

October 16th, 2022
Heaven: Week 3

If we're honest, we know very little about Heaven! Heaven is a place where Mystery and Majesty collide!

The big challenge is, everyone wants to go to heaven, but a lot of people aren't really sure how to get there, or even worse, they've been given wrong directions.

You want to be sure you're always going in the right direction, and that you're getting the most accurate information to your destination!

Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

John 1:12 (NIV)

Yet to all who did RECEIVE him, to those who BELIEVED in his name, he gave the right to BECOME children of God.

To BECOME a Child of God, you HAVE to BELIEVE the right thing! You can't just believe anything, we don't set the standard!

Let me give you four steps on how to make it to Heaven.

A. GOD

1. He is LOVING! (1 John 4:16 (NIV)- God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.)

2. He is HOLY

Anything impure stands in stark contrast to God, since He is *without* sin or impurity of any kind. His holiness exposes and rejects anything that falls short of His perfect standard.

3. He is JUST

This means that God is all about Justice, He's a good and perfect judge.

Not only does God's holiness expose and reject anything impure or sinful, His justice HAS to deal with it. He must punish sin, and imperfection

because a good judge does not let lawbreakers go without paying for their misdeeds.

B. Us

1. We were created Good, but chose to become SINFUL (Disobedient)

Adam and Eve were told they had the whole garden, just don't touch the fruit of this one tree! But they did!

Romans 3:23 (NIV)

... For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

The human race was originally created good, but this rebellious act against God's law brought about what we call Universal Sin.

2. The penalty of Universal Sin is DEATH, both physical and spiritual.

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

For the wages of sin is death...

(Hebrews 9:22 (NIV)

... Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.)

The debt we owe God requires payment, and that payment is made in blood. Without it, it causes eternal separation.

3. We are spiritually HELPLESS (*Isaiah 64:6 (NIV)*- All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...)

We have incurred a debt which must be paid, and there are no funds in our moral bank account to buy our way off death row. This is where some people go in the wrong direction.

C. Enter CHRIST! Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves!

1. Jesus is fully God, who also became MAN

John 1:1,14 (NIV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...

2. Christ died as our SUBSTITUTE

1 Peter 2:24 (NIV)

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

This is the central truth of the Gospel. The debt of death that we owe was paid for by Jesus who died in our place. He made it possible to offer us the greatest gift in the world.

He will give His righteousness, forgiveness, and life in exchange for our sins, guilt, and death sentence.

Why did any price have to be paid at all? Why couldn't God just forgive and forget, like we can?

3. Christ offers His forgiveness as a FREE GIFT

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Despite the enormity of our debt and the high cost, Jesus paid to buy us forgiveness and new life, the whole package is offered to us freely. It is literally a gift waiting to be opened.

D. YOU

Individually each of us decides the outcome of our own storyline in the play, which is whether or not we will end up being reconciled to the Father.

Each of us must make a decision.

2. You and I must RESPOND.

The gift has been offered, but we must respond to it!

3. You and I must ASK Christ to be our FORGIVER and LEADER

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

If we confess our sins HE is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

As our Forgiver, Christ takes away our death sentence and gives us eternal life with Him. As our Leader, Christ has control of our life.

When we respond by receiving Christ as forgiver and leader, a spiritual transformation takes place in us.

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

1. When and What was your first thought on how to go to Heaven? Explain your process to the group.
2. Did you ever think there was another way to heaven besides Jesus?
3. How important is it to have a witnessing plan? Have you ever used one? What would you say to help people to become a follower of Jesus?
4. What do you think most people think about... God is Love or God is Just? Why?
5. Does it make sense that God can't just Forget your sin but must deal with it?
6. What is one big piece to your Salvation Story? Were you saved from something? Grow up in a Christian home? Were you far from God and have a come home story? Have a few people briefly tell their salvation story.