

Friday, August 21, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

Romans 3: 21-25

I am writing this brief devotion to you just to make sure that you are not working too hard to get into heaven. That's right, I said, "NOT." I'm sure you really want to go to heaven. Who doesn't? (Maybe some people don't want to. I don't know.) So, am I catching you in time? Have you been working pretty hard to get into heaven? Or, were you thinking of starting to work hard at it.

If you have been working hard at making sure you get to heaven, I would be curious to know what you have been doing to achieve that goal. If you've been thinking of starting to work on getting to heaven, I would also be curious to know what you were planning on doing. Were you planning on starting to feed the homeless? Were you planning on becoming a missionary? What did you have in mind? And if you have been working on it already, what have you been doing? What do you plan on pointing to in your life when you get to the "Pearly Gates," as they say? Are you pretty sure what you've been doing has been good enough? I mean, the day is coming, right? We will all die someday, and we will either go to heaven or to hell, right? Do you still believe in heaven and hell? The Bible still does.

Well, I am writing this message to STOP you from working hard to get into heaven. I just don't want you to waste your time. Not that wanting to go to heaven is a waste of time. That's a really big deal. In fact, it's the biggest deal in life! The waste of time would be if you are WORKING ON getting to heaven. It's a waste of time because there's nothing you can do to earn your way into heaven. Are you glad I stopped you? No human being, except for Jesus – and He is both God and man – is good enough to go to heaven. The reading above tells us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Simply put, you and I come up short when it comes to deserving heaven. Christianity is not about trying to be good enough to go to heaven. It's about recognizing our INABILITY to earn our way into heaven, and, therefore, letting Jesus do it for us. That's why He died on the cross and rose from the dead. He did it to get us into heaven. He paid for our sins, and gave us His perfection. It's because of Him that we get to go to heaven.

So ... what are you going to do now? Those who have been saved by Jesus don't go out and do all the things that would have kept them out of heaven now that those things can't keep them out of heaven. We live our lives AS IF our salvation depended on how we live our lives, even though it doesn't. But we live that way anyway because we're thankful for what Jesus did for us, and because we can see how serious our sinfulness is that it made it necessary for Jesus to get nailed to the cross and to be rejected by God the Father while He was on the cross. So, we don't purposely keep doing the things that made it necessary for all that to happen to Jesus. And we start doing the things that Jesus did that made Him so perfect, just because we want to be like Him.

God's Peace!
Pastor Jim

