

# Do Good People Go to Heaven?

by David Guzik

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*The sermon explores the misconception that being good is sufficient for heaven, emphasizing the necessity of faith in Jesus for salvation.*

**Duration:** 44:07

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:17-19, Matthew 19:17, Romans 8:3-4

**Topics:** "Salvation By Faith", "Heart Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how the law was unable to bring people to heaven because no one is completely good except God. The solution to this problem is found in Romans 8:3-4, which states that God sent his own son, Jesus, in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin and fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. When a person puts their trust in Jesus, their lives are transformed by a power greater than themselves, leading to genuine heart change and a desire to do good works. The speaker emphasizes that true transformation can be seen in a person's life as a whole, rather than just in isolated incidents.

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## Transcript

I'd like you to open up your Bibles to the book of Romans, chapter 8. The title of our message here this evening is, Do Good People Go to Heaven? It's a very important question. If God is real, if there's really a heaven, people should be interested in knowing how to get there. And we surmise that being good has something to do with going to heaven.

Well, what does it have to do with going to heaven? Romans, chapter 8, beginning at verse 3, I think really shed some light on the issue. So let's take a look. Romans, chapter 8, verse 3. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin.

He condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Remember a few years ago there was sort of a big deal that happened near San Diego, California. People know it today as the Heaven's Gate tragedy.

You may remember impressed in your mind the videotape footage or the photographs of all these people dressed in similar attire, you know, sort of track suits with a particular kind of tennis shoes, and they were all dead. They all committed suicide. They all laid down willingly their own lives for a strange, irrational

superstition.

I mean, after all, killing yourself because you believe that there's an invisible spaceship hiding behind a comet and that that will save you after death, that's pretty far out there, don't you think? Now, the reason why I even bring this up is because in the aftermath of this whole Heaven's Gate tragedy, I was reading the newspaper and I read an article or a letter to the editor, actually, in the Los Angeles Times, and one particular writer, the man was a skeptic, a man who disbelieved everything having to do with religion or the supernatural, this is what he wrote in response to commenting on the whole Heaven's Gate tragedy. He wrote basically saying, we may think that those Heaven's Gate people were nuts, but Christians are just the same. And he went on to write about the things he considered crazy about Christianity.

And let me read you this section of his letter and where he began this train of thinking. Now, I'm quoting from this letter written to the editorial page of the Los Angeles Times. He says, quote, The essential belief of Christian fundamentalism is that regardless of how good a person you are, you will go to hell forever if you don't believe in Jesus.

This means that my mother, a Hungarian Jewish Auschwitz survivor who did not believe in Jesus, is now in hell. Yet if Hitler, before he died, had made a sincere decision that Jesus was his savior, he would now be in heaven. The writer goes on and he continues and he says, With all due respect to my Christian friends, the notion that good people who reject Jesus are damned, but evil people who finally accept Jesus are saved, is much more dangerous and much more of an offense to the basic principles of justice and fair play than the idea that some UFO is waiting to whisk us away to a better life after we die.

You understand what the man's saying, don't you, in his letter? He's saying, we may think those Heaven's Gate people were crazy, but Christians are worse. Because Christians believe that if you're a good person but don't believe in Jesus, you could go to hell. And if you're an evil person but in the end come to a trust in Jesus, you could go to heaven.

And he says that is a far more dangerous and offensive idea than the idea that some invisible UFO is going to save us. Well, if I could speak to this writer, who by the way was a Beverly Hills lawyer and a member of the Southern California branch of the Council of Secular Humanism, if I could speak to this man, the first thing I'd ask him is I'd say, Mister, why are you concerned in the slightest way with what Christians believe about heaven or hell? Because you're absolutely convinced that there is no heaven or hell. I mean, you may as well be worried about whether people think the gingerbread house in Hansel and Gretel, you know, was made of, had white frosting or chocolate frosting.

It's all irrelevant to you. You think it's all a fantasy. What do you care? That'd probably be the first question I'd ask him.

After I calmed down a little bit, I'd ask him, OK, so you have this thing that bothers you. So if this one thing was changed about Christianity, would you change your idea about heaven and hell? Of course he wouldn't. After I got that off my chest, I'd want to go deeper.

You see, of all the things he might have said to paint Christianity in a bad light, this was the first topic he chose. And he chose this topic saying that Christianity is foolish and it's dangerous because it says being good is not the basis by which God lets people into heaven. Let me say it again.

That's what offends this man. It's because he believes that Christians teach that being good is not the basis by which God lets people into heaven. And might I say that the man who wrote this letter is not alone in being bothered by this.

There's a lot of people in this world who find that profoundly troubling. And I believe that as Christians, we've got to confront the issue head on and simply find out what the Bible teaches. And so here's our question for this evening.

Do good people go to heaven? When you get down to the statistical surveys, you find out that most Americans believe in God. Most Americans believe in heaven. Most Americans believe in hell.

And most Americans are absolutely persuaded that they're going to heaven. They do the surveys all the time. Do you believe in God? Do you believe in heaven? Do you believe in hell? Do you think you're going to heaven? Absolutely.

Overwhelmingly, everybody thinks they're going to heaven. And most of the people who believe that they're going to heaven believe that they are going to heaven because they're basically good people. And I saw one recent survey where people were asked about those they knew.

They asked about all sorts of famous people. You know who got the highest rating of all the famous people they asked? You might expect Mother Teresa. Somewhere in the neighborhood, 75% of people interviewed said, Mother Teresa, she's going to heaven.

You know who was number two in the high 60s? Oprah Winfrey. I don't know. Go figure.

Not that I've seen her television show. It can't be that good that she's got a ticket to heaven just because the TV show. And then it went on down the line.

At the time, just over 50% of the people thought that Bill Clinton was going to heaven. I don't know what the rating would be now. It's probably going to be substantially lower than that.

But check it out. With all those people that they asked, who do you think is going to heaven? The highest one on the charts was Mother Teresa with somewhere in the neighborhood of 75%. Do you know how many people thought that they were going to heaven? 86%.

More people thought they were going to heaven than Mother Teresa was going to heaven. People were far more confident about their own salvation than of anyone else's. More confident about their salvation than Mother Teresa's.

More confident of their salvation than Billy Graham's. More confident of their salvation than anybody's. Why? Because most everyone considers themselves good enough to go to heaven.

Do good people go to heaven? It's such an obvious answer. I wonder how people can miss it at all. Of course good people go to heaven.

The answer is so obviously yes, I wonder why it's an issue at all with anybody. That question is not the problem. Here's the problem, if I could make it even more of a specific question.

How good do you have to be to get to heaven? You see, we know that there's all different levels of goodness. There's all different kinds of goodness. So how good do you have to be? What if a person is

really good to their family, but really bad to everybody else? What if a person is really bad to their family, but really good to everybody else? What if a person is mostly good, except for one really bad thing that they did once in their life? What if a person is mostly bad, except for one spectacularly good thing that they did once in their life? What if a person is bad when they're young, but good when they're older? Or what if a person is really good when they're young, but bad when they're older? What if a person is good in the way that they treat other people, but they're really bad in their personal habits? Or what if a person is really good in their personal habits, but bad when it comes to treat other people? You see, this is a pretty complex issue.

How good do you have to be to get to heaven? We all agree that if you're good enough, you can go to heaven. No problem. That's obviously the answer.

Yes, if you're good enough, you go to heaven. Don't go to hell. Do not pass go.

Do not collect it. You go straight to heaven. But how good do you have to be? Who's going to decide? You think there's some government agency somewhere? Has a handbook? You know, you write to the office of government pamphlets in Pueblo, Colorado, and they send you back, and this is how good you have to be to get to heaven.

Do the heads of the world religions get together once a year and revise the standards? This is how good you have to be to get to heaven? How about this? Does each person decide for themselves? Do you decide for yourself? Well, you know, I get to decide that I'm this good to go. Who should decide who's good enough to go to heaven? Might I say that since it's God's heaven, shouldn't we let God decide the issue? Why not let God decide how good a person has to be to get to heaven? God can give the only final, perfect decision on this matter. I think we have to agree that God in heaven must decide this issue.

Well, if only we could ask God. If only right now we could ask this question to God directly. Send up a letter.

Send up a memo. God, can you answer this question for us? How good do you have to be to get to heaven? The funny thing about it is I did that earlier today. I sent a letter to God, and God answered back.

He said, I already wrote it down for you. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus dealt with this exact issue. People were asking that question back then even as they were asking it today.

How good do I have to be to be accepted by God? Now, the Jews of Jesus' day knew what the answer to that question was. They said, well listen, to be accepted by God, you have to keep the law of God. But what the Jews of Jesus' day did was they redefined the law so that it could be kept very simply.

For example, let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew 5, beginning at verse 17. And I'll show you, just sort of in a brief way, Jesus' whole point here. Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5. Jesus says, verse 17, Do not think that I came to destroy the law of the prophets.

I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no

means enter the kingdom of heaven. We're at a disadvantage reading this.

Jesus' original audience, when Jesus said those words, I'm convinced you would have heard a gasp from His audience. They would have gone, Are you telling me that I have to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees? They would say, that's impossible! The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day had the reputation of being so sold out to obeying God, so committed to serving Him, that the other people, the normal people, the everyday people looked at them and said, they are so holy, there's no way I could ever be like them. It would be like being a monk, or a nun, or Mother Teresa.

Now, Jesus didn't say, You have to be as holy as a monk, or a nun, or a Mother Teresa, or a scribe, or a Pharisee. He didn't say you have to be as holy as them. What did He say? He said, you have to be more righteous than they.

Then Jesus goes on to explain what He means. He says, listen, the law says don't murder, but if I have murder in my heart, I've broken the law. Not as bad as if I actually murdered someone, but I still broke it.

The law says don't commit adultery, but if I lust after someone in my heart, I've broken the law. Not as badly as if I've actually committed adultery, but I still broke it. The law says to love my neighbor, and I thought that that meant I had permission to hate my enemy.

But Jesus says, no, love your enemies, and bless those who curse you, and do good to those who hate you. Jesus is bringing out the fullness of what it means. This was a righteousness.

This is a holiness that went on beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. Their holiness, their righteousness was all concerned with outward things, outward actions. Jesus said, no, the outward actions are good, but you've also got to have the heart.

And then He concludes it all with Matthew 5, verse 48. Now, this isn't the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, but it's the conclusion of this point that Jesus is making. Look at it carefully.

This is God saying, how good do you have to be to get to heaven? Matthew 5, verse 48. Therefore you shall be perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect. That's God's standard.

Do good people go to heaven? Absolutely. Absolutely. Everybody who fulfills Matthew 5, verse 48 with their life is going straight to heaven.

I guarantee it. God will not keep a single person, perfect person out of heaven. You can count on it.

Not a single one. Now we kind of have a problem, don't we? Because we know we're not perfect. People who assume that they're good enough to go to heaven are desperately hoping that God grades on a curve.

And they comfort themselves with the thought that there are a lot worse sinners in the world than themselves. And they say, okay, good. There's worse sinners than me.

They're going to hell. But I'm good enough. I'm going to heaven.

Friends, you need to wake up and understand that God does not grade on a curve. That idea is completely foreign in the Bible. Instead, the Bible confronts us very plainly, and it says in Romans 3, verse 23, that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 64, verse 6 says, but we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags. We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away. Matthew 19, verse 17 says, no one is good but one.

That is God. That's it. So how good do you have to be to get to heaven? Totally good.

And since none of us, not a single one of us in ourselves is totally good, we cannot get ourselves to heaven. So what's the solution? What if we could be filled with or accounted to have a perfect goodness? Friends, this is what the Bible says exactly happens when a person puts their trust in Jesus Christ. And our passage from Romans chapter 8, verses 3 and 4 presents this very clearly.

Please turn back to Romans chapter 8, verses 3 and 4. I want you to take a close look at that because this is the answer to all of this. Romans chapter 8, verse 3. For what the law could not do. Do you see that? Do you understand that now in the context of what we're talking about? What could the law not do? The law could never take me to heaven.

Never. God says, hey Paul, you want to get to heaven? Here's the rules. Just keep these rules.

I can't keep them. I can't get to heaven. For what the law could not do.

The law could not make us good enough to be accepted before God. Why can the law not do this? Look at the next line in Romans chapter 8, verse 3. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. This is why the law could not do it.

There's no problem in the law. The problem is in me. I am weak because I was born with a nature of sinful flesh.

The law was not made to get me to heaven. This is beautiful. Look at verse 3 again.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did. Isn't that beautiful? You can just stop right there. What the law could not do, God did.

The law couldn't do it. You can't do it. You cannot get to heaven by making yourself good enough, by doing enough good things.

I grew up in a religious background where you have catechism before a confirmation. And I remember one of the instructors that I had during catechism taught me something that stuck in my mind very powerful. I didn't remember a lot from catechism, but I remember this.

She said getting to heaven is like climbing a ladder. Every time you do something good, you take a step up. Every time you do something bad, you take a step down.

If you have enough good ones above and beyond your bad ones to climb the ladder to heaven, you get there. Do you see how totally wrong this woman was? That's not what the Bible teaches at all. The Bible says that the law could not do it, but God did it.

Forget about the ladder. God wants to put you in His elevator and take you to heaven. Where you just by faith push a button.

Isn't that what you do when you get into an elevator? How do you know that it's going to take you up? All you do is let the doors close and push a button. Now you have to do something. You can sit there and if you don't push any buttons, nothing's going to happen.

You have to do something. Now, do you stand back and look at yourself and say, aren't I pretty fantastic the way I pushed that button? You look at everybody in the elevator and you go, I bet you're thanking me right now for the way I brought us up to the 17th floor. I really pushed that button, didn't I? You know you didn't do anything.

You had to do something, but what you did was of no great credit or merit to you. What you did was just set in motion something that was engineered to take you where you were supposed to go. Same way.

What you could not do, what the law could not do, verse 3 of Romans chapter 8 says that God did. Now, how did God do it? Verse 3 tells us, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin. Jesus came looking like any other sinful man.

That's what Paul means when he says in the likeness of sinful flesh. When you looked at Jesus, He looked like anybody else. He didn't look different.

He didn't look peculiar. He didn't have a halo behind His head. He looked like any other man.

Why did God send Him? Again, on account of sin. Look at verse 3. He did it by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin, because our sin would keep us from a relationship with God, both now and in eternity. And what did He do? Look at verse 3. It's so powerful.

At the end of it, He says, He condemned sin in the flesh. How did God condemn sin in the flesh? By putting on Jesus the condemnation that we deserved. Do you understand that your sin, that my sin deserves condemnation? It does.

Sometimes we believe it. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes we're very aware of the fact that our sin deserves condemnation.

Other times we think that we should just kind of get a free ride because we're so good or we're so nice. I don't know if you're feeling like it tonight or not. It doesn't really matter.

Your sin and my sin deserves condemnation. But here's the issue. God condemned sin in the flesh.

God put on Jesus Christ the condemnation we deserve. God condemned our sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ on the cross. Why? Look at verse 4 now.

That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who have been given new life in Jesus Christ, for those who have had their sin condemned by God in Jesus on the cross, then the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us. Notice this.

The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us. Now, think of it this way. Did Jesus Christ fulfill the righteous requirement of the law? Absolutely.

He did it with his life. Jesus totally obeyed God. Was there ever a time when he disobeyed God? Never once.

Never once. You will never find a sin that Jesus committed. I love the life of Jesus in looking at it because even though he never sinned, he loved to kind of break the traditions of men sometimes.

Jesus would almost look for it at times and places. He would look for a reason to not sin, but break the tradition of men. Because Jesus wasn't overly concerned with the traditions of men, but he was terribly concerned with obeying God.

Now, Jesus fulfilled all the righteous requirement of the law. And because we are in Jesus, we fulfill the law, including the punishment that's deserved by the law. That was put on Jesus.

Please notice this. Take a close look at verse four. This is the word I want you to see epistle here right now in verse four, where it says that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

If you mark your Bible, I want you to underline that word in. It's not fulfilled by us. How good do you have to be to get to heaven by keeping the righteous requirement of the law? You've got to be perfect.

You've got to keep it all. But what if the righteous requirement of the law could be fulfilled in you? Not by you. In you.

By the free gift of God. Jesus was treated as a sinner so that we could be treated as righteous. If we believe on Jesus, He makes you good enough to get to heaven.

That's it. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in you, not necessarily by you. Paul put it very powerfully in 2 Corinthians 5.21, where he said, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This is the great exchange. Not only does God take our sin, but we receive His righteousness. That is the glorious exchange.

Now, how do you get God to condemn your sin in Jesus Christ? Right? You've got your sin. You want God to condemn your sin in Jesus, not in you. You don't want God to condemn your sin in you.

That's what hell is all about. You want God to condemn your sin in Jesus. Well, how do you make that arrangement? You simply submit your sin to God.

Give it to Him. Say, God, I know I'm a sinner. I give you my sin.

Every sin I've committed. The ones I remember, the ones I don't remember. The ones I knew I was doing, the ones I didn't know I was doing.

The ones I'm going to commit in the future that I don't even know about. Every sin, every aspect of my life that's sinful, I give it to you, God. And God says, fine, now that you've given it to me, I'm going to condemn it in Jesus on the cross.

Now, the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in you. Do you understand how glorious that is? God looks down from heaven tonight and if you've made this transaction with God, if you've submitted your sin to God to have Him condemn it in Jesus on the cross, God looks down on you tonight and He sees a totally righteous person. Do you believe that? That's something you should grasp on.

God, you're good. You're a good person before God. You know what? You are good enough to get to heaven.

You really are. Why? Because you have performed the goodness? No. Because the goodness has been put into you because of the work of Jesus.

God looks down upon you and He says, that person is good enough to get to heaven. That's how good. Now, many people criticize this teaching from the Bible because they say it cheapens goodness.

And I understand what they're saying. I mean, I want to be a little bit sympathetic to this disagreement. They say, hey, now wait a minute, wait a minute.

What you're saying, David, is that it doesn't matter how good you are. It matters how good Jesus is. And Jesus will put His goodness into you if you trust in Him.

And so your goodness doesn't matter. You're cheapening the idea of a personal goodness and nobody's going to care about being good. It's a dangerous teaching.

Society's going to crumble because nobody cares about being good anymore. How do you answer that? Well, the great key to understanding this is appreciating what the Bible says when we put our trust in Jesus. Our lives will be transformed by a power greater than ourselves, and we'll have our hearts genuinely changed, and we'll have an instinct to do good that we did not have before.

Then we're challenged to go out and actually do those good works. If there's not a change in a person's life, you look and say, has the righteous requirement of the law been fulfilled in them? Has their sin been condemned in Jesus? I think you can't look at one incident in a person's life and make that judgment. But when you take a look at the whole broad span, you take a look at their life as a whole, you can make that assessment.

You can say, I don't know. I don't see it. Maybe we should use our elevator illustration again.

Here you are. You walk into the elevator. What do you do? Well, by faith you push a button.

You have to do something. You have to reach out and do something. It's not a work that you can pat yourself on the back on.

It's not a work to say, well, gee, I really know how to work these elevators. It's just something you do. You have to do it, though.

You go and you push the button. It takes you up. Now, the proof in the pudding is that you've moved up to a different floor.

If you never moved anywhere, if nothing ever happened, then you have a right to say, you know, I don't know if they really know how to work those buttons right. Maybe they went in there and just punched some buttons, but maybe it wasn't the right button. Because if they really punched the right buttons, there would have been a change in the floor.

Well, there's going to be a change. You really trust in Jesus Christ, there's going to be a change in your life. Friends, we all know the changes don't come all at once.

And the changes are never complete until we go to glory with God. But there's changes nonetheless. The Bible says that we should let our light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.

The Bible says in Ephesians 2 that we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. See, God not only puts His goodness into us, but then He says, now I'm going to live that goodness out through you and the goodness should be up. We can't ignore what is for many people the most troubling aspect to all of this.

And that is the personal issue that it raises. Maybe we should go back to our letter writer to the Los Angeles Times. Do you understand that this is what troubled this man more than anything? Oh sure, he had his theological disagreements, his philosophical disagreements with Christianity, but what really got him? It was his mother.

He said, wait a minute. Do you understand that my mother was a Hungarian Jew who suffered in Auschwitz and are you telling me that she wasn't good enough to get to Heaven? It's as almost as if the guy is saying, listen, you can tell me that I'm going to Hell and I don't care one bit. I don't believe in your Heaven.

I don't believe in your Hell. You can tell me I'm going to Hell all day long. I don't care.

But when you tell my mother, my sainted mother who survived Hitler's Holocaust and the concentration camps, when you crush her by telling her that she's going to Hell, that's too much. You can't do that. Some people go even farther and they say, how many times have you heard this line? What right do you have to send them to Hell? That's what this man is asking.

What right do you have to send my mother to Hell? Can we just take a step back and agree that's out of my hands? I don't have the right. I don't have the power to send anybody to Hell. Aren't we all glad of that together here this evening? None of us as individuals have the right to send anybody to Hell.

God has mercifully taken that power out of our hands. It's not up to me. It's not up to some religious official.

It's not up to anybody except God and God alone. So what about this man's mother? Well, honestly, we don't know. Perhaps she had the Gospel of Jesus Christ clearly explained to her at one point.

And maybe this woman, despite all the heroic things that she went through in her life, perhaps this woman looked at the Gospel of Jesus Christ and simply said, No. I believe that I'm good enough. I don't need the goodness of Jesus to be accounted for me.

Now, if that were the case, and of course we're speaking purely hypothetically, but if that were the case, she sealed her own fate. She consciously rejected the only goodness that could save her. And again, it's possible that this woman never heard the Gospel of Jesus.

Maybe she never heard about the way that Jesus stood in her place to take her badness, and now she stands in His place to receive His goodness. Maybe she never heard that. Well, if that's the case, how would God judge her? Well, if she never heard the preaching of the Gospel, she certainly heard the preaching of her conscience and the preaching of the glory of creation.

The Bible says those are two sermons that everybody hears. Everybody hears the sermon that their conscience preaches them, and everybody hears the sermon that creation preaches them. And Romans 1 tells us that people will be judged by their accepting or their rejecting of what they know of God and His salvation through their conscience and through creation.

And again, perhaps this woman never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Did you know that this world is filled with people who never heard the Gospel? You have people probably where you work or on your street who have never heard the Gospel. I'm not saying they never heard the name Jesus.

Oh, they've heard the name Jesus plenty. Most of the time taken in vain or in a profane way. They know that a guy named Jesus lived and healed a bunch of people and died on a cross.

They know that, but that's not knowing the Gospel. Note, my friends, perhaps this woman, that this man is so upset about his mother, perhaps she knew from what her conscience told her and from what she could see in the glory of creation, that there truly was a God so much bigger than her that she could only be saved by submitting to that God instead of earning her own way before Him. The bottom line is, we don't know.

But what we do know? We do know what Abraham said of God is true. In Genesis 18, verse 25, Abraham said of the Lord, Will not the judge of all the earth do right? Absolutely he will. God will do what is right by His standards, not necessarily ours.

And He'll do what's right by this man's mother. He'll do what's right by this man. He'll do what's right by all people.

We can have full confidence that whatever the perfectly right thing is to do, God will do it. No one goes to hell will go there thinking that they were treated unfairly. And if there are any words on the lips of those people who will be in hell, those words will not be, I was robbed.

The words will be, God is fair. See, what I've done tonight right now is kind of a dangerous thing. Dangerous for you personally, whether you're listening to this in person or later on through a tape or some other way.

What's dangerous about what I've done before you right now this evening is I've made you fully accountable. There's not a single person who's heard what I've said who can go before God and say, well, I never heard. I never heard that Jesus came because I wasn't good enough and He died on the cross to take my badness and to give me His goodness.

You've heard the Gospel. You've heard that God's standard is total goodness and that you can't fulfill that. You've heard that Jesus stood in your place to receive your badness and that by faith you can stand in His place and receive His goodness.

You can accept it or you can reject it, but you cannot claim an excuse. That's why it's so important for you to step inside the elevator and push the button. To reach forward and to admit your need.

To say, I need a goodness that's beyond me. My friend, if you're in that deception where you think that God will grade you on a curve and you're hoping and taking refuge in the fact that there's a lot of bad people around you, maybe you're watching those talk shows that have all these really weird, dysfunctional people on them. And you're thinking, well, you know, I look pretty good compared to them.

You're deceiving yourself. You're making up your own criteria for getting to heaven. The problem is it's not your heaven.

It's God's heaven. And He establishes the criteria. He says how good we have to be.

It's not based on a curve. What I implore you to do is to understand that you don't have the goodness within yourself. Even if you are, by the measure of everybody else, a good person or even a really good person, you're not good enough.

You need to reach out and put your trust in the perfect goodness of Jesus Christ and trust that He went forth and had your sin condemned in Him so that His righteousness could be put in you. And if you are a believer, let me suggest that there's three things that you must do. Number one, you should just praise the God of heaven that made you good enough to be saved.

You're good enough to be saved. You are. Not because you're so great.

Don't dislocate your shoulder or pat yourself on the back here. You should recognize that it's the goodness of Jesus that's put into you. Doesn't it seem a little silly to be telling God right now, well, God, thank You very much for Your offer of giving me the goodness of Jesus, but I think I'm just going to try to prove myself worthy of Your love instead.

What are you doing? I've given you the goodness of my Son. That's not good enough for you? You feel like you have to prove you're good enough? You're not good enough. That's why I gave you the goodness of my Son.

You have it. Stop trying to prove yourself worthy of God's love. He knows you're not worthy, but He gives it to you anyway.

And finally, just go out and walk in the goodness that God has given you in Jesus Christ. You should leave here tonight pumped up that the righteousness of God is put in you. God sees you as good, as righteous as Jesus Christ.

Because it's Jesus' goodness, Jesus' righteousness that's been put in you. It gets you excited. It gets me excited.

I'd rather have Jesus' goodness than mine. Or anybody else's. That's the perfect goodness.

Do good people go to heaven? Yes, they do. If they're as good as Jesus. Well, if you can't be as good as Jesus by what you do, then receive His goodness by entrusting your life to Him.

Father, I pray for everybody here tonight. I pray for everybody listening to this message at a later time. And I pray, Lord God, that You would persuade them to take action, decided action, on what's real, on what's right.

That they would reach out and touch You. Say, Father, here, take my sin. Condemn it in Jesus Christ.

I submit my sin to You for Your condemnation. And I want to receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And Father, let them trust that You have done it and will do it.

That You will pour out the goodness of Jesus into them. And that the righteous requirement of the law will be fulfilled in all of those who do that. I pray, Lord, that You'd help everybody to just pray that simple prayer of surrender to You.

Now, if you're here tonight, maybe you've never heard the Gospel explained so simply, so plainly before. Maybe you realize tonight, even as I'm speaking, that really at the bottom line, you've been trusting in your own goodness to save you, not the goodness of Jesus. And I want you to pray this prayer.

Lord Jesus, I know that I'm not good enough. I may not be a bad person compared to other people. But I understand that I am not good enough to get into heaven by my own goodness.

So I give You my sin, Lord God, and I ask that You condemn it in Jesus by what He did on the cross. And I ask, Lord God, that You would fill me with the goodness and the righteousness of Jesus. That His perfect keeping of the law would be poured into me and accounted on my behalf.

Receive it tonight, Lord. I receive it now. Change my life.

We thank You for this, Lord, in Jesus' precious name, Amen.

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