



The Westminster Abbey Church

To Connect People To Jesus Christ And To Each Other.

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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever stood by the hospital bed of someone who is in the process of dying? I have done it many times and the Lord God will not allow me to not try to determine if the dying person is saved or not. I know that it is not my call, but it is my responsibility to ask the question: "Do you know where you will be going when you pass from this world to the next?"

Far too many times I have had people tell me that they think they will go to heaven because they are a good person; they have never cheated on their wife; have treated people with respect; helped people in need and so on and so on. So, what does the Bible say and what are we to believe about what it takes to be saved?

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi and the earthquake set them free, the jailer asked them, ***"He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."***

The Catechism says, *"Protestant Christians have often found it difficult to hold together two fundamental Scriptural convictions. First, we are not "justified" nor are we "saved" on the basis of works. Second, we have been created anew in Jesus Christ for good works and what we do with our embodied lives will determine whether or not we are accounted righteous when we stand before Christ on the last day.*

On the one hand, then, we cannot earn forgiveness or pardon and the very attempt to do so is essentially flawed because it represents an attempt to leverage God's acceptance, to place God in our debt so that forgiveness results. God, however, has turned this fact into good news: we do not have to wait to receive pardon until we have (supposedly) made ourselves good enough by cleaning up our behavior! Christ calls us as sinners to repent and to receive forgiveness; we become righteous in connection with Him and through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

The bottom line, of course, is that our deliverance, our realignment with God's righteousness, our enjoyment of the verdict or "righteous" on the last day are all the result of God's initiative and not our own. We are rescued from what we were by God's gracious interventions in Christ, so as to become righteous as the Spirit restores the image of God - Christ Himself! - in us and, thereby, transforms us into people who live righteous and holy lives.

So, if we think we are going to get to heaven by being a good person... we are DEAD WRONG!

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Dave

"I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death". John Wesley