

Done > Do = Happy Salvation

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[0 : 00] Today we're going on in our study of the happy Christian. And last week we looked at happy media. Happy media. And on Monday morning someone confessing to be a bit of a drudge report junkie sent me a news story that came out that very morning.

And I brought it with me and I wanted to read a little bit of it. And it's entitled, Too Much Bad News Can Make You Sick, Say Researchers.

And it goes a long way to confirming a lot of what we've been talking about. And so this is not a biblical perspective. This is just people looking at life and our news and everything like that.

And I just wanted to read a little bit of this and see what it has to say. So this was originally from CNN. And I guess other local people carried it.

And this is what it says. With every news alert or breaking story, our world seems to be pushed further and further into crisis. It takes a serious toll on our environment but also on our mental health.

[1 : 12] The world has always been stressful. But experiencing acute events occurring thousands of miles away is a new and challenging phenomenon.

Have you guys ever thought of that? A hundred years ago, what was the geographical range of your news? A mile?

Now, 12,000 miles all the way across the other side of the world. Something bad happens. And all of a sudden, I have to deal with that. On any given day, it feels like our world is falling apart.

Now, I'm going to be skipping some parts. But our brains are hardwired to process stress relating to trauma by entering into what is known as fight, flight, or freeze. You probably know about that.

Mode before returning to a restful state. However, constant exposure to trauma can derail our ability to cope healthily and hinder our ability to return to a relaxed state.

[2 : 15] Every time we experience or hear about a traumatic event, we go into a stress mode. We might go numb or we might have overactive fear to a perceived threat.

Our physiology is triggered to release stress hormones like cortisol or adrenaline. Now, ideally, after the perceived threat is resolved, the body's resting state should be regained.

However, reoccurring exposure to traumatic events means the body is undergoing this process far more frequently than ever, interrupting this restful recovery.

And so then, if you're living under this sort of chronic stress of living with bad news, it has myriad of physical manifestations such as headaches, muscle tension, pain, stomach problems, anxiety, sleep issues.

And so the researcher says, one way of coping to this continual exposure is not getting overloaded with news and pacing yourself with consumption.

[3 : 17] Everyone has a different limit, and you have to find out what your limit is. Setting a limit on how much you look at the news or go on social media can create a space and time for you to soothe your nervous system's stress response and return to normal.

So this may require turning off your push notifications on your phone or setting aside specific times to check world events. So, in other words, a news fast.

And then they just have one other suggestion. And that is that research points to social connection. Social connection as the bedrock of resilience and the best way to combat apathy.

The more that you are connected to others and you call upon them, the more likely it is that your entire community will withstand. In other words, we need each other.

We need to be connected with each other. And that helps us deal with what is so difficult about what's going on in the world and all the bad news.

[4 : 28] We need each other. We need to be connected to each other. So that's too much bad news can make you sick. Today, our Sunday school lesson is a really good one.

It's the happy Christian. And remember, with each chapter, we have an equation. Today's topic is happy salvation.

Happy salvation. And the equation for this morning is done greater than do equals positive.

Done greater than do equals positive. Now, I just want to begin. I'm reading a lot this morning.

I want to begin by just reading how David Murray starts off this chapter of happy salvation. This is what he says.

[5 : 30] And as I'm reading, just tell me, does this sound like what goes on in your heart and in your life? I've tried countless kinds of to-do lists.

I've experimented with colorful cards, complicated mind maps, sophisticated software, and innumerable apps. And none of them ever gets me closer to done.

I keep hoping that somehow the right technique, the right method, or the right program will move my inbox to zero, my desk trays to empty, and my latest to-do list to all checked off.

All in vain. Emails keep arriving. Reports keep dropping. And things to do keep multiplying. An insatiable cacophony of do, do, do taunts me as I reluctantly come to the depressing conclusion that I will never be finished.

That I'll never be done. And then I turn to Christianity. And to my unutterable and indescribable delight, I encounter the rare and refreshing words, It is finished.

[6 : 54] Are there any happier words in the universe? It is done. All done. Nothing in my spiritual inbox. Nothing in my trays.

No list to tackle. It is finished. Jesus lived the life I could not live. And died the death I dare not die. He took my duties and performed them perfectly.

He took my failures and paid the penalty. That's the foundation. The starting point. The beginning of all true Christianity. Done.

Done. Done. Done. And yet it is so difficult to believe, isn't it? Can it really be totally finished?

Nothing left to do? What a hugely positive and happy difference it would make to the whole of our lives if we could really, really believe that.

How much steadier and richer our joy if we could put and keep our faith in finished. Finished.

[8 : 01] It is finished. It is finished. That's the gospel. It's finished. The life I couldn't live. The death I dare not die.

Jesus did it. His death. His life. Everything that I needed to be done is done. So that thief on the cross who lived a whole life of sin and has no opportunity to really do anything else.

Jesus could say it is finished. And it was done. And today you'll be with me in paradise. Now, are there things that we need to do as Christians?

Are there still expectations? Yes. Yes. Of course. But this is how we need to feel this.

How we need to feel this in our bones. That the do, the things that we have to do come after and are not as great as the done.

[9 : 12] The done. The done is where we start. The done is what we tie our hearts to. And so there's things that keeps us from living in the joy of it is finished.

It's finished. And that's what we're going to start with this morning. We're going to start with the handicaps. The things that hold us back from experiencing the joy of it is finished.

Horse racing. I don't know a lot about horse racing. But I do know that in some horse races, they handicap the horses. So they actually put weights in the saddles of some of the horses to sort of make it what they want as an even race.

So it's called a handicapped race. Now, some of us carry in our spiritual saddles weights that weigh us down.

They keep us from running as fast as we could. That slow us down. They prevent us from enjoying just the fullness of the victory that we have through Jesus Christ that keeps us from hearing, it is finished.

[10 : 27] Done. Done. So that's what we're going to talk about at the beginning. And the first weight is an accusing conscience.

An accusing conscience. We all have an inner voice that says, Do, do, do.

Do, do, do. And we've been born with this prodding, this needling conscience that says, You need to do.

And we do. And after we've done that, we hope to hear, It's done. But do you ever get to hear that? No. Your conscience will never tell you that you've done enough. When we hear, Not done. You need to do more. You need to do more. Now, that's life, what we would call under law.

[11 : 30] It's that perpetual demand to measure up. That perpetual demand to continue to do more. That's what Jesus was born under. Revelation says he came born under law.

He came born under that perpetual demand to always and completely and forever obey to the very end of your life to obey God's law.

And that's what he did. It's this perpetual demand of do, do, do. Now, way back in 1517, Martin Luther, or it wasn't 1517, 1518 or 1519, Martin Luther argued, he had a disputation, he had this argument, a scholastic argument, and it was called the Heidelberg Disputation.

And I know, I've quoted this repeatedly, but you know what, this is something that we need to hear again and again and again. And this is what Martin Luther said. This was, he had about 28 theses, and this was thesis 26, and he says, the law says do this, and it's never done.

Grace says, believe in this, and everything is already done. Now, Luther meant two things by, the law says do this, and it's never done.

[12 : 56] He meant first that, the law never can bring about what it demands. It never can bring about what it demands. And actually, in sinful men, the law produces the exact opposite.

In sinful men, we actually do exactly the opposite of what the law wants us to do. it's never done. We do the exact opposite. So, the law says, you shall love.

And it's right. It's good. There's no problem with the law. And yet, I can't bring about what it demands. Just because you tell me to. Just because it's right.

Just because I should. It doesn't mean that I can actually do it. Now, it might impel, this is what he says, it might impel toward the works of the law, so it can make us look like for a while we can keep the outside of love intact.

So, we can have the motions of love. But in the end, it will become irksome and we will too often, it will too often lead to hate. So, let me give you a perfect illustration of that.

[14 : 07] You come up to me on the street and you grab me by the collar and you say, you should love me. You should love me. And, is that right?

Yeah. I should love you. But you telling me to do that, does that actually make me do it? More than likely, the results will just be the opposite, won't it?

You keep telling me that I should love you and pretty soon, what am I going to do? Is anyone honest enough to say how they're really going to feel?

I'm going to hate you. Even though I shouldn't. The law is good and right and just. That's the, but that's what happens when the law comes to a sinful person.

And so the law says it's do this and it's never done. And that's true in that way. And the true that, it's true in the sense that the law never brings about what it demands. But it's also true in another way.

[15 : 15] It's true that the law is never done demanding. You can never get to the point where the law will say, you've loved enough. You've done enough.

You've done enough good. And our conscience then is never done demanding with do, do, do.

Now, it's in all of us. And our conscience is good in that way.

It's on all of our heads. But the do's keep coming and multiplying and expanding. Have you ever thought like, really a child has about one thing that they need to do, don't they?

They need to honor their father and mother. But as you grow, it seems like the responsibilities and the demands grow along with it.

Samuel Johnson wrote in his daily journal, I have now spent 55 years in resolving, having from the earliest time that I can remember been forming schemes of a better life.

[16 : 23] I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing since the time is short. Oh God, grant me to resolve a right and to keep my resolutions.

It's like, I haven't done anything. I need to keep doing. You can almost hear the despair in his voice. He's now desperate to do something, to accomplish, to be, to be a better person.

And yet, you could tell he's not anywhere closer to accomplishing what he wanted. So is that your Christianity? Is that the voice echoing through your heart? Resolution, fall, guilt, shame, remorse, frustration, resolution, guilt, shame, remorse, frustration, resolution, and on and on it goes.

What do you need to hear? What voice do you need to hear echoing through your heart? You need to hear the voice of Jesus from the cross that says, it is finished.

It's finished. There's nothing left to do. And we need to take our consciences to the cross. We need to take our consciences to Christ's cross and that's where we'll find silence and peace.

[17 : 58] So that's the first way, an accusing conscience. Now, the second way is, can be a demanding church. church. And sometimes pastors and churches can make it really hard for our hearts to hear done.

And I really and I sincerely hope that that's not the case here, that we don't fall into that here. But so much of ministries and so much of sort of Christian expectations and books and blogs and articles are all, you need to do this, you need to do that, don't do this, don't do that.

And if a pastor or a teacher or a father or a mother or a Sunday school teacher, if their message is duty, duty, duty, then all the people are going to hear is disobedience, disobedience, disobedience. Now, is there a place for duty? Yeah, there is. We're going to, in the morning worship, in the morning sermon, we're going to be speaking on, I believe your commands and what we need to believe God's law about and for.

Is there a place for duty? Yes, but the duty comes after the done. The duty comes after the done. The good news of the gospel, the grace of God comes first.

[19 : 35] And you see that again and again and again in the Bible. There's truth, there's good news, there's help, and then there's a therefore.

Now go and do this. And then a command. But when you skip right over the gospel and you go right to the duty of, you need to do this, you need to be better at this, you need to do this better, you need to, then you know what ends up happening is as pastors, you end up killing your people. Because they can't live up to that. And they become discouraged and you ruin churches and you ruin a Christian's joy. And brothers and sisters, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. We do our best obeying when we are happiest in the Lord. When we're satisfied in him, when we're experiencing the good news, when we're living in the glory of the gospel, when we're living in the overflow of the fountain of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus did everything that needs to be done and when that is soothing our souls, then we'll have the strength, then we'll have the heart, then we'll have the desire to do what needs to be done.

[20 : 56] But you know what the biggest and the heaviest weight of all is? So you have accusing conscience, you have over-demanding churches, but the biggest and the heaviest weight is unbelief.

It's unbelief. Now there's a lot of places in our culture, in our world, where people are not believing the Bible.

Creation, you know, the Trinity, all sorts of things. But you know what the three most disbelieved words in all the Bible is? The three most disbelieved words, the ten most disbelieved letters in all of the Bible are from Ephesians chapter 2, verse 9, N-O-T-B-Y-W-O-R-K-S.

not by works. Not by works. It's the hardest for unbelievers to hear, and it's the hardest for believers to keep on believing.

mean? I've had, I've told you all this before, I've had Jehovah Witnesses, had Mormons come to my door.

[22 : 32] They're both cults, but they believe totally two different separate things, and you know what? They do have one thing in common. When you boil it all down, you know how they're going to save themselves?

by their works? So I could have them over, I could have some Roman Catholics over, I could have some Buddhists over, I could have some Muslims over, and they're not going to agree on anything. But you know what one thing they're going to agree on? What's the one thing that they are all going to agree on? That I'm going to be saved by what I do. That's what they all end up saying.

And the sad thing is, as believers, that's where we're all coming out of, and that's one of the things that keeps on holding us captive.

That feeling in our hearts, that continual abiding thought that I have to do this. Murray says this, I've asked seniors, so like senior citizens, about their hope for heaven.

[23 : 42] And despite listening to thousands of not by work sermons, their entire lives, many still answer, I've done my best.

I've gone to church. I raised my children to go to church. I pray and read my Bible. but I'm longing to hear. I'm done with my doing and my working.

I'm resting on Christ's work and what Christ has done alone. God. You know, I've interviewed a lot of people for baptism and membership.

And, you know, we always ask them, if you were to die tonight and ask God and God were to ask you, why should I let you into my heaven? What would you say?

So what's your hope for heaven person? And, you know what I've heard over and over again? It's something that starts like this.

[24 : 48] I. I have. I've believed. I repented. I something.

And, you know, I really long to hear just why should you let me into heaven? Jesus. Just Jesus. Nothing. He's my all my hope. Maybe just three words. Jesus paid it all. Or maybe five words. Jesus said it is finished. Many Christians are able to give, you know, grace apart from works answer sort of in a Sunday school class, a theological exam, but their daily spiritual experience is I live with God based on my works.

So if I was good today, then God and I are good. If I wasn't good today, then I don't, he doesn't love me.

God and it's salvation by works. That's what we all come into the world believing. And Paul was able to call that, or Paul called that just the basic principles of this world.

[26 : 16] The basic principles of this world. That's how the world works. You do and you get. You go to work and you get paid.

You do the crime. You do the time. You know what I'm saying? And there's definitely truth there, but that truth does not work out and go over to how we're saved.

Because it's not by works. works. And it's like W-O-R-K-S is just tattooed on our hearts. That, oh, God will love me and be impressed because I've been doing this.

And, you know, that works tattoo will just kill you. And it won't make you holy. And it won't make you happy. And it will just, when your relationship with God works on that basis where it's just sort of transactional, it's just going to create distance between you and God.

It will rob you of your joy. Brothers and sisters, we need to hear again and remember again, salvation is not by works. And it's by faith in Christ alone.

[27 : 33] And that's what Paul calls living by the Spirit. When you leave the basic principles of this world and you live by faith in Jesus Christ, that's living in the freedom of the gospel, the joy of the gospel.

You're living as a freely adopted child of God. And you know what the fruit of living in that kind of heart relationship with God is? He says it's love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, and so on.

what the law was powerless to do. God did by sending his son. And Romans 8 goes on to talk about we need to live by the Spirit then, the goodness of this gospel.

So we need to get rid of these handicaps, these weights that we carry around. God didn't save you to make you feel burdened again. Again, Jesus didn't become the man of sorrows so that you would have to live your whole life as a man of sorrows.

You know that? Galatians 5 says for freedom, Christ set you free. Christ set you free that you could enjoy freedom.

[28 : 55] So that's the handicaps. Now we have to have the helps. What about the helps? So we have the handicaps. Those are all the things that are weighing us down. We have to get rid of those. Now what is the help? Well, first help, we have to re-believe the gospel.

Re-believe the gospel of done. It is finished as our only hope for real happiness. If that is the first and primary thing in our heart, it's the non-negotiable starting point.

The non-negotiable starting point. We have to believe the gospel of done again and again and again. Now we've talked about the gospel already. and now what I'm saying is we have to believe it. We have to believe it. So our works are always waiting to get front and center on the stage. Do you notice that?

If we don't put Christ on the front of the stage with a spotlight on him, our works soon start to crowd him out. the happiest Christians live with Christ on the stage with the spotlight on him.

[30 : 01] Their works have their place, but they're in on the edge. It's not about what you've done. It's what he's done. So Jesus says it is finished and by faith, you know what we say?

Amen. Amen. We don't add to it. We say amen. So be it. That's the first help. Re-believe the gospel. The second help is refocus your Bible reading.

Refocus your Bible reading. Again, this is talking about this is not one or the other. This is not all or nothing. None of this is all or nothing. But we need to refocus our Bible reading.

Don't first read for your Bible to find out what you need to do today. what you need to do, how you need to live. Now, is there a place for that?

Yeah, definitely. But that's to get started on the wrong foot. The Bible is not first and foremost to help you to live a holy life.

[31 : 05] I know that sounds crazy, but that's not the very first thing it's about. It is about that. I know that even sounds dangerous, but that's true.

The Bible is not first about living a better holy life. If you think so, I guarantee you that you're going to go to your Bible and you're going to skip right past Jesus, right past the gospel, and you're going to look at what you need to do and how what you failed at and how you need to fix it.

Now, the Bible does talk about that, but that is not what the Bible is centrally about. That's not what the Bible's first and foremost message is. The first question is not how does this apply to me.

The first question is how does this show me how God is saving me through Jesus Christ? So when Jesus was raised from the dead and he's on a walk with his disciples down to the Emmaus, what did he show them?

what did he show them? He showed them this is the scriptures and beginning with Moses and the prophets, he showed them everything that concerned himself.

[32 : 22] He said to the Pharisees, you know, you think by knowing the scriptures that you'll be wise to salvation, but you're missing the whole point. Those are the scriptures that testify to me. Jesus read himself first into the Bible and out of the Bible.

And if we are going to read our Bibles like Jesus read his Bible, we need to start with Jesus. What does this say about him? What does this tell me about God's grace and love saving me through Jesus Christ?

What does this reveal about him? So the Bible isn't about how you can save yourself, about how you can become a good enough person, about how you can be a holy Christian.

It covers all that, but not first. First is Jesus. So refocus your Bible reading. The third is restudy salvation. So we have re-believe, refocus, and restudy salvation.

The angels desire to look into this. And they're not even the saved ones. They're like on tippy toes trying to look into this mystery.

[33 : 30] You know, I took Spanish for three and a half years. And you will not find me speaking Spanish to anyone. And guess what? Most of the time I don't need to.

I'm perfectly fine living my life without speaking Spanish. I took chemistry in high school. I took chemistry in college. And guess what? I'm perfectly fine not remembering anything about chemistry. I even took calculus. Pretty impressive. You know what? I can't even remember algebra now. Like, all I know is I can balance, well, I can add and subtract from my checkbook.

And you know what? I'm doing quite well without it. But I can't survive without the gospel.

I can't survive without salvation. it's a huge topic with different ways of looking at it. There's justification.

[34 : 36] There's redemption. Victory. Reconciliation. Atonement. Adoption. And maybe some of you don't even know what some of those words mean.

But if you're a Christian, that has happened to you. That is your experience. That's what's happened to you. And so why not study those things? Why not learn about them?

Why not dig deep into the wells of salvation? It's going to bring you more joy than the TV ever will, than the internet ever will. It's going to give you lasting contentment and peace and flourishing in your life more than exercise and a good diet.

As important as those things are, you have happy salvation. You have a happy salvation. Why not study it? Like, I'm not telling you to study something that's bad.

I'm not telling you to study cancer or how people die. I'm not telling you to study depression. I'm telling you to study the greatest thing that's ever happened.

[35 : 44] God's loving real sinners. God really loving real sinners. sinners. So that's third. Now fourth, repent immediately. So we've had re-believe, refocus, restudy, and now fourth, repent immediately.

So you believe in Jesus and you rejoice in your salvation and you sin again. Now what? You repent immediately.

do we need to do something good to make up for the bad? Do we need to, you know, like some, stay away, give him some time to cool off?

Do we need to stay away and, you know, keep a respectful and healthy distance from him until things are a little better before confessing and getting close to our father again?

Do we need to wait? Do we need to stay away? No. We need to hear Jesus' words again.

[36 : 44] It is finished. Come. Get washed all over again. Don't do anything. Don't do a deed. Don't delay. Don't despair.

Don't do anything. Turn to Jesus. Turn again and confess your sins. First John 1 9 says he's faithful and just.

You know, we're always like, well, you know, you don't want to just. First John 1 9 it. You know what? Respectfully, sometimes that's what exactly what we need to do.

Not because sin is not a big deal, but because that promise is a big deal. So don't carry one miserable sin for one miserable second.

Immediate sin. Immediate confession. Immediate forgiveness. Immediate joy. Immediate rest and peace. That's fourth.

[37 : 43] Repent immediately. And now fifth. Begin and each begin and end each day with done. So this is where we're going to end. The alarm goes off and all of a sudden it's do, do, do.

and all the to-do list whispers into your mind. Well, maybe you should whisper back it is finished and repeat it.

It is finished and say it aloud. It is finished. Listen to David Murray again. Whatever you will complete or not today, rest in the only work that will never need to be done again.

rest in the fact that Jesus has done the most impossible job in the world and he's done it perfectly and he's made it available to you. Take it. Enjoy it. Build your life on it.

Let it change your whole view of your life and your work. Use his work to put your work into perspective. Believe his work is counted as yours. Despite all that you fear and dread about the next ten hours, a critical boss, a vicious competitor, a looming deadline, a complaining customer, an impossible sales target, unrelenting children, monotonous drudge, you have Christ's perfect work credited to your account.

[39 : 11] It's yours. As if you did it, are you humble enough to receive it? And as the day ends, when you have all your incomplete lists, all that unfinished business, rest again and Christ it is finished.

The most important work has been done and it covers all our laziness, all our foolishness, all our time wasting, all our bad decisions, all our temper tantrums, all our losses and our ability and our inabilities are everything.

Christ gives you a copy of his perfect life and says, now take this and put your name on it. It's yours. Let this satisfy you.

Let this make you happy. It's finished. Well, we're out of time. We're dismissed. Good luck.