

Let Us Live the Good News!



SABBATH—AUGUST 31

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 3:16, 17; Matthew 9:36; Ephesians 2:8–10; Malachi 2:10; Revelation 14:6, 7.

MEMORY VERSE: “You have been saved by grace [God’s loving favor] because you believed. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. You are not saved by the things you have done, so there is nothing to boast [brag] about. God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would [will] spend our lives doing the good things he had already planned for us to do” (Ephesians 2:8–10, ERV).

WE MUST BE CAREFUL when we talk about God’s commands. We must not think that somehow we can do anything to save ourselves. We must not think we can earn God’s favor either. Our good works can never save us. The Bible tells us again and again that we are saved by God’s loving favor. Only our faith in Jesus’ death for us on the cross saves us. Can we hope to save ourselves by adding our good works to Jesus’ death? Not at all! Ellen G. White writes, “Let us say you made a list of everything good, holy, and lovely about humans. Then you showed that list to God’s angels. You told the angels that these things had a part in saving humans. What will the angels say about that? The angels will say your words are not loyal to God. They will turn away from them.”—*Faith and Works*, page 24, adapted.

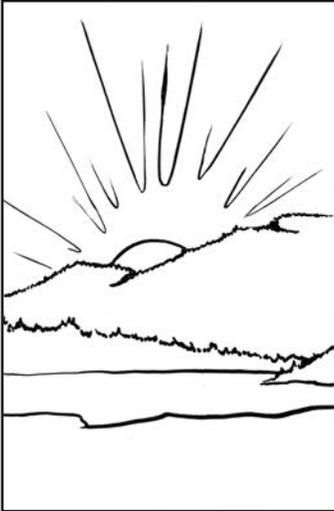
In the same way, our helping the poor does not save us. But when we help the poor, we learn more about God’s love for us. We also understand more clearly what God did to save us. We understand better His love for us too.



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love for us.**

**“ ‘GOD SO [VERY MUCH] LOVED THE WORLD [ALL PEOPLE WHO EVER LIVED ON THE EARTH]’ ”
(John 3:16, NlrV)**

John 3:16, says, “ ‘God so [very much] loved the world [all people who ever lived on the earth] that he gave his one and only Son [Jesus]. Anyone who believes in him [Jesus] will not die but will have eternal [everlasting] life’ ” (NlrV). The word for “world” is written as “kosmos” in Greek. “Kosmos” means “this planet with all the life on it that God made.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 5, page 929, adapted. John 3:16 is about God’s plan to save humans. But this plan also includes the earth too. God will make it new again.



“ ‘Your Father causes the sun to rise on good people and on bad people’ ” (Matthew 5:45, ICB).

Read Romans 8:20–23. What do these verses teach us about God’s big plan to save humans?

God’s plan to save us is more than forgiveness for our sins. He makes us new. He saves us to serve Him. He invites us to become part of His family. As part of His family, we show other people God’s love by the good works we do.

Read John 3:16, 17. How does verse 17 help us understand verse 16?

We know that God loves other people just as much as He loves us. God loves the people we love. That makes us happy. God also loves the people we help. But He also loves the people who hurt us. He loves the ones who make us afraid. God loves all people, everywhere. He even loves the people we may not like very much.

The Bible says that nature shows us that God is good: “ ‘Your Father causes the sun to rise on good people and on bad people. Your Father sends rain to those [people] who do good and to those [people] who do wrong’ ” (Matthew 5:45, ICB). Life is a gift from God. Some people may choose to turn away from God. They may choose not to love Him. But God loves everyone, even the ones who do not love Him back.

God loves every person. He made everyone. How does this truth change the way you think and feel about other people?

LOVE FOR GOD AND TURNING AWAY FROM SIN (Matthew 9:36)

We are sinners. Our planet is filled with sin. Life on this earth is not what God made it to be. Humans were made to look the same as God. He made us to be the same as He is in many ways. And we can see that even now. But we live on a planet that is hurt by sin. This sin is part of us and our lives. This same sin causes so much pain and hurt on this earth.

No wonder we feel hurt and sad at all the awful things that happen. It is right for us to feel this way. Look at the sad psalms in the Bible. Look at the writing of Jeremiah. Look at the tears Jesus cried. Look at His love. You will see that Jesus and these other people felt sorrow when they saw the evil done on this earth. What hurt them the most? When they saw other people hurt by evil.

Read about Jesus in Matthew 9:36; Matthew 14:14; Luke 19:41, 42; and John 11:35. Jesus felt the pain of other people very deeply. He cared about them. What caused Jesus to feel deep love for other people? How can we have a heart that is full of the same love for other people too?

We need to remember something about sin and evil. Sin and evil are not just done by bad people. Our sin hurts people too. “Suppose [what if] we claim [tell other people] we are without [do not] sin. Then we are fooling ourselves. The truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8, NIRV). Bible writers taught that sin was awful. Yes, they believe sin was awful because it broke God’s law. But more than that, sin breaks God’s heart. It breaks our connection with God. Our sin hurts other people. That is why sin is so evil.

What is the reason for the evil you see in life? Why are people poor? Why are leaders not fair? The answer to these questions is sin. That is why people are selfish, greedy, mean, and full of hate. That is why they do not care about other people. What can we do to stop this evil? We can confess our sin to God. We can let God’s love control our hearts. “But if we confess our sins, God will forgive us. We can trust God to do this. He always does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done” (1 John 1:9, ERV).

In what ways has sin hurt you? How has your own sin hurt other people? What is the only way to solve this problem?



Jesus felt sad at all the evil done on this earth.

GOD'S LOVING-FAVOR AND GOOD WORKS (Ephesians 2:8–10)

In your own words, explain what Ephesians 2:8–10 is saying. What do these verses show us about the connection between God's loving-favor and good works?

The Bible says God made us to worship Him. He also made us to serve other people. It is hard to make a picture in your mind about our living on an earth with no sin, right? We can only wonder about that.

For now, we know we live in a world filled with sin. At the same time, Jesus' death on the cross makes healing and forgiveness possible. Yes, sin has hurt life on this earth. But with God's help, we can work with Him to heal the hurt we see in the lives of other people (read Ephesians 2:10). "God gives to us so that we can help other people. People everywhere need help. God asks us to gladly help people in need."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry [work we do for God] of Healing*, page 103, adapted.

Let us be clear again. God asks us to take care of the poor. He asks us to feed the hungry. We do not do these good works to earn God's favor. We cannot "buy" God's love with the good works we do. Our good works will not make Him save us. He saves us because of Jesus. In Jesus, we have everything we will ever need to be saved. We see that we are sinners. We see that we are hurt by sin. But God loves us anyway. He saves us. Yes, we will continue to fight against sin. We must fight against being greedy and selfish. But God offers us a new life. His love will change our lives.

What do we see when we look at the Cross? We see Jesus' perfect gift for our sins. We can add nothing to what Jesus offers us. So, how should we answer God's offer to save us? Does that mean we should do nothing? Not at all! True, we cannot save ourselves. But we must accept what God does to save us. What is the best way to do that? By our showing love to other people.

Read 1 John 3:16, 17. How do these verses show us what our answer to the Cross should be?



What do we see when we look at the Cross? We see Jesus' perfect gift for our sins.

HOW ARE HUMANS ALL THE SAME? (Malachi 2:10)

Jesus taught that we should help everyone in need. He did not turn away from anyone who came to Him. Many people came to Jesus that nobody liked. Women who were sinners came to Jesus. So did tax collectors. And people who were very sick. No one wanted to touch them. Roman soldiers came to Jesus too. Religious leaders and children also came to Jesus. What did Jesus do? He welcomed them all. The New Testament church learned that Jesus wanted believers to welcome people too. Jesus wanted His church to welcome other people to accept His gift of everlasting life.

The first Christians slowly started to learn that the Good News was for everyone. Jesus' work on earth, His life, and His death showed His followers something important. He wanted them to do good works. He wanted them to help other people. At first, Jesus' followers had trouble understanding what Jesus wanted them to do. Just look at Peter (Acts 10:9–20). The New Testament church had a hard time understanding this truth too (read Acts 15). But soon they understood that Jesus wanted them to share His love and Good News with everyone.

What do each of the verses below teach us about our connection to other people? How are we all the same? How should the ideas in these verses change our thoughts and feelings about other people?

Malachi 2:10 _____

Acts 17:26 _____

Romans 3:23 _____

Galatians 3:28 _____

Galatians 3:28 teaches us the same lesson that Jesus taught in the picture story about the good Samaritan. What is its message for us? Jesus does not want us to waste our time arguing about who we should help. He just wants us to go help people. Be ready to be helped by other people too. You may not expect help from them when you go to help them out. But our helping each other is all part of God's big plan to save humans. God's love and His Good News ties everyone together. His love makes us one with other people.



Women who were sinners came to Jesus. So did tax collectors and Roman soldiers. Jesus welcomed them all.

THE GOOD NEWS THAT CONTINUES FOREVER (Revelation 14:6, 7)

Jesus commands His followers to share the Good News with “the people living on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and race of people” (Revelation 14:6, ERV). The book of Revelation tells us about what will happen when God’s people will share this message at the end of time.

Read the First Angel’s Message in Revelation 14:6, 7. What message about the Good News do we find in verse 7? How is this message the same as John 3:16?

Revelation 14:7 talks about three important topics that God cares about:

God Will Judge the Dead and the Living. During every age in history, God’s people cried out to God to judge the evil people who hurt them. The Bible shows us that God hears the cries of suffering people. What do the Psalms often tell us? God’s work as Judge is good news for hurting people.

Worship God. Old Testament writers often show us a connection between worship and good works. Many people who say they are God’s followers do evil things. In Isaiah 58, God tells us about the worship He accepts. He loves to see His followers worship Him by doing kind acts and taking care of the poor and the needy (read Isaiah 58:6, 7).

God Is the One Who Made Us. God made man as a copy of Himself. So, we are all one family. God loves us all the same. That is why we must be fair and kind to each other. We all have worth in God’s eyes. No one should use anyone to get rich. We should be fair to everyone. We should not be greedy. We should not take what does not belong to us. God’s people will stand for what is right in the end time. They will be changed by the end-time announcement of the Good News in Revelation 14:6, 7. The First Angel’s Message asks us to accept God’s plan to save us and make us new. God’s end-time people will keep His commandments. They will have the faith of Jesus, even when everyone on earth worships a false god and religion.

What are some ways we can help people in need? At the same time, in what ways can we share with people the hope and the warning found in the Three Angels’ Messages?



The 1st Angel’s Message asks us to accept God’s plan to save us and make us new.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘God With Us,’ ” pages 19–26, in *The Desire of Ages*; “Saved to Serve,” pages 95–107, in *The Ministry of Healing*.

“God announces that the whole earth is His grape garden. Satan says that he is in control of God’s grape garden. But the grape garden belongs to God. God made it. God sent His Son to die for it and save it. Jesus’ death was for everyone. ‘God so [very much] loved the world [all humans] that he gave his one and only Son.’ John 3:16 [NirV]. That one gift makes every other gift God gives us possible. Every day God gives us many blessings. Every drop of rain is a blessing from God. So is every ray of sunlight. Every leaf, flower, and fruit shows us God’s deep love for us. These gifts show us that God is very patient with us, too, even when we are not thankful for everything He gives us.”
—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 301, 302.

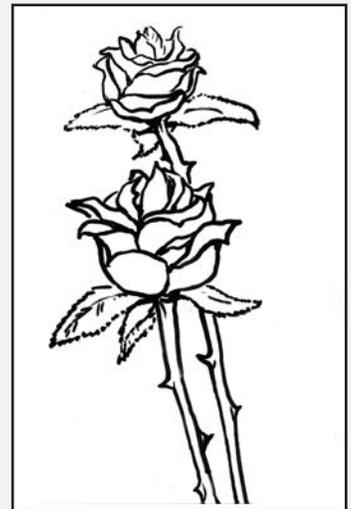
“ ‘Now, in Christ [Jesus], it doesn’t [does not] matter [not important] if you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or free, male or female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus’ ” (Galatians 3:28 [ERV]; Ephesians 2:13).

“If someone cries for help, you should help them, even if this person is not your religion. . . .

“All around us are poor people. They are having a hard time. They need someone to be kind to them and help them. There are widows who need pity and help. There are orphans. Jesus has asked His followers to adopt these children. But too many times we do not help the poor, the widows, or the orphans. These people may look rough and not very attractive. But they belong to God. God bought them with a price. So, they are as precious in God’s eyes as we are. These poor people are members of God’s family. As Christians, we must take care of them.”—Pages 386, 387, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that our good works save us. What can we do to stop thinking this way?
- ② How does your church make everyone feel that they are all one in Jesus? What can your church do to help other people feel more included?



“Every leaf, flower, and fruit shows us God’s deep love for us.”