is the Bread of Life who provides for my needs. He is the Fountain of Living Water who quenches the thirst in my soul and the Refuge in my time of need. I have been adopted into God’s family forever through His substitutionary death. His Holy Spirit indwells in me and I can draw upon the power of His Holy Spirit at all times, not because I’m worthy but because of what Christ did for me.

We often sing the song that says ‘we have a story to tell to the nations’ and we do have a story to tell and it’s Good News! It is the best news that we have to share. I think it was summarized well by a 19th century Baptist pastor, Octavius Winslow for he said “The child of God is, from necessity, a joyful man. His sins are forgiven, his soul is justified, his person is adopted, his trials are blessings, his conflicts are victories, his death is immortality, his future is a heaven of inconceivable, unthought-of, untold, and endless blessedness. With such a God, such a Savior, and such a hope, is he not, ought he not, to be a joyful man?” Amen! We have something wonderful to tell people.

I realize there may be people reading this today who don’t know this salvation or are not sure. Maybe you have been in church like my friends Dick and Brian but you’re not a believer. Maybe you have never heard the message before and you would like to talk to someone. If you would like to talk with someone please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 and we’d be happy to talk and pray with you. Please don’t put that off.

Finally, my last point is God’s promise of eternal happiness for those He saves. Revelation 21:3–5 says [3] *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

[5] *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

We can’t even grasp what heaven will be like, what our eternal state is going to be like. Even in writing the book of Revelation John over and over says things like “it will be like this” or “as this” or “as the appearance of this.” He is trying to use human words to define heavenly things and it’s so great he can’t even find the words but just to say ‘it’s kind of like this...’ It is going to be wonderful. As the hymn says ‘When we all get to heaven what a day of rejoicing that will be.’ It will be great to be there and have people come up to you and say ‘thank you for sharing the Good News with me so that I could be saved and now I spend eternity with the Lord

in perfect happiness.’ That will be good. What about those we never saw again but God used our conversation and continued to work through someone else and now the person is in heaven.

The first couple of years we were living in South Africa we were living in Cape Town in a particular neighborhood and that was in the days they still delivered milk to your front door. My wife who is a friendly person, got into conversations with the milk man and over a period of time she eventually shared the Gospel with him but rejected it. Not too long after that we moved to another neighborhood a few miles away and to fast forward five years that milk man became a Christian and came looking for my wife, Jan. He couldn’t find her but one of the neighbors said they knew her from church and so he said to that neighbor ‘please give her the message that the conversations we had was what led me to thinking more about this and talking to other people and eventually coming to faith in Christ.’

I believe God gives us a few instances like that because He wants to encourage us to keep on but I think when we get to heaven we’re going to meet a lot of people that we never found that out about. We talk to them and it seemed to be a dead end but God was using that as sort of a golden chain to bring them to faith in Christ. So by way of application, we have great news to share and we should be delighted to offer Jesus to our friends. God is determined to save His people from their sins and after a person is born again God transforms them to become like Christ. This offer of free grace sounds too good to be true but it is true and God guarantees us eternal happiness in heaven with Him some day.

So who can you have conversations with about Christ or continue conversations that you already have going? We have a tool that we have been teaching here at Briarwood called bridge building and we also said it could be called relational evangelism because of the people that we have relationships with. It can also be called relax evangelism because the point is that God is sovereign and it’s not up to us convert people. He does the converting so all we do is bring the grace and truth to them and allow God to work. We have called it questioning evangelism because rather than telling people we’re learning to question them by asking questions and let them answer. We call it listening evangelism because we really seriously listen to their answers. It is persevering evangelism because it takes time and sometimes years before God brings a person to faith. We also call it humble evangelism because we don’t have all the answers and we acknowledge that and that it is God who opens their eyes and not our clever arguments.

Will you be part of bringing this exceedingly Good News to people and experience the joy of being part of God’s work? If you will I’d like you to ask God to use you as His instrument in the lives of someone this year. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, would You put on the hearts a name or even more than one person of someone that we could talk to about Jesus? Would You use us in that golden chain in a person’s life to bring them to faith? And we’ll give You the glory when that happens because we realize that You must open their hearts and minds, for we pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Power Point

1. God’s Commitment to Save His People
2. God’s Transformation of Those He Saves
3. God’s Offer Sounds Too Good to Be True
4. God’s Promise of Eternal Happiness for Those He Saves

Conclusion and Application