

RELIGION

How Do I Trust In Jesus So I Will Know I Am Going To Heaven?

Bob Sexton

This is the key question and the Bible has the answer.

In John 1:12, the Bible says as many as received Him (Jesus) to them He gave power or the right to become children of God, even to those who believe (trust) in His name.

Paul, in Romans 10, adds that if you confess (agree)

with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and trust in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

He continues there to tell us that it is with your heart (deep inner being) that you trust and become right with God, and then with your mouth you continue to confess all the way to salvation.

Additional verses in Ro-

mans 10 give the sequence of trusting in Christ as this: You first hear the Word of God about Jesus, then faith (trusting) is made possible.

Next, you choose to trust in the Word heard (concerning Jesus dying for your sins and being resurrected from the dead).

This is to happen when the Spirit of God convicts (persuades) you that is what God wants you to do. As a

result of hearing the Word, and being convicted in the mind and choosing to trust in your heart, then you call upon the name of the Lord to save you, forgive your sins, and accept you completely only because Jesus died and arose to make it possible.

The final step, according to the Bible, is that God honors that faith (trust) and saves you just as He prom-

ised.

The good news is that from that point on into eternity, you are adopted into the family of God, and you are fully assured of going to Heaven.

More "good news" is that nothing will ever change that fact.

For more information or an appointment to discuss this personally, call 903-849-4198.

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Believers must not become 'storefront Christians'

Samuel Mills
trusting-in-jesus.com

Storefront Christians: As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him and reflect his glory even more, according to 2 Corinthians 3:18 says in the New Living Translation.

I once dreamed of walking down the Main Street of a beautiful city.

The storefronts along each side were filled with beautifully dressed mannequins, elegant musical instruments and other luxurious items.

It was a fantastic dream until I decided to enter one of the stores for a closer look. To my surprise, when I opened the door, nothing was there — not even a floor — only what appeared to be a large, deep, dimly lit cellar, charred and black.

In shock, I quickly closed the door and stepped back out onto the sidewalk, and there again was this beautiful storefront.

The point is that it's not what's on the outside, but the inside that counts with the Lord.

What are our true intentions? Where is our heart concerning our love and dedication to Him?

If we are not careful, we will find ourselves resembling that of a storefront Christian; wherein on Sunday morning our life reflects our faith in Jesus, and the rest of the week a lifestyle resembling that of the world.

The sad part is that the world recognizes this. It has been said that "if you want to know how a Christian should act, ask a sinner."

It is disappointing but true that this Christian is probably the last person others will approach for spiritual guidance.

A Christian is to look like Christ at all times. The Apostle Paul says: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glo-



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ry, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit," 2 Corinthians 3:18 says.

According to Colossians 3:9-10, when one becomes a Christian, they put off the old self and put on the new. For a Christian to put on the new self means to put on Christ, to live like, and to emulate Him, then to begin doing and living according to His Word.

The Christian walk is an ongoing lifelong process that takes effort, patience, and concentration. It is our day-in, day-out walk with the Lord that brings honor to Him.

We are to bring honor to God in every aspect and activity of our daily lives. As Christians, we represent Christ at all times.

We are not only to tell others about Him, but to

exemplify Him in all our actions and speech.

We are to let God change us so that we are more like Christ.

As Jesus looked like the Father, we are to look like Jesus.

When we surrender ourselves to Him and allow Him to do what He wants in us, we are then imitating Christ — doing the will of the Father; trusting in Him, honoring Him, and loving Him with all our strength.

Our transformation from storefront Christians into the Christlike people begins in our relationship with Him.

Perhaps the most beautiful experience through all eternity is to be at one with and to share the loving intimacy of the Father and the Son.

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:1)"

'TIME OF EXAMINATION' Lenten season offers purity for Christians

Rev. Richard Prather

The Lenten season is a time for self inspection.

Christians around the world are called to be in a time of examination for purification of the heart and soul in preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection.

Like the Jew in preparation for Passover, we are to search the whole house (our hearts) for that smallest of indications of yeast (our sin) and remove it from the house.

Then, and only then, are we ready to celebrate the salvation of God.

In the gospel reading for last Sunday, we heard Jesus telling the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6-9).

The main question did not deal with how bountiful the leaves on the tree were, or how tall the limbs reached to the sky, or how much shade it could provide on a hot, summer day.

No, the question dealt with the fruit it provided. For three years, the man who had planted the tree did not find fruit upon its branches, so the task was given to uproot the tree because it was "wasting the soil."

But the gardener stepped in and secured more time.

I have to admit I do like summer fruits. Nothing's better than to be in the field picking the ripe peaches and plums.

As I was growing up, we had a couple of plum trees and a peach tree or two. The plums produced quite a bit (could almost keep ahead of my and my two brothers' eating); the peaches were not so plentiful and were small in size.

But what a joy they did bring when they were in season and producing!

My father was an accountant, not a farmer. My mother was, well, a mother,



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not a fruit grower. Those trees were tended and fed by "Mother Nature."

The trees had good soil (evidenced by the growth and the fruit) and were blessed by plenty of water from the rains God provided.

But many commercial orchards know this is the rare situation rather than the norm. Without proper care, disease will hit, insects will attack and produce will drop significantly. Without care, the tree will become barren.

This parable from Luke is a quite appropriate text to study in this season of the year.

We have the genes of growth and produce within us. All that needs be done is nurture the roots with a little fertilizer (the Word of God) and make sure it gets some water (the Living Water) and let the Light of the World shine upon it. So where is the fruit?

I used to ask that of my tomato plants many years ago — luscious green vines of great height. All looked good on the top side, but nematodes lurked in the underground.

We had plenty of good food, lots of water, and abundant sunshine but no fruit. Those plants were lucky, for a real gardener came along and identified the problem as nematodes.

A trip to the store, a little work, and a whole lot of love, and the vines began to bear fruit.

That is the joy of this parable. Yes, it ends with the warning that the "time" is coming, but it tells us that we who want to bear fruit still have the chance to do so.

The gardener is at hand; he has laid the axe aside and brought fertilizer and a spade fork instead.

As we rush toward the finish of the season of repentance, we do so with the loving work of the gardener nourishing us and working with us, so that our joy may be complete when we encounter the Gardener at the tomb and He calls our name.

Yes, the celebration comes, but first we must clean the house, absorb the nutrients, drink the Water and put on the flowers to make the fruit. Come, O Gardener, come.

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