



There is all kind of good news — getting a raise, winning the lottery, finding a job — but here the good news is a lot bigger and a lot better. The word "gospel" that we looked at a few days ago means "good news." Verse 31 reminds us that God is for us, and then makes it clear how much God is for us, "He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all — how will he not also with him freely give us all things?" Now this is good news.

We know that Jesus was a real person who died on a real cross. Here Romans tells us that this was an act of God's love for the world. John 3:16 says it a different way, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . ."

Take the time to reread verses 35-39 and accept God's love for you.

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GPS for Families

GrowPrayStudy.org/family

We all have doubts. As adults, we know how to deal with doubt — find answers, pray through it and experience God in ways that are unexplainable. But when kids ask questions or begin to doubt what they have been taught, we panic and feel like we need to give them concrete answers! While kids do think concretely until the teen years, they are also curious and adventurous in their thinking. They can handle the unknown. In order to help our kids live with doubt in a healthy and faith-building way, we need to first teach them that doubt is okay.

Help your child understand that God loves them so much, and nothing will stop him from loving them. Read the words of Paul in Romans 8:37-39. Explain that God's love for us is deeper and stronger than any questions we may have. We are free to ask God about things we don't understand. We can talk about these questions with our parents and pastors and other friends. But in the end, we don't understand it any better. God is so much bigger than we can even imagine.

Help your kids imagine the biggest thing they can — the earth, the sky and the universe. Then say God is even bigger than that. So, of course we can't understand everything about him. But we can depend on the most important thing we do understand — that he loves us deeply, and he will never leave us!

MESSAGE "Can We Talk?"

SCRIPTURE Acts 26:22-29

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"In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian?"

(The words of King Agrippa to the apostle Paul, Acts 26:28)

- Learn to speak the language of the culture without compromising the message of Christ.
- "I wish you could be just like me but without these chains." — *Paul*
- Evangelism is about a conversation between doubt and faith, one's reality and Jesus Christ.

"Go easy on those who hesitate in the faith." (*Jude 1:22*)

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God, you know that sometimes it is hard for us to believe you really love and care about us. The world we live in can be confusing; we get lost in its demands and sometimes our own brokenness. Today, remind us of the cross, this amazing-grace offering that reminds us that nothing can ever separate us from your love, not even our doubts.
 AMEN.

Many proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God; Jesus proclaimed himself to be the Son of God. Part of a journey to faith is attempting to understand just who Jesus really is. Few argue that Jesus really existed. History in and outside of the Bible speaks of his crucifixion. History knows of Pontius Pilate, King Herod and a Jewish teacher and prophet named Jesus. But here, the Bible tells us that Jesus was proclaimed the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, that this act of power proves God, as well as the identity of his Son.

The teachings of Jesus are pretty special. Certainly he was charismatic, drawing many to him. None of his enemies questioned his miracles; they just questioned who he was and how he did them.

Why do you think the resurrection is so critical to the Christian faith?

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These are words Paul penned to the church at Rome. In many ways, Rome was the New York of its day, as well as the center of political power for the Roman world. Here the early Church would take root and grow rapidly, even under persecution and in a pagan culture full of idolatry and immorality.

- Verse 8 records words about "a faith being talked about in the whole world."
- Verse 9 and 15 mark the "preaching of the gospel."

What do you think was unique about the Christian faith that drew so many to it so fast? Why would people around the Roman Empire talk about these young Christians and their Savior they called Jesus Christ? What is the gospel?

The word "gospel" means "good news," and throughout the Bible it signifies the teaching, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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The apostle Paul writes these words to the Roman church. Paul had been at one time a Pharisee. He actively opposed the Christian faith, even arresting very early Jewish Christians. He held the coats of the men who stoned Stephen to death, one of the first Deacons of the church in Jerusalem. Yet on the Damascus road, he saw Jesus and eventually became a follower. In his words, "the chief of sinners" converted to be "the apostle to the Gentiles."

Now Paul writes that he is not "ashamed of the gospel" for "it is the power of God for salvation."

Why do you think that Paul writes he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Why is it significant that the gospel is as simple as the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? How do you think "the gospel" connects with "salvation"?

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This Bible verse is one of the classic verses in the Bible, telling us that the believer is "justified by faith." Religion often speaks of the practices or behaviors that must be performed or acted out in order to be accepted and even loved by God. Yet the foundation of the Protestant and Methodist churches is the opposite, "But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This tells us that we are justified by faith in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and not by what we have or can do. Our lives then become a journey in response to God's gift — living in gratitude, grace and in relationship with Jesus Christ.

How does God's act in Jesus Christ show God's love for us?

Why is it important to find faith in what God has done?

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