



[Leader Note: Tell a quick and lighthearted story here about something you were really good at NOT doing at some point in your life (Examples: never eating Twinkies, refusing to wear a certain trendy item of clothing, watching certain shows, etc.) and then finally broke down and did the thing you said you would never do. This story will emphasize the point that we all are “bad at being good” and “good at being bad.”

My example: I use to pride myself in not watching TV. At the dawn of time, before Netflix, and Disney Plus, and Hulu, there were television shows on at a certain time, on a certain day, and if you missed it, you missed it. And I use to PRIDE myself on not being a consumer of TV. And especially one show you may have heard of called “The Bachelor.” It’s a very old show and since the beginning it has been sucking in viewers to the dramatic syndication of the animal-like choosing of a mate from out of a pack of eligible suitors. I WAS TOO HOLY to watch such a show and neither did I want to because reality TV was new, and it was DUMB. Who could ever like that kind of show? Over the years, I wore my badge of honor when invited to viewing parties of said show, *humbly* declining their invitation and secretly thinking how stupid these people were to enjoy this type of entertainment. Until one day many years later when I happened to see a commercial advertising the upcoming season (By this point in my life, streaming was now available and perhaps most of the reasons I didn’t watch TV before were eliminated and I saw the trailer for the premier.) AND I WAS CURIOUS. I thought it would be no big deal for me to watch the first episode. Watching it would not make me one of “those people.” I watched it in secret so my husband wouldn’t know, and I was HOOKED. ENAMORED. I watched the entire season, Googled the participants most days to find out the predictions and possible spoilers, and dramatic Instagram posts they were making. And sure enough, for me, the reasons why I didn’t watch the show in the first place did come true. I became obsessive. It was an idol for those weeks. It caused me to think lustful thoughts. It distracted me from other positive things I could have been doing like reading my Bible, or listening to worship music, or thinking about who I could serve, or investing in friendships in those evenings that I was going down the Internet’s rabbit hole.]

Now I'm not saying that watching TV is necessarily a sin. I'm not saying watching the Bachelor is a sin, although in most cases I don't think it honors God in any way and I wouldn't recommend it. But what I am saying is that we are all **“bad at being good”** and **“good at being bad.”**

And it is vitally important that we understand what that hard-wired condition means for our life and the life of everyone else on this planet. What I am talking about is the most important churchy word you could memorize: the gospel.

What is the gospel? Gospel in Koine Greek means “Good News.” Koine Greek is the language the language that the New Testament of the Bible was originally written in.

The good news is that we are really good at being bad, but God has been really good to take the punishment we deserve *from Him* so we could be forgiven. Jesus, who is God, came to earth and died the death we deserved for our badness, also called, our sin. He was crucified on a wooden beam hoisted in the ground called a cross. The cross was a Roman instrument of torture around 33 AD. And when He died, the curtain that separated humanity from God in the Jewish temple ripped from top to bottom and those who believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord, were forgiven for all their badness, given a new identity as children of God, and when He rose from the dead, three days later, now gained closeness with God forever in Heaven.

This is the good news. We were bad. God is good. If we accept His gift of salvation, and let Him be our Lord, we are **unshakeable** because He is **unshakeable**.

So, today we are starting a three-week series through the book of Philippians about what we now DO with that kind of good news. The world needs it. Your friends need it. You need it. Your parents need it. Your siblings need it. Your fellow athletes and mathletes need it. Your neighbor needs it. The guy who sharpens your ice skates need it.

And it is an incredible adventure that Jesus is inviting you on today to join what the Holy Spirit is already doing around you in those people's hearts. We just need to lift our eyes off our phones for a few minutes to see Him working.

Let's start by reading **Philippians 1:1-2 (NLT)**, *"This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace."*

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to a church he started. He had accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord after realizing he was really good at being bad when he thought he was really good at being good. Check out Acts 9 if you want to know more.

God speaking through Paul said, we have God's **grace**. God wants to forgive you and everyone around you. God wants to give you **peace**. Does anyone here need more peace in their life?

There is peace in belonging to Jesus the Messiah. If you have accepted Him as Savior and Lord, then you belong to Him. You are His child. That is your new identity.

And Paul wanted the Philippians (think of him writing to our town: [Insert your town's name here.](#))

He wanted them to know that even though He was in jail, it was worth it because that gospel (good news), the forgiveness of all our badness, and the peace that comes from knowing Jesus was worth telling everyone about—even if it meant going to jail.

Let's look at **Philippians 1:12-19 (NLT)**, *And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. 13 For everyone here, **including the whole palace guard**, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. 14 And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and **boldly speak God's message without fear**. 15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to **defend the Good News**. 17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. 18 But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or*

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