

Can You Really Go to Heaven?

Introduction:

- I. I've seen a lot of problems with confidence among brethren in various places.
 - A. I've seen an alarming number of brethren who doubt whether they can even get to heaven.
 - B. If you don't believe you can get somewhere, you'll never try (at least not whole-heartedly).
 - C. I suspect that more cases of failure to thrive-and-try come about because of this than we realize.
 - D. It's time for us to get up and get on our way to heaven!
- II. Let's talk about the certainty we should have of getting where God truly wants us to be.

Body:

I. **Heaven Is a Hope We Must Nurture...**

- A. Heaven should never be, for us, a questionable proposition.
- B. **Heb 6:10-12** *"¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. ¹¹And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize **the full assurance of hope until the end**, ¹²that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."*
- C. **I John 1:8f** *"⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
 1. Three things become crystal clear in this text:
 - a. We will sin.
 - b. It is our personal obligation to correct it.
 - c. If we correct it, we will be forgiven.
 2. People wonder, at times, what if I sin and don't know it?
 - a. What do you think you're doing that you don't know.
 - b. Do you know what God expects of you?
 - c. Do you know what God forbids of you?
 - d. Then do as you should, avoid what you shouldn't, and live with joy in the Lord.
 3. I've known brethren who believed we sin many times every day. They view their existence as being filled with daily sins.
 - a. When I ask them how they sin, they can't be specific. They just begin to talk about "secret sins."
 - b. If you can't get through a day without sinning, then you need some serious meditation and prayer.
 4. We commonly speak of ourselves as "sinful creatures." This is straight out of Calvinistic doctrine.
 - a. Holding on to this makes us feel like we cannot rise above the world in **any** way.
 - b. **Sinful** is the Bible view of us *before* we became Christians (e.g. **Eph 2:1ff**).
 - c. Now we are viewed as "saints," "sanctified," and "holy."

II. **Pressing on Toward the Goal...**

- A. **Phil 3:12ff** *"¹²Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*
- B. Don't mistake the Bible's admonitions to excel still more and be more diligent, for saying you still aren't quite good enough for heaven.
 1. We will never be good enough for heaven, no matter how much we excel, or are diligent!
 2. We don't get to heaven because we have become morally perfect.
 3. We get to heaven because we have trusted in God's grace, and given our lives to Him in faithful service.
 - a. The problem arises in our minds when we make our mistakes.
 - b. We somehow imagine that God is intolerant of mistakes, and writes us off.
 - c. This is a lack of trust in God's grace and mercy.
 - d. God expects us to do the very best that we can.
 - e. Your new motto: **Ditch the excuses, get busy, and trust the Lord.**

III. We Are All Standing on a Rug...

- A. I want every Christian here to imagine that he/she is standing on a rug.
1. For some it is a royal carpet of welcome.
 2. Others look down and see a rug that may one day be yanked out from under them by the Lord.
- B. These are two different ways of looking at your Savior. The rug beneath your feet is an expression of how you feel about Jesus.
1. In the first case, you believe that God and Jesus want you to be saved.
 - a. **II Pt 1:10f** ¹⁰ *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.*
 - (1) People ignore this text when they go to interpret **I Pt 4:18**.
 - (2) That the righteous will *scarcely* be saved doesn't mean we'll just barely get into heaven!
 - b. **Rom 8:31-34** ³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge (to call into account) against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; (to pronounce free of guilt) ³⁴ who is the one who condemns (to give judgment against)? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes (not strictly legal - but may be used of petitions in a legal suit) for us.*
 - (1) God is for us, and His Son is the judge.
 - (a) We know He is for us because He gave His Son to die for us.
 - (b) Won't He give us all things?
 - (2) Who will "charge," "condemn"? Legal terms...
 - (3) Most famous passage still says it best from a simple standpoint: **John 3:16**.
 - c. Standing upon this blood stained carpet before the cross of Jesus Christ, you see His arms open wide.
 - d. Are you going to go to heaven?
 2. In the second case, you look upon God and Jesus with suspicion.
 - a. Every passage in the Bible becomes a nail in the coffin of joy.
 - b. You don't really see yourself going to heaven.
 - c. Instead, you imagine that you are in that group that is told to depart.
 - d. **Mt 7:21ff** ²¹ *Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" ²³ And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."'''
 - (1) Do you see a group who diligently tried to make it to heaven, but had the rug yanked out from under them?
 - (2) If that is what you see, then you aren't seeing correctly. These people did not do the will of the Father.
 - (3) Just because people are *sincerely* laboring, does not mean that they are laboring for the Father.*
 - e. These are looking down at a rug stained with the blood of someone who died to save, and they still won't trust Him to save them!

Conclusion:

- I. I haven't left you much wiggle room. You are either on your way to heaven with joy, or you are wallowing in distrust.
- II. I want to leave you with one passage that you would do well to memorize:
 - A. **Rom 8:35-39** ³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, 'For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 - B. God never meant for the faithful to live their lives with a fear of the judgment (**I Jn 4:17f**).