

What Happens to Those Who Never Hear the Gospel?

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[0:00] I've entitled this, What Happens to Those Who Have Never Heard.

! Interesting question. What happens to those who have never heard?! Speaking, of course, of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now let me just start by saying this. When it comes to salvation and to the matters of salvation, the Bible is ironclad and clear.

Acts 4, verse 12, And there is salvation in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

Obviously, Dr. Luke there speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke there speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. In John's gospel, Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

[1:19] No one comes to the Father but through me. And I'm told if we understood the Greek language, I'm the exclusive way, I'm the absolute truth.

I'm true truth. I am the specific life. There is no other. Search the universe. You must come through me, Jesus, to get to the Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the exclusive way to the Father and ultimately into heaven.

There is no plan B. So don't go looking for plan B. And let me tell you, having been in 43 countries, there's a lot of people out there that are looking for or are already grasping what they believe to be plan B.

And there is not one. I was reading David Platt, maybe you're not probably a lot of you familiar with, but some of us are. And he was in, I can't remember, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, somewhere over there.

[2:36] And he was with a Hindu priest and a Buddhist priest. And they were talking about God in heaven. And basically David said, you know, it seems to me what you guys are saying is that there are different ways up the mountain to God.

And if you will struggle and work and do all these wonderful things, someday you might reach the top. And both the Buddhists and the Hindu agreed and said that's exactly what we're saying.

To which David said, what if I told you that there's another path where God came down the mountain to us?

And that excited them. They were excited about that. They'd never heard that. And he went ahead and gave them the gospel. Don't know what they did with it, but he was faithful that God in Christ has come down.

And there is no plan B. Unfortunately, men and women have been trying to come up with plan B, I suppose, within a few minutes after Calvary.

[3:53] You know, they were probably hatching a plan. The plan B. The gospel of Christ is the only true saving good news.

And we must be certain about this. There are plenty of false gospels around. A whole lot of them.

That's one of the reasons I don't watch much Christian TV. Except for Channel 378, which may not mean anything to you all. I'm on cable up in the country. They have some true messengers.

But plenty of false gospels around. Paul warned us about that in the opening words of Galatians.

He said, there's going to be people come and bring another gospel.

And it's a false gospel. And they will be the anathema of God. The cursed of God. Jude. And we're just going through Jude on Sunday morning in my class.

[4:52] And we've only got two lessons left. And Jude has been talking. The great warnings on apostasy. And on apostates and false teachers. As they have infiltrated the church.

They did so in Jude's day. They've done so in our day. But the only gospel that saves. Is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And the Bible is very clear. That we are saved. Through a doctrine. That is found in the pages of Holy Writ.

It is called the doctrine of justification. By faith. The just shall live by faith. And faith saves us. And it is actually. If you read Ephesians 2.8 and 9. It is the faith God gives us. To empower us to believe. And when we believe. We are justified. In his sight.

[5:50] And then we begin. The process of sanctification. But there has been. A titanic shift.

In this foundational doctrine. Of justification. By faith. Our grandfathers. And great grandfathers. And going back into the reformers.

And the Puritans. And even beyond that. Held strongly. Held strongly. To the doctrine. Of justification. By faith. But today. There is a. Another doctrine.

That is. Probably. The most. Widely held. Doctrine. Certainly. In America. I would.

I would include. North America. Canada. It is a. Most widely held. Doctrine. Concerning. How. You get.

[6:47] To heaven. And it is called. Justification. By death. You die. You go to heaven. People hold to that.

They hold to that. And you can see. Terrible examples. Of people. That have lived. Aberrant lives. That have. Rejected Christ. Rejected.

The father. Rejected. The word of God. Gone their own way. And. And they die. And. People say. Well. They are in heaven now. They are in heaven now. Dr. Stanley. Years ago.

I had a. Tape. One of his messages. He said. He has seen this. So many times. In his church. When he comes to him. Crying. Weeping. Hasn't. Has anything to do with Christ.

Doesn't want the gospel. Doesn't like church. Full of hypocrites. I tell people. Hey look. There is always room for one more. You know. We are all inclusive here. And he said.

[7:43] You know. She just said. Please go talk to him. I go. She comes back. Six months later. It didn't work. Go again. I go again. And. And then. That man. Dies.

And. That widow. Will come. And say. You know. You are going to do my husband's funeral. And I know that he is in heaven. Because he was a good man. And he paid his taxes.

And he kept the lawn mowed. And he kept food on the table. And I know God. Doesn't allow. Good people. To go to hell. And actually.

And I will get to this. So don't. Don't throw stones yet. But that is true. God does not allow. Good people. To go to hell. He does not allow. Innocent people. To go to hell. And he doesn't allow. Righteous people.

To go to hell. We'll develop that fame shortly. But. The error. Embraced by our culture. Is this.

[8:39] Justification. By death. You die. You go to heaven. It is embraced across our land. I have found it. It has infiltrated churches.

Across America. Even those we call evangelical. And it is of course a lie. From the pit. This is hard to swallow.

For a postmodern culture. Today we live in. We live in an age of tolerance. You've heard that word. We have to be tolerant. Where it has become shameful.

To challenge anyone's belief system. Especially on the matter of faith. And in this culture. All faiths are tolerated.

And acceptable. So we who. Exclusively believe. In salvation. By faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And his finished work. Are branded intolerant.

[9:40] People of tolerance. Have very little tolerance. For us. In fact. They are very intolerant. Of us. And. I don't want to stir up. A hornet's nest.

But there are churches. In this community. That have branded. Highland Park Baptist Church. As intolerant. Because we believe. There's one way. Trinity Baptist Church.

Believe there's one way. Other churches. It's interesting. Now. All of this. Still begs a question. That has been around. For millennia. What happens.

To people. Who have never. Heard. The gospel. And that's an interesting question. I've. I've had that question. Ask me. A number of times.

By lost people. Especially. When you. Are involved. With them. In a witnessing. Encounter. You know. You go to share.

[10:37] The gospel. With someone at work. Or a friend. Or a colleague. Or a stranger. Whatever. And they'll stop you. Midway. And they. They will shift. The focus. And I say.

Well now. Wait a minute. You're telling me. That to get to heaven. I have to believe in Jesus. What about. The little guy. In Africa. That has never heard.

Now. I want to suggest. To you. Tonight. That's a ruse. That's a. That's a. False. Trail. Because people. Get very uncomfortable. When you.

The unsaved. When you tell them. Jesus is the only way. And they'll come up with that. And I have a pat answer. For that. I actually have a short term answer. And a long term answer.

For that question. The short answer. Is. Let's not worry about them. Right now. Because you have heard. Let's worry about you.

[11:32] Because you have heard. What are you going to do. With the gospel. And my long term answer. Is the focus. Of the message. Tonight.

And I told the class. This morning. We've been. We've been. Preaching on apostasy. And apostates. To reject credit. I said. You know. I'm very careful. On who I steal.

My messages from. I want to make sure. I go to the giants. You know. John MacArthur. R.C. Sproul. Ralph Dersham. The guys I trust.

That I know. Are not apostates. So. So. I stole this from. A guy that I know. Is not apostate. There are some. That think. There's about. 4.5 billion.

5 billion. People. On this earth. Who have never heard the gospel. 4.5 billion. You know. People may say. Why don't they turn on television?

[12:28] Well. Not easily done. If you don't have a television. Not easily done. If you're in an Islamic country. Or Hindu country. Or Muslim country. Or. Or. Or. Confucian. Or any of these others.

There are. We know. 6. Thousand. People. Groups. Who have never. Seen. The word of God. In their language.

And this is a total aside. This is free. I won't charge for this. A number of years ago. Diane and I were able to. Purchase a Bible.

Bibles. For the Coho tribe. In Vietnam. They've never seen the Bible. In their language. And we were able to do it. \$3,000. You know.

That's not a lot of money. For the. For the collective church. We. We ought to. One day. I've talked to Don about this. We ought to one day look at that. Can you imagine. Highland Park. Publishing.

[13:28] Having. That includes everything. Translation. Publishing. And delivery. It was an amazing experience. The only negative. Was. They gave me one copy.

We printed 2,500 copies. They gave me a copy. And on the front page. When you turned. It said. The Tom Holland version of the Bible. That was one downside. To the whole thing.

I didn't know. I had a version. But. That was the only thing in English. The Tom Holland version of the Bible. In Yemen. North Yemen. There are 8 million people.

It is estimated. That there are 20. To 30. Born again believers. You thought I was going to say 20,000. Or 30,000. No. No. 20.

To 30. The size of this group here tonight. Is larger. Than all of the believers. In Yemen. North Yemen. A heavily Muslim country.

[14:25] And a radically Muslim country. I might add. The Bedouins of Algeria. And I've been in the Algerian desert. The Sahara desert out there. And Bedouins come through. And they don't know borders.

They don't understand the concept of borders. There are 1.4 million Bedouins. Traveling the sands. Of the Sahara desert. And among them. There are. Zero. Christians. None. And they've probably never heard.

They've probably never heard. You know. That's hard to imagine. Well what does the Bible have to say. About them. As we often do.

When facing a challenging question. We turn to the Apostle Paul. If you want to know. Answers to a lot of your questions. Concerning the word of God.

[15:21] Go to Paul. After all. He wrote 13 books. That's a big song. And as we do.

When we turn to Paul. We often turn to the book of Romans. I mean. It's not just Paul. It's the book of Romans. Fantastic book. The Bible. We will never plummet to death.

Dr. McGee said. He taught it like 20 times. And never. Did it justice. But it is there. That we discover. Truths. Concerning those.

Who have never heard. The gospel. They've never heard. And I'm going to list these. To you. As a series of truths. And truth number one.

We're going to deal with. And these are going to be just bullet points. We're going to move very quickly. Truth one. This is very important. According to Paul. Writing by inspiration. Of the Holy Spirit. All people.

[16:20] Have knowledge. Of God. And we have to keep that in mind. When we're talking about folks. Spread out across the world. Who have never heard.

Specifically. The gospel of Christ. All. People. Have. The knowledge. Of God. God is in the business. Of revealing himself.

That is made very clear. Just a few verses. Into the magnificent book of Romans. If you're following along. I'm in chapter one. Starting in verse eighteen.

For the wrath of God. Is revealed from heaven. Against all ungodliness. And unrighteousness of men. Who suppress. I'm sorry ladies. That's the generic term.

You're included in this. The righteousness of men. Who suppress the truth. And unrighteousness. Because that which is known. About God. Is evident within them.

[17:15] For God made it evident. To them. Did you hear that? He has made his himself. Evident. To all people. For since the creation of the world.

His invisible attributes. His eternal power. And divine nature. Have been clearly seen. Well that's quite a word. That the Holy Spirit put in there.

Clearly seen. Being understood. Through what has been made. So that. They are without. Without excuse. Wow that is powerful.

That is powerful. The Spirit of God. Who cannot lie. Because he's God. Authored this passage.

And says. That God has made himself. Evident. To all men. Though God is spirit. He has revealed.

[18:13] His invisible attributes. His eternal power. And. His divine nature. To the human race. And God has chosen.

To do that. Through the created world. Through the created world. Yesterday morning. I was sitting on the back deck. It was still cool.

I was talking to the Lord. And my field of vision. Was very narrow. I mean. Like. Here. And. And I'm. I'm looking.

As I'm talking to the Lord. And I know this message is coming. And I could see. Some trees. I could see the leaves. On the trees. And birds. And clouds. In the sky.

And you know. In my prayer time. I mentioned to the Lord. That that would be enough. For anyone to know. That God exists. Just seeing. That very narrow thing there.

[19:11] We can know. That God exists. And. And. Therefore. Knowing. That. Having seen. Just. A hundred feet this way. A hundred feet that way.

And taking that in. All men. Including myself. Are without excuse. We have no excuse. To stand before God. And say. I didn't know you were there. We.

I will go out. This evening. About 930. And I will have a prayer time. Looking up at the night sky.

And. If you don't have the good fortune. Living out in the country. Come out sometime. And you can look at it with me.

And we'll talk to God. Even the heavens declare. The glory of God. Man is without excuse. So number one is. That all people. Have a knowledge.

Of the existence. Of God. And truth number two is. All people. Reject. God. Some of you are swarming. So.

[20:04] Whoa. Whoa. He's really off base now. Stay with me. This is what Paul says next. In chapter one. For even though they knew God. They did not honor him as God.

Or give thanks. But they became futile. In their speculations. And their foolish heart. Was darkened. Professing to be wise. They became fools. And exchanged the glory.

Of the incorruptible God. For an image. In the form. Of corruptible man. And of birds. And four footed animals. And crawling creatures. All people.

Have rejected. The true knowledge of God. That. Is a product. Of the fall. In the garden of Eden. When our original parents.

Fell. In the garden of Eden. Our nature. Their nature. And our inherited nature. From them. From them. Shifted.

[21:03] To sin. I like what. Dr. MacArthur says. You know. Do we have free will? Yes. We have the freedom to choose. The sin we're going to commit. But we are bound.

We're tied up. With a sin nature. Now we're going to. We're going to break that. Down the road here. Just hang with me. But all people. Are bound. By that sin nature.

The first Adam and Eve. The first sin Adam and Eve. Committed. Was eating the forbidden fruit.

The second sin. They committed. After that. Was believing. They could actually.

Go somewhere. And hide from God. They went. And tried to hide from God. I mean. Where do you go. To hide from God. You know. And they thought. They could do that.

And men and women. Have been trying. To hide. From God. Ever since. Sin. Was introduced. Into the human race. And we come up.

[22:00] With thousands. Of these. Religions. To work our way. Back. To God. Adam and Eve. Created the first. Human religion. Called fig leaf religion.

They said. If we just cover. Our shamefulness here. We can go back. We can be back. In the presence of God. And everything will be like it was. You don't get there. By sowing fig leaves together.

Fig leaves don't bleed. And if you're going to be. In the presence of God. It will be based upon. A blood sacrifice. Fig leaves don't bleed.

The nature we inherited. From our original parents. Rebels. Against the knowledge. And the glory. Of God. And this leads to another question. If people worship. Incorrectly.

But sincerely. Does that. Count for something. And the answer to that is no. We don't get credit. For worshipping a false God.

[22:58] And we don't. Get credit. Even though our. Our finite minds. Are fallen. And maybe we've never even. Heard about it. But you're not building up. Credit with God. By worshipping a false God.

Least. Truth number three. All people. Are guilty. Are guilty before God. All people. You can go. Down the street.

Go to Dewey. Go to Yemen. Go to Cameroon. All people. Are guilty. Before God. A brief examination. Of some foundational truths. In Romans chapter three.

Explains this. There is none righteous. Not even one. So how many righteous people. Are on earth. There is none.

There is none. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside. They have become useless. Together they have become useless. There is none.

[23:54] Who does good. There is not even one. What an indictment on the human race. With these words.

God has made his case. And it is decisive. All people. In every culture. Nation. Tongue. Tribe. Race.

And so on. Are guilty. Before a holy God. We inherited that. From our parents. We inherited that. That is why Paul said later in the chapter.

That every mouth is silence. And the whole world. Held accountable. To God. The whole world. And we are silent. Before God. We are silent.

So this begs the question. What about the innocent guy. In darkest Africa. Who dies. Never having heard the gospel. Never even having heard that the gospel exists.

[24:50] Does God send an innocent man to hell? And my answer may surprise you at first. God has never and will never send an innocent person to hell.

The innocent guy in Africa or Asia or America will not go to hell. If they are innocent. They have no need of a savior. Because they are innocent.

Christ did not come to call the righteous to repentance. He came to save sinners. Now most of you know where I am headed with this. Concerning this innocent guy. He doesn't exist.

Paul has already told us that in chapter 3. He is a figment of our imagination. He cannot be found in Africa.

He cannot be found in Asia. He cannot be found in Bartlesville. There are no innocent people in the world. All people are guilty before God.

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■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ This is true, and it is.

And what about those who've never heard? Someone needs to go and tell them about Christ. And who has God set apart to do and to go?

[32 : 15] Who's He set apart to go and do the telling? Now the easy answer, if we want to really get off the hook, is, well, He's called missionaries. He's called missionaries.

But is that what God said? The accurate answer is the truth number seven. Christ commands the church to make the gospel known to all people.

And we're the church. We're the church. Who in the church is to fulfill this role?

And the answer is the church. Working together is to fulfill this role. We're rowing together.

Nothing's worse than you're out rowing and one person is going the opposite direction. We're rowing together. Listen to what Romans 10.13 says.

[33:27] Again tonight. Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Wow.

That's dynamic. And you know, let me say to you here, I'm going to add this in too. That's not manipulative evangelism. Okay? I wrote a book one time called Manipulative Evangelism.

Unfortunately, I heard it in my head. And now it's gone because I'm old. We don't manipulate people into saying, Oh, I called on the name of the Lord.

Okay, you're in. Let's go to the next. We'll get another notch on our belt, you know. But whoever will call upon the name of the Lord and His name is holy, He is God in human flesh, He is Lord, King, Sovereign of the universe, will be saved.

But listen. Though that verse should be crystal clear to the church, listen to this. As the Spirit of God continues, In the next verse, How then will they call on Him in whom they've not believed?

[34:51] How will they believe in Him whom they've not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

And how will they preach unless they are sent? Now it's easy to say from that verse, Well, we'll send the preacher.

And in fact, we are. He's going to China. Xinjiang, China. Going to teach pastors how to preach. Wonderful ministry. And this church has risen up in support of that.

But let me suggest to you, That word preacher there is someone who preaches forth the gospel.
Who shares the good news. We're all commanded to do that.

You don't have to have a seminary degree to do that. The verse really says, Send those who will then preach or deliver the good news to the lost.

[35:54] And that is us. That is us. We often hear, you know, about God's plan of salvation or God's plan of redemption. And then some guy writes a track and, you know, says, If you'll say this prayer you're in, Or if you do this or that, Or give all the money to Benny Hinn.

I'm not going to call any names tonight. But, you know, you'll be in. Here is God's plan of redemption. God sends His servants, The members of His church, For which He died.

His bride, For whom He died. He sends the church. When they go, They tell about Christ.

They preach Christ. And people hear that. God has given us ears to hear. And people hear that message about Christ.

And hearers believe. When God opens those dead ears, Sinful ears, Ears bound by the sin nature, God has a way of opening those.

[37:10] And I trust He's opened everyone's in this room. And people hear, And people hear, And hearers believe. And when they believe, They call.

They call out. Lord, I see it now with spiritual eyes. You know, Save me. And everyone who calls to save us.

That's the plan of redemption. And every one of us in this room, Who know the Lord Jesus Christ savingly, From our youngest convert, I think he's back there, Levi, To those of you who have some years on you, You're all servants of Christ.

We're all servants. We're all called To go and tell. And you say, I just can't go. Maybe you can't go to Vietnam.

But you can go. He sends His servants. And if He sent you or me, Would we go? See, that's really the heart of it.

[38:32] Would we really go? You know, David Platt, His book Radical, And it is pretty radical, I've got to tell you. But he said something That really struck me. Just gripped me. He said, You know,

As a starting point, Every saved member of the church Should commit One week a year To

ministry.

It doesn't have to be, You know, Well, these seven days, You can spread it out. But he said, As a starting point, Do one week In a year's time In ministry.

Touching on this topic. Touching lives. Touching the lost. Maybe that's a good starting point. Maybe that's a good starting point.

I know that our pastor, We're going to be talking about this this fall. We've got some exciting things coming. We've got some challenges coming. There are going to be exciting challenges. There's a whole people out there I've been around them That have never heard.

And what excitement it is When you see someone That hears for the first time And their eyes are open Their ears are open And God moves in and saves them.

[39 : 57] And what a blessing To the church Not only in this life But in the life of God.

Thank you.