

Why Should I Allow You into My Heaven?

Ephesians 2:4-10

Today our Scripture reading from God's holy word comes from **Ephesians 2:4-10**. "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

A Christian brother in another state was reading a book when he came across a bold and challenging question. Jesus is supposedly standing at the gate of Heaven and admitting people and He asks each person: "Why should I allow you

into my heaven?" Thought provoking isn't it? What would you say? Why should you be allowed to enter heaven and live with God forever? Many people think almost everybody is going to heaven and one would have to be really evil to miss heaven.

Not everyone will answer this question alike. You can imagine the many answers people might give. **I expect, however, to hear some people appeal to how good they are.** They figure since they are better than others the Lord ought to let them come into heaven; and I suppose we can all find somebody we think is morally worse than we are. We can always find a way to see ourselves better than other people. The Scriptures tell about a man who came to Jesus seeking eternal life and who thought that he was a pretty good fellow. **Matthew 19:16-22** says: "And behold, a man came up to him, saying, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' And

Jesus said, ‘You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Well, the young man said to him, ‘All these I have kept. What do I still lack?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ Well, when the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

My friend, you can be moral and still not please God. Good morals by themselves won’t save you. This young man wrongly put his money in front of God and allowed it to keep Him from following Jesus. You’ll remember the Lord Jesus said in [Matthew 6:24](#), “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [that is money].” Now if you let anything come between you and God, you have chosen to separate yourself from God.

Someone else will likely say to the Lord, **“Well, I’m a Christian; my parents and grandparents were Christians. We went to church every Sunday,”** or “my father was a preacher,” or “my mother was a Sunday school teacher.” Some people think because they are kin to a deeply religious person, that this is enough to save them. Well, a pedigree might impress some people, but a pedigree is not enough to guarantee entrance into heaven. The apostle Paul once spoke of his religious background, which was most impressive to some. But he realized that having a good background didn’t make one right with God. The inspired apostle said in **Philippians 3:7- 8**, “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ . Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and I count them but rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.” There was something better to Paul than his Jewish heritage; that something was Jesus Christ himself. He would give it all up to know Jesus.

Some people no doubt will look at the works they have done and appeal to their works as a reason for their salvation. You remember in Luke 18: 9-14 that the Lord told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and then treated others with contempt. He said, “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. And the Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’” Oh my, you might notice that even Jesus got tired of hearing this man read his resume about how good he was. Then the Lord speaks about another man: “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, (you see, people prayed looking up in those days) but he beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ Jesus said I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” You see, appealing to all our good works doesn't work with

God, because our good works don't cancel out our sins. Did you hear that? God doesn't use a balance to weigh the good with the bad; and good works do not atone for sin and you can't earn your place in heaven. Can anyone ever do enough to pay for salvation or heaven? . . . For all our blessings? . . . For eternal life? . . . For eternal joy . . . For eternal fellowship . . . For eternal health . . . And for an eternal inheritance? My friend, if you could live a hundred lives of a hundred years and fill each one with constant service to God, you could not do enough to earn a place in heaven. No one is good enough. The Bible says in **Romans 3:10**, "There is none righteous, no, not one." I can't live good enough on my own to please God. Nobody can. We are helpless and we need the grace of God.

Now the Bible describes where we are spiritually and what God has done for us in the book of **Titus 3:3-7**. It says, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,

he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, (oh, no!) but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

God’s grace gives us the opportunity to go to heaven. God’s grace does what nothing else can do. The tax-collector of Luke 18 said, "God be merciful to me, the sinner." I tell you any appeal for salvation must ultimately rest upon the grace and mercy of God. The Bible says in **Ephesians 2:8-10**, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

The word ‘grace’ refers to a gift and gifts are not earned . . . They are freely given. Well, our forgiveness, our salvation, our relationship with God is a gift. We possess this gift

because of the blood of Jesus Christ. Now, gifts are free, that's true, but they are not cheap and they should never be cheapened by being taken for granted. Wives are a gift to their husbands. When fathers give their daughters in marriage, that son-in-law is receiving a great gift . . . A precious gift, but not a cheap or frivolous gift. Children are a gift from God according to Psalm 127: 3; but you know, children must not be taken for granted. Why, they are a great responsibility. Just because something is a gift doesn't mean that it's cheap or trivial.

Some people cheapen grace by thinking the grace of God means they have no responsibility at all. They don't have to make changes in their moral lives. They don't have to serve the Lord daily. But you know the Bible teaches exactly the opposite. We are saved to be different. Oh, I know that song "Just as I Am;" but singing a song 'Just as I Am' doesn't mean that is how I am always going to be. We all come to God as sinners needing the grace of God. But the grace of God will not leave us alone. It expects our lives to change, to be like

Christ. Listen to what the Bible says in the book of **Titus 2: 11-14**; it says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works.” We are a saved people, but we should be a changed people. Don’t cheapen the gift of grace by living a worldly life. Salvation ought to make a difference in how you live.

Now if God’s grace is what saves us, we need to know how God makes His grace available to us. If He gives His forgiveness and eternal life as a gift, we should want it for ourselves and for everyone we know. If someone is going to give me a priceless gift, I tell you I’m going to do whatever he asks. I’m not going to try to do things my own way. I’m going to listen to God and do just what He desires for my life.

I'm going to make my aim to please Him because of this great, great gift. I won't try to change anything but simply believe and obey Him and do things according to His terms.

Well, to enjoy the blessing of God, I'm going to have to trust God and trust His Word, the Bible. The Bible says in **Hebrews 11:6**, “without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Trusting God means trusting that His ways are better than mine. I know that God knows more than I do about spiritual matters. It means I'm going to listen to God and do what He says, because He said it.

So, when God asks me to repent of my sins, I'm going to do it. The Bible says in **Acts 17:30-31**, that “the times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man who he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Now, because I believe in Christ, I'm willing to confess my faith in Christ as Lord and as the Son of God to anyone and everyone. The Lord Jesus also asks me to obey Him in baptism. Now, baptism is the time when God acts in my life to save me. Baptism isn't the work of men; baptism is the work of God. God is the active one in baptism, and we are the passive ones. He acts on us.

Now, listen to what the Bible says in **Romans 6: 3 -7**, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”

Now, it takes effort to hear the word of God, to believe, to repent, and to confess Christ as the Son of God; that is something we do. But baptism is when God works on us to cleanse us, to cause us to be born again, to give us new life, and to free us from sin. Oh, I thank God for the gift that we get in baptism; and that's our salvation, that's when we become children of God and we are added to the church. When people say baptism isn't important to our salvation, they are actually interfering with what God does in baptism when he saves us.

Now, Jesus won't ask us at the gate, "Why should I allow you into heaven?" Oh, no! He gave us that promise when we became Christians, but you see we must hold on to it. Some Christians, sadly, forget the grace of God; they go back into sin and they lose that promise. I hope that you aren't one of them. My friend, stay faithful to the Lord and serve Him with gladness, because of all the good that He has done for you. Be grateful for His love and grace. Don't cheapen the grace of

God by forgetting all the good that He has done for you. Stay close to God.

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