**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Is Good Morality All That Is Necessary To Go To Heaven?**

Is Being Good Morally All That Is Necessary To Go To Heaven? Sometimes you hear people say something like, “I believe that as long as a person is good morally, believes in God, and doesn’t hurt other people, God will save him and take him to heaven.” You ask someone, “are you saved and going to heaven?” and they may respond by saying, “Well, I am a good person, I don’t hurt anyone. I’m sure God will save me and take me to heaven.” What does the Bible say in answer to this question? Is being good morally all that is necessary to go to heaven? This is the focus of our lesson today. We are glad you are with us.

First I want to emphasize that IT IS INDEED NECESSARY to strive to be good morally if we are going to be right with God and go to heaven. You see, all saved people have repented of their sins, and therefore are striving to be good morally. But, the question is, is living a good moral life all that is necessary to being saved and going to heaven? The answer is no. Let me illustrate, every living human adult must breathe, but just because something breathes does that mean it is a human adult? No. Likewise, a person must have good morals to please God and go to heaven, but is good morality enough for him to go to heaven or is something more required in addition to this? Just as there is more to being a human adult than just breathing, there is more to being pleasing to God and going to heaven than just good morals. Consider what the Bible says.

As we read through Scripture, what we find is there were some people who were not saved despite believing in God and having good morals. Even though they believed in God and had good morals, there was something else they needed before they could be saved.

In Acts 8 we read of a man who was a believer in God and a worshiper of God, but he was not saved. This was the Ethiopian treasurer. He was a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury. He had just been up to Jerusalem to worship God, and now he is returning home. He is reading from the scriptures, in particular, the book of Isaiah. And so, this man, no doubt, is a worshipper of God and desires to please God, but he is a sinner in need of salvation. We know that to be true because God sends Philip, a preacher of the gospel, to him. When Philip gets to the eunuch he hears him reading the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked him, *“Do you understand what you are reading?”* The eunuch said, *“How can I, unless someone guides me?”* *“And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.”* The passage which the eunuch was reading is in Isaiah 53 which says, *"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.” The eunuch enquires, "Of whom does the prophet say this, of himself, or of some other man?”* The text tells us that Philip began at that same scripture, and preached to him Jesus, and this was the answer to his question. This scripture was not written about Isaiah himself or any other man, but about Jesus, the Son of God. Evidently, the eunuch did not know about Jesus sacrificial death in fulfillment of this prophecy. And so Philip preaches to him about who Jesus is and what He did to procure our salvation. Peter said in Acts 4:12, *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* It is only in the name of Jesus that we can be saved. The Ethiopian eunuch could not be saved without believing in and obeying Jesus. After hearing Philip preaching Jesus to him, the eunuch said, *“‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”* (Acts 8:36-38) Verse 39 says that the eunuch *“went on his way rejoicing.”* What was he rejoicing about? He was rejoicing that now he was saved from his sins and had the hope of heaven. He did not have that salvation and hope before he heard the preaching of Jesus and obey it. Just because one believes in God and worships Him does not mean he is saved and going to heaven. He must hear the gospel, come to Jesus, the only Savior of the world, and obey Him.

Let us look at another example of one who was a believer in God, and was good morally, but was not saved from his sins. This is the example of Cornelius, recorded in Acts chapters 10 and 11.

In Acts 10:1-2 Cornelius is introduced to us as a God fearing man. It says that he was *“a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.”* Today many would call him a “good, moral man.” Many today would think it strange that he needed to do anything in order to be saved from his sins. Why would one who is honest, prayerful, generous, and has a good reputation in the community have to fear anything at the hands of a just and merciful God? The reason is because he had not heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ as yet. He was still in his sins and needed the saving power of the blood of Christ. The text mentions four times that Cornelius needed to “hear words.” In verse 6 an angel who appeared to Cornelius told him that a man by the name of Peter would tell him what he must do. Verse 22 the men who were sent by Cornelius to go get Peter told Peter that Cornelius was *“divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.”* This is also stated in verse 32. And then later when Peter is telling the believing Jews in Jerusalem about the conversion of Cornelius he says that Cornelius told him *“how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ‘who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’”* (11:13-14). Even though Cornelius was a devout man and feared God, and was generous, giving alms to the people, he was still a sinner in need of salvation. He still needed to hear the gospel and obey it. Since the gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation (Rom 1:16), and since Jesus is *“the way, the truth, and the life,”* and *“no one comes to the Father except through”* Him (John 14:6), Cornelius needed to hear the gospel of Christ in order to be saved. When he and his household believed in Jesus and were baptized they were saved and they had the hope of eternal life, but not before.

These examples show that belief in God and good morality is not all that is necessary to be saved. The reason is all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). No matter how good morally one is, he has sinned. Romans 6:23 says that the “*wages of sin is death,”* that is, eternal death, eternal separation from God in hell. Because of our sins we are headed for hell. And so we as sinners are in need of forgiveness. But how can God forgive us of our sins and be just in doing it? That is accomplished through the death of Christ. In His death on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins, thus satisfying the demands of justice and making it possible for God to forgive us. Because of God’s grace and mercy, expressed in the death of His Son, we now can be saved from sin and stand justified in His sight. Hebrews 9:26 says that Jesus *“appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”* John says in Rev. 1:5, *“To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood...”* We cannot be saved by our good morality. To think that one can be saved just because he is good morally is to think that one can be saved apart from the blood of Christ. This means that to think that one can be saved just as a good moral person is to think that God gave His Son to die on the cross for no reason. To think that one can be saved as a good moral person is to think that he can save himself making both God and Christ irrelevant. If you can be saved by your good morality then Christ died in vain. Christ did not die in vain. Again, the only way any of us will be saved and go to heaven is through the death of Jesus Christ.

Now someone might be asking, if Jesus died for all sinners does that mean that all sinners will be saved and go to heaven regardless of how they live? No, the Bible also teaches that there are conditions that man must meet for him to be saved by the death of Christ. You see, God gave the gift of salvation only through the death of Christ, but in order for man to receive this gift of salvation he must come to Christ and obey Him. The Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 5:9 that Jesus *“became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”* Jesus provides the way of salvation through His death, but we must come to Him and obey Him if we are to be saved. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. It doesn’t matter how good morally I am, if I refuse to come to Christ and obey Him then I will not be saved and go to heaven.

Earlier, we read of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, recorded in Acts chapter 8. He was a believer in God and a worshiper of God, but he was not saved. He had not as yet come in contact with the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It was not until he heard Philip preach Jesus to him that he came to understand that salvation is by the death of Christ. He then obeyed the commands of Jesus to be saved. He believed in Jesus and was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and went on his way rejoicing. What if the eunuch had said to Philip, “I’m a believer in God, and I’m a good person; I don’t need to become a Christian to be saved?” Would he have been saved? No, because he would not have obeyed Jesus. He would not have contacted the blood of Christ.

In Acts 10 we read of the conversion of Cornelius and his household. Cornelius was a devout man, one who feared God with all his house, gave alms generously to the people, but they were not saved until Peter came and preached the gospel of Christ to them. They heard the gospel, they believed in Jesus, repented of their sins, and were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:48). They obeyed. What if Cornelius had said, “I believe in God; I pray to Him; I’m generous with my money; I’m a good man. I don’t think I need to obey Jesus Christ and become a Christian to be saved.” Would he have been saved? No. Again, Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. When we come to Christ and obey Him, yes we will live a good moral life; repentance requires that, but good morality is not all that is necessary to be saved.

If you have not come to Jesus Christ and rendered obedience to His gospel, why not come today?

If you would like to communicate with us we would like to hear from you. There are three ways you may contact us.

You may email us: Our email address is sjchurch@sjchurchofchrist.com.

You may call us: Our phone number is 573-265-8628. If no one is there to answer, just leave your name and telephone number and we will get back with you.

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