

Good News For Sinners

Are you a sinner? If you say you are not, be careful of such a bold claim, for the bible says that every one in the world is a sinner [Romans 3:23]. It also calls us liars if we make that claim [1 John 1:8].

“Well, sure I sin sometimes”, you may say, “but I make up for it with prayers and good works, and get forgiveness of my sins through faith in Jesus and my religion. Then I’m clean as a whistle until the next time I sin.”

Ok, since you admit that you do sin sometimes, the bible has good news for you.

But first the bad news:

- ◆ Never mind only sinning once in a while. If we sin just once during our whole life we’re cooked (literally) [Romans 6:23; Hebrews 10:31; Revelation 21:8]. Hint: Examine the Ten Commandments [Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-19].
- ◆ Many of us trust in our religious clergy or rituals for forgiveness of our sins. But the bible says that no one can forgive sins but God [Luke 5:21].
- ◆ Many trust in church laws, but those cannot save us [Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16].
- ◆ Many of us trust in our own merits, such as prayers, sufferings and confessions to pay for our sins, but that’s a lost cause [Romans 4:1-5]. Those efforts are worthless, because forgiveness of sins only comes through the grace of God [Ephesians 1:7]. Side bar: The grace of God means that He gives us undeserved favor in the face of deserved wrath.
- ◆ Some of us try to pay for other people’s sins, be they alive or dead, through church rituals, but that just can’t happen. [Ezekiel 18:4].
- ◆ Many of us think our good works can pay for sins, but in God’s eyes our good works are no better than filthy rags [Isaiah 64:6]. Neither can our works save us from God’s wrath [Proverbs 14:12; Romans 3:12].

We are not sinners because we sin. Rather, we sin because we are sinners due to our makeup. Sin is in all of us – no one is excluded. Most people think that sinners cannot go to heaven. But it is not sin that keeps us out of heaven. What keeps us out of heaven is our lack of God’s righteousness. And God’s righteousness cannot be earned because it is a gift of God.

So, when all things are considered, what we think of as good news in our religion is really bad news because our religion is offering us a false sense of security, a false hope. “Well, is there no true hope at all?” we may ask. Yes, there is hope. Even though God’s righteousness cannot be earned, it can be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now the good news:

- ◆ God provides the ONLY way of salvation, that is, Jesus Christ [John 14:6].
- ◆ We are saved the moment we fully believe and trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation [John 3:16].
- ◆ Jesus performed the Perfect Sacrifice to take away the sins of the world [Hebrews 10:12, 14]. And when He performed that Perfect Sacrifice, He declared “IT IS FINISHED” [John 19:30], meaning that NO OTHER SACRIFICES need be (nor can be) performed for sins [Hebrews 10:12,14].
- ◆ Jesus rose from the dead so that we would have Someone to believe in for our justification and righteousness [1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 4:25].
- ◆ Salvation is a gift of God’s mercy and grace [Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9]. We do not have to do any good works (nor can we) to earn salvation.
- ◆ Once we believe in Christ, our good works earn us rewards in heaven rather than being wasted trying to earn salvation [1 Corinthians 3:12-14].

The point of the good news is that Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, paid for the sins of the whole world. He is the only one who was able to do that. He died for the sins of the whole world only

one time and will never again repeat that act, for He lives forever more. No one else can do what Jesus did. God raised Jesus from the grave to give us Someone to believe in for our justification [aligned with God, rather than against Him] and salvation. Try as we may with our confessions and sacrifices and good works, we are not able to pay for a single sin, much less the sins of friends and relatives who have passed on before us. The sad and ironic thing is that all our efforts to become righteous on our own terms only guarantees our being lost forever.

Blind faith in our good works or church or religion mean nothing to God. But focused faith in Jesus Christ the Righteousness will guarantee that we also will be raised from the grave to everlasting life.

All God requires of us is our obedience to put our complete trust and faith in the finished work that Christ has done for us on the cross. That faith must not be shared with anything or anyone else. When we do that, God imparts to us the righteousness of Christ and freely justifies us and we become born again to live forever with Christ. Failure to do this one simple act of faith will result in eternal separation from God and Jesus Christ in the Lake of Fire that was prepared for the rebellious angels.

It is a difficult thing for most of us to abandon our good works, for we feel that we should do something to earn righteousness. But God will not honor works of righteousness which we have done. Only by His mercy will he save anyone from His wrath. Having faith alone in Jesus Christ alone honors God and Jesus. But sharing that faith with anyone or anything else dishonors Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

Conclusion

Can anyone claim to not be a sinner? The bible emphatically answers, NO. Do sinners deserve God's abiding [lasting forever] wrath? Emphatically, YES. Can we do any kind of works to appease God and cause Him to turn away His anger? NO. Is there any hope at all of escaping God's judgement on our sins? The good news is, YES.

Peter tells us in Acts 4:12 that there is only one name in the whole earth whereby we MUST be saved. Must, in the sense that if we don't get saved we will never see heaven. And must, in the sense that we must get saved through the name of Jesus Christ. The name of our church cannot save us, neither can the name of our religion. Only faith in the name of Jesus Christ can save anyone.

Jesus told Nicodemus that we MUST be born again to see the kingdom of God [John 3:3]. That "born again" birth is a spiritual one. Physical water will not bring about a spiritual birth, neither will any other kind of physical ritual, no matter how holy it may seem. Only the Holy Spirit of God can bring about a spiritual birth. The Holy Spirit imparts a new birth to our spirit ONLY through our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

God urges us to not let the chance slip away if today we hear His voice urging us to place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. There is no second chance to change our minds after we die. While we still have the chance, while we are still alive and can decide who will be our Savior, let us place our complete trust and faith in Jesus Christ, who freely gives us everlasting life with Him through that faith, but paid dearly with His own life to appease God forever for our sins. Do not harden your heart against the simplicity of placing your faith only in Jesus Christ for your salvation.

Are you ready to abandon your own efforts to become righteous, but rather fully trust and rely and believe in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation? Doing so will guarantee that you will be saved forever and have eternal life with Jesus. I pray that you will.

BELIEVE IN JESUS NOW!

Questions?
DonDipascal@bellsouth.net

Comments? Concerns?
Rom 1:16; Ps 103

Criticisms?

04/22/2008