

The Power of Good News

A Godly Response to a Pandemic – Part 13

Series Overview

Proverbs 27:1 says, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” The COVID-19 outbreak certainly shows that this is true. When 2020 began, we had no idea we would face this new kind of challenge. Though it caught us by surprise, we know God was not surprised. He knew this would happen and will guide us through this challenging time.

This study guide is the second in a new Faith Baptist Bible study series called “A Godly Response to a Pandemic.” Each lesson will provide biblical teaching that enables us to think, feel, and live in a Christlike way throughout this pandemic experience.

Together, we’ll tackle topics like fear, anxiety, and loneliness. We’ll also examine our behavior as a church. Most importantly, we’ll learn about our loving, sovereign God who is all-knowing, almighty, always present, and trustworthy in every way.

Series Guidelines

This series will continue throughout our period of “social isolation” in New York City. To participate, please take the following approach.

1. A new study guide will be provided each Saturday at Shepherd Thoughts. You can follow the guide online or download and print it as a PDF.
2. Use each guide for an in-home Bible study from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Sunday.
3. If you live with a Christian family, you can study together. If not, try studying together with another believer from Faith by phone or internet using a service like Facebook Video Chat, Google Hangouts, Skype, or Zoom.
4. For each study: (1) begin with prayer, (2) read the Scripture passage, (3) work through the study guide, then (4) end with prayer.
5. Then tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson. Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.
6. You can also leave comments on the blogsite at the end of the study guide page and Pastor Overmiller will respond by sometime Sunday.
7. As a bonus, memorize a verse or more from the passage and think about it throughout the week ahead.

Lesson Introduction

No matter how long you've lived in this world, you've probably noticed that there's plenty of bad news to go around. Now, we shouldn't be ostriches who bury our heads in the sand when a whiff of bad news comes our way, pretending as though it doesn't exist. We need to be knowledgeable and we need to be aware.

Yet have you also noticed that it's the bad news that always seems to get the attention, the spotlight, and the press. Seriously. When's the last time you saw some good news plastered on the frontpage of the newspaper, headlining the evening news, or trending on Twitter? That's a rare occasion, isn't it – but why?

This problem reflects the fallenness of our hearts. In our sinfulness, we find ourselves attracted to the bad things in life and this brings even more bad effects in our lives. If you want bad news, it's always there. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we of all people should know quite well that there is goodness in the world all around us, vestiges and glimmers of the goodness of God. We even know the best news of all, which is called the gospel!

In this lesson, we're going to take a close look at the negative effects of taking bad news to our heart and the importance of both receiving and spreading good news instead. "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad." We need some good news right now, don't we? But we're not going to find it in the headlines. So, what can we do about that?

Proverbs 15:25

Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,

But a good word makes it glad.

Study Guide

Consider the Background

This statement appears in the Old Testament book of Proverbs, which provides an extensive collection of insights for a wide variety of situations. They teach us how to live in a skillful, successful, and satisfying way.

Most importantly, they teach you how to make choices in light of what you know about God, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov 1:7). Since God is who he says he is, does what he says he does, and rules over every aspect of our lives, we should give him the respect he deserves by making choices with him in mind.

Examine the Scripture

- How does the first line (A-line) of this proverb relate to the second line (B-line)? (Do they say something similar or different, or do they relate to each other in another way?)
- The word *anxiety* describes a mixture of fear, restlessness, and worry.
- The word *broken* means to be “crushed, defeated, beaten down.”
- The word *cause depression* is an interesting word that in its most basic sense describes a person who bows down physically due to a great weight on them or in submission to another party who is dominating or ruling over them.
- What kind of “bowing down” does this proverb portray; where does the “bowing down” occur? (Hint: it doesn’t portray bowing down physically.)
- Why does the “bowing down” occur?

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- What have been some causes for fear, restlessness, or worry in your heart this past week?
- How can you know whether you have allowed these factors to depress, discourage, or push you down in a spiritual, internal way?
- What was the cause, source, or reason for your “heavy heart” and why have the thoughts, news, or information influenced you so significantly?

Examine the Scripture

- The word *word* is broader than it may first appear because it refers to more than just “one word.” It can refer to a range of “things that are said,” like comments, conversations, news, statements, a talk, or a speech.
- The word *good* narrows the kind of “word” in focus here, it’s “good news.” One commentary describes it as “encouragement, kindness, and insight – saying that which the person needs to gain the proper perspective and renew hope and confidence.”¹ Another commentary simply says that it “has the sense of [being] reassuring, encouraging, or helpful.”²
- The word *make glad* describes “cheering up,” “bringing joy,” or “lifting someone’s spirits.”

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- We’ve already considered where our “bad news” comes from, the news that weighs us down. So, where can we get our good news from?
- What is the best source for good news?

¹ Allen P. Ross, “Proverbs,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 973.

² William David Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Proverbs*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 280.

- What should we expect to happen to our spirit when we feed ourselves with a heavy dosage of bad news but a low dosage of good news?

Examine the Scripture

- So far, we've examined this proverb from the perspective of being the person who is either being depressed or being cheered up. Let's step away from this viewpoint and look at the proverb from another perspective. What might that perspective be?

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- As believers, we ourselves need to be a *source* of good news, kind words, uplifting perspectives, and encouraging information. As you think back over the past week, who have you encouraged with good words?
- What kind of "good words" did you share? Word of encouragement, a Bible verse, a positive story buried in social media, a cheerful attitude, something else?
- What is the most important "good news" that we can share? (Hint: the word *gospel* means "good news.")
- How have you shared this good news with another person last week, whether a believer or nonbeliever?
- How can you be a source of good news in the week ahead?

Conclusion

As believers, people who have believed the "good news" of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, we should not allow bad news to get us down, nor should we be the "bearers of bad news" to others. Instead, we should encourage our own hearts and the hearts of other people with the good news of Christ (first and foremost) and whatever other good news we may also pass along. Our fallen, broken world does a terrible job of providing us with good news, but let's not allow ourselves to be "pressed into that mold." Let's allow our minds to be renewed and transformed with all the good news we can and let's spread good news to others (cf. Rom 12:1-2).

Share Your Feedback

Now that you've finished this study, don't forget to tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson! Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.