

Trusting Jesus Alone

By Don Krow

Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" What would you say? Let us state this another way, "What do you think a person has to do to go to heaven?"

According to our survey most people answer this question by saying something like this: "I have to do the best I can, live a good life, keep the Ten Commandments, love my neighbor, etc."

It is true that if we kept God's laws and commandments perfectly—in both our actions and attitudes—that we would have a righteousness that equaled God's. The only problem is, no one has ever done that. There are over 613 commandments in the Old Testament and hundreds of commandments in the New Testament. For a person to be justified by the law (that is, declared right before God) he would have to keep the whole law perfectly without one slip. The Living Bible states, "For Moses wrote [concerning the law] that if a person could be perfectly good and hold out against temptation all his life and never sin once, only then could he be pardoned and saved" (Romans 10:5).

James 2:10 states, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (New International Version).

To illustrate this point I will share the following parable. Suppose I am driving 50 miles per hour through a residential area that has a 25 miles per hour speed limit. A policeman clocks my speed with a radar gun and gives me a summons. I appear in court and say to the judge, "I never speed on that street and you should give me a reward!" The judge looks at me and says, "You may have never sped on that street until last week, but when the policeman clocked you, you were going 50 miles per hour. You are guilty of breaking the law and must pay the appropriate fine."

How many of God's laws do we have to break before we become lawbreakers? How many lies does it take to make a person a liar? How many sins does it take to make a person a sinner? Just one!

Have you ever sinned? If we consider sin as missing the mark of God's perfection we can easily see the error of our ways. If we think of sin as consisting of wrong thoughts that we embrace: anger, jealousy, gossip, or lust, we could say that a person who only sinned three times a day would seem to be almost an angel. Have you ever considered that three sins x 365 days = 1,095 sins or transgressions against God? If you are only 17 you would have already committed more than 18,000 sins or transgressions against God. What do you suppose would happen in a court of law if you were found to have 18,000 offenses on your personal record?

The Bible says "**the wages of sin is death**" (Romans 6:23). "Wages" are the due reward for the things we have done. "Death" in the Bible means "a separation" (James 2:26). What does sin do? It separates. It always separates!

If someone committed the sin of adultery, what would that sin do? It would separate the couple in the marriage relationship.

If someone was dishonest or got into strife in a business partnership, what would that sin do? It would separate the business partners.

When the Bible says, "The wages of our sin is death," it means that our sins will separate us from God forever. That's not good news.

The Good News!

"All we, like sheep have all gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way and the LORD has [in His mercy] laid upon him [Jesus] the iniquities [sins] of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

The Bible tells us, "God offered him [Jesus], so that by his sacrificial death he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven." (Romans 3:25, Today's English Version).

The following parable illustrates what Jesus has done for us. A parable is a simple story that illustrates a moral or spiritual truth.

I was raised in a small community in Northeastern Oklahoma. Although we lived in town, we had a ranch a few miles west of the city. As I was driving hurriedly to our ranch one day, I suddenly was startled by the flashing lights of an Oklahoma highway patrol car. He stopped me and gave me a summons for speeding. I was to appear before a judge at the Pawnee County courthouse. As the judge came in, I noticed that he was a friend of the family. I thought to myself, "I know I'm going to get this traffic ticket dismissed." The judge greeted me, asked about my family and then said, "I'd like to show you mercy; I would like to show you grace, but I cannot in order to be a just judge." He heard the evidence from the highway patrolman and found me guilty as charged. His sentence was one day in jail or \$50. Not having \$50, I was prepared to go to jail. At this point the judge did an amazing thing. He took off his robe that distinguished him as a judge, stepped down from his stand, reached into his pocket and handed me \$50.

Because he was a just judge he sentenced me and found me guilty, but in his mercy paid my debt.

That's what God did for us in Jesus Christ. Because He is a just and holy God he sentenced us (The wages of our sin is death; Romans 6:23), but in His mercy and love He paid our debt. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18).

How are we to respond to this good news? The Bible tells us that we are to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:5).

What is repentance? Repentance is a gift that God gives to people who want to be saved. It involves a new attitude, a change of heart, and a change of mind. It results in turning to God and His kingdom and away from Satan and his kingdom. Although it is not perfection, it is a change of direction. Repentance involves turning **FROM** something, **TO** something. It's described in Acts 26:18 as "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins."

Jesus not only said to repent, but also to believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

In the 20th century, "believing" can mean just acknowledging some mental facts. I "believe" in Jesus; He died on a cross and rose again. I believed that all my life and was taught that in Sunday school.

In the English language there is just one word for "believe," it means: "To hold an opinion; think or consider to be true or honest." In the Greek language of the New Testament, "belief" or "faith" means, "having confidence in, trusting, reliance upon, placing one's self in the care of another."

The Amplified Bible expands faith's meaning by stating, "Believe in and on the Lord Jesus Christ—that is, give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31).

An example of how one must believe upon Christ is expressed by the story of a pilot who crashed in the ocean. As he saw a piece of wood from a raft floating by, he really believed that it could save him. However, he finally perished as he saw the wood float away. Even though he believed it could save him, it did not save him. In order for the piece of wood to save him, he needed to throw himself on it, cling to it, rely on it, and trust himself to it. Saving faith is throwing yourself on, clinging to, relying on and trusting yourself to Jesus Christ and His saving work for you upon the cross. It is trusting Jesus **ALONE** for your salvation (Galatians 2:21).

Discipleship Questions

1. What do you think a person has to do in order to go to heaven?

2. How do most people (according to our survey) answer the question, "What must you do to go to heaven?"

3. What does Titus 3:5 say about being saved by your own good works?

4. Read James 2:10 (*New International Version*). How many of God's laws do we have to break before we become lawbreakers?

5. Read Romans 10:5 (*The Living Bible*). How many sins does it take to make a person a sinner?

6. What would happen in a court of law if you were found to have 18,000 offenses on your record?

7. According to Romans 6:23, What is the due reward for the evil things that we have done?

8. Read Isaiah 53:6. Read out loud the first part of the verse and ask the question, "Is that true of me?"

9. Read Isaiah 53:6 again. What has the Lord done with your sins?

10. Read Acts 16:31 (*Amplified Bible*). What then must you do to be saved?

11. Do you believe that Christ died for your personal sins?

12. Do you believe that He rose from the dead?

13. Read 1 Peter 3:18. Do you believe that He did this to bring you to God?

14. Repentance is turning to God through Christ, for mercy and forgiveness of your sins. Read Acts 20:21. How is repentance described in this verse?

15. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9 (*New International Version*). How is repentance described in this verse?

16. Read Acts 26:20 (*New International Version*). How is repentance described in this verse?

17. In the English language there is just one word for "believe," it means: "To hold an opinion; think or consider to be true or honest." In the Greek language of the New Testament, "belief" or "faith" means, "having confidence in, trusting, reliance upon, placing one's self in the care of another." How does the Greek language define "faith" or "believing?"

18. What is Jesus saying in John 6:37?

19. According to Acts 26:18, why do we need to come to Jesus?

20. Will you come?

Scriptures to Use with Questions

Titus 3:5 - *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"*

James 2:10 (New International Version) - *"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."*

Romans 10:5 (The Living Bible) - *"For Moses wrote [concerning the law] that if a person could be perfectly good and hold out against temptation all his life and never sin once, only then could he be pardoned and saved."*

Romans 6:23 - *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Isaiah 53:6 - *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath [in His mercy] laid on him [Jesus] the iniquity [sins] of us all."*

Acts 16:31 (Amplified Bible) - *"And they answered, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ [give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping] and you will be saved, [and this applies both to] you and your household as well."*

1 Peter 3:18 - *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"*

Acts 20:21 - *"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."*

1 Thessalonians 1:9 (New International Version) - *"for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,"*

Acts 26:20 (New International Version) - *"First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds."*

John 6:37 - *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

Acts 26:18 - *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*

Answer Key

1. What do you think a person has to do in order to go to heaven?
2. How do most people (according to our survey) answer the question, "What must you do to go to heaven?" **They say, "I have to do the best I can, live a good life, keep the Ten Commandments, love my neighbor, etc."**
3. What does Titus 3:5 say about being saved by your own good works? **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us**
4. Read James 2:10 (*New International Version*). How many of God's laws do we have to break before we become lawbreakers? **Just one!**
5. Read Romans 10:5 (*The Living Bible*). How many sins does it take to make a person a sinner? **Just one!**
6. What would happen in a court of law if you were found to have 18,000 offenses on your record? **You would be found guilty (a lawbreaker).**
7. According to Romans 6:23, What is the due reward for the evil things that we have done? **Death or separation from God forever.**
8. Read Isaiah 53:6. Read out loud the first part of the verse and ask the question, "Is that true of me?"
9. Read Isaiah 53:6 again. What has the Lord done with your sins? **Laid them on Jesus.**
10. Read Acts 16:31 (*Amplified Bible*). What then must you do to be saved? **Believe in, that is, entrust yourself unto His keeping and saving work.**
11. Do you believe that Christ died for your personal sins?
12. Do you believe that He rose from the dead?
13. Read 1 Peter 3:18. Do you believe that He did this to bring you to God?
14. Repentance is turning to God through Christ, for mercy and forgiveness of your sins. Read Acts 20:21. How is repentance described in this verse? **As a turning towards God.**
15. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9 (*New International Version*). How is repentance described in this verse? **As a turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God.**
16. Read Acts 26:20 (*New International Version*). How is repentance described in this verse? **As turning to God demonstrated by the fruit of good works.**
17. In the English language there is just one word for "believe," it means: "To hold an opinion; think or consider to be true or honest." In the Greek language of the New Testament, "belief" or "faith" means, "having confidence in, trusting, reliance upon, placing one's self in the care of another." How does the Greek language define "faith" or "believing?" **Trust, reliance upon, placing one's self in the care of another.**
18. What is Jesus saying in John 6:37? **He that comes to Jesus will never be cast out, or away.**

19. According to Acts 26:18, why do we need to come to Jesus? **To receive forgiveness of sins and the inheritance, eternal life He has promised.**

20. Will you come?

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