

Do You Care Enough?

Hallmark has a motto: “When you care enough to send the very best.” Many, if not most, would answer, yes, if asked whether they care about their salvation and where they will spend eternity. But the larger question might be, “*How much* do you care?” Some might say they care so much that they participate in sacraments every month or every week, or even every day. Some may even say they care enough to try to live right every day, taking care not to break any of the Ten Commandments or the commandments of their church.

But sin, like death and taxes, is unavoidable. Sin also disturbs the conscience to the point of wanting to make reparations. But when we do things such as performing various sorts of penance and sacrifices, etc, in an effort *to pay for sins* we are in effect working for, or trying to earn righteousness and salvation.

However, there is a huge problem with working for salvation. No one knows exactly *how much* work is required. Should we pay for big sins only or also for little sins? Should we pay a little extra just to make sure? Should we do these things at least once a year, once a month, once a week – who knows? Human nature being what it is, we do the best we can. We just keep doing whatever we’re doing over and over and hope we die in a state of grace, in between states of sin. There is no security in this system of works. There’s got to be a better way.

There is also a more serious problem with this system of paying for sins. It just can’t be done! It is impossible! The bible tells us that “the wages [payment] of sin [singular – any sin] is death” (Romans 6:23). That is, the *only* way to pay for just one sin is to die for it. Doing penance won’t pay for any sin. Nor will saying prayers or giving to the poor. No, we cannot pay for just one sin and live to tell about it, for we would be dead. Again, there has to be a better way.

A more important reason why we cannot pay for our sins is that Jesus has already paid for them on the cross. Therefore the better (and *only*) way to obtain righteousness is to stop working to pay for our sins and just believe and trust that Jesus has already paid our penalty. The bible tells us that Jesus Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31), had no sins of his own (1 Peter 2:22) and was able to die for the sins of the *whole world!* (1 John 2:2) But this is only the half of it. Not only did Jesus die for our sins (as the bible predicted), but also three days later he rose from the dead (as the bible predicted) – (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). That is, not only did Jesus Christ pay for the sins of the whole world, he came back to life from the grave to give the world someone to believe in to be justified (Romans 4:25).

Many *say* they believe that Jesus paid for their sins, but they don’t support this claim by putting complete faith and trust in Him alone. They insist on doing their own penance and sacrifices in addition to Jesus’ sacrifice of himself on the cross. But when we do these things we are sharing our faith between two persons, Jesus and ourselves. Hence, there is no guarantee that either person is reliable by himself to do the thing that is believed in. There can only be one object of faith for salvation. That object must be the person of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). When we do anything in addition to what Jesus has already done for us, we are not completely trusting that Jesus paid the full penalty for all our sins.

But the bible says that Jesus “by himself [no help needed] purged [clear of any charges] our sins [plural – all of them]” (Hebrew 1:3). So there is no need, nor is it even possible, to participate in any sacraments or rituals that will pay for our sins. They have already been paid for and purged. Once something is paid for it cannot be paid for again.

The bible further says that Jesus “offered one sacrifice [himself] for sins for ever” (Hebrews 10:12). His sacrifice was perfect (Hebrews 10:14). God the Father is propitiated [satisfied] with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the righteous for our sins – and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world!* (1 John 2:2) Our sins have been remitted [released, forgiven], so there is *no need* to make any more offerings for sin (Hebrews 10:18).

Our *spirit* [not our flesh] must be “born again” to see the kingdom of God (John 3:7). Since flesh can only beget flesh (John 3:6) we are “without strength” [powerless] to spiritually bring about our spiritual rebirth (Romans 5:6). However, our faith in Jesus Christ allows the Holy Spirit to beget our new spirit (John 3:6).

Only God can make ungodly man right with Him (Romans 4:5). Only God can justify us and give us peace with Him through our faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Therefore we should change our mind [repent] about trying to become righteous on our own. We should abandon all efforts to pay for our sins, and trust solely and exclusively in Jesus Christ, who has already paid for all sins. To repeat, things that are already paid for cannot be paid for again (and again...).

The bible says that salvation [in the person of Jesus Christ] is THE GIFT OF GOD (Ephesians 2:4-9). Payment is neither required nor accepted. For if a gift could be earned it would not be a gift [something acquired without compensation]. Clearly, righteousness and salvation cannot be earned (Romans 4:1-5; Titus 3:5). It is one thing to reject a gift from another person, but pity the poor soul who rejects THE GIFT OF SALVATION from God. What answer would he give if asked by God, “Why did you reject MY GIFT?”

Man has an innate urge to worship something. More often than not we worship the wrong thing. But God gave us the correct thing to worship (John 3:16). He gave us His Son, who is trustworthy and is able to save us to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). All God wants from us is to accept His Gift by placing our complete faith and trust in His Son. The reward is everlasting life for this simple act of faith. Those who change their minds about working for salvation, and put their trust totally and exclusively in Jesus Christ, are rewarded with righteousness and salvation and everlasting life. Those who refuse God’s free gift of salvation and insist on working for it themselves can shamefully look forward to God’s EVERLASTING WRATH (John 3:18,36; Daniel 12:2).

The quintessential example of a person unable to work for salvation is the thief on the cross who was crucified with Jesus. Just minutes from death and with no chance for works, he acknowledged his sinful state and his just punishment, and asked Jesus for mercy when He came into His kingdom, thereby implying a faith that Jesus was the promised Messiah of scripture (Luke 23:40-43).

The bible states emphatically and authoritatively that not even God’s ceremonial/religious laws can justify us (Galatians 2:16). And if they could, then Christ died in vain (Galatians 2:21). What chance then, can man-made laws have to accomplish this? It further urges us to free ourselves of the bondage of vainly working for salvation by these means (Galatians 5:1). Let us therefore heed the bible’s exhortations and place our faith alone in Christ alone for our salvation.

One final note: Bible verses which promise God’s righteousness or salvation or everlasting life through faith alone in Christ alone hold the same weight and authority as a contract which is guaranteed by God. Man plays no part in this contract other than to believe in the One who guarantees it – Jesus Christ.. Adding *anything* to this contract, such as faith in one’s religion or church or baptism or rituals or works, is tantamount to making this contract null and void, with the person dying *in his sins* [not because of his sins – they were paid for by Christ], spending eternity in hell. We should tremble at this thought.

So back to the original question: Do you care where you will spend eternity? Do you really care enough to change your mind and abandon the present way you hope to get there? All it takes is faith in Jesus Christ. By placing your faith exclusively in Jesus Christ as your Savior (no additional faith in church or sacraments or anything else), and believing that Jesus has paid for all of your sins (something that is impossible for you or anyone else to do), you will become a born again (John 3:3) child of God (Galatians 3:26) who is guaranteed to have everlasting life (John 3:16; 1 John 5:13) with the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

BELIEVE IN JESUS NOW!

Questions?
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Comments? Concerns?
Rom 1:16; Ps 103

Criticisms?

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