

## *Resisting a Free Gift?!*

Depending upon who you are reading this, this message might save your life, or someone you know. This is not an exaggeration.

Have you ever told someone about the gift of eternal life that's available to us through the Lord, Jesus Christ, and they seem to resist it or dismiss it, with a "that's nice" type of attitude??

Why is that? Shouldn't they be jumping up and down in their souls? Is it because they don't really believe they need it/Him? And if so, why is that?

For example;

**Eph 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is **the gift of God**, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

But many do not receive the gift of God because of a common misconception.

Many people, religious and non-religious, think their own goodness/good works can save them when they face God one day.

And the reason they believe this is because **they don't believe they're totally depraved**, as the Bible teaches we all are (i.e.- **Rom 5:12, Eph 4:18-19, Tit 1:15**).

**Rom 5:12** *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because **all sinned**.*

**Eph 4:17-19** *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, **alienated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

**Titus 1:15** *To the pure, all things are pure, **but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled.***

**When we tell people about the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, without mentioning WHY they need this gift, we are doing them a disservice.**

Otherwise, many will just shrug it off, or say "I hope that's true" and leave it at that. But that flippant attitude doesn't save anyone.

The root of the problem begins with us if we're not being honest with others about their need to repent towards God, which the apostle Paul did for all he met on his missionary trips (**Acts 20:21**).

**Acts 20:20-21** *how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Do you shrink away from telling others the whole truth?? This includes the fact that we're all sinners, in desperate need of the Savior.

If someone doesn't believe/ realize they've sinned against God, why would they think they need to believe in the Savior??

Many mistakenly think they're "OK" just the way they are. Or, at the very least, they think they'll "get by" when they meet God, pointing to God's love as a scapegoat.

Yet, even though "God is love", (**1Jn 4:8,16**), and He "desires all people to be saved" (**1Ti 2:4**), He will hold those who reject His precious Son's sacrifice accountable.

**John 3:16-18** *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

Then some say they "believe" in Jesus, but let's not forget the demons also "believe, and shudder" (**Jas 2:19**)!

And some people will actually use the Lord's name on Judgment Day, but He will say to them " I never knew you, depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness" (**Mat 7:21-23**)!

My dear friends, what's the difference?!! What's the difference between a true believer who's born again and saved, and these examples of those who supposedly believed but aren't saved?!!

Some people who only give a mental assent to Jesus are still holding in their hearts that they can somehow please God on their own merits.

**They are not relying upon God's grace, but upon themselves.**

The Bible is totally against this idea, and part of our job as good witnesses for our Lord is to help people realize this.

If someone isn't told/ doesn't accept that they're "wretched" compared to God (**Rom 7:24**), and that without turning to Christ from the heart (**Rom 10:9-10**), they will "die in their sins" (**Joh 8:24**), **they will remain in deception with a false sense of security.**

This is why people in many religions, including Christian denominations, remain stuck. They remain thinking/ hoping they can be "good enough", all because the call to repentance has been avoided, or not even shared with them.

Let's consider this again; some people don't even think they need the "free gift" of eternal life when they hear of it (**Rom 5:15-17, 6:23**)!

Why would anyone resist the gift of eternal life (**Joh 4:10, Rom 3:24**)?! - It's because they're not properly taught about, or they refuse to accept, their guilt before God.

**Rom 3:21-24** *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,** 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Think about the "Gospel Call" from Jesus, Himself.

When Jesus said the first words of His public ministry, "**Repent and believe in the gospel!**" (**Mar 1:15**), He was **commanding** people to do this ("Repent" and "believe" are in the **imperative** mood in the Greek language).

And how about when He said to the crowd "**Repent or you will likewise perish**" (**Luk 13:1-5**)?

He was telling people to stop thinking others were "worse sinners" than they... that they themselves needed to turn to God for forgiveness of their sins. Why??

Because **unless they're willing** to turn from self-reliance, admitting their sins before the Lord God, then "self" will remain their god, and they won't genuinely turn to Christ alone for their salvation.

When we go back to **Luke 18**, what picture does the Lord paint of the one who would be justified before God?

**Luke 18:9-14** *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

It looks like the one with the humble, repentant heart to me.

But, if someone thinks they have nothing to repent of, and nothing to be saved from, they won't humbly seek forgiveness from the Lord.

It's our job to tell people the whole truth and not just the easy parts, for THEIR benefit, out of love for them!

Let's end with this; the Gospel that Jesus preached was so offensive, they put Him to death for it. Why??

Because He did a lot more than just tell people about the gift of eternal life.

**Out of His great love, He told them very honestly why they needed the gift, and that they needed to repent, so they wouldn't remain in self-deception.**

We all need to think about and pray about this, if we want to be good witnesses of His amazing grace towards us sinners.

We are ALL sinners in need of the Savior.

To share anything less than that could leave others in self-deception. :(

Love in Christ,

Scott