God’s Gift to You

This life is not all there is. The Bible says God has put eternity in the hearts of every human being. Each person instinctively knows that there is more to life than the years they will spend on earth.

Whether you are happy or sad at present, whether you are successful or a failure, whether your dreams are coming true or not, this life is not all there is. One day your heart will stop beating and your body will die but your spirit will go on forever and ever.

Just as a baby in the womb cannot understand or imagine what life outside the womb will be like, we cannot fully understand or imagine what eternal life will be like, but the Bible tells us we will either be with God in heaven forever and ever, or we will be separated from God, in hell, in grief, regret and torment.

You had no choice over your birth. You didn’t choose your parents or the circumstances into which you were born. But you do have a choice regarding where and with whom you will spend eternity. **It’s the most important choice you will ever make.**

*John 3:16* is one of the most well-known and often quoted verses in the Bible: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* The next verse goes on to say: *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

God loves people. He loves you! You may have judged God based on the things you have experienced so far and think He doesn’t love you but that is wrong. God loves you more than you can imagine! That’s what the Bible says. He wants you to spend eternity with Him. But God is absolutely holy and pure and He hates sin. He loathes sin because of the damage it does. Sin hurts people. It destroys lives. And so God planned a way for sinful human beings like us, to be forgiven and made morally pure and clean and holy, and fit to dwell in His presence forever.

Here are a few verses from the Bible explaining this:

*Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*

All! Everybody is guilty of sin. None of us can reach God or experience heaven on our own because we are sinful and there is no sin in heaven, in God’s presence.

*Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Sin kills. Sin destroys. Our sins have earned us eternal separation from God in hell. But God wants to give us the gift of eternal life. It’s a gift. It’s not a reward for good behavior because none of us are good enough. It’s a gift, pure and simple.

There are all kinds of gods in the world and all kinds of religions. But there is only one true and living God. Jesus said in *John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.” Acts 4:12 says “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” As a husband doesn’t want his wife to have other lovers, God doesn’t want you to have other gods. One of the 10 commandments is “You shall have no other God’s before me.” No one else loves you like Jesus does.*

*Romans 6:23 says: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Jesus Christ (Christ means “the anointed one”), God’s only begotten son, was the only sinless person who has ever lived. He never sinned a single time. When Jesus was put to death by crucifixion, He wasn’t paying for any sins He had committed. He was taking our punishment. No other god has ever died to pay for your sins. When Jesus died on the cross, it was to pay for your sins and mine. We had no way to justify ourselves before God, who is absolutely holy, so Jesus volunteered to die in our place, and pay the penalty for all our sins. The innocent One took the punishment for us guilty sinners. He died for us, but He didn’t stay dead. He arose on the third day. (That’s why we celebrate Easter.)

When God raised Jesus from death to life again, He was verifying that Jesus was indeed His Son, God in the flesh, and that God had accepted Jesus’ sacrifice as payment for our sins.

Jesus paid a horrible price so that we could be saved. He was beaten and mocked and spit on and crucified. Crucifixion was one of the most torturous ways to die ever invented. Jesus went through all of that because He loves us and wants us to be with Him in heaven for eternity.

But we have a part to play in our own salvation. What part do we play? Here’s what the Bible says:

*Romans 10:9 “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.”*

*Romans 10:13* says it again*: "for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Jesus died to save us from the penalty of our sins and rescue us from eternal separation from God in hell. Yes, hell is real! Jesus warned people about it more than he talked about heaven. But salvation and the forgiveness of sins, is available to anyone who calls out to Jesus, and asks Him to save them.

Jesus did the awful work to atone for our sins. He did the hard part. Our part is simply to receive the free gift of forgiveness and salvation that He is offering us.

A gift is no good to you unless you receive it. You need to say Yes to the giver and take the gift He’s offering you.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 says: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

Some people figure they are as good or better than everyone else. They figure that if anyone will make it to heaven, they probably will. But the Bible says that no one can earn salvation and heaven. No one is good enough. Salvation is a gift from God, given purely because He is so loving and gracious towards us.

Our sins created a huge gulf between us and God that we cannot cross on our own. The only way we can be saved is by putting our faith in Jesus, and believing that His blood, shed for us on the cross, will pay for all our sins and make us fit for heaven.

The choice is yours. This is the most eternal decision you will ever make. Jesus wants to be your Savior. He wants you to be with Him in heaven after you die. Do you want to receive the free gift of salvation that He is offering you?

If you do, here’s a sample prayer you can pray. The word themselves won’t save you. Only faith in Jesus Christ saves you, but you can pray something like this from your heart:

“Dear God, I know that I have sinned against you and am deserving of punishment. I am so grateful that Jesus Christ took the punishment that I deserve so that through faith in Him I could be forgiven. With your help, I place my faith and trust in Jesus to save me. Thank You for Your wonderful grace and forgiveness. I receive the gift of eternal life! In Jesus’ Name, Amen!"

If you have prayed sincerely from your heart, your relationship with God has started. You are God’s child now! God’s spirit, the Holy Spirit is with you to help you live to please God. Old things have passed away and your new life has begun. As a Christian, or Christ-follower, these Bible verses apply to you:

*Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

*Romans 8:1 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

*Romans 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

The Bible teaches that there are three aspects of salvation:

1. You are saved when you first open your heart and life to Jesus and ask Him to forgive your sins and be your Savior.
2. Salvation is ongoing as you live for Jesus, day by day, with His help. The Holy Spirit will help you overcome sinful habits and thought patterns and change you “from glory to glory” as you continue to trust in God and depend on Him. When you sin, quickly ask God for forgiveness again, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you live to please God. Like a new baby, you will need to be nurtured and nourished spiritually. Begin reading the Bible (start in the New Testament) and get into fellowship with other Christians in a church where the Bible is taught. A wonderful journey with God has begun; a journey of faith that will continue throughout your life.

1. The culmination of your salvation will be heaven and spending eternity in God’s presence with all those who love Jesus. You were made for heaven. If you’ve noticed that nothing in this earth fully satisfies you, that’s because you aren’t in heaven yet. Someday, God will wipe every tear from your eyes, and say “Welcome home beloved!” Heaven will be the fulfillment of all your heart has been longing for.

God’s gift to you is salvation and eternal life. Your gift to the world is sharing this wonderful news with others. It’s the best gift you could ever give to anyone.

For more information about God’s gift of salvation here are some good websites I recommend:

Gotquestions.org

Purposedrivenlife.com