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THE HONEY THAT MADE MY STOMACH BITTER Decatur, IL

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Revelation 10:1-11**.
B. John the apostle is given the commission to write down everything that he sees. In chap., 10, he is figuratively told to eat a little book.
C. This book is at first sweet in his mouth but then becomes very bitter in his stomach.
D. One lesson to be drawn from this experience is that some things in the gospel are good (sweet) and some are bad (bitter).
E. To preach the good news is a mixture of good and bad to those who hear.

I. **SOME GOOD NEWS.**

A. The word *gospel* means "good news." When we hear that salvation is possible by the gift of Jesus Christ--that is good news.
B. Many different times the words "good news" or gospel is used. Let's look at some;
   1. The good news that JC was born (Lk. 2:10,14).
      And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people;… **14** "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."
   2. John the Baptist preached the good news (Lk. 3:18).
      So with many other exhortations also he preached the gospel to the people.
   3. God is good, He alone, and all creation is good (Lk. 18:19).
      And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.
   4. Beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15).
      (Isa 52:7) How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, *And* says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
      (Rom 10:15) And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"
C. I like to tell people about the good things found in JC. It is easy to preach and is usually accepted without problem. Some of these things are:
   1. A person who is baptized is added to the church (Ac. 2:47; Col. 1:13-14).
      (Ac 2:47) praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
      (Col 1:13-14) For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
   2. A Xian has fellowship and forgiveness (1Jn. 1:6-7; Rev. 1:5).
      (1Jn 1:6-7) If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
      (Rev 1:5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood,
   3. Xians enjoy all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).
      Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,
   4. God answers the prayers of a Xian (1Pet. 3:12).
      "FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL."
D. Our message to the world is one of good news. Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to save it. This is sweet to preach (Jn. 3:17).
   "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

II. **SOME BAD NEWS.**

A. But along with all of the blessings that come our way by obeying the gospel of X, we have certain responsibilities to carry out with penalties for not doing so.

B. These bitter things must be preached as well. Even though not as acceptable as the other, part of the "little book" too.

C. First, there is a cost of discipleship. After the sweetness has passed some of the bitterness of following Jesus may set in (Lk. 14:25-35; esp. v26-27).

(Lk 14:26-27) "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. **27** "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

D. Second, there needs to be an awareness that it is possible to lose one's salvation by going back into sin (Heb. 3:12-13; 2Pet. 2:20-22).

(Heb 3:12-13) Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. **13** But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

(2Pet 2:20-22) For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. **21** For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. **22** It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire."

E. Third, we need to know that there is a heaven to be gained and a hell to avoid (Mt. 10:28).

"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

F. Some things that should taste bitter to us are:

1. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6; Mk. 16:16).

(Mk 16:16) "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

(Heb 11:6) And without faith it is impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

2. Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17,26).

(Jas 2:17) Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

(Jas 2:26) For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

3. Only godly sorrow works repentance (2Cor. 7:10).

For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

4. There are things that if practiced will cause one to go to hell (Gal. 5:19-21).

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

5. Those that do not live up to their potential go to hell (see Mt. 25:14-30).

G. The life of a Xian must be different from the world. Maybe even so much so that there will be persecution (2Tim. 3:12).

And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. The Bible is good news--to those who want to please God. The things written there should make us happy. There are things written in the Scriptures to instruct us on how to get to heaven.

B. But the Bible is bad news to those who do not want to go to heaven. Bad news to those who do not want to please God. And to read the Bible from this point of view should make one feel uneasy.

C. Accept the Bible as good news by counting the cost of your discipleship and journey through this life in your desire to inherit eternal life with God.

D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.