

## Good News and "Bad" News

by Tricia Berg

Good news and "bad" news: The good is that Jesus loves even you, even me, despite ourselves—even though He knows every single thing about us, even our very thoughts. Wow! The "bad" news is that He doesn't love our sin. He came to FREE us FROM it, not only the consequences for it, but also the HOLD it ONCE had over us. If we love Him BACK, we will allow Him to cleanse us and to help us STAY clean. He knows how weak we are and so He gives His Spirit within us to help us resist sin. He also promises to forgive us each time we come to Him needing to be cleansed AGAIN, of ANY sin, EVERY time. That's not the same as wallowing in the mud in delight along with the unsaved world, though. It's not the same as receiving a pristine white garment of His righteousness and then casting it OFF and running from it, tempting God as to whether He will come chasing after us or not. (Ask the prodigal son if his father came running after him or Jonah if he enjoyed being in the belly of the fish. Also ask Esau how it feels to have his right of the firstborn given to his brother—we believers have the firstfruits of the Spirit. This is NOT a small thing, but a miraculous blessing of God!)

If we belong to Jesus, then we care how we represent Him to the world by our words, attitudes and actions. We're to shine our lights and bear fruit (of the Spirit). Jesus said that whoever doesn't obey Him does NOT LOVE HIM. So let's be honest with ourselves and with Him. If we REALLY love Him, then we'll care more about the treasure in heaven that will be ours in His glorious kingdom than the worthless garbage called "treasure" in this lost world. Where our treasure is, our heart is, and that treasure is Jesus Himself for those who truly love Him and understand what their freedom cost Him, who truly understand that He is the beautiful, beloved, powerful Son of God, who truly understand what a PRIVILEGE it is to belong to Him, redeemed and purchase by His very own precious blood.

Let's cry our tears of shame and regret over the crumbs of "our" lives we've offered to Him (but we're NOT our own) and repent of it NOW, while there's still time to devote whatever is left of our short lives to pleasing and honoring Him. Let's read the Bible for ourselves and ask Him what He desires of us. Let's be WISE. When He returns for us, we'll be SO glad we did!

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age**, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people **for his own possession who are zealous for good works**. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Titus 2:11-15*

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