

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

I'll Just Take My Chances

Romans 7:14-25

¹ Whenever sharing your faith with someone, have you ever heard this response, “I think I’m living a pretty good life. I’ll just take my chances.” ²

Romans, Chapter 7, verses 14 through 25, help us with this response. We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. ¹ ³

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in

¹ v14-19.

God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! ² ₄

Death is simply a transition into another life. ⁵ The Bible says you will live forever either in heaven or in hell. ⁶ Nearly everyone wants to go to heaven, of course, but are not really sure how to make that happen. ⁷

The Bible points out to us two possible ways and, in fact, divides our Bibles into two sections, to point out those ways. The sections are the Old Testament way and the New Testament way.

² v20-25.

I. The Old Testament Way ⁸

There is the Old Testament way. ⁹ This is the way most people think about getting to heaven. ¹⁰ The idea is that people are divided into two categories: good guys and bad guys. ¹¹ Good guys go to heaven and bad guys go to hell. ¹² Since God is a god of love and mercy most people will probably get in.

There's a vastly overlooked problem here. ¹³ What's the standard that determines which category you fit into? Where's the line where, when you step over it, you become a bad guy?

Well, it's kind of a relative thing, isn't it? ¹⁴ Basically, as this thinking goes, if you're not a criminal and you treat people reasonably well, you're a good guy, right? ¹⁵ Hell is reserved for the real "sick-os", who mow people down in high schools, burn down homes, murder folks and chase people out of their country. ¹⁶

But who sets these standards? Do your parents? Does the government? Who says those are the

standards? The truth is ¹⁷, you decide if you're a good guy or not. Most of you have determined that you are in the good guy category. ¹⁸

The first possible way of getting to heaven, the Old Testament way, considers this way of thinking. It gives us some very absolute standards called the Law of Moses.

Moses, a great prophet and leader of the Jews, was called of God to go into Egypt and lead the Jews out. They had become slaves and God wanted them freed and returned to the land He had prepared for them. After some difficulties, Moses succeeded in doing just that.

In the process of two million people, plus livestock, journeying to the Land of Canaan, they make a necessary stop-over in the valley beside the Holy Mountain of God. There, God instructs His people in the way He wants them to live. Through Moses, God dictates His Law. It takes the children of Israel about

forty years to get it reasonably right! Then, they entered their promised land.

This law was what God determined to be the standard for being a good guy or a bad guy. After all, as our Creator, He is the only One who has the right to set those standards! You obey the commandments, and you go to heaven. You disobey them and you go to hell. It's pretty simple.

The first half of this 7th chapter of Romans points out what the Law of Moses could and could not do for you. ¹⁹ The good news is it very definitely points out what those standards are. ³

But there's bad news to trying to have a right relationship with God by obeying all the rules. ²⁰ The bad news is, once you fail to obey even one command, you've blown it! ⁴ There is no provision in

³ v7-8 - Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

⁴ v9-11 - Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was

the Law of Moses for forgiveness! In fact, ²¹ James, Chapter 2, verse 10 states, **For whoever keeps the whole law & yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it!**

So, ²² according to the Bible, if you choose to try to get to heaven simply by being a good guy, you aren't going to make it! ²³ Perfection is the minimum standard for entrance into heaven. You've got to know the Law of Moses and then obey it to perfection all of your life and never goof! ²⁴ In fact, only Lord Jesus did it right!

If anyone else lived a good guy life it would have been the Apostle Paul and he's the one who wrote this biblical book. Listen to what he says. ²⁵ **There is no one righteous, not even one.** ⁵ ²⁶ **All have sinned and**

intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

⁵ Romans 3:10.

fall short of the glory of God.⁶ ²⁷ For the wages of sin is death.⁷

There's not much hope here in the Old Testament way of going to heaven by trying to be a good guy. Are you just going to take your chances? I don't think so. There's another way.

II. The New Testament Way ²⁸

The New Testament way is the other way. It's the Christian way. This way is found in John, Chapter 3, verse 16, **²⁹ For God so loved the world that He gave His one and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

This way pictures you and me as filthy rotten sinners no matter how much of a good guy we try to be. From God's viewpoint, we don't seem to do very well working our way to heaven. So God sent His Son, Lord Jesus, on a mission to help us out of this sin problem. ³⁰

⁶ Romans 3:23.

⁷ Romans 6:23.

This is how He did it. ³¹ He paid a price He didn't have to pay. **For the wages of sin is death.** ⁸ ³² Jesus lived a perfect, sin free, life. So He didn't have to pay that wage! But He volunteered to pay it anyway! ³³ Lord Jesus took your place on the cross! The cross fills in the gap between your puny efforts at trying to be a good guy to get into heaven and God's minimum standard for getting there!

What you need to get through the pearly gates is not good guy status but a personal relationship with the King of kings! You need forgiveness for your sins the Law couldn't provide, but the cross could. It's only because of what Lord Jesus did for you that you can be counted as righteous: ⁹ a good guy. ³⁴

How do you respond to this! ³⁵ Surrender your life to the Lordship of Jesus. ³⁶ Trust Him to provide forgiveness for your sin and an eternal home in heaven for you. ³⁷ Then, spend the rest of your life

⁸ Romans 6:23.

⁹ Romans 4:5 - to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

loving Him and expressing your appreciation to Him by living for Him.

So, you've got a choice. You can take your chances by trying to be a good guy on your own apart from the way God provided for you. ³⁸ That was the Old Testament way. Obey His rules perfectly, without goofing even once, and hope that God will make an exception in your case. Those people flunked!

You should come the Christian way. ³⁹ Lord Jesus said, **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** ¹⁰ Here is the New Testament way. Lord Jesus paid your debt for you so you could go to heaven forever. Identify with Him! Trust Him! Appreciate Him! You win!

<http://biblelifemessages.org>

¹⁰ John 14:6.