

4. The Top 10 Lies of the Devil—Pt.4

(8/6/23)

Today we're going to finish up a special series I've entitled—"*The Top 10 Lies of the Devil.*"

For the last few weeks, we have been looking at some of Satan's favorite lies he constantly tries to get people to fall for—starting with number 10 and counting down to number 1:

10. Happiness will be yours when you *own* (a home, a boat, a time-share in Myrtle Beach...), ***achieve*** (wealth or earn a degree, or start a business), **or *experience*** (success or marriage) ...

9. God can't exist because there is so much evil and suffering in the world

8. There is no absolute truth—whatever a person believes is *their* truth

7. You're so bad God can't love you (and wants nothing to do with you!)

6. Hell isn't real (it's right here on earth)

5. It's too late for you (to receive Jesus and start living for God)

4. God is an angry God who is looking for any reason to punish you

3. There is no need to hurry to get your life right with God—you have plenty of time

2. There are many roads that lead to heaven

That leaves us with one more lie we need to look at—the number one lie that Satan deceives the people of this world with:

1. Only good people go to heaven

Now I realize that for some of you this is anticlimactic in that we have touched on this several times already as we looked at the first 9 of Satan's favorite lies—so then why include it?

I included it because I still believe that of all the lies Satan has fed the human race—this one is at the very top of his list—and we need to give it some more attention.

Why do I believe that?

I believe it because the groundwork has already been laid, people have already been *primed* and *prepped* to receive this lie—all the devil has to do is whisper it in their ears!

What am I talking about?

Western civilization has been built on what has been called a '*works/righteousness*' system or foundation.

In other words, '*If you do good works (if you're nice, help older folks across the street, don't pull the wings off butterflies etc.) then you'll be right with God Who will love you and bless you—but if you're bad God won't love you or bless you.*'

This mentality shows up early in the history of mankind (it probably got started right after the fall).

We definitely see it manifested in the pages of the oldest book in the Bible—the Book of Job. (Explain).

And in more modern times we see it manifested in the lives of the Pharisees in Jesus' day and in the lives of Roman Catholics and Protestant legalists in our time.

And this could be expanded to include all religions on the face of the earth because—they're all built on a '*works/righteousness*' foundation.

Here's the problem with the mentality that only good people have a chance to get into heaven—it's a lie that has been tailor made by the devil to keep people *out* of heaven by deceiving them into thinking they're basically good enough to get *into* heaven. As Proverbs 20:6 says—'*Most people proclaim each their own goodness.*'—Why?

Because the devil has convinced them (working in tandem with the pride in their deceived fallen hearts—Jer. 17:9)—that they're good people.

So right out of the gate the devil has deceived people from the beginning of time into thinking that they're good enough to make it into heaven.

Whereas the flip side of that coin is where he then turns around and tells others that—they're so bad that God can't love them and doesn't want them in heaven! (See lie #7)

Since we've already looked at the lie that some are so bad God wants nothing to do with them—let's focus the rest of our time on those who think that they're *good* enough to get into heaven.

And again, this is without a doubt the biggest lie the devil has ever fed the human race—the lie that you get to heaven by being *good* (moral and religious)—or in other words, that heaven is a *reward* for deserving people—folks, that is the lie of religion.

As we said last week, there are really only two '*religions*' in the world—the religion of human achievement, and the religion of divine accomplishment.

Every religion and religious system in the world apart from Christianity falls under the category of human achievement—in other words, what we do for God to earn His favor (and if they believe in the God of the Bible)—to earn a place in heaven.

Only Christianity (which is not a religion but a relationship) falls under the category of divine accomplishment—in other words—what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ to offer us a place in heaven as a gift.

Religion is spelled “*DO*” (as in ‘do’, ‘do’, ‘do’ and maybe someday you’ll do enough to earn heaven)—whereas Christianity is spelled “*DONE*” (as in Jesus’ declaration from the cross, “*It is finished*”—John 19:30).

Religion comes from man and is an expression of his pride (to show he’s good enough to work for and earn a place in heaven)—it is man-centered and works oriented.

Christianity comes from God and is Christ-centered and grace oriented (i.e., ‘*salvation isn’t something we earn by works it is free gift we receive by faith*’—Eph.2:8-9).

Trying to *add* any work or works (no matter how religious and well intentioned they might be) to the completed work of Jesus on Calvary’s Cross as a way of earning salvation—is an abomination in the sight of God Who will not share His glory for the work He has done in purchasing our salvation with anyone!

I grew up in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) where we were taught that religious practices and observances like—going to mass, lighting candles, keeping holy days, praying the rosary, abstaining from certain foods during lent and other acts of ‘piety’—would earn us a place in heaven.

For centuries the RCC has taught (and still teaches) that we must punish ourselves as a way of paying for our sins and lessen our time in purgatory (which does not exist).

And so faithful Catholics in some parts of the world during ‘Passion Week’ walk barefoot on roads containing sharp rocks while flagellating themselves with whips until their feet and backs are raw and bloody.

They do this as a way of earning God’s favor and meriting heaven (like Roman Catholics living in the Philippines who even conduct mock crucifixions to atone for their sins).

This is an absolute blasphemy against the completed work of Jesus Christ Who said from the cross—“*It is finished!*”

Listen to the words of Isaiah on the subject:

Isaiah 53:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

One pastor said, *“If you add one ounce of works to a billion pounds of grace you negate grace.”*

In other words, you forfeit grace (salvation is a gift of God’s grace—i.e., ‘*getting what you don’t deserve*’) and have divorced yourself from the completed work of Christ for you on Calvary’s Cross. (Gal.5:2-4)

Which means that—what Jesus did in paying for your sins will not be available to you, will be withdrawn from you as an offer if you try to add to it (in any way) human works as a way of ‘*helping*’ to purchase or earn your salvation.

Paul hits this hard in the book of Galatians—*“If human works, rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices etc. could save us—then Christ died in vain!”* (Gal.2:21)

As I just said, this is without a doubt the deadliest lie the devil has ever fed the human race—that heaven is only for people who have gone to church their whole lives and have lived virtuous, moral lives—in other words, heaven is only for ‘good people.’

Let me stop here and lay a bombshell revelation on you—heaven is only for good people!

Heaven is a place only *good* people will be allowed to enter into!

The problem is that most people define goodness from fallen man’s perspective and not from Holy God’s perspective.

Most people come to the conclusion that they are good people and therefore worthy of heaven—by looking at *others* in society.

Of course, they can always find people who are worse than they are to compare themselves to—thieves, rapists, murderers and other assorted miscreants and malcontents—which makes them look like Mother Teresa by comparison—shining examples of virtue and worthiness.

But you see the Bible defines goodness as '*moral perfection*'—and only God is morally perfect.

Which is exactly what Jesus acknowledged in Matthew 19:17 when He said, "*No one is good but God*"—which means everyone else, all of humanity, falls into the category of 'sinners' not good people!

The word '**sin**' is a Greek word that literally means "*to miss the mark.*"

It was an archery term for hitting the bullseye on a target.

God's Word (Romans 3:23) says that—"*all have sinned* (all have missed the mark)."

Of course, the next question is "*What does the 'mark' or the bullseye represent?*"

Well, we're not left to guess because Paul goes on to tell us in Romans 3:23—"*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*"

"*What is the glory of God?*" → It's perfection.

"*Yes, but perfection with regard to what?*"

The perfection that Paul is referring to in Romans 3:23—is perfectly keeping God’s righteous standards as set forth in His divine law.

In the O.T. God’s law contained 613 commandments—to break anyone of them was to miss the mark (sin) and to be guilty before God.

But let’s not deal with all 613, let’s just limit ourselves to the ten we are most familiar with—*the Ten Commandments* (not the 10 suggestions).

In that regard, being good in the eyes of God means hitting the ‘mark’ (sinless perfection) all day, every day!

It is keeping perfectly all the Ten Commandments of God your entire life without fail!

These commandments are like the wooden boards that make up the hull of a ship—it doesn’t matter if most of them are there—if only one is missing or broken that ship is going down!

The same is true for the person who tries to get to heaven by keeping the Ten Commandments.

It doesn’t matter if they keep *most* of them—if any commandment is broken even once—that person is sunk (condemned)

James said—“*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point (break only one of God’s commandments), he is guilty of violating them all.*” (2:10)

This is why Paul calls the law a curse—it’s because it makes salvation dependent upon a person keeping all of it without fail—in other words, the law demands moral perfection from a person to gain access into heaven.

And yet when I ask people, “*If you were to die tonight would God let you into heaven?*”—they almost always tell me, “*Yes!*”

And when I ask them to explain why they respond, “*Because I’m a good person. I know I’m not perfect (morally speaking), but I still think I’m good enough to get into heaven*” (they have bought into the devil’s lie!).

Listen to what God’s Word is saying—If you’re *not* morally perfect you’re *not good enough* to get into heaven!

And that’s why Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 (a very moral and religious person)—“*No one is good but God*” because God defines “good” as moral perfection.

Fallen man defines goodness as simply being better than others—and since we can always find someone worse than we are to compare ourselves to—we think we’re good!

But they aren’t the standard—Jesus is the standard—and He’s perfect!

Which means there is no “*I think I’m good enough*” or “*I’m better than most...*” argument that will get a person into heaven—it’s either sinless perfection or eternal rejection (hell)!

Again, Paul the apostle in Romans 3:23 said, “*For all have sinned (missed the mark) and fall short of the glory of God (sinless perfection)*” and in Romans 6:23 he said and, “*the wages of sin is death (eternal death in hell)*” Rom.6:23a.

I can hear people shout back, “*No one can live a life of sinless perfection!*”

That’s not true—One Man did—His name is Jesus, and if we put our faith in Him, He will put His righteousness to our account so that we can go to heaven through Him—

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Romans 4:5 (NLT)

⁵ But people are counted as righteous [worthy of heaven], not because of their work [religious and moral works], but because of their faith in God [God's Son, Jesus Christ] who forgives sinners.

You see, the bad news is that God only lets perfect people into heaven—the good news is that anyone who receives Jesus into their heart as Savior is pronounced perfect by God (because I am now in Christ and God no longer sees me He sees only Jesus) and given the gift of eternal life in heaven—

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

²³ ...the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And so, the idea that most people are basically good and therefore God will accept them into heaven—is the #1 lie of the devil.

Heaven is only for perfect people and there are only 2 ways a person can be perfect—1. Live a sinless life; or 2. Receive Jesus as your Savior who lived a sinless, perfect life.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Look, some people are so hung-up on the works/righteousness system—let me say it one more time.

Some people are obviously living better lives than others—but that doesn't make them 'good' (morally perfect) in the eyes of God.

Jesus was the only human being Who was truly good—because He was (and is) the only Human Being Who was/is truly God—the Great ‘I AM!’

John 1:1–3, 14 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 14:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus at His first coming, didn’t come to judge the world and send people to hell—He entered the world on a search and rescue mission to rescue lost sinners—

Luke 19:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The whole purpose of Jesus coming to the earth, the whole reason He died and rose again wasn’t to make good people better, or bad people good—it was to make dead people alive! (Comment)

But God won’t accept those into heaven who think they’re good enough to get there—He only accepts those who know they’re sinners and need a Savior.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Lies that didn’t make the top 10 list but deserve special mention:

- *The Bible was written a long time ago and so it’s not relevant for today.*
- *I don’t need God—I know what’s best for my life.*

- *You've really blown it this time—so don't even think of going to God!*
- *God didn't create the universe—it was the Big Bang.*
- *God doesn't want to hear from you anymore—not after you've ignored Him for so long.*
- *If you're not being blessed and your prayers aren't being answered—you're not right with God and He's angry with you.*
- *You don't matter to God.*
- *If I'm not happy, then God must not love me.*
- *I'm the only one who struggles with _____ so I'm hopeless and should just kill myself.*
- *I have to be perfect for God to love me.*
- *Being a Christian means never sinning again.*
- *I don't need Christian friends—I can make it on my own.*
- *It's all about me.*
- *If you love God—you don't need to go to church.*

John 8:31–32 (NLT)

³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 17:14–17 (NLT)

¹⁴ [Father] I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.