

GREAT NEWS!

*Keeping the Main Thing
the Main Thing...*

JESUS



Christian Men's
Fellowship

Altoona, PA

www.altoonaleighouse.org

GREAT NEWS!

We have some great good and wonderful news for you! God loves you and He wants you have a close, real and very personal relationship with Him. We are not talking about religion, or ritual or tradition. We are telling you that The God – the one who created Heaven and Earth and You - this God wants you to know Him the way He knows you. He wants to share with you His wonderful plan for your life.

*For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. **Jeremiah 29:11-13****

He gave us His word – The Bible - to show us how to have this kind of personal relationship. He wants to be found by you!

“Seek the LORD while you can find him. Call on him now while He is near.”

Isaiah 55:6

God gave us His Son, Jesus, to make it possible to have a relationship with Him. So we can know Him and know Him for Eternity.

*And this is the way to have eternal life - to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. **John 17:3***

- **Do you want to seek God?**
- **Do you want get to know the God who knows and loves you?**
- **Are you ready to face the things that stand between you and God?**

Turn the Page

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources He will give you mighty inner strength through His Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love.

And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

Ephesians 3:16-19^{NLT}

* Out of a desire to keep this important message simple and clear all Bible quotations are taken from the New Living Translation.

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Our Problem is Sin

*Listen! The LORD is not too weak to save you, and he is not becoming deaf. He can hear you when you call. But there is a problem - your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, He has turned away and will not listen anymore. **Isaiah 59: 1-2***

*As the Scriptures say, "No one is good - not even one. No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God. All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, not even one." **Romans 3:10-12***

*"For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard." **Romans 3:23***

Everyone has sin in their life. Sin is everything we do and think that is against God. When we actively choose to do things that we know are wrong - that is sin. When we are passive and indifferent to God - that is Sin. When we sin we are choosing to do things apart from God. We have our backs turned away from God. And since God is Holy and Righteous "He has turned away" - He will not look upon sin.

So why is this Great News? Because God loves us so much that he doesn't want us to stay separated from Him. He wants us to seek and to find Him. So He has made a way to deal with our sin so that nothing keeps us from knowing Him.

- **Are you ready to find God's Solution for Sin?**

Turn the Page

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God.

Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead. And instead of worshipping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people, or birds and animals and snakes. So God let them go ahead and do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they worshiped the things God made but not the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. Amen.

Romans 1:18-25 NLT

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God's Solution is Jesus

*But now God has shown us a different way of being right in His sight - not by obeying the law but by the way promised in the Scriptures long ago. We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us. **Romans 3:21-25***

I can't say it any better than the Bible passage above. God sent Jesus to die on the cross to take away our sin. By trusting in what Jesus did we are made right with God - we are able to find God! The barrier between us and God, caused by sin, has been completely removed by Jesus!

But it is not enough to know these things...God wants us to respond to Him and what He has done for us.

Turn the page if you are ready to learn about "Our Response" to God

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross.

Colossians 2:13-14 NLT

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms - all because we are one with Christ Jesus. And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:4-7 NLT

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Our Response: Turn and Accpet Jesus

“But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had declared about the Messiah beforehand - that he must suffer all these things. Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins. Then wonderful times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will send Jesus your Messiah to you again.” **Acts 3:18-20**

We must choose to turn away from our sin and our own way of doing things and turn to face Jesus. You can not have a relationship with someone if you always have your back turned to them. So we must turn away from sin and...

“But although the world was made through him, the world didn’t recognize him when he came. Even in his own land and among his own people, he was not accepted. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan - this rebirth comes from God.” **John 1:10-13**

We must choose to accept Jesus. It is like receiving a free gift. When someone offers you a gift you can not enjoy the gift until you take it and open it for yourself. Accepting Jesus also has another, more personal, meaning. You must accept Him into your life just like someone accepts a visitor into their home. This is what Jesus was talking about in the book of Revelation when he was talking to churches that had forgotten about Jesus:

“Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends.

Revelation 3:20

We hope and pray that you are ready to turn and receive Jesus into your life. Or that you have already made this decision and are learning what it means to have a relationship with God through Jesus.

However, to be true to the teachings of the Bible we must issue the following warning. Because you need to know what happens to those who do not choose to turn and accept Jesus.

Turn the page if you are ready to go on to “The Warning”.

After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to speak with Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you.”

Jesus replied, “I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God.” “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus replied, “The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. So don’t be surprised at my statement that you£ must be born again. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

John 3:1-8 & 16-17 NLT

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A Warning

God has given to us a free will that allows us to choose. We can choose to turn away from sin and accept Jesus into our lives so that we can have a real relationship with God. Or we can choose to live our lives apart from God. We can choose not to have a relationship with God. But we must be careful. For if we live apart from God in life, when we die, we will live apart from God for Eternity.

“He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power” **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**

We must also warn you that you can not earn God’s favor through religious activity and good works. You must have a relationship with God through Jesus.

“Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as ‘Lord,’ but they still won’t enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven. On judgment day many will tell me, ‘Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Go away; the things you did were unauthorized’”

Matthew 7:21-23

God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

- You don’t want to live apart from God - do you?
- You want to know God and have a relationship with Him.

Turn the page

And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God’s throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done. The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the grave gave up the dead in them. They were all judged according to their deeds. And death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death - the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11-15 NLT

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My Choice

Consider this great promise from God:

And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life.

1 John 5: 11-12

You can know that you have eternal life and a relationship with God. Just ask Him for it! He will do what He has promised to do. The following is a sample of a prayer that expresses these things back to God. If you really want to choose to have a relationship with God then you can - right now - through talking to God!

Dear God,

I want to know You. I want to have a relationship with You. I want to know that You are real. I choose to turn away from my sin and the way that I have been doing things. I choose to turn to see Jesus. I trust that Jesus died on the cross to take away my sin. Jesus rose from the dead to show that He has power over sin and death.

I now ask Him to come into my life so that I can know You, for You and Jesus are one. Thank you for doing all of this for me!

In the name of Jesus, because He is the one who made this all possible - Amen

Wow that was a big step!

I bet you are asking yourself, "Self, what do I do now?"

Turn the page

"Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. You parents-if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

Matthew 7:7-11 NLT

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What Now?

This is a great exciting and dangerous time! It is exciting because you are embarking on a great adventure in your relationship with God! It is dangerous because you will be tempted to do things as you have always done them. You might fall back into old habits and life patterns. To go forward you need to be committed to **GROWTH** in your relationship with God.

G Go to God and talk to Him. It's called prayer. Tell Him everything!

R Read the Bible. This is how God talks back to you. This is how He shares Himself with you. (Try the Gospel of John)

O Obey God and His commands for you. God wants to bless you. We experience the truth of God when we follow and obey Him.

W Witness - Share with others what God is doing in your life. Tell them what He has done for you!

T Together we grow better. You need to find other who follow Jesus. Get connected to other believers in a local church.

H Hope, be excited, look forward to what God is going to do in and through you.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned for greater fruitfulness by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:1-5 NLT

G - John 15:7 But if you stay joined to me and my words remain in you, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted!

R - Acts 17:11 And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to check up on Paul and Silas, to see if they were really teaching the truth.

O - John 14:21 Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.

W - 1 Peter 3:15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you

T - Hebrews 10:24-25 Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. 25And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

H - Romans 5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.