

HOW CAN I KNOW IF I'M SAVED?

1. It Doesn't Depend on Your Goodness.
2. It Doesn't Depend On Your Experiences.
3. It Depends Entirely on Christ and His Promises.

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who wants you to be certain of eternal life in heaven, dear friends:

Have you reached the point in your spiritual life where you are absolutely certain of going to heaven when you die? Absolutely certain?

If someone asked you "Are you saved?" would you get a bit nervous or embarrassed because you wouldn't quite know how to respond? Do you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die?

You can be sure. Jesus wants you to be sure and to enjoy the peace of mind which that certainty gives. When you stare death in the face, it is the only thing that will comfort you. But how can anyone be sure they are saved? How can I know if I'm saved? That is the question which will be answered today on the basis of God's truth.

1. IT DOESNT DEPEND ON YOUR GOODNESS.

The main reason why so many people are in doubt about going to heaven is that they think that going to heaven depends on their own goodness. The thought is that "If I'm good enough, I'll get to heaven." On that basis there will always be doubt, for we can never answer for certain questions like "*How do I know if I've been good enough? What is good enough?*"

The Bible teaches that no one is or can be good enough to get to heaven by his own efforts: "**All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23). Let's say that heaven and earth are separated by a canyon that

is about 1000 feet across. To get to heaven you have to jump across the canyon. Do you know what the world record is for the broad jump? About 30 feet. Some people can jump that far, others can't come close. If getting to heaven were like jumping over the canyon - we had to get there by our own efforts - some would run and just kinda fall over the ledge, like me. Others would make it 30 feet. But everyone would fall short and tumble down to their destruction.

No, if any one is to be saved, it will be by God's power and mercy, not his own efforts. A person gets to heaven because Jesus Christ died for his sins on the cross. **All who believe this will have eternal life.** God promises that, and he will not make a promise that he won't keep. You can believe that whoever believes will be saved. It is the truth.

2. IT DOESN'T DEPEND ON YOUR EXPERIENCES

That leads us to another question that may be a little harder to answer. *"How do I know if I have faith?"*

Some people think that you must have proof of faith. They say that such proof is a "conversion experience." They say that a real believer will be able to point to the moment of his conversion. They say that a real believer will be able to remember when he or she felt something strange, like a warm sensation in his heart, that meant that he finally believed the Gospel of Christ. They trust in an experience that they have had. The problem with this is that emotions and feelings change. What if I feel the separation from God that sins cause? Does that mean that I am no longer a child of God, when I don't feel like one? Knowledge of our faith cannot rest on feelings and emotions.

Some Christians may see proof of their faith in their good works. "My family helped build this church." "I have been serving in the church for many years." "I always try to say 'yes' when my neighbors need a hand." Even some might point to the fact that they are very regular in worship. I would agree that those can definitely be signs of faith.

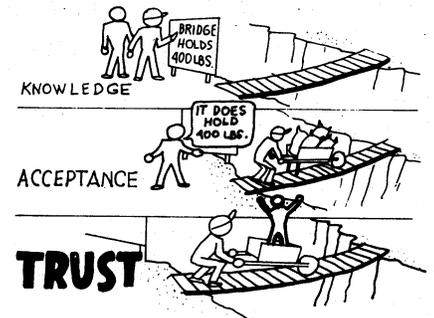
However, we aren't always doing good works. We may not feel like helping out at church or helping our neighbor when the big game is on or the sale is on at the grand opening of the new store. We see good works in our life, but we also see a failure to do good works. If we want to be sure that we have saving faith, the answer is not found with good works.

We still haven't answered the question, *"How do I know if I have faith?"* Let's ask the question, *"What is faith?"*

Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, a work of God in the heart of a person. "No one can say that Jesus is the Lord except through the Holy Spirit," St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:3. And in Ephesians 2:8-9 the Bible says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."

This gift of faith comes through the Gospel. "Faith comes from hearing the Word of God," the Bible says in Romans 10. Without the Gospel, there can be no faith.

Faith is not just knowing a set of facts. Even the devil knows the facts, the Bible says. The demon in the Synagogue at Capernaum called Jesus, "the Holy One of God." (Luke 4:34) Faith is not just accepting the facts to be true. Faith is trusting someone or something with our lives. (Picture)



How do I know if I have faith? The Bible encourages us to examine our hearts for faith. Such an examination might include the following questions:

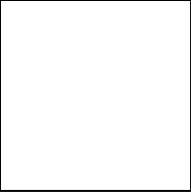
- 1) *Do I believe that I am a sinner and that I have deserved God's anger and punishment?*
- 2) *Do I believe that Jesus paid for my sins when he died on the cross?*
- 3) *Do I believe that it is true that whoever trusts in Christ will go to heaven?*
- 4) *Do I intend with the help of God to make whatever corrections in my life are necessary to please God and show him that I appreciate his mercy?*

These questions can help us examine our hearts for saving faith. And when we do, let us turn to God's Word, the source of faith, the tool of the Holy Spirit.

3. IT DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON CHRIST AND HIS PROMISES.

Saving faith is trusting in Jesus to take you across that canyon I mentioned a few moments ago. Just believing isn't all that counts. Some say, "It doesn't matter so much what you believe, but that you are sincere in your faith." God would dispute that. I can believe with all my heart that the moon is made of green cheese, but that doesn't make it so. Sincerity isn't the bottom line. What matters is WHO you believe in. **Faith in Christ the world's only Savior is the key.**

Our certainty of salvation is not based on what I have done or felt, but upon the facts of what Christ has already done. He died on a wooden cross for the sins of all people. That's a fact. He rose again on Easter morning as assurance



that our sins are forgiven. That's a fact.

He has left us with the unbreakable promises: **“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life.”** That's a fact. And it's because of Christ and the sure promises of God that we can be sure of our salvation.

It's not our success at life or our subjective feelings that count. It's Christ and His Word. And that is all we need to know we are saved. Amen.