



# The Harvester

*Preparing Souls  
To Serve The Lord!*

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## *Don't Miss the Good News!*

Brian R. Kenyon

Even with three covid-19 vaccines available, most major news programs begin their news cast with “the numbers” of how many new covid cases and deaths have been reported since the day before. If covid-19 is not the top story, then some bad news about the current or previous presidential administration is, fueling the political divide that has kept America polarized. Either way, the bad news seems to take precedence! Because of this emphasis on bad news, many people, including Christians, are missing out on the good news! Even during the pandemic, there is good news! The greatest news of all is that Jesus has risen from the dead! Because of that, people are still obeying the Gospel to become Christians; great spiritual growth is taking place among our young people; new Christian families are being started by couples committing to Scriptural marriage; and a host of other significant happenings that are strengthening and expanding the borders of the kingdom. Yes, there is all kinds of good news, but some have allowed the bad news to keep them from realizing it!

### *The Emmaus Road Disciples*

There is a particular example of this missing the good news in the New Testament with the two disciples on the Emmaus road (Lk. 24:13-35). This account happened on the very day Jesus rose from the dead. Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, some women came to the tomb only to find that it was empty (Lk. 24:5-8). On that same day, two disciples, who heard the women’s report but presumably thought it to be “idle tales,” did not

believe it (Lk. 24:11). They left Jerusalem for their home village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles away (Lk. 24:13). As their walk to Emmaus and hasty return to Jerusalem reveal, they at first allowed themselves to miss the good news because of the overwhelmingly bad news. Let us explore two major areas that will help our perspective so we never miss the good news!

### *What Bad News Can Do*

Due to the fact that the world is guided by the “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16) and is swayed by Satan’s influence (1 Jn. 5:19), there will always be bad news (cf. Mt. 24:6). What we do with the bad news makes all the difference. In order to properly put bad news in its place, there are three things we must realize that bad news can do to us, as it did to the two disciples, if we allow it.

**Blur Our Focus.** While the two disciples walked toward Emmaus, they conversed and reasoned with one another about what had happened (Lk. 24:14-15). Obviously, their focus was only on the bad news involving the heartless events of Calvary. From whatever angle they conversed, as Jesus acknowledged, their conversation made them sad (Lk. 24:17). Yet, as they declared later, they heard the testimony of the women who first saw the empty tomb and even the testimony of those who reported first-hand what the women said was true (Lk. 24:22-24). Does this not show their focus on the good news was so blurred they lost a clear view of the good news?

This can also happen to us. With so much bad news, our focus on the good news can be so blurred we completely miss it. Recently, a local church member suggested that the announcements should be made at the end of services because if bad news is announced, it might ruin worship for some. While announcements may be better off after worship, is there ever a good time to receive bad news? We must keep so entrenched in the good news of the Gospel that no amount of bad news, following the initial shock, should blur our focus on what Jesus did for us on the cross and even now at God’s right hand (cf. Rom. 8:34; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

**Blind Our Reality.** When Jesus joined the two disciples on the Emmaus road, “their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him” (Lk. 24:16). Although some commentators take the disciples’ eyes being “restrained [holden, KJV; prevented, NAS]” (Lk. 24:16) as a miraculous intervention that blinded them from seeing Jesus (i.e., the opposite of miraculous “illumination”), neither the language nor the context requires such. Rather, their being overwhelmed by the bad news is what blinded them from recognizing Jesus. It seems they were so distraught their eyes were focused on their steps toward Emmaus. Added to that, their mind obviously had no reason to think Jesus

would be there on that road. He was bitterly crucified and hastily placed in a tomb. Even when they began to talk with Jesus, Cleopas (the only disciple named) first asked, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and ... not known the things which happened there in these days?” (Lk. 24:18 cf. Acts 26:26).

With the bad news blinding them, these two disciples could not see the significance of Christ’s resurrection. The resurrection completely vindicated Jesus’ character and teaching. It also showed the disciples that their sacrifice in following Him was not in vain. They were true disciples of the true King (cf. Jn. 18:36-37). The reality of the resurrection transformed the fleshly brothers of Jesus from being non-believers (Jn. 7:5) to later calling themselves “a bondservant ... of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas. 1:1; Jude 1). The resurrection is what motivates all true disciples of Christ to “be faithful unto death” (Rev. 2:10, KJV).

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As it did those two disciples, bad news can blind us to the reality, “He ... is risen!,” and to all this entails (Lk. 24:6). When we allow bad news to dominate our thoughts, we become blinded to the fact we have been bought with the blood of the Lamb (1 Pet. 1:18-21) and are thus members of His blood-bought church (Acts 20:28), wherein all spiritual blessing are found (Eph. 1:3)! Bad news can blind us to the win/win, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21), situation Christians always have (cf. Rom. 8:28). Even in the mist of bad news, we must keep in sight “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2)!

**Break Our Spirit.** Even though these two disciples heard reliable testimony that Jesus was risen from the dead (Lk. 24:22-24), they were still “sad” as they conversed with one another (Lk. 24:17). After they summarized the traits of Jesus (to them, a stranger) and what happened to Him in Jerusalem, they said, “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel” (Lk. 24:21). While the word “hope” is used elsewhere for trust and certain expectation (Rom. 8:24-25), its use here shows great disappointment and broken-heartedness. They were ready to give up and go back to regular life (cf. Jn. 21:3).

Bad news can also break our spirit, which can lead to other problems (cf. Pr. 17:22). How many Christians became so distraught and disconnected from Christ and the fellowship of His people by the bad news they have heard since March 2020? How many have given up living the Christian life? Local churches canceling services for “covid concerns” can certainly contribute to such, but a broken spirit in this case is ultimately because Christians have allowed the bad news to blur their focus on Jesus and to blind their reality to His resurrection and the great blessings it entails.

## ***Keeping the Good News Good***

Bad news will always be present in this world. People who emphasize bad news will always have a strong, influential voice. We cannot avoid bad news. However, there are some things we can do to handle the bad news without our focus on Jesus being blurred, our reality being blinded, and our spirits being broken.

**Study the Scripture.** Even before the Calvary events actually happened, Scripture taught such would (cf. Isa. 53:1-12). When Jesus responded to the disciples, He said they were “slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken” (Lk. 24:25). Then, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk. 24:27). These two disciples did not need miraculous confirmation, which was not featured in this Emmaus road incident. What these disciples needed was a reminder of what Scripture already taught. When they finally realized their guest was Jesus, they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while ... He opened the Scriptures to us” (Lk. 24:32).

Scripture teaches us everything we need to know about Jesus and living for Him (Jn. 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Though Scripture accurately records the bad news of sin, it is full of good news, sustainable even when surrounded with bad news! As disciples of Christ, we must constantly study the Scripture (2 Tim. 2:15). No matter how long we have been Christians, our faith can never outrun our knowledge of God’s word (Rom. 10:17). When bad news bombards us, knowing Scripture from our own study will keep us confident in the good news!

**Know the Savior.** These two disciples seemed to have forgotten not only the Scriptures but even what Jesus Himself said about His own suffering (Lk. 24:6-7). They obviously thought His cruel death was the end of their hope (Lk. 24:21). However, their view of Jesus was limited. Even though they were told beforehand, Jesus’ excruciating suffering did not register as part of their view of the Savior. Jesus had to remind them, “Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Lk. 24:26). As Jesus further taught them from “Moses and all the Prophets,” He appealed to “all the Scriptures” (Lk. 24:27). It was after this and His breaking bread in their house that “their eyes were opened and they knew Him” (Lk. 24:31-32).

To really know the Savior, we also must look to “all” Scripture, not just our favorite parts that already agree with how we envision Jesus. Part of who Jesus was in the flesh involved a suffering, despised, criminally treated human being, whom the crowds would rather see die on the cross than a known “murderer” (Mk. 15:7). There is more to Jesus than merely a meek and gentle man who sought to save the lost. Bad news confirmed the evil things happened to

# Florida School of Preaching



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Him. Knowing the Savior also entails knowing how He wants us to live. We must not be like those fair weather disciples, who, upon hearing the demanding life Jesus required (Jn. 6:53-58), “went back and walked with Him no more” (Jn. 6:66).

### ***Fellowship the Saints***

Throughout the account of these two, Emmaus road disciples, their circle of companionship is featured. In detailing the events to the stranger walking with them, they mentioned “certain women of our company” (Lk. 24:22) and “certain of those who were with us” (Lk. 24:24). Then, immediately after realizing their house guest was Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem and “found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together” (Lk. 24:33). The disciples naturally banded together and sought each other, especially following the chaotic events in Jerusalem, when mutual support and testimony was greatly needed!

Our fellowshiping with the saints is equally important in this pandemic of bad news. Fortunately for some, the providence of God has worked out their not missing an in person worship service, thus being

able to enjoy fellowship with fellow Christians each Lord’s day. However, for far too many, cancelled or online services have taken their toll. In person fellowship can never be replaced by cancelled or online arrangements! With the rare exception of small, pessimistic congregations, there is usually at least one faithful, enthusiastic Christian whose fellowship can deflate any bad news and turn it into optimism and hope in the resurrected Lord! We have been called to fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9), and one great blessing from that is to receive mutual encouragement from fellow saints!

### ***Conclusion***

Instead of missing the good news because of being overwhelmed with bad news, let us work on letting the good news meet, defeat, and one-up the bad news! May we forever remember the words of the angels as the women wondered about the empty tomb, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!” (Lk. 24:5-6). Let us not forget, even when our world seems to be collapsing all around, the blessings we have in Christ. No amount of bad news can take those away (cf. Rom. 8:29-39)!