

We All Need Grace

Have you ever been told that good people go to Heaven, and bad people go to Hell? It seems reasonable, but what does the Bible say about salvation? The Bible gives a message of hope and a message of judgment at the same time. The Bible teaches that nobody can be saved by their works. (Galatians 2:16) This is because to make it to Heaven based on your works, you would have to live a perfect life. (Romans 6:23) Fortunately for us, the Bible's message doesn't end there. The Bible teaches that salvation is a free gift received through faith in the message of Jesus Christ, and there is much hope for all of us. (Romans 3:24, 1 John 5:9-13)

Does this sound hard to believe? It isn't when you look at God's commandments. In this teaching, I present the various commandments that God judges the world by, so you can see whether or not you measure up.

Love God and Others Perfectly:

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40 NIV)

These two commandments prove us all to be sinners. Let's start with the command to love God. People simplify this command to make it a general command to love God, but that isn't what's commanded. The command teaches we are to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds. It basically means a person would have to love God perfectly with every fiber of their being, every waking moment of their life. Who can do that? What is worse for us is that loving God involves making every decision in life for the sake of pleasing Him. (1 John 5:3)

Now let's look at the command to love our neighbors. This command also has a catch to it. We are to love our neighbors to the same perfect degree we love ourselves. Once again, who can do that? This entails having perfectly loving actions towards our neighbors. (1 John 3:18) We also can't choose which neighbors we love. To be truly righteous, we would have to go as far as love our enemies. (Matthew 5:43-44)

Based on these two commands alone, do you see how impossible it is to measure up?

Anger:

²¹ You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” (Matthew 5:21-22 NIV)

Once again, the Bible is impossible. I want to share two things about this teaching before I move on. The first is that this passage doesn't forbid righteous anger over injustice. The second is the warnings of judgment in this passage apply to those who reject God's forgiveness, and not those who receive it. The moral commands of the Bible are collectively known as the Law, and the Bible teaches that Christians are freed from the Law when they seek God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:10-14)

Are you beginning to see how hopeless it is to try to earn your salvation.

Lust:

“²⁷ You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27-28 NIV)

Idolatry:

“³ You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3 NIV)

A God is simply whatever is most important to you. To keep this commandment, you can never let anything be more important to you than God. If we are all honest, we fall short of this command all the time.

Using God's Name as a Curse:

“⁷ You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” (Exodus 20:7 NIV)

Lying:

“¹⁶ You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” (Exodus 20:16 NIV)

This command is about lying. The thing about this commandment is it forbids even white lies. If you ever lied, you are condemned as a liar.

Stealing:

“¹⁵ You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15 NIV)

This command forbids all stealing. This means if you ever stole anything small, you are condemned as a thief.

Coveting:

“¹⁷ You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” (Exodus 20:17 NIV)

Honor Your Parents:

“¹² Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12 NIV)

This command is about obeying your parents while you live with them, but it goes beyond that. We are generally called to love people. We are called to honor our parents. This means we basically have to put them on a pedestal. Who hasn't fallen short of that? This means you can't speak ill of your parents if they upset you. This means you have to spend time with your parents, even if you don't get along with them. This means that even if you don't get along with your parents, you still have to treat them with respect. By now, who doesn't feel like a sinner?

What We Must Conclude:

When we look at all these commandments, we see that we fall painfully short. The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and God's law proves that in all our lives. (Romans 3:23) So how do we get to Heaven? When a person places their faith in Jesus Christ, all their sins are forgiven and they enter into grace. This is the unmerited favor of God. Before I close, I want to share some scriptures that show the way to Heaven.

“²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23 NIV)

“⁹ We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:9-13 NIV)

“¹⁵ Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NIV) *** A person believes in Jesus by believing He died for their sins, and rose from the dead. This is biblical faith, and it is what saves a person.

“⁹ If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, ‘Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.’ ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Romans 10:9-13 NIV) *** This

promise teaches that a person converts to Christianity by coming to faith in Jesus, and acting on that faith by confessing Jesus as Lord. Confessing Jesus as Lord means acknowledging He is the Son of God who rules over the universe. When a person calls on the name of the Lord in faith, they are forever saved. (Ephesians 1:13-14) A person then proves the sincerity of their faith by keeping it for the rest of their life. It is normal to have doubts, and God accepts that. (2 Timothy 2:13) But a true believer will keep the faith for their whole life. (1 John 2:19)

“¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Colossians 2:13-15 NIV) *** When a person calls on the name of the Lord in faith, all their sins are forgiven (past, present, and future). This gives a person the gift of eternal life (Heaven).

Works Cited

Holy Bible: NIV. Zondervan, 2011.