

Outline

What Would You Do... for Heaven?

For the last several weeks we have been seeking to understand the question: "What would you do...?" The inspiration for this question came from a social experiment that I saw while watching television one day and I saw the program by the same title on ABC's Primetime – "What Would You Do? In the show, which we have shown several excerpts of over the past several weeks, ABC's John Quinones sets up several hidden cameras and tapes the reactions of people that he sees in situations that call for certain ethics. If you remember the first one we showed, they had an actor portray a homeless person collapsing on the sidewalk on a busy street – 88 people walked by before anyone stopped to help – and that person had to ask another 22 people to help before she could get anyone to call 9-1-1. What would you do in that situation? It's a healthy moral question to ask yourself before you get into it.

I have reported to you about another of the episodes where a 'momzilla' was publicly berating her adult daughter in bridal shop. This posed two questions: (1) If you saw someone berating someone, would you intervene if you thought it could help, and (2) if you are in a relationship where someone is crossing your personal space and emotional boundaries, what would you do for love? This is a great question to ask before you find yourself in that boundary crashing abusive situation.

The best time to consider - "What would you do" – is well before you find yourself in the situation of ethical choice, for truly the old axiom is always true – "Failure to plan is a plan to fail." My hope in teaching through this series and raising these questions has been to give all of us pause concerning our ethics and our motivations for doing the things we do, acting the way we act, and thinking the thoughts we think. We need to know what we believe to be right and allow that to guide our actions no matter the situation. Because no matter what the people caught on tape may say afterwards, their actions to get involved or not get involved are motivated by what they truly believe down deep in their soul. What would you do is a very good question. Most of us have reactions to things and ideas without ever having thought about them and it leads us to engage in some very harmful thinking and actions. Take a look at this one: [Insert video](#)

Now that one had very little to do with where I want to go with today's message, but I felt so very compelled to engage our thoughts here this morning that I had to show it. What would you do? The thing is that many of the people they showed on this video probably would consider themselves to be Christian or at least moral, yet as you can see there were both instinctive and active positive and negative actions. What would you do? Think about that the next time you make a joke or espouse your very sincere but poorly thought view on illegal aliens, Muslim orientation, gay agenda, or other unfamiliar people groups or ideas.

However, the question that I have for you today I could not find a "What Would You Do" video clip on. It is a very fundamental question that you also need to consider long before you find yourself in need of an answer. The answer to this What Would You Do question is very fundamental to your life and your after-life. This question needs to be answered because it is guiding you correctly or incorrectly in the life that you are presently living. The answer to this question is also so very relevant to the life that you hope to have after this life is over and you find yourself dead to this life, but ready to live on in your soul in the next life. My question to you is: [What Would You Do For Heaven?](#) The answer to this question just like the answer to the question, What would you do in a racist situation, or an abuse situation, or a moral and ethical dilemma will guide how you live your life and as we shall see from the Bible it will guide your eternal destination.

[What would you do...for Heaven?](#)

June 14, 2009

- ◇ Cross your fingers?
- ◇ Have the right good luck charm?
- ◇ Give a little extra in the offering?
- ◇ Do some good deeds?
- ◇ Go to church?
- ◇ Keep all the commandments?
- ◇ Confess all your sins? Are you sure you got them all covered?

As I talk to a lot of people the answer to this question is varied and, really, I find a lot of people who would call themselves Christian, are not sure of the answer to that question. Many of whom I have talked to are relying on some of these things, but still are not sure if it will be good enough when they die. Many are just not sure if they are going to Heaven or if they can be certain that God will take them there. They sure hope so. But they are not certain. What Would you do...for Heaven? What Should you do...for Heaven?

It is impossible for you to do anything for Heaven.

Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Galatians 3:2,3 NIV

We absolutely are incapable of doing anything for Heaven. It is not in our grasp or control. Human effort will only frustrate us, for we cannot be good enough for Heaven. The Bible does not stop here, but the same book in the Bible goes on to say this about our efforts to keep the commandments and have it make us Heaven-eligible:

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

Galatians 3:10,11 NIV

If you are relying on keeping the law, the Ten Commandments, you are cursed and cannot do it. Just trying to keep the Ten Commandments is a cursed venture and cannot be done. Jesus shows us just how tough that is with an illustration of it in The Sermon on the Mount, the very first time he chose to teach publicly. Look what He says about trying to keep the Ten Commandments and get into Heaven:

You cannot help but break the "Thou Shall Not Murder" commandment.

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, "Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment." But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Anyone who says, "You fool!" will be in danger of the fire of hell. Matthew 5:21,22 NIV

And

You cannot help but break the "Thou Shall Not Commit Adultery" commandment.

You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a

June 14, 2009

woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:27,28 NIV

And then He goes on to show us how futile it is to try and keep many of the other commandments. I mean in order to rely on keeping the Ten Commandments, I have to be aware of every subtle nuance of breaking them, every thought, every feeling, even the slightest bit of acrimony that I may not even be aware of. It is humanly impossible.

What is the result of really trying hard to keep the Ten Commandments? Jesus shares this with us too in the lives of one who tries and one who knows he just can't do it:

Jesus told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral performance and looked down their noses at the common people: "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: 'Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this taxman. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.'

"Meanwhile the taxman, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, 'God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.' Jesus commented, "This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God." Luke 18:9-14 TM

It is a dangerous thing to think that you are capable of achieving rightness on your own. It leads to a life of self-righteousness, which always results in exclusion, prejudice, and a superiority complex, something Jesus railed on in His entire ministry.

So I guess The question then is not "What would you do for Heaven," but "What would I not do for Heaven?" I am quite confident that I am going to Heaven and that I am already experiencing Heaven to some extent in my life. One day I will experience it in full and exist in the full physical presence of God and in complete relationship with Him fully, not this dimly understood version of it. And I have done nothing for it. He has done it for me.

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." Galatians 3:11 NIV

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Galatians 3:13,14 NIV

Now the question is, what is it to live "by faith?" How can I get me some of that? How do I do that? Well, you don't DO a thing. You simply accept the crazy truth that Jesus died to pay the price for your sin because He did keep all of the Ten Commandments and His blood was shed for your sin – He did it for your Heaven. And you crazy adults – you just got to quit over-thinking this thing. You need to accept the fact that there is a God who loves you and who desires you to believe in Him simply because He said so – sounds like a parent right? Look what God said right in the middle of the story of the Pharisee who

June 14, 2009

was trying to be so good that he got self-righteous:

People brought babies to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. When the disciples saw it, they shooed them off. Jesus called them back. "Let these children alone. Don't get between them and me. These children are the kingdom's pride and joy. **Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in.**" Luke 18:15-17 NIV

Would you be willing to do that right now? If you are trying to do anything for Heaven, the effort is futile and must be frustrating. Yet, right now, you can, like a child, accept the fact that God loves you and bought your ticket for Heaven because of Jesus. Let's pray together right now and tell Him that we accept His gift of unconditional forgiveness for our sins and are counting on Jesus' sacrifice and miraculous resurrection from the dead for Heaven. If you have not prayed that before, will you pray it with me right now?

What Would You Do For Heaven? Prayer

God, help me to believe with the faith of a child and in the midst of my unbelief. Right now I choose to believe in You and to believe that You love me and that You have forgiven my sins. I want Heaven and will trust You to give it to me based on Your saying it is mine as Your free gift.

Next Steps

1. Worship God and His Gift of Heaven through Jesus with the act of Remembering Jesus' sacrifice that paid the price for your sin through Communion.
 2. Obey Jesus' command to publicly identify with His death, burial, and miraculous Resurrection by choosing to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit on Wednesday, June 24 at 6:00 pm in the river.
- ◇ Let's take the first step right now and worship God in Holy Communion. Listen and pray during the song, then follow the instructions of what to do with the bread and the juice at the conclusion of the song.
 - ◇ Let's take the 2nd step now as the ushers take the offering. Fill out your tear off sheet telling us of your decision to trust God today and of your decision to be baptized.

June 14, 2009