



**January 7, 2007**

Preaching: Rev. Eunbae Doh

Matthew 2:1-12

## “Good news or bad news”

We are getting a lot of news everyday from TV, newspaper, and the Internet. Some of it is good news. Some of it is bad news. When we say good news or bad news, our judgment is entirely subjective and therefore quite incorrect, even unfair. It is really difficult to find something great to satisfy everybody. The football game on last Sunday was bad news for the Bears, but it was good news for Packers fans

Yes it's true! Something good for me, can be something bad for you. Here is my question? If that is true how can we say that the gospel of Christ is good news for every human? I want to talk about how we can understand the gospel as good news for every human.

Two thousand years ago, three wise men from the east came to the land of Jerusalem. They were following to a big shining star which indicated the birth of a great hero. They were convinced that they brought some great news for the people of Israel. Therefore they were asking delightfully "where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? Hey!! Congratulations!! where is the baby, the super hero!!

But that was not good news. That was terrible news for King Herod because that was a menace to his kingship and political power over the Jews. What about the people of Israel? Was that good news? Well... may be not. That might be bad news because that means a serious challenge which threatens the peace and political, economical stability of their society. It is a historical truth that most people don't care whoever the King is. They just want daily bread rather than any ideology.

Therefore we can conclude that the news the three wise men brought was not good news for the people of Judea, even though we are calling it GOSPEL which means good news. Isn't it surprising that the gospel was not good news for them?

How can we say that the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for every human, Jews, Gentile, Christian and Muslim? I believe that it was good news because that was a story of salvation, because that was a story of God's love to us. Jesus came to the earth to save every human because God loves us.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

This is a gospel. The story of Jesus can be good news for everybody because he came to earth and died for us, not just for me but for all.

Second, this was news which was not expected, a one way decision.

God sent his only son without any agreement or any permission from us. Whatever we do, whatever we say, accept or not, ready or not, God sent his son to us. It seems very rude to do something without getting any agreement from others in our culture. One of the big differences between Korean culture and American culture is the system of appointments. It seems to me that American love to make an appointment for everything. When they go to the hospital, a restaurant or meet someone, they do. But Korean don't. They just go anytime, anywhere.

Let me give an example. If Jesus is coming to us this afternoon, to you is that a good news or bad news? Can you answer that? Surely, it may not be good news. Yes, Jesus is welcome!! But not NOW!! Would you come later? I love you. But I am not ready yet. We have so many reasons we can agree with that. We need to do many things before he comes.

I really wonder in this society where everything should be reserved and arranged early, how can we understand the fact that God sent his son without any appointment or agreement?

It is true that God gave his son to us without our agreement. That was a one way decision. Why did God send his son like that? God chose that way, because human salvation is a free gift from God not from us, because we cannot be saved ourselves in our way, in our time, because humans will be trying to avoid God. Escaping from God, that was the only thing we have done.

A few months ago, I had a short conversation with my daughter. We were sitting at the dinner table. She said, "Daddy, today at school, a friend of mine told me something" "What did he say? She said, "I was talking about God with my friends. Suddenly, a boy sitting beside us said "God is a jerk!! What do I do Daddy? I took a breath and said, "Do you hate him?" She said, "No". "OK, when you meet him next time and when he say that again, why don't you say something like this? Whatever you say, whoever you are God loves you."

Yes, it's true. God sent his son in his time, in his way because he loved us and wanted to save us. Whatever we do, whoever you are, it doesn't matter.

Third, to the people who live in Christ everything is good news. There is no bad news in Christ because we trust God, because we know that God has a plan for us, God never forsakes us. It is the truth the Bible tells us.

It was bad news for Abraham to give God his only son. But It was revealed that it was good news when he trusted God. Job had terrible news that he lost his children and everything he possessed. But that was a new beginning of a great blessing when he was not disappointed with God.

This is also the same truth for us. We are experiencing much bad news in our life, disease, unpredictable accident, financial difficulty, losing family. But there is no bad news when we trust God. Even when we are in such a terrible situation, everything can be good news in God.

I'd like to tell you a story of my friend who is teaching music at a University in Ohio. He is a faculty member, conductor of the orchestra, and an internationally well known violinist. He is a handicapped person who sits in a wheelchair. He got infantile paralysis when he was a little boy. His family was in poverty. So, his mother sent him to an orphanage hoping for them to take care of him. So he was raised there. He couldn't go to school. One day he found something he can do without his legs. It was a violin. He practiced a lot, day and night.

It is not possible to tell you the whole story, how he became a professional violinist. Many people just can say, hmm, he is lucky! Well, it's just a miracle. Do you agree with that?

I still remember his saying, "Whenever I am faced with a difficult situation, I found myself expecting some great blessing from God. As far as I know, a suffering is not a suffering but a great blessing.

That was the secret that makes him live a great successful life! In Christ, we don't have any reason to make us upset. We believe in God who changes any bad news into good news. We trust God who helps us to see new hope beyond despair.

I want to finish this sermon with introducing one of my favorite gospel song based on Philippians 1:21.

Christ in me is to live,  
 To die is to gain.  
 He's my king, He's my song.  
 He's my life. He's my joy.  
 He's my strength. He's my sword.  
 He's my peace. He's my Lord.  
 Christ in me is to live, to die is to gain.

## Christ in me is to live

C G/B Am Am/G F G C G

Christ in me is to live to die -- is to gain --

C G/B Am Am/G F G C *Fine* C<sup>7</sup>

Christ in me is to live to die -- is to gain -- He's my

Fmaj<sup>7</sup> G/F Em<sup>7</sup> Am<sup>7</sup> Dm<sup>7</sup> F/G Cmaj<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

king He's my song He's my life He's my joy He's my

Fmaj<sup>7</sup> G/F Em<sup>7</sup> Am<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup> F/A C/G G D.C

strength He's my sword He's my peace \_ He's my Lord -- \_