

LORD'S DAY 7 Q 20-23

20. Q. Are all men, then, saved by Christ just as they perished through Adam?

A. No. Only those are saved who by a true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all his benefits

- Through Adam's sin we all fell
 - So logically – through the death of Christ we are all saved
 - Is this correct?
 - Short answer – No
- Jesus specifically warns us about this type of thinking in Matthew 7:13-14:
 - ¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.
- Hell is not an enjoyable topic for anyone to talk about
 - Most preachers are uncomfortable with the subject
 - Hell is preached on far less than heaven is preached
- Anytime I look at the obituaries online or in the paper I always notice one thing:
 - Everybody goes to heaven
- I have heard it said by many people in the past
 - People who are not particularly religious
 - People who really do not associate themselves very much with the Christian faith
 - Who say something like this:
 - Jesus died for everyone
 - This means all of our sins are forgiven
 - He is the Savior of all mankind
 - Therefore - we all go to heaven
- This is simply not true
 - The Bible does not teach this
 - All unbelieving and unrepented people die in their sins
 - This means that a large amount of people are not saved when they die
 - How many times as a hospital chaplain did I meet a person on their deathbed who told me
 - “I am not religious – but I am spiritual”
 - This is not repentance
 - This is not belief in Christ
 - This is not acknowledging Christ as both Lord and Savior
 - Being spiritual will not save you
- The sad reality is
 - Everybody doesn't go to heaven
 - Christ's death does not automatically mean everybody goes directly to heaven when they die
- For this reason
 - Many faiths traditions discard the reality of Hell altogether

- They teach that in the end we all end up in heaven
 - That if Hell does exist:
 - It is for the really bad people
 - Like Hitler and Stalin
 - Hell is too hard of concept for many people to come to terms with
 - We find many ways to rationalize the judgment and wrath of God
 - That those who die in their sins will find themselves in Hell for all eternity
- It is eternally impossible for an individual who finds themselves in Hell to retrace their steps
 - There is no way out
 - They cannot be restored
 - Nor will they want to be
 - Since God has removed His restraint of common grace from the individual
 - They are now left to completely express their hatred for God in their suffering
- We have to ask ourselves which one is more important:
 - Telling someone the truth about Hell
 - Or being concerned with how they will respond or how it will affect your relationship with the person
 - This may be the single most difficult subject that you will ever have to bring up
 - We all have that friend / that loved one / that relative / that co-worker
- We have heard it time and time again
 - **Acts 20:26-27** - ²⁶ *Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,* ²⁷ *for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God*
 - We do not want to be this person
 - We do not want to be the one who has to stand before God and give an account as to why we were afraid of telling people about the reality of Hell
- This is why we must have a balanced approach in our witness
 - Both law and grace together
- Yes – Hell is a reality
- No – Jesus death on the cross does not automatically mean all people go to heaven
 - This is the negative result of sin
 - But we also must preach the positive side of God’s grace
 - We must preach the entire counsel of God
 - Both the bad with the good
- True faith in Christ is the only thing that can save a person
 - God requires all people everywhere to repent
 - Every human being has the mandatory responsibility to repent of their sins and to turn to Christ for their salvation
 - *True faith* is what accomplishes this
 - The result of *true faith* is the individual being *grafted into Christ Himself*
 - The person has now *accepted all the benefits that Christ has to offer*

21. Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in his Word. At the same time it is a firm confidence that not only to others, but also to me, God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits. This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel

So here is the positive side of the coin – The nature of “true faith”

How do we communicate this to others?

- **1 - True faith is a sure knowledge**
 - True faith is not just consent
 - Meaning you believe, but not to the point of being saved
 - True faith always results in salvation
 - Neither is true faith simply having faith in faith
 - It is not simply taking a blind leap into the dark
 - Hoping that the Lord will catch you
 - True faith is based upon true knowledge
 - It is knowledge that is real / relevant / and trustworthy
 - Let's take a look at these two verses together:
 - **2 Peter 1:20** - *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
 - **2 Peter 1:16** - *For we (referring to the apostles) did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty*
 - We have sure knowledge from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the apostles who were eyewitnesses to the events they describe
 - The Bible is not based upon myth
 - It is not based upon fables or superstition
 - Rather – it is based upon eyewitness testimony from those who were there and witnessed these things first hand
 - Through the Holy Spirit who moved the authors as the Spirit inspired the very words that they wrote
- **2 - Whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in his Word**
 - You may wonder how this is even possible
 - At times we lack faith in the saving power of the Holy Spirit
 - We ask ourselves
 - How we can expect a person to all of a sudden accept as true all that God has revealed in His Word
 - Former agnostic turned Christian, C.S. Lewis, speaking of himself, stated:
 - “The Lord opened the gates of salvation to a person who was kicking, struggling, resentful, and looking for any way to escape God's calling”
 - How does the Lord do this to a person?

- **2 Cor 4:6** – *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*
 - It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes this task in the heart of a person
 - He supernaturally makes His Words known to the individual
 - And it comes by way of hearing the Word of God preached
 - **Romans 10:17** - *So faith (referring to true faith) comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*
- **3 - At the same time it is a firm confidence that not only to others, but also to me, God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, out of mere grace**
 - Paul gives us a description of why we have a firm confidence regarding our salvation
 - **Romans 5:1** - *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith (referring to true faith), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*
 - We see an example of salvation by true faith in **Acts 10:44-46** with Cornelius and his household
 - ⁴⁴ *While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God*
 - Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2:8-9** that our salvation is out of mere grace
 - ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved (true faith) through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast*
 - Paul tells us in **Philippians 1:29** that our faith has been first granted to us by God
 - *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him (referring to true faith) but also suffer for his sake*
- **4 - only for the sake of Christ’s merits**
 - An entire study could be made just on this subject alone
 - Simply put – when the Lord saves us:
 - We now stand in His righteousness
 - We no longer stand in our own righteousness
 - We receive the righteousness of Christ
 - He receives our past, present, and future sins
 - When God looks down from heaven upon the believer
 - He sees the finished work of Christ
 - It is Christ’s meritorious work on the cross that saves a sinner
 - And nothing else
- **5 - This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel**
 - As **Romans 5:5** tells us - *God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us*

So the negative – not everyone is saved through Christ’s death

- The majority of people die in their sins and spend eternity in Hell
- They do this by their own choosing
- This is a difficult subject to discuss, but we must be faithful to the whole counsel of God

This gets balanced out by preaching the positive – true faith is required of all people

- Salvation is attainable by grace through faith (true faith)
 - Not by works
 - Only through Christ’s merit alone

22. Q. What, then, must a Christian believe?

A. All that is promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary

- This has been required of us by way of the Great Commission
 - **Matthew 28:19-20** - ¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*”
 - **John 20:31** - *but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

23. Q. What are these articles?

A. Those which are stated in the Apostle’s Creed

I. 1. I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

II. 2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord;

3. he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;

4. suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell.

5. On the third day he arose from the dead;

6. he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;

7. from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

III . 8. I believe in the Holy Spirit;

9. I believe a holy catholic Christian church, the communion of saints;

10. the forgiveness of sins;

11. the resurrection of the body;

12. and the life everlasting.