

## Living Truth series.

### What is the Gospel? by Fr Julian Green

Relationships, hopes, choices - good and bad, skills, weaknesses, addictions, expectations - yours and others, love, freedom. The message of Jesus Christ is: FREEDOM. Christians may call it other things like 'salvation' or 'redemption' but they mean the same thing.

Most people would say freedom means being able to do absolutely whatever you want to. That's certainly not the type of freedom Jesus brings to us! A lot of people even say that Jesus came to imprison us. They say that telling us not to do things, he just came to try and force us to do good. Jesus does not force us to do anything. He invites us. But he did not free us to do what we want. He came to free us so that we are able to do what is right for us, and to do what will please God. Doing that will make us really free and joyful inside ourselves.

Jesus was certainly a teacher. He came to lead us into TRUTH. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor responsible for condemning Jesus to death, said to Jesus: "What is truth?" A lot of people today ask the same thing. They not only don't look to faith for truth, they deny that God's truth exists. They would say that anybody's personal belief is their personal truth. True believers in Jesus cannot accept that way of thinking. The great thing about Jesus is that the things which are hidden to the human mind - those God-truths - are revealed to us in Jesus.

Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". He is the truth because he does not only come to teach us truth in the things he says, but proves it to be true by what he does. He lived truth. Christians believe Jesus was God made man - God in the flesh. If God himself does not tell the truth, then what hope is there to hear it from anyone else?

The heart of what Jesus came to teach and what he did by dying for us was to show us who God is. God is LOVE. That sums it up. And Jesus shows us what that love is about. It is all about God's MERCY. When Jesus died on the Cross, he became weak, so that he could take away all that makes us feel bad, and make us strong. At the root of all the things that make us feel bad is sin. It may be something you have done which is wrong that makes you feel bad. It may be something someone else has done to you that makes you feel bad. But Jesus' death on the Cross takes away the guilt, and makes you free.

By rising from the dead, Jesus gave us the power and the strength which he had won by dying on the Cross. He made it so that his power could be real and available for us for ever. That is God being merciful, even when we feel bad...even when we are bad. Mercy is about not holding anything against us, even when we're guilty. That is what God's love does.

So if Jesus has done all this for me, how do I receive this truth, this freedom, this mercy, this love? Jesus himself said: "Repent, and believe the Good News!" If we want to live in Jesus' freedom we have to turn away from bad things - the things we know in our hearts are bad - and simply tell him we believe, and place our trust in him. If you are not a baptised Christian, it means you should come to the Church, to a priest, who represents Jesus, to be baptised. If you are, then you should come to the Church, to a priest, to ask for forgiveness of your sins. Jesus will give you healing. He will show you his love and mercy. Believe, trust, and you will find true freedom. This is the Gospel.

Prayer.

Lord Jesus, you have come into the world as the Light of the World; transform my life and the lives of all young people, so that we might give ourselves to You completely, to follow you, to live the Gospel and to work in the Church. I entrust myself to You in the midst of today's culture of death and ask for the courage and generosity to work with You in bringing the Gospel to the world and building the civilisation of love. Renew our hearts to burn with zeal and love for you. Give us the armour of faith and fill us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can embrace Your Gospel. Help us to respond to You as You desire. Amen.

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