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**GOOD ENOUGH**

***Richard Fox***

Do you ever ask yourself, “Am I good enough”? And how do you know when good enough is enough!

Trying to measure up to family and friends or the boss or even yourself can be difficult. It can leave you feeling exhausted, guilty and wondering if it’s all worth the effort. Well today I’ve got good news for those of us who never quite feel like we are good enough.

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try you just can’t please everybody all the time.

There’s always more that I’d like to do for people. I’d like to be a better dad, a better husband, and better at my job.

But I often find myself feeling guilty about not being the best I can be. I often let others down and more importantly, I let myself down.

I try and make time for my family and leave work at work. But I also want to be better at what I do and improve my job skills. So I find myself exhausted and in need of a break, which makes the feelings of failure even worse. I don’t think I’m good enough and I can get down on myself.

Do you ever feel like that?

I mean there’s nothing wrong with trying to be good. But can we actually ever be good enough?

No matter how hard we try I’m sure there will always still be things we muck up. We might say the wrong thing, think the wrong thought, or even do the wrong thing. We can’t be at the top of our game 100% of the time.

So why do we bother to try to be good enough? We may as well give up and save the energy and all the stress!

But if we did that, what would happen to us, the people we love, and the world around us?

Thank fully there is a way to be good enough, but we don’t get there by our own efforts or hard work.

500 years ago, a young German bloke, Martin Luther, was struggling to be good enough. He’d heard that you had to work as hard as you could to be the best person you could be. You had to give everything to be good. And this wasn’t just to the standards he thought other people expected, or even what he expected of himself, this was to the standards that he thought God wanted from him. Martin Luther thought he had to somehow be good enough for God.

This started about the time Martin had one of those “cry for help” moments in his life. He was running through a storm in a muddy field when he was almost hit by lightning. He dropped to his knees and promised to dedicate his life to God, if God rescued him. He did survive and so he became a monk, which 500 years ago was one of the most dedicated ways to show that you were following God. He strictly followed all the religious requirements and tried to be the best monk he could possibly be. He endured long periods of fasting and long times in worship and prayer. But the more he tried to be good, the more he realised he wasn’t good, and in fact, he despaired that he would ever be good enough.

Thankfully his teacher encouraged him to read the bible. He started by reading the books of Romans and Psalms. In these books he started to learn what God actually expected of him, and more importantly how he could never be good enough by his own efforts. And not only for God, but also for himself and the people around him.

The crucial sentences that changed the way Luther saw himself before God and before himself was in Romans 3:23 which reads, “All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. But God treats us much better than we deserve, and because of Christ Jesus, he freely accepts us and sets us free from our sins.”

In short, we can never be good enough by our own efforts or by trying to be the best person we can be. God is the only one who can make us good enough and he does that through the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

God has made us good enough by Jesus’ death and resurrection on the cross. On the cross, Jesus paid the price for all of our stuff ups, selfishness, and failures. By this act, Jesus makes us good enough before God. Jesus takes what is bad onto himself and gives us his goodness. He forgives us and when God now sees us, he sees what Jesus has done and who Jesus is. He sees how Jesus makes us good. And we can’t be better than what God makes us to be.

As a result of God making us good, we’re then good enough for ourselves and for each other. We don’t have to strive to be good to earn people’s favour. We can strive to love people because Jesus has made us good. We have his forgiveness and love to share with others. A love and forgiveness that Jesus wants them to have too.

Martin Luther was so excited by this discovery that he wanted to tell the world. He wanted everyone to know that God has already made you good enough by simply believing in Jesus Christ.

So 500 years ago, he wrote 95 statements about how God alone can make you good enough He wrote how you can’t be good enough for God by paying him cash. You can’t buy or work your way into his good books. You can’t even bargain or trade. To be good enough for God was to simply receive the gift of Jesus Christ and believe in him.

An amazing gift from God.

So Martin Luther took these 95 statements and nailed them onto the town’s noticeboard, which back then happened to be the door of the cathedral. There was no Facebook, TV, radio or newspapers in those days. The best way was to use the town’s noticeboard.

People read those statements and were excited about what Luther had written. So they made copies on the newly invented printing press and spread them all over Europe. Copies even made their way into the hands of world leaders.

Luther thought everyone would jump for joy at this news but sadly many people became angry.

Luther stood his ground and stood up for the truth and many more people started reading the bible and discovering God’s love and forgiveness. Many people came to believe in Jesus Christ.

This event that happened 500 years ago is being commemorated this year on the 31st October. Luther’s 95 statements on the grace, mercy and forgiveness of God changed the world then and still impact us today. The teaching of God’s saving love through Jesus Christ which we receive through faith is still being taught.

It is because of Jesus that you are good enough. You don’t need to strive and work hard to be good, you are good because of Jesus. Because Jesus has made you good, you can live in his goodness and love others. Not to earn their favour, but in response to the freedom and hope Jesus gives. Because of Jesus, you can be loving parents, partners and employees. You are free to love and care for each other.

Who are you trying to be good enough for? Is it yourself, your partner, family, friends or even God? Striving to be good enough is hard work. Just ask Martin Luther.

What Martin Luther discovered was that God can help you be good enough. In fact, we’re only good enough because of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness he won for us by dying on the cross.

God makes you good by giving you the gift of his son, Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection. We have hope that we are good enough. Good enough to love and care. Good enough to be free of the burden to make ourselves good enough. Free to love and care for people around us.

So on the 31st October this year, I encourage you to celebrate what Martin Luther discovered 500 years ago, that by the love and mercy of God, because of Jesus Christ, and through believing in him, you are made good. Good to love and care for people around us and ourselves.

If you’d like to know more about Martin Luther and the events of the Reformation, contact us for the free booklet, A TREASURE REVEALED. You’ll read how Martin Luther discovered the gift of God’s grace and what it means for you too. For your free copy of A TREASURE REVEALED call 1800 353 350 or go to messagesofhope.org.au 

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