

"BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS"

(Romans 3:9-20)

(Chuck Swindoll)

Martin Luther got it right. "The principal point, therefore, of the Law in true Christian divinity is to make men not better but worse; that is to say, it shows them their sin, that, by the knowledge thereof, they may be humbled, terrified, bruised and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek comfort, and so come to that blessed Seed [that is, Christ]."

The Law was never given to save lives; the Law was given to reveal the sinfulness of sin. Like a physician's MRI scan, the Law is the tool God uses to reveal the moral cancer consuming our souls. Fortunately, there's a cure for the disease of sin. We must, however, accept the truth of our diagnosis.

There are preachers today who don't want to focus on the negative side of Christian truth; that is, the terminal disease of sin. They prefer to remain focused only on the positive, which sounds wonderful on the surface. But that's like a doctor who only likes to talk about pleasant things. I can't speak for you, but I don't go to my doctor for smiles and compliments. I want the truth—the plain, ugly, unvarnished truth—about my body. If the doctor finds a tumor, I expect to know about it—right away. And if I have cancer, I want to know that I have cancer. Especially if it's treatable!

If you want to know the truth about your moral health, read the Law. Start with the Ten Commandments. Find one you haven't broken. As you read, don't be fooled into thinking, Well, I've only broken one or two, and not very often. I'm not as immoral as other people. It only takes one violation to make you sick with the disease of sin. God will not tolerate sin—any sin—in His presence, any more than you would tolerate the presence of just one malignant tumor in your body.

Just like a good oncologist, however, the Great Physician doesn't show us our guilt merely to bring shame. He doesn't say, "SHAME ON YOU!" and leave us to die. The Lord offers us a 100 percent effective remedy. And it's free for the asking.

If we glance a few pages ahead in the book of Romans, we find in 5:1, "Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In a letter to Christians in another church, Paul affirmed "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

The only cure for the disease of sin is a relationship with Jesus, who paid the complete penalty for our wrongdoing on our behalf. The gift of freedom from sin has been paid for by the Son of God, and it has been offered to each of us. To receive healing, we must believe the offer is true and then receive the gift.

There is no magic formula, no scripted response you must follow. But some have begun their relationship with God by praying words similar to these:

Dear God,

I know my sin has put a barrier between You and me. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to pay the complete price for my sins as He died in my place. I trust in Jesus alone to forgive my sins, and I accept His gift of eternal life. I ask Jesus to be my Savior and to be the Lord of my life. I thank You for accepting me as I am and for Your commitment to make me the person I long to be.

In Jesus' name, amen.

