

## Why Being Good is Not Good Enough

Can a person be good enough to go to heaven? If we live a respectable life and do good to our friends and neighbors, is that enough to get to heaven? Many people today think so. Many people think they will go to heaven when they die, and they base their confidence on the idea that they are more or less good people. Now, no one claims to be perfect, yet they do claim to be as good as other people and certainly good enough to deserve heaven. Yet, there are serious problems with the idea that people can be good enough to go to heaven.

First, the Bible teaches that all have sinned and thus no one is inherently good. Romans 3.10-12 says, “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” Jesus said, “No one is good—except God alone” (Mark 10.18). Compared to God and his moral perfection, we fall so short that no one can claim to be good in his sight. People think they will go to heaven because they are good people. The problem is: in God’s sight no one is good, certainly not good enough to enter heaven.

Secondly, good deeds cannot atone for sin. Even if you do a lot of good deeds, they can never make up for the sins you have already committed. Sin must be atoned for, or else we will have to pay the price for sin ourselves. And the only way for sin to be atoned for is through the blood of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9.22 says, “Without the shedding of the blood there is no forgiveness.” 1 Peter 3.18 says, “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” Christ shed his blood to atone for our sin so that we could be forgiven and have eternal life. This is a free gift. We cannot earn it or deserve it. We cannot atone for our sin by doing good; we must accept Christ who has already atoned for our sin.

Thirdly, how good is good enough? If you can go to heaven by being a good person, how good do you have to be? Can you support one charity, or do you need to support two or three? Is going to church once a week enough, or do you need to go three times a week? Can you pray once a day, or must you pray throughout the day? How good is good enough? A person who thinks they are going to heaven because they are good never has solid assurance. My assurance is not based on how good I am; it is based on the grace of God shown to me in Jesus Christ.

Lastly, if we can get to heaven by being good, then why did Jesus die on the cross? If people go to heaven because of their morality and goodness, then Jesus died in vain. His death was a mistake. Galatians 2.21 states, “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.” Only Christ could drink the cup of God’s wrath for mankind’s sin. And he had to do this; there was no other way for us to be saved. The cross was not a mistake. The cross pronounces a double verdict. It tells us that we cannot save ourselves, but it also tells us that Christ can save us no matter what we have done. At the cross all our sins can be washed away

and we can receive the free gift of eternal life. Then we will go to heaven not because we have deserved it but because Christ has washed us from our sins.

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