

# **I Cannot Make My Own Way To Heaven**

**Romans 3: 9 – 26; John 10: 22 – 30**

Mirrors don't lie, do they? [Illustration of how the mirror does not lie- As I look into this mirror I see that .....]

James 1:23-24 says, "Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like." The Bible is a mirror that reflects with pinpoint precision what we are really like. And it's not a pretty sight because sin has left a significant scar on each of us.

There's something terribly wrong in the world. Something terribly wrong. You don't even need a Bible to tell you that. But God did not make a world with something wrong. When God created the world he said, That's good. Now what has happened? S-I-N, sin. You can almost hear the, the hiss of Satan the serpent as you say sin. And when you look in the middle of that word sin you see a capital letter 'I'. And the sin is not primarily in the world as much as it is in hearts, and not primarily so much in hearts as in my heart and in your heart.

Sin fascinates, and then assassinates. It thrills, then kills! You'll get what you want, but you won't want what you get!

## **1/ I'm good enough to go to heaven, aren't I?**

When I am out and about talking to people and talk about where they would like to go when they die 99% of people want to go to heaven. Then when you ask further questions they are convinced that they have been good enough to go on their own merit.

Life is short, death is sure, sin the curse, **Christ** the cure. But you're not going to get the cure until you have a proper diagnosis, until you have a good look in the mirror, the Bible and see the problem. We live in a society today that doesn't want to hear much about sin, yet at the same time suffer the very consequence of sin. Paul opens Romans and he begins to lay down the problem so we can see it and understand that we aren't good enough to go to heaven.

When we think of spies in movies or TV they are often hero's like: James Bond, Mission Impossible, Bourne Series. They were suave and resourceful, capable of escaping danger and death with skill and wit. They were almost superhuman in their abilities

And then we have Maxwell Smart.

**Video:** Maxwell Smart ending in "missed it by that much"

Smart was always supremely confident in his own abilities. He always knew that his superior abilities and training would help him save mankind from Kaos.

But in reality he was totally inept.  
He was totally incapable of even the most basic spy techniques.  
And he was always “missing something” by “that much.”

We laugh at this sitcom. But if that was how everything happened in real life, we could end up in some serious trouble.

Now what about if we apply that sort of inept thinking with certain professions in our society like:

- The Council Water Board? Drinking water would be unsafe
- Passenger Pilots? Planes would crash land
- Surgeons? Surgeries would be botched each week
- Pharmacists? Prescriptions would be improperly causing more sickness

How would you react? I wouldn't want to drink that water. I wouldn't want to fly on those planes. And I wouldn't want to have those pharmacists and surgeons anywhere near me or my family. [PAUSE]

We are inept in our own ability to get to heaven. We are 'missing something....by...that much' We miss understand our true sinful nature. We need the Bible, the mirror to see just how far we have fallen in our relationship from God.

## **2/ A decent life is not good enough to go to heaven**

There's a lot of people that believe out there that all they need to do to get into heaven is live a comparatively decent life. Now, they'll acknowledge to you that they probably have sinned a little bit each day or in the past.

They'll acknowledge that they've thought bad thoughts.

They've done wrong things.

And they've said bad words.

But they think that on a scale of 100, they're somewhere in the 90 to 95% range of being good, moral and able to get to heaven because of what they have done. BUT 'they have missed it by that much!'

But Paul wrote: "ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

The reality is as I pointed out last week in Romans 1: 25 Mankind has, 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie.'

There are a lot of people who believe that, if they can just follow a set of rules, they will end up living a fairly decent life and they will stand a chance of being acceptable to God.

To prove that, Paul lists many Old Testament Scriptures that show that even the Jews who had God's Word sitting right in front of them - even the Jews couldn't live perfect lives.

Look at vs. 10-18 the list points out:

"Their tongues practice deceit." Ps. 5

"The poison of vipers is on their lips." Ps 140

"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." Ps 59

"The way of peace they do not know." Isaiah 59

"There is no fear of God before their eyes." Ps 36:1

God said "...no one will be declared righteous ... by observing the law..." Romans 3:20.

You're never going to get yourself cleaned up right for heaven by your own efforts.

### **3/ Not what I can do BUT what Christ has done for me**

In Romans 3 God's telling us: you'll never get that done on your own. But listen and exercise faith, because "...now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known..."

Romans 3:21

And this righteousness comes – not from our abilities and our efforts – but "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe..." Romans 3:22a

God says I have provided a way of dealing with your sin.

It comes through faith in Jesus Christ

This is how we come into a right relationship with God.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

My sins are removed not by what I can do but by what Jesus has done on the Cross.

Ok, so how can I obtain a right relationship with God if I'm NOT a Christian?

Once again, it comes "through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."

So, what am I to believe in order to become a Christian?

(I asked the Church to respond and waited til someone said, "I have to believe that Jesus died for my sins".)

That's right.

I have to believe that Jesus died for my sins, and that he was buried and that he rose from the dead.

In our baptism, we die with Christ.

When we're buried in baptism's waters, our old life, is buried in a watery grave. And then we rise with Christ, a new creation.

At that point, we're freed from the past and we're made "right" with God. **AMEN**