
Words of Truth

You're Not In Heaven Yet

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You would think that it is pretty obvious that if you are reading this article you are not in Heaven. You would think that if one is walking and talking in this world that person would realize he or she is on earth. That is pretty obvious, isn't it? Do you know that you are still on earth and not in Heaven? Are you thinking that I am asking some pretty dumb questions?

The point of the questions is rather simple, just like the questions themselves. When you realize that you are not in Heaven you should also realize that means you still have to do something to get there. None of us, who are reading this article, have finished the course faithfully yet.

Consider the following Scriptures: *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"* (Hebrews 9:27-28 and I Peter 1:3-9).

The Scriptures you read above point out an oft-missed point for us. Our salvation is not realized while we are on earth. It is not even really realized at death. At death, the faithful will find themselves in Paradise (Luke 16:19-31 and Luke 23:39-43). However, that still is not the resurrection that ultimately brings us to eternity in Heaven (John 5:28-29, I Corinthians 15:1-57, and I Thessalonians 4:13-18). God expects us to be faithful to Him until our lives here on earth end (Matthew 10:22 and Revelation 2:10). With such information we should all realize that we are not yet finished here on earth no matter how much we have done. We have NOT attained our salvation yet.

Not As Though We've Already Attained

The beloved Apostle Paul made this point well. Notice: *"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the*

church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:4-17).

How do you think that Paul got to his way of thought? Yes, He was inspired by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:9-13). Isn't it more than that though? Paul instructs us to be followers of him as he was of Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). His mindset was not original. His mindset was learned.

Paul was imitating the mindset of our Savior. While living on this earth Jesus said this: *“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work”* (John 4:34). Jesus did not consider His work for the Father finished until it was (John 17:4 and John 19:30). Jesus was a finisher. We must be as well. We cannot give up running the race that is set before us until we cross the finish line. We get this point in other areas of life, now we have to understand it spiritually.

Life In This World Teaches Us These Things Too

If you quit anything before it is finished that is failure. Imagine a house without a roof or a car without tires. We cannot get tired and just stop at some point short of the real finish (Galatians 6:9 and Hebrews 12:1-3). Nor can we get arrogant and reach a point wherein we think we've somehow done enough to earn our salvation (Luke 17:7-10 and Ephesians 2:1-10). When does a laborer receive wages? Is one paid without doing work? Not if the employer is wise. The Scriptures teach this point by illustration and equates it to our spiritual reward. If you want the reward, finish the work (Matthew 20:1-16 and Mark 13:34-37). Therefore, don't give up on the work so that you can reap the eternal wages (Hebrews 6:10-12).

Conclusion

As Christians, we have Heaven to look forward to. We cannot forget that such is still in front of us. Let's not act as though we've already arrived in eternity with our Lord. The righteous are scarcely [hardly] saved (I Peter 4:17-19). Live like that! Keep working until you finish the course (II Timothy 4:6-8). Remember, the end is the goal. On that note, consider this Scripture: *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and **the end everlasting life**”* (Romans 6:22).