

## “How to Know You Have Eternal Life”

Luke 10:25-28

**Read Luke 10:25-28....** Of all the questions that could ever be asked and answered, none is more important than this one, because every human soul is immortal. Every human being ever born lives forever. Our bodies die but our souls go on eternally; you will spend eternity in one of two places, heaven or hell.

You will be forever conscious that you are in heaven or hell. Jesus now expresses that reality to a man who comes to ask how he can be sure he will be with God in heaven.

The timeframe here is important, for Jesus has already gone through Galilee with the message of the gospel. He is now in His final months and is going through Judea's villages and towns, where He is proclaiming the wonderful message of forgiveness for sin and eternal life, calling people to be true disciples of His.

In less than a year, Jesus will be executed on a cross, buried, rise from the dead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, show Himself to many of His followers over forty days, then He will ascend back into heaven, from where He will send the Holy Spirit, and the church age will begin.

Think about those who have pledged to follow Jesus so far, we know of the twelve (of which one would betray Him), then there are the seventy who He sent out and have just returned.

We know that after His resurrection He appears in Galilee to a group of 500 believers. And yet, when the Holy Spirit comes to those who are gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem, after His ascension, their number is only 120. After three years of Jesus demonstrating God's divine love and power and healing, there is but a small remnant of those who have experienced God's redeeming power

In **Matthew 7:13-14** Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Jesus is that narrow gate, he is the only way to God, for salvation cannot be acquired through ancestry, rituals, law keeping, or good works (**John 14:6**), “I am the [only] way, and the [only] truth, and the [only] life [from God]; no one comes to the Father [goes to heaven] but through Me.”

In **Luke 10** we find a one-on-one encounter between Jesus and a lawyer [scribe] who asks, “What do I need to do to inherit eternal life? Jesus will explain and expose what is necessary, according to God, for a person to have eternal life.

The phrase “eternal life” is used over 40 times in the New Testament. In fact, it appears in every gospel. But the encounter with this man is not a parallel to any other event. This encounter is unique, and the main point here is for people to realize that they are going to live forever, either with God, or apart from God, and if you want to be in God's kingdom for eternity you must have eternal life.

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Let's look at what some of the Scriptures say about eternal life:

**John 3:14-16**, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that *whoever believes will in Him have eternal life*. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

**John 5:24**, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” **39-40**, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”

**John 6:28-29**, “Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” **40**, “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds [looks upon, observes] the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

**John 17:3**, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

**1John 5:11**, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” **13**, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” **20**, “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

The lawyer, in **Luke 10**, clearly has a recognition of eternal life, if he didn't he wouldn't ask how to have it. He knows there is eternal life, not in the biological sense, eternally living in the body we have now [Greek, bio], but he is asking in the spiritual and eternal sense [Greek, Zoe] to live in a state of eternal blessing.

God promises an eternal kingdom of blessing, a place of joy, peace, and love where hope is realized and fulfilled beyond any human comprehension.

The question wouldn't have been asked if the man didn't believe in eternal life. He wouldn't need to know how to inherit it, if he didn't believe that it existed.

God our Creator has put the longing for, and reality of, eternity in our hearts. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**, “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven— A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear

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apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace.” **11**, “He has made everything appropriate in its time. [God] *has* .” **14**, “I know that *everything God does will remain forever*; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear [*revere with awe*] Him.”

The subject of eternity is taught in both Old and New Testaments, in fact, Daniel writes that, after the time of the Lord's return and judgement, man will either experience eternal rejoicing or eternal mourning, (**Daniel 12:1-2**), “There will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people [those with eternal life], everyone who is found written in the book [Lamb's Book of Life], will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life [in heaven with God], but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt [condemnation in hell].”

God established an eternal kingdom, where all those who belong to Him will live and enjoy all of its pleasures and joys, in God's glorious presence (**Revelation 21:1-8**), “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He \*said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. *He who overcomes* will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars [*all who reject God*], their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

So who can overcome sin, death, and judgement?

**1John 5:4-5**, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

We have talked about the reward of eternal life, it is granted, inherited, to all those who belong to God through belief in God's Son, Jesus Christ. But we really haven't answered the lawyer's question to Jesus of how he can have eternal life.

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Let's look again at **Luke 10:26**... Jesus said to him. "What is written in the law? How does it read to you?" In other words, what is written in the law concerning what God requires for someone to inherit eternal life?

The man is a lawyer, an expert in the Law of God, and he knows that Jesus is referring to the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Pentateuch, which was written by God through Moses. These Books are summarized in the Ten Commandments, and further summarized in the *Shema* [meaning "hear and obey," from **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**]. This portion of Scripture was to be recited by all Jews two times every day.

The lawyer responds to Jesus in the first part of **Luke 10:27**, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind," and the additional clause, "and your neighbor as yourself," is quoted from **Leviticus 19:18**.

When Jesus was asked this very same question in **Mark 12:28** (by a scribe), Jesus responded (**Mark 12:30-31**), "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. 'The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 'There is no other commandment greater than these.'"

The word used for love in the above passage is *agapaō*; it's not *phileō*, brotherly love; it's not *eros*, sensual love; it's not *storgē*, family love. *Agapaō* is *sacrificial, willful, devoted, perfect, godly love, and is used repeatedly in (1Corinthians 13:4-8)*, "Love is patient, love is kind not jealous; love does not brag, is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

In other words, if you want to inherit eternal life on your own merit, all you have to do is love God perfectly, without any sin, without any failure, and you are to love others as you love yourself. But the reality is no one can do that, no one is perfect, no one is without sin, no one can earn or merit eternal life, for it is unattainable and can only be received as a gift from God to all those who believe in God's Son for salvation. (See **Romans 3:10-12, 23-24; 6:23; 5:8; 8:1; 10:9-10, 13**).

Although Jesus affirms the man's response (**Luke 10:28**), "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." It would seem from the man's next question that he clearly is not confident that he has inherited eternal life (**Luke 10:29**), "But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – (full service notes)

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The next time we are together, on February 11, I will do a little recap on today's lesson and then I will make a diligent effort to comprehensively answer the lawyer's question to Jesus in **Luke 10:29**, “Who is my neighbor?” by providing an exegesis of the parable of the Good Samaritan given by Jesus in **Luke 10:30-37**.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a simple, and yet, a very complex illustration of how a person's life gives evidence that he or she has received eternal life from God. I hope to see you on February 11.

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