

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING FOR ?

A young woman who recently videotaped her own dying experience for a TV documentary said, "I don't know what's going to happen next. Maybe I'll be taught about my next life after I leave my body."

That she decided to WAIT until she died to find out something this crucial is not only sad, but incredibly foolish. Once we die, it is too late to do anything about our eternal destiny.

The Bible, which is God's revelation of truth to man, teaches us something about ourselves and the afterlife. It emphatically declares that all of us are under the penalty of death.

Romans 3:23 - All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

1 John 1:8 - If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

God cannot have a relationship with any of us because we fall short of His perfect standards. This means that we are born into this world physically alive but spiritually dead. We inherited this condition from the first man, Adam, who died spiritually the instant he first sinned.

Genesis 2:17 - From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will not eat , for in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die [spiritually] .

Genesis 3:6 - ... and she [Eve] took from its fruit and ate, and she gave also to her husband [Adam] with her, and he ate.

Genesis 3:8 - ...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

While Adam and Eve did not die physically right away, they fell under God's condemnation and their relationship with Him was broken. God cannot overlook sin. His perfect righteousness and justice must condemn it in order for Him to remain perfect and just. God would not be God if He compromised His character.

So, Adam and Eve had a real problem. They were separated from God, and there was nothing they could do about it. But there was something that God could do. His love and mercy was as boundless for them as it is for us today.

God the Father commissioned His only Son, Jesus Christ, to take the punishment for our sins. He was uniquely qualified to be the substitute for us since He was born of a virgin and lived a perfect, sinless life. He voluntarily gave Himself to be a sacrifice for us.

Romans 5:6 - For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18 - For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God...

We are kidding ourselves if we think we can somehow be good enough to convince God to overlook our sins. And there is nothing we can do about our sins, so our only hope is for God to save us.

Notice in the first verse quoted above that Christ died for the ungodly which includes all of us. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all sinners.

1 John 2:2 - And He [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation [satisfactory payment] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 Timothy 4:10 - For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men...

What **FABULOUS NEWS** ! Sin is no longer a barrier between God and man. Jesus Christ took all the condemnation for man's sin on Himself when He died on the cross. So that means that sin is no longer an issue!

The issue now is accepting Christ's perfect work on the cross for us. This is the only thing God will accept that will restore our relationship with Him. A jailer asked the apostle Paul, "***What must I do to be saved?***" Paul answered, "***Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved...***" The jailer's sins were never mentioned.

Romans 6:2 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do you understand what this means? God has offered eternal life to us as a GIFT. That means we can't work for it. We simply receive God's gift by believing in Christ's work instead of trying to earn salvation by our own good works. The Bible calls this grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.

Jesus Christ did not do a partial or incomplete job on the cross. And it would be impossible to add anything to a job already finished by perfect God. God has never said that we must try to help atone for our sins by performing good deeds.

As He hung on the cross, Jesus Christ said, "***IT IS FINISHED!***" (John 19:30). The payment for our sins was paid in full. There is nothing left for us to do but receive His gift of salvation by simply believing. At that instant, we are immediately and irrevocably reconciled to Him.

John 3:16-18 - For God so loved the world that He sent His uniquely born Son, that whoever BELIEVES in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. Whosoever BELIEVES in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not BELIEVE is condemned already because he has not BELIEVED in the name [person] of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 - He who BELIEVES in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not BELIEVE will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John 6:28-29 - Then they asked Him, "What should we do, that we may work the works of God [for salvation]?" Jesus answered them and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you BELIEVE in Him whom He has sent."

John 6:47 - Truly, truly, I say unto you, he who BELIEVES has eternal life.

John 11:25 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who BELIEVES in Me will live [eternal life] even if he dies [physically].

John 12:46 - I have come as light into the world, that everyone who BELIEVES in me may not remain in darkness [spiritual death].

Now you may be thinking that this is too easy. After all, no one gets something for nothing, right? Right. Even though our salvation costs us nothing, it cost God a great deal. And to try to add our own works to Christ's work on the cross is to reject God's GIFT of salvation. It is an insult to His matchless grace.

Satan's oldest lie is, "If you are good, you will go to heaven, and if you are bad, you will go to hell." While the Bible does encourage us to be good, it is so that we will be happy, never for the purpose of attaining salvation.

No one is saved by doing good deeds, keeping the Ten Commandments, being moral, or obeying the law!

Titus 3:5 - Not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us.

Romans 3:28 - For we maintain that a man is justified by faith, apart from the works of the law.

Galatians 2:16 - Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus...

We are justified before God by our faith in Jesus Christ, not by our works. Our works are considered to be filthy rags when compared to Christ's perfect work, ***Isaiah 64:6***.

It is a tremendous relief to realize that we do not have to work for our salvation. Arrogance is what makes people resist the gift of salvation because human pride wants to take the credit that rightly belongs to God.

Romans 4:2-5 - If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham BELIEVED God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor but as debt. But to the one who does not work, but BELIEVES in Him who justifies the ungodly, his FAITH is reckoned as righteousness.

Those who die depending on their own good works to get into heaven will one day stand before Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Rev 20:11 - And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place for them [to hide].

Because they have rejected the clear message from scripture that salvation is **FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE**, Jesus Christ will be their judge. They rejected Him as their savior.

It is very important to notice in the following verses that no sins will be mentioned at this trial. Why not? Because Christ paid for them. So if no one will be judged according to his sins, what will be the standard of judgment? GOOD WORKS. Good works are recorded in books in heaven and will be presented as condemning evidence at this trial.

Remember, we are justified by faith, not by works. Our righteousness is unacceptable to God.

Revelation 20:12 - And I saw the dead [spiritually dead unbelievers] both great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened [where their works are recorded]; and

another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead [spiritually dead unbelievers] were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their works.

God's justice accepted Christ's work on the cross but rejects man's work. So, unbelievers do not stand condemned for their sins, but for relying on their own works instead of Christ's. God's righteousness and justice rejects man's best human efforts to atone for sins. So, those refusing to accept Christ's atonement alone for sins will have their name blotted out of the Book of Life, and they will be judged.

Revelation 20:15 - And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life [because of rejection of Jesus Christ], he was thrown into the lake of fire.

We must allow God to speak to us through His Word rather than trust people who are influenced by humanistic ideas and traditions.

Right now, you can accept God's gift of salvation by believing in Christ's work on the cross, and you will receive eternal life! You have God's Word on it!

*Acts 16:31 - **BELIEVE** in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...*

