



Sermon Series: Confident in the Face of Questions

To be used with Session 5: Won't All People Ultimately Go to Heaven?

Sermon Title Possibilities: Getting to Heaven

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-23

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Confident in the Face of Questions,” this sermon will make the declaration that going to heaven requires something more than living a good life and being good. Going to heaven requires believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Going to heaven requires a decision to trust in the work of Christ on the cross. Going to heaven requires an acceptance of God’s gift of salvation. According to the Word of God, if people have not repented of sins, they will not go to heaven.

Introduction: In the movie, *All Dogs Go to Heaven*, a dog named Charlie implies that friendship is the way to be rewarded with the gift of living in heaven when one dies. This movie is not far from what many people in today’s culture believe about going to heaven. Through their own efforts, many people believe they are on their way to live with God for eternity. However, we learn in the book of Matthew that this is not so. Matthew writes that only those who love and trust Christ will go to heaven.

1. Enter the Right Gate (vv. 13-14).

It should be said here at the beginning, that even though God loves everyone, not everyone will live in eternity with Him. This does not mean that God is a tyrant; rather, we must understand that God is a holy God. His holiness is without defect, so He is utterly untainted by sin or any evil. This requires that those who follow Him or His Son should also be holy. But being holy is a choice we have to make. God has given every person a precious gift called free will; we can live as we choose. It allows us to love God with our whole heart (Matt. 22:37), if we want to.

To a large extent, we can determine our future on earth and in eternity. The Bible reveals to us that when we choose to obey Him and follow His commands, we are choosing life (Deut. 30:19-20). God communicated through Moses that the Israelites should choose to walk in obedience to Him. We choose life today when we choose God and the gift of salvation through His Son Jesus

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Christ that God offers. Not many will make this choice; therefore, the gate will be narrow. Most people will choose what they believe will benefit their lives on earth. They will choose the broad road that leads away from God.

2. Beware of False Prophets (v. 15).

As we walk the road through life, we should be warned about the deceitfulness of preachers and Christian teachers who are sharing false doctrine. False teachers and preachers desire the things of the world more than they desire a loving relationship with God. They are motivated by money, power, and fame. They seek the gifts of God rather than the Giver, who is God Himself. These false prophets will cause people to think they are true disciples that follow Jesus by looking and acting like sheep, God's people. But their character and behavior reveal they are ravaging wolves. If we follow them, we will not be on the road that leads to heaven.

3. Know Christ (vv. 21-23).

The teachings of false prophets are based on just enough truth to be believable. They speak a false narrative about each member of the godhead, especially about Jesus Christ. This deprives those who follow them to not understand and know the Christ who died for their sins. Knowing Christ is essential for many reasons, primarily so that Christ will know them when they pass from this life. If they don't know Christ, then it means they are missing the requirement for eternal life and living with Christ in heaven.

Conclusion: You may have heard the question, "since God is a loving God, then why won't everyone go to heaven?" The problem is not God's love; the problem is our sin. Because people are born with wicked hearts (Jer. 17:9), and God loved us so much, He provided a solution for our wickedness for which He paid a great price. God allowed His one and only Son to be sacrificed for the sins of all people. The Bible says, "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 2:7). God should be praised because He patiently waits for as many as possible to be saved. Not everyone will go to heaven, but everyone can by simply accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Dr. Harry Zimmerman Jr. has been an associate minister since 2005 at various churches. Currently he serves as an associate minister at Faith United Missionary Baptist Church and as a men's ministry leader and prayer coordinator. He received a Master of Divinity from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Master of Theology and Doctor of Ministry in Evangelistic and Expository Preaching from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to his wife of 14 years, Christina, and between them, they have four children.

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