

“God’s Miraculous ‘Whoever’ Policy”

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By Max Lucado

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Sometimes I detect my favorite fragrance wafting from the kitchen: strawberry cake. I follow the smell like a bird dog follows a trail until I’m standing over the just-baked, just-iced pan of pure pleasure.

Yet I’ve learned to still my fork until Denalyn gives clearance. “Who is it for?” I ask. She might break my heart. “It’s for a birthday party, Max. Don’t touch it!” Or “For a friend. Stay away.” Or she might throw open the door of delight. “Whoever.” And, since I qualify as a “whoever,” I dig in.

Thankfully for us, God’s gospel includes a “whoever” policy that’s always open for business. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that *whoever* believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV, emphasis mine).

Whoever unfurls 3:16 as a banner for the ages. Whoever unrolls the welcome mat of heaven to humanity. Whoever invites the world to God.

Jesus could have so easily narrowed the scope, changing whoever into whatever. “Whatever Jew believes” or “Whatever woman follows me.” But He used no qualifier. The pronoun is wonderfully indefinite. After all, who isn’t a whoever?

- The word sledgehammers racial fences and dynamites social classes.
- It bypasses gender borders and surpasses ancient traditions.
- Whoever makes it clear: God exports His grace worldwide. For those who attempt to restrict it, Jesus has a word: Whoever.
- Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32).
- Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it (Matthew 10:39).
- Whoever does God’s will is My brother and sister and mother (Mark 3:35).
- Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).
- Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him (John 3:36).
- Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst (John 4:14).

- Whoever comes to Me I will never drive away (John 6:37).
- Whoever lives and believes in Me will never die (John 11:26).
- Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life (Rev. 22:17).

The downturns of life can create such a sad state of affairs that we wonder if God still wants us. But God's "whoever" policy has a "however" benefit. Just ask Lazarus, the street sleeper with dogs licking his sores. There's no need to clean up or climb up. Just look up. God takes you however he finds you.

This policy also features a "whenever" clause. Whenever you hear God's voice, He welcomes your response. Sometimes we think the invitation has expired. We've waited too long. But just ask the last-minute vineyard workers in Jesus' parable who were paid the same wages as the all-day workers: God offers 11th-hour grace.

We may struggle with such a thought. A last-minute confessor receives the same grace as a lifetime servant? Doesn't seem fair. But request grace with your dying breath and God hears your prayer. Whoever means "whenever."

And there's one more clause: Whoever means "wherever." Wherever you are, you're not too far to come home. Just ask the prodigal son.

We may lose sobriety, solvency and sanity. We may lose jobs and chances, youth and vigor, idealism and dreams.

But we never lose our place on God's "whoever" list.

Whoever—God's wonderful word of welcome.

No status too low. No hour too late. No place too far. However. Whenever. Wherever.

Whoever includes you . . . forever.