

LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET TO HEAVEN

One Sunday morning I was sitting in the auditorium waiting for my family to arrive from their Bible classes when I overheard a conversation between two older ladies. I have forgotten all that was said except for one sentence. One lady leaned over and said to the other, “I hope that I am lucky enough to get to heaven.”

Even now when I think of this incident I am filled with sadness. I am sad that this sister in Christ was lacking in the assurances of God’s promises. I am also sad to realize that she has been a Christian for many years, yet had somehow failed to learn the truths of God’s Word.

I must admit that I also began my Christian life with some uncertainties about salvation. It was common back then to hear a preacher say, “Only one unrepented sin will send your soul to hell.” Statements like that left me with little confidence and I felt somewhat like a frog, hopping back and forth between a saved and lost condition based on the proximity to my last prayer.

Paul, however, explained it this way: *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9). You see, “luck” has nothing to do with it. A person is saved based on his or her relationship with God. Jesus has died for our sins. He has paid our penalty (Rom 6:23). Salvation is a gift based on God’s grace. A person who is living a faithful Christian life does not have to worry about his or her salvation. The forgiveness that Jesus made possible takes care of not only past sins, but future sins as well.

Therefore, as Christians we can rest assured that our sins are forgiven and that the gift of salvation has been extended to us through God’s grace. We also have the assurance of heaven itself. In 1 John we read: *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life”* (5:13). John was writing to Christians who had been

unsettled concerning their salvation by false teachers. In response he emphatically stated that “you may know that you have eternal life.” This is an assurance that Christians claim as God’s people.

That does not mean, however, that as Christians, we will never sin. John also addressed this when he stated: *”But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:1b-2).

I can remember almost the point at which I personally began to understand that my salvation was based on God’s grace and that I can know with certainty that I am saved. I can remember because of something that happened to me. One day there was a knock at the door and when I opened it I saw a lady with a Bible in her hand. She identified herself and then without wasting any words she asked me, “Are you saved?” I replied, “Yes, I am.”

I must admit that I was a little surprised by my response. In fact I had to sit down and think about it for a while. But I was so happy that I had come to the point where I could say with confidence that I am saved.

“You may know that you have eternal life.” There is no question about it. Salvation is a gift based upon the death of Jesus and freely given to anyone who will accept it. If you, yourself, are in a right relationship with God and are living a faithful Christian life, then heaven is waiting for you. This is a promise from God himself and “luck” has nothing to do with it.

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