

Good News Not Fake News, 2017

Steve Berger April 16, 2017

Good News Not Fake News

We're here this morning to celebrate the **truth** that Jesus Christ conquered death, hell and the grave, by raising from the dead!

Love C.S. Lewis quote, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important."¹

We have an infinitely important message today!

So much being said about Fake News in the last year, it's become part of our vocabulary ... Fake News is nothing new however... it is an age-old problem...

"the record of its use stretches back to ancient times. Roman Emperor Octavian famously used a campaign of disinformation to aid his victory over Marc Anthony in the final war of the Roman Republic. In its aftermath, he changed his name to Augustus, and dispatched a flattering and youthful image of himself throughout the Empire, maintaining its use in his old age." **Fake info, name, image = Fake News!**

Fake News deceives people

- a) looks right — deceptive packaging, official looking
- b) sounds right — some truth, something that wants to be heard, celebrity quotes
- c) widely circulated — liked, shared, repeated, must be credible

Bottom line — Fake News has no redeeming value!

When discovered — shocked, disappointed, angry... decision...reject fake, receive truth!

Important — *Fake News isn't just political, there's **fake spiritual news** that has been believed, liked and shared for centuries. But just because it looks right, sounds right and gets wide circulation — doesn't mean it's true — it surely isn't redemptive!*

Today — *I want to **highlight the differences** between **spiritual Fake News** and **biblical Good News**... opportunity at the end for you to decide which you believe... takes humility and courage!*

"God helps those who help themselves" (cleanliness/godliness; build/come)

- political guru Algernon Sidney, made famous by Benjamin Franklin.

¹ Gregory S. Cootsona, *C.S. Lewis and the Crisis of a Christian*, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 15

**“God helps those who help themselves” is
Fake News — opposite of Good News!**

- **Titus 3:3-5**

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...

**God didn't wait for us to help ourselves before He helped us —
we were miserable!**

- God's kindness, love and mercy saved us from our spiritually bankrupt selves

- **Romans 5:6-8**

“God **demonstrated His love** for us by having **Christ die** for us while we were **without strength**, while we were **ungodly sinners!**”

- That's how much He loves us, that's how much He loves you!
- **God isn't waiting for you to get it together! Come as you are!**

***Good news** — you can't help yourself enough, be strong enough, or godly enough for God to help you — He helps and saves you in your current condition, according to His kindness, love and mercy! That's Good News!*

***Listen** — reject Fake News of G.H.T.W.H.T. and receive Good News, just as you are!*

“My good works will save me”

**No they won't, they can't,
that's Fake News, opposite of Good News!**

- **The Good Place** — Hollywood's comedic attempt at Heaven — all deeds get positive or negative value, good or bad in universe, calculate value of life, highest scores get into the Good Place... saved by works! (*to see accompanying video, watch sermon online*)
- **Ephesians 2:8**
For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.
- **Good News** — faith in God's grace saves you, not yourself, it's His gift, not your works!
- Evangelist **George Whitefield** — “Works! Works! A man gets to heaven by works! I would as soon think of climbing to the moon on a rope of sand.”²

² <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/evangelistsandapologists/george-whitefield.html>

**Well-meaning people have embraced the Fake News
of working their own way to heaven through their own good deeds
and self-righteous works — its age-old Fake News!**

- **Romans 10:2-4** — Apostle Paul fought this Fake News
...well-meaning, yet **unknowing** people create their **own way** of being **right with God**, because they **haven't received the Good News** of God's kindness, love, mercy, grace and salvation through Jesus alone!

Good News — if you are trusting the Fake News of good deeds and self-righteousness to save you, you can abandon it today for the Good News of God's kindness, love, mercy, and grace found in Jesus.

“All roads lead to God”

- “Religions are different roads converging upon the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal.”³ Mahatma Gandhi
- **The Good Place**- “who is right? Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, every religion a little right, about 5%” (to see accompanying video watch sermon online)

**Sounds friendly, tolerant and acceptable, but it is Fake News.
But there's just enough truth in it, said by respected/celebrity sources,
it's been repeated enough, that people embrace it — as fake as it is.**

*Listen — all roads **do** indeed lead to God, whoever you are, whatever you believe or don't believe, you will end up standing before God... but there is only One Way, One Truth, One Life, One Name, One Mediator, One Man that will save you!*

- **John 14:6**
"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
 - Nicodemus — not about religion or works
- **Acts 4:10-12**
...let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead...that there isn't salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- **1 Timothy 2:5-6**
For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave His life a ransom for all.

³ Anthony Parel, *Gandhi, Freedom, and Self-rule*, (Lexington Books, 2000), 141

Fake News says — “all roads lead to God,” “all religions are of equal value,” “get to heaven however you choose”

Good News says — *One Way, One Truth, One Life, One Name, One Mediator, One Man, Jesus Christ who gave His life for you so you could be forgiven of your sins and saved! NO OTHER MAN OR RELIGION SHOWS THAT MUCH LOVE FOR YOU!*

“I’m not a sinner”

- **Huffington Post** — *Dharma’s Good News: You Are Not a Sinner!* “Christian salvation is a solution to the problem of Eternal Damnation caused by Original Sin. But that problem does not exist... the good news is that there is no such thing as Original Sin. We are all originally divine.”⁴
 - *No sin, no judgment, we’re god... Fake News — not Good News!*

What does God’s Word say — Psalm 51:5- born in sin, conceived in sin... original sin!

- **1 John 1:8**
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- **Romans 3:23**
for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- **James 2:10**
For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Listen — *Fake News tells you you don’t have any sin, or it tries to make you feel better about your sinful condition by comparing yourself to others. It disregards the fact that we are all guilty of sin, and therefore guilty of breaking all of God’s laws.*

Test — ever lied, stolen, hated, lusted — apart from Jesus’ forgiveness, you’ll stand before God as a lying, thieving, murdering, adulterer... **who saves you... God is Just, sin must be judged!**

Don’t gamble your eternal soul based on your opinion over God’s Word!

Good News

- **1 Timothy 1:15**
This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21**
For God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Jesus.
 - *Jesus died our death so we could live His life*

⁴ www.huffingtonpost.com/rajiv-malhotra/the-hindu-good-news-you-a_b_854904.html

**If you're a sinner today, admit it, abandon the Fake News
and say yes to God's Good News,
say yes to Jesus to be forgiven, rescued and saved!**

“I won't face God's judgment, God loves me”

**God does indeed love us all, but if we think that that love preserves us
from His judgment while rejecting His only way of forgiveness,
we're believing Fake News!**

Interesting — the first lie Satan told to Eve was, “you shall not die,” “you shall not face God's judgment for your sin.” That Fake News has been embraced for thousands of years... 3,000 years after the Garden... Fake News is still being believed...

- **Psalm 10:13**

Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, "You will not require an account."

Fake News — “you can renounce God, God won't require an account, you won't face judgment for your sin.” Fake News — oldest lie known to mankind, don't fall for it!

Paul fought this Fake News as well — to people who loved Fake News, saying and hearing “new things”

- **Acts 17:30-31**

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Good News — God has overlooked the Fake News you've believed, but now commands you to repent because judgment is real, based on what you do with the **love of God found in Jesus** and what He did for you... crucified, died, buried... rose again!

Good News

- a) you can come as you are
- b) salvation is a free gift
- c) there is One Way for everybody
- d) your sins have been paid for by Jesus
- e) you can be forgiven not judged when you stand before God

Question: What do you choose, Good News or Fake News?

- a) repent, believe, Good News, receive Christ, confess Him publicly...

Discussion Questions

1. Why can Christianity not be “moderately important”?
2. What can you say to your friends who say there are many ways to reach God?
3. If God is a God of love, why will some face judgment?