

CAN WE MAKE IT TO HEAVEN

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Text: Matthew 7:13-14

One morning, my 4-year-old son, Kevin, and his grandpa went out to buy donuts. On the way, Grandpa turned to Kevin and asked, "Which way is heaven?" Kevin pointed to the sky. "Which way is hell?" Kevin pointed towards the floor of the truck. Grandpa continued, "And where are you going?" "Dunkin' Donuts," Kevin replied.

-- Kathy Chapman, North Lauderdale, FL. Today's Christian Woman, "Heart to Heart."

People in general are a good bit like the little boy in the story. They seem to understand the questions, but keep missing the point when it comes to the directions that God offers. The choices that we must make in relation to our soul are constantly before us. God's direction is also ever before us in His Word. Yet, in spite of the willingness of many to acknowledge the truths of the Bible, they seemingly continue to miss the point of God's direction. Just when it seems that they understand God's point—they are distracted by their own goals or desires—and continue on toward their original destination.

This passage of scripture is all about two choices—two ways of life: positive and negative, good and bad, obedience and rebellion, life and destruction. It speaks of the conflict in the human soul that everyone must resolve by making a choice. No man can serve two masters—he must choose.

Note the admonition to of Jesus for us to make the right *choices*. He wants us to remember that the right decisions are what will get us to heaven.

I. WE CAN MAKE IT TO HEAVEN IF WE CHOOSE WHAT MOST REJECT (vv. 13a & 14).

A. The narrow gate is the way to eternal life (v.13a).

Wabush, a town in a remote portion of Labrador, Canada, was completely isolated for some time. But recently a road was cut through the wilderness to reach it. Wabush now has one road leading into it, and thus, only one road leading out. If someone would travel the unpaved road for six to eight hours to get into Wabush, there is only one way he or she could leave--by turning around.

Each of us, by birth, arrives in a town called Sin. As in Wabush, there is only one way out--a road built by God himself. But in order to take that road, one must first turn around. That complete about-face is what the bible calls repentance, and without it, there's no way out of town.

-- Brian Weatherdon, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Leadership, Vol. 8, no. 2.

B. However, the way to eternal life is not sought by most (v.14).

“Democratic decisions do not determine truth and righteousness in the kingdom. That there are only two ways is the inevitable result of the fact that the one that leads to life is exclusively by revelation. But if truth in such matters must not be sought by appealing to majority opinion (Exod 23:2), neither can it be found by each person doing what is right in his own eyes (Prov 14:12; cf. Judg 21:25). God must be true and every man a liar (Rom 3:4).” EBC

C. S. Lewis in, The Problem of Pain writes, “We are afraid that Heaven is a bribe, and that if we make it our goal we shall no longer be disinterested. It is not so. Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to.”

-- C. S. Lewis in The Problem of Pain. Christianity Today, Vol. 36, no. 7.

II. WE CAN MAKE IT TO HEAVEN IF WE REJECT WHAT MOST CHOOSE (v. 13b).

A. The road to destruction has few obstacles (v.13b).

In Jules Verne's novel The Mysterious Island, he tells of five men who escape a Civil War prison camp by hijacking a hot air balloon. As they rise into the air, they realize the wind is carrying them over the ocean. Watching their homeland disappear on the horizon, they wonder how much longer the balloon can stay aloft.

As the hours pass and the surface of the ocean draws closer, the men decide they must cast overboard some of the weight, for they had no way to heat the air in the balloon. Shoes, overcoats, and weapons are reluctantly discarded, and the uncomfortable aviators feel their balloon rise. But only temporarily. Soon they find themselves dangerously close to the waves again, so they toss their food. Better to be high and hungry than drown on a full belly!

Unfortunately, this, too, is only a temporary solution, and the craft again threatens to lower the men into the sea. One man has an idea: they can tie the ropes that hold the passenger car and sit on those ropes. Then they can cut

away the basket beneath them. As they sever the very thing they had been standing on, it drops into the ocean, and the balloon rises. Not a minute too soon, they spot land.

Eager to stand on terra firma again, the five jump into the water and swim to the island. They live, spared because they were able to discern the difference between what really was needed and what was not. The "necessities" they once thought they couldn't live without were the very weights that almost cost them their lives. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles" (Heb. 12:1, NIV).

-- Ed Haynes, Edwardsville, Illinois. Leadership, Vol. 11, no. 4.

B. The road to destruction is traveled by most (v.13b).

Luke 13:23-24 contradicts the world's philosophy that everybody but the "really bad" will go to heaven. Note what the passage says, "Someone asked him, 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?' He said to them, 'Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.'"

We must choose while there is time because the day is coming, like in the days of Noah, when it will be too late. And it will not matter how many want to be saved then, when it is over, it is over.

CONCLUSION

At the end of a five-day retreat for families affected by disabilities, a microphone was passed around so all the participants could share a couple of sentences about how meaningful, how fun the week had been. Little freckle-faced, red-haired Jeff raised his hand. We were so excited to see what Jeff would say, because Jeff had won the hearts of us all at family retreat. Jeff has Downs syndrome. He took the microphone, put it right up to his mouth, and said, "Let's go home."

Later, his mother told me, "Jeff really missed his dad back home. His dad couldn't come to family retreat because he had to work." Even though Jeff had had a great time, a fun-filled week, he was ready to go home because he missed his daddy.

This world is pleasant enough. But would we really want it to go on forever as a family retreat? I don't think so. I'm with Jeff. I miss my Daddy, my Abba Father. My heart is longing to go home. Don't miss the chance down here on earth to begin investing in eternity so that heaven can be your heart's home.

-- Joni Eareckson Tada, "Heaven, Our Real Home," Preaching Today, Tape No. 157.

Ultimately our heart must be set upon our eternal goals if we are going to make the right *choices*.