

## **“Your Good News”**

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Mark 9:2-29

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Read the Scripture by clicking [here](#).

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*“What did it mean for you?”*

Different people had different answers.

*“My husband could finally come home.”*

*“I got to eat bananas!”*

*“I was able to hold my child for the first time.”*

*“There was a big party on our street.”*

*“We moved into a new house. They called it a ‘prefab.’”*

*“The street signs went back up!”*

*“We got married.”*

*“I stopped being afraid.”*

Different people, different meanings. Yet all because one thing had happened. What was it?

World War II ended.

That was the big event. For these people, things changed because that big thing changed.<sup>1</sup>

So, which was the good news? The big thing? Or the little things? Can we pick between them? Not really. The end of that terrible war mattered, because it mattered in many millions of individual lives. And those little changes were possible only because the war ended. Big things and little things . . . it was all the good news.

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<sup>1</sup> John Bowen developed this analogy in session 3 of his “Reimagining Church” curriculum. See <http://www.freshexpressions.ca/project/reimaginingchurch/>

## II

The day told about in the Bible reading . . . what was the good news that day?

Obviously, Jesus' Transfiguration. He was filled up, bathed in and overcome with the fullness of God's love, God's power, God's celebration. Like music fills up ordinary words, making them soar in song, so Jesus was filled up with the voice of God: *This my Son, whom I dearly love!*<sup>2</sup>

The days before had been about death. Jesus was seeing his future: rejection, suffering, and execution on a cross. His closest followers could not believe it. Harsh words were thrown. It was a hard time.

Can it be a coincidence that it was Moses and Elijah whom God sent, from wherever the saints go, to talk with Jesus that day? They'd each had their own crises: Moses when the people rejected God's covenant; Elijah when he was on the run for his life. Each had been led by God to a mountaintop, and there God had reassured them. And now, with them, God reassured Jesus.

Was this the good news that day? *Jesus is God's beloved, doing God's mission.*

## III

Or, was it this?

How Peter saw Jesus transformed. Yes, he was still a person, of flesh and blood, Peter's friend and rabbi. Yet he was also more. He was glorious!

Peter would say it was then that he knew, for sure, that he was not following a dream, myth, or delusion. He saw Jesus' magnificent power. He heard God's majestic command: *Listen to him!*<sup>3</sup> It was terrifying and wonderful!

And Moses, through whom God gave the Law. Elijah, the crown of God's prophets. Both, talking to Jesus. Peter's Jesus!

Peter had wanted to stay there, at the feet of the masters. Who wouldn't? But Jesus took them back down from the mountain.

Was this the good news that day? *Jesus is the One to whom the Law and Prophets point: the Messiah, God's Son.*

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<sup>2</sup> N. T. Wright, Mark for Everyone (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001, 2004), 116.

<sup>3</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:16-21.

IV

Or, was it this?

*That day, it ended. No more screaming and convulsing. No more thrashing and frothing. Never again would I wake up, soiled and spent in my mother's arms. Never again would I see such terror in my father's eyes. Never again could the demon seize me. Jesus freed me, to live.*

That's what the boy might say. Was that the good news?

Or, was it this?

*That day, I began to believe again. With every one of my son's fits, my hope had been torn away. I was always afraid. Even when he was well, it was just a pause before the next storm. One day, I would not be able to protect him. I could not save him. I took him to Jesus, but he wasn't there and his disciples were useless. Then, Jesus came down. I tried to believe. That was enough. That day, I first heard my son say "Abba" . . . "Dad."*

That's what the dad might say. Was that the good news?

What was the good news that day?

*Jesus is God's Beloved, doing God's mission?*

*Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son?*

*Jesus healed the boy?*

*Jesus answered the man?*

All of them! Of course!

V

What is the Gospel?

Gospel . . . means "good news."<sup>4</sup>

Gospel . . . translates a Greek word. It was used for royal proclamations, announcements of great victories, that sort of thing. It recalls a Hebrew word, for someone who announces great things.<sup>5</sup> Jesus' followers took it and made it their own to talk about Jesus.

Gospel . . . it's what they call the 4 books in the Bible that tell about Jesus' life. Jesus' life with us, his death for us, his resurrection to give life to us, his rule over us — Jesus is the good news.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/gospel#English>

<sup>5</sup> The Greek word is *euangélion* and the Hebrew word is *basar*.

Gospel . . . maybe we can sum it up:

*Great News! God the Creator has not given up on this hurting and sinful world. God is at work in the world in love, putting things right. God has personally come to us in Jesus. He has decisively dealt with sin, pain and injustice. Because of him, the whole creation is entering a new time — God’s Kingdom — where there is peace, health, justice, and all of life flourishes. (That’s my much-to-wordy attempt.)*

Or maybe like this:

*Jesus is GOD WITH US, come to  
SHOW US God’s love,  
SAVE US from sin,  
SET UP God’s kingdom, and  
SHUT DOWN religion, so we can  
SHARE IN God’s life. (That’s by an Oakville pastor, Bruxy Cavey.)<sup>6</sup>*

Or, maybe we can’t sum up the Good News. Not adequately. Maybe we do best to tell the story of Jesus, who is the Good News of God.

## VI

Or, maybe the Gospel is best told, when you tell your story.

The Gospel is the “Big Thing” of what God has done in Jesus. That’s the big-news announcement, like the newspaper headlines shouting “The War is Over!”

And, the Gospel is all the ways that Big Thing changes millions and millions of individual lives. Just like the War’s end meant so much for so many.

Some people are really good at telling about the Big Thing. Historians and history teachers can tell about the War. Theologians and evangelists can tell about Jesus. They can teach us to tell too.

But each of us has a story to tell. Anyone in Britain after VE day could tell what the War’s end meant for them. What does the Good News of Jesus mean for you?

The past few weeks, we heard the story of the blind man whom Jesus healed. He knew very little about Jesus. He didn’t have much to say. Except, the most profound thing: *All I know is that I was blind, now I see, and it was Jesus.*<sup>7</sup>

What is the Good News for you?

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.bruxy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Gospel-Cheat-Sheet-web\\_updated.pdf](http://www.bruxy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Gospel-Cheat-Sheet-web_updated.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> John 9:1-41, especially verse 25.

- Does the Good News of Jesus make sense of your world and your life?
- Does it give you hope for the future?
- Does it sustain you to make a difference in the world?
- Does it take away your fear of death?
- Does it free you from guilt for things in your past?
- Does it give you courage to set things right?
- Does it heal you?
- Does it bring reconciliation into your broken relationships?
- Does it give you joy?
- Does it give you peace?

Can you think about this? (It's a bit like homework) I'd love to hear your story. And thinking about your story and learning to tell it might be a blessing to others.

Because the battle Jesus fought, the war Jesus has won, is his gift of love for everyone.

That's Gospel! It's the good news story worth telling!