

Harmony of the Gospels
Part 37 Matthew 7:21-29
“What it takes to Enter Heaven”
(A Tribute to my Dad)

In 1767, John Newton penned the song “Amazing Grace”.

In his later years, he often lost his memory when he took the pulpit to teach and had to be reminded what his text was for that day.

He would often say to the congregation upon forgetting certain things:

“My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner, and that Jesus is a Great Savior”.

I have discovered as I am getting older now, that everything in this life eventually fades and passes away.

- ☞ **Thursday Morning at 4:45**, Melinda and I had the supreme privilege of holding my fathers hand and praying him into the presence of the Lord.
- ☞ **My fathers life** was one of “**Lost Potential**”.
- ☞ **At 32 years old**, dad became one of the youngest self made For Dealers in the history of Ford motor company.
- ☞ **Although** he became a very successful business man and made millions of dollars, **He ignored his true calling from the Lord as a young boy.**

My dad was raised by a Christian family to know and serve the Lord, but he chose instead to pursue the things of this world.

- ☞ **After he achieved all the success** he thought that he wanted, he found that it was empty and did not satisfy his inner most being.

Jesus Said:

Matthew 7

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

22 "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in Heaven...”

In John chapter 6, the multitudes of people that gathered around Jesus, found Him in Capernaum, and they asked Him this question:

John 6:28-29

28 Then they said to Him, “What shall **we do**, that we may work the works of God?”

29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, **that you believe in Him** whom He sent

The people wanted to know what it was that THEY should do to make it to heaven, Jesus told them “This is what you need to do to make it to heaven...Believe in Jesus, the one the Father sent to save us...THAT IS IT!

What is the will of your Father in Heaven? That you need to do to be qualified to enter heaven?

“Believe in the One He has sent...”

I prayed for my Father and witnessed to him for more than 32 years.

- ☞ **In the 70’s**, I worked for my father in our Automobile agency in San Gabriel California.
- ☞ **I got into so much trouble with my dad** because I was always witnessing to everyone at the dealership.
- ☞ **On at least one occasion**, my dad even fired me for being so vocal about Jesus to him and other in the dealership.

I had a lot to learn in those days about the proper time, place and way to witness for Jesus.

- ☞ **I didn’t understand** back then that witnessing during your working hours is not what the Lord would have us do.
- ☞ **We are paid by our employers** to do the best job for them as possible, and that by being a quiet, hard working employee, **we are a good witness** of what someone who follows Jesus is all about.

Anyway, My father did not receive the Lord during those 30 plus years, but is was not because I didn’t try.

- ☞ **On December 24th, 1985**, I gave my Father a brand new Bible with his name engraved on the cover.
- ☞ **When we were at my dads house in Overgaard**, 2 days before he passed away, I found that Bible in the bottom of a box **as if it had never been opened**.

In the last year of my dad's life, he had a quadruple heart by-pass, a heart valve replacement and a pacemaker installed in his body. He also broke his hip and was in the hospital and care facilities a total of 14 months...he never went home...

- ☞ **In the past year**, As a result of coming to the realization that his life was nearly over, dad began for the first time in his life, to search for the Lord.

He began to ask me questions about the Lord and how he could be forgiven and make it to heaven.

- ☞ **Dad's high school best friend** Lloyd Seagraves, suddenly appeared on the scene this year, after more than 50 years of not seeing my dad, and guess what Mr. Seagraves occupation is?

He is a Pastor in New Mexico.

He began to share with my dad, the Lord and they had many hours of conversation about the Lord.

Last Monday we went to visit dad in Payson and learned that he only had a couple of days to live.

- ☞ **We stayed with him all night** Wednesday night, we prayed with dad and held his hand until he breathed his last breath at 4:45 am.

This is a small tribute to my Father in pictures...

I believe that in this past year my father called on the name of the Lord for forgiveness and salvation and made it into heaven.

What did Jesus say was necessary for heaven?

"Believe in the One He has sent..."

Luke 23:39-43

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "**Do you not even fear God**, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"

41 And we indeed justly, **for we receive the due reward of our deeds**; but this Man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said to Jesus, "**Lord, remember me** when You come into Your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, **today you will be with Me in Paradise**

Why should the Lord allow my father into heaven after he ignored the Lord his whole life?

- ⊞ **There were two thieves** on crosses next to Jesus on that day.
- ⊞ **One of them**, right up to the moment of his death, was **unrepentant, unwilling** to turn to the Lord for salvation.
- ⊞ **The other thief**, realizing that he had wasted his life, made wrong decisions, and was receiving what he really deserved, repented of his sins, asked the Lord to remember him.

Jesus told Him, “That is enough, you are forgiven, today you will be with me in paradise!”

- ⊞ **Now, here on earth**, we would say, *“That’s not fair, this man wasted his whole life on himself, ignored God all of his life, and now at the end, he wants to be forgiven and go to heaven...no way, it’s too late!”*

You see, we have this notion here on earth that to receive something as good as heaven, a person **must be good enough**.

- ⊞ **The Bible says** that no one ever born is “*Good Enough*”.

Psalms 14:3

They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one

Romans 3:10-12

10 As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

Romans 3:23

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

This means that every person ever born on the earth does not have the capacity to be good enough to enter heaven.

- ⊞ **That is why** Jesus came.
- ⊞ **When Jesus lived** his life for 33 ½ years in the body of a man, **He never sinned once**.
- ⊞ **When Jesus died** on the Cross, he was paying for something.
- ⊞ **Not His own sins**, for He had never sinned.
- ⊞ **He was taking your place** and paying for all of your sins.

And not just your sins, Jesus was paying for the sins of every person that has ever or ever will be born on the earth.

1 John 2:2

And Jesus Himself is the payment for our sins, and not for ours only but also **for the whole world**

John 3:16

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.

When Jesus died, He was paying for the sins of every person that will ever live.

- ☞ **Well then**, if the only barrier for a human being to enter heaven is their sins, and Jesus died and paid for those sins, then why doesn't every person ever born go to heaven?

Luke 13:3

Jesus said: I tell you, no; **but unless you repent** you will all likewise perish

Personal Repentance is required by each person before Jesus sacrifice is applied to their life.

- ☞ **Repentance is defined** as "**A Complete change of your mind**".

"I have been going my way, now I will turn around and do what the Lord says."

- ☞ **I will seek to not go back** to that old life that I used to live.

Remember what Jesus said at the beginning of our study this morning?

Matthew 7

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

These people that Jesus is speaking of are those who at the end of this world, come to Jesus and say to Him that they should be allowed into heaven because they "know Him".

Then they give as a reason for letting them into heaven, all kinds of things that they did:

Matthew 7

22 "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not **prophesied** in Your name, **cast out demons** in Your name, and done **many wonders** in Your name?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

They knew about Jesus, **they knew His name**, who He was, they did things in His name, but they never “*Knew Him*”.

Just confessing a knowledge of Jesus is not salvation, notice in verse 20 Jesus said to them “*I never knew you*”.

- ☞ The Greek word here for know here is “**Ginosko**’ (ghin-ocē’-ko)—“*It is to know by experience.*”

In the Book of Job, he is described by God as the “**Most righteous man on the earth.**”

- ☞ **Job endured** the loss of his entire family.
- ☞ **His health.**
- ☞ **Every material possession** he owned.

But at the end of the Book of Job, he had this to say about his knowledge of God:

Job 42:5

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You

In other words, Before I went into this trial I knew ABOUT YOU intellectually, in my mind. But now that I have gone through all the trials of my life, I KNOW YOU BY EXPERIENCE.

- ☞ **That is** what “**Ginosko**” is.
- ☞ **Jesus said** that unless you know Him by personal experience, have a personal knowledge that you need to be forgiven of your sins and ask Jesus to save you, that you are not saved.

These people that Jesus is speaking of that say to Him “Lord, Lord”, at the end of the world who said they “know Jesus”, only knew **about Him**, but then had never come to a **life changing realization** of their own need to be cleansed of their sins and to rely upon Jesus for their salvation.

- ☞ **How does a person** get to that place where they have truly repented of their sins and received eternal life?
- ☞ **When either you are emptied** of your self by trials or you are emptied of your self by a realization of your need to be forgiven and saved, when you hear the Word of God.

J Vernon McGee once said;

“We are not saved by anything that we do. Frankly, friend, you are not a Christian until you believe something, and that something is...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures. That is the Gospel; that is what saves you...”

The greatest success of my fathers life, was not the day they handed him the keys to his own Ford Dealership.

- ☞ **It wasn't the day** he married my mother.
- ☞ **Not even the day** I or my sister were born.

It was the day that my father came **to the end of himself** and realized that everything else he had done in his life was a complete waste of time, and he was ready to make Jesus His Savior and Redeemer.

- ☞ **When** did that happen?
- ☞ **When everything else** was gone.
- ☞ **When his body** was slipping away.
- ☞ **When he only had** a few days to live.

But when he reached that place where he was ready for the Lord, the Lord was ready to receive my Dad.

Lamentations 3:32

Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies.

Psalms 31:19

Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You

Nehemiah 9:17

...But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them

Psalms 103:8

The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy

You might have given up on some of the members of your family or your friends...but the Lord has not given up on them...

- ☞ **You might believe** that some people you know will never surrender their lives to the Lord.
- ☞ **But you very well** may be wrong.
- ☞ **There were times** that I believed my dad could never be saved.

But I watched him be emptied of all of his pride, and power and lust for this world...

- ☞ **It was painful to see** him suffer so much.
- ☞ **But oh how glorious it is today** as dad is walking those streets of gold, and Is there in the the presence of the Lord.

Dad knows today that the decisions he made in his life were wrong and misguided.

- ☞ **But he knows also today**, that the only reason he made it to heaven, is because the Lord is so merciful and forgiving.

My dad did not do anything to be worthy of heaven, but Jesus did everything that is required to make it to heaven...

Don't give up on people, because the Lord never gives up on them.

- ☞ **If you are here today** and you are **playing games with God** and have not yet surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, **what are you waiting for?**
- ☞ **For that place in your life** where you are completely emptied of yourself and are left dying upon a bed?
- ☞ **I have seen it** and it is not good

Better to surrender to the wonderful love of the Lord right now and enjoy the rest of your lifetime in his incredible blessing.

- ☞ **But if a man or woman** stubbornly refuses to give their life to Jesus Christ, He will still be there with you right up until you breath your last.
- ☞ **He will still be loving you** and trying to get you to call on Him so He can give you heaven, even to the last breath..

Because great is His love and His mercy endures forever...

"I'll miss you dad, but oh how glad I am that the Lord allowed me to be there with you at your greatest achievement in life, when you finally understood how much the Lord of heaven loves you...and you gave your life to Him..."

See you soon!