

“Everyone Should be Quick to Listen, Slow to Speak, Slow to Anger”

James 1:19-21

7/27/25

How does a person get into Heaven? Does this question matter to you? Do you talk about it with anyone? A man stands before St. Peter, who says, “You need 100 points to get into heaven. Tell me the good things you’ve done.” The man says, “I went to church every Sunday!” St. Peter: “That’s 2 points.” “I gave to the poor!” “That’s 1 point.” The man, exasperated, says, “At this rate, I’ll never get in except by the grace of God!” St. Peter smiles, “That’s worth 100 points—come on in!”

The family and I have been traveling, and I thank you for letting us get away. You were in my prayers as I was writing thank you letters to many of you. Will writing thank you letters get me into Heaven?

I can’t thank you enough for providing me time to spend time with our family. Over the Sabbath rest, I did spend much of that time with the boys and Hope. Will spending time with family, attempting to be a present father and husband get me into Heaven?

As we traveled, there are billboards around the countryside asking, "Where are you going: HEAVEN or HELL?" "Are you preparing to meet God?" "After you die, you will meet God." "If you die tonight, heaven or hell?"

The brother of Jesus, James, writes about saving souls and living out the faith of his brother, Jesus Christ, in his letter to Christians.

James 1:26-27

I thank Pastor Travis and Karen for preaching about common discipleship. How do we live into Jesus’ faith when offering hospitality, when using our time, our resources. According to Travis, and according to James, the mundane, everyday work is how we can best glorify God, but it is how we can also overcome giants in our lives. I appreciated Travis’ image of how David defeated Goliath. It wasn’t through using Saul’s fancy armor. David defeats Goliath by relying on his faith in God and what God had taught him in protecting his flock. David used his common tools to overcome the new giant in his life.

Common tools to overcome the new giant in his life! God’s Word teaches, “everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.” James, Travis, and Karen speak to folks who want to grow into the faith of Jesus and live well. To live Heaven on earth.

So how do we get into Heaven? What would you tell your children? Your friend? But maybe your wrong? Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger!

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So how do we get into Heaven? A certain rich ruler asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied, you know the commandments: You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not lie; Honor your father and mother. The rich ruler replied, “I have kept these since my youth.” Jesus listened and then said, “There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow me.”-Luke 18:18-22

Notice how Jesus doesn’t talk about the future but the here and now. Jesus teaches following God’s Law in the present is how to inherit eternal life.

But what if you are worried you cannot follow the Law or if you are not following the Law? This is where the faith of Jesus Christ applies. We do not need to rely on our own good works or even our own faith for that matter. The only reason any of us will be in Heaven is because Jesus forgives. Lay down your flaws, your mistakes, your sins at the foot of the cross. Jesus takes on the sin of the world on the cross. Jesus’ life is a gift. Jesus’ faith is a gift. Jesus’ love is the gift we receive but do not deserve: grace. As God’s Word teaches, “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” - Romans 10:9

But James asks, what if someone confesses Jesus is Lord, but has gold all around him? What if, James asks, someone confesses Jesus is Lord, but does not serve the poor? What if, James is asking, someone confesses Jesus is Lord, and is eager to tell everyone without listening? James writes, “If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before, God, the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”-James 1:27

So how do we get into Heaven? Trust Jesus Christ. Listen to Jesus. Accept Christ’s forgiveness. Build your friendship with Jesus to live Heaven on Earth. Heaven is not something we wait for. James, Paul and Jesus believe that we can live Heaven on earth now by living into the faith of Jesus, by living out from the faith of Jesus Christ. This is how we get into Heaven: to live into, to live out from the faith of Jesus!

James writes his letter desiring Christians to live Heaven on Earth and to invite others to live Heaven on Earth. The best way to do that is be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. The best way to live Heaven on earth is listening to each other. The best way to live Heaven on earth is caring for the most vulnerable, supporting Living Stones, supporting Foster Love Project. As our Trekkers did this week, supporting the Haitians in Charleroi.

Will writing thank you letters get me into Heaven? Will attempting to be a present husband and father get me into Heaven? The answer is no; only Jesus Christ will get me into Heaven. But the good Lord Jesus desires me to live Heaven on earth, so by writing thank you notes, by being generous, we ourselves are not only doing the soul work, the spiritual work; we are inviting others into Heaven. Building the community of Christ.



Will attempting to be a present husband and father get me into Heaven? No. Only Jesus Christ. But the faith of Jesus Christ informs me, instructs me to practice being a present husband and father.

By creating Heaven on earth in the home, by creating Heaven on earth in this community.

Love,
Pastor Curtis