

WHY ON EARTH ARE ONLY A FEW SAVED AND MANY LOST?

Opening: Growing up, how did you discover there were consequences associated with your choices? Were any long term?

Introduction:

In our “Why on Earth” studies so far, we have seen that God’s intent was to create us to glorify Him and live with Him for all eternity. He created angels and us with free wills to choose whether we would be dependent on Him or ourselves (i.e. independent of Him). The independence of Adam and Eve, as well as our own (which is called sin) brought suffering and physical death into the world. Satan, the leader of fallen angels, is bent on destroying everything that is dear to God (and we are His dearest). So, if Satan can get us to follow him and his way (whether we acknowledge his existence or not), we will follow the road to hell which God created for Satan and his angels (Mt 25:41). Hell is eternal....and life in heaven is eternal. Christ died to give us life...but we must choose it.

❖ **SHARING:** How aware of heaven were you as a child? How aware of hell? How has your awareness changed since? Why?

1. The Scriptures are clear....Christ’s words can not be twisted.....few are saved.....many are lost.

¹³ *“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way. ¹⁴But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it. Mt 7:13-14 (NLT)*

❖ **SHARING:** Share how the following verses associate Jesus with the narrow/small “gate” and the narrow “road.”

Jn 14:6 -“I am the way...”

Jn 10:9 -“I am the door...”

Acts 4:12 -“...there is no other name....by which we must be saved **1Tim 2:5** -“...there is ...one Mediator...”

- ❖ **SHARING:**
1. Share how the truth of Scripture strikes you.....that “few” will be saved and “many” lost.
 2. If we believe these Scriptures, how should they motivate us? Share if you have ever had the opportunity to discuss salvation with a non-believer, but didn’t because you were scared, embarrassed, didn’t want to take the time, hoped someone else would share the message with them, or assumed they might be saved already?
 3. If you polled your neighbors, friends, and co-workers, where would the most of them say they are going? Have you ever been to a funeral where it is assumed that no-matter-what, the person who died is in heaven.....or have you heard a lost person brag about looking forward to “partying in hell”? Per your understanding of God’s Word, what is wrong about either of these scenarios?
 4. Per Barna Research, a majority of Americans (including a third of born-again Christians) believe that a “generally good” person will earn a place in heaven. How would you advise someone who believed this?
 5. What is a “generally good” person? What standard does the world use to determine who is good enough?

2. The road to heaven is one of self-denial in following Christ....the road to hell is one of self-gratification and ease.

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Lk 9:23 (NIV).

- ❖ **SHARING:**
1. As expressed by Jesus in (Mt 7:14), the narrow road has the meaning of “hemmed-in like a mountain gorge” (per Vine’s). It can have uneven footing, jutting rocks, flash floods, steep climbs and dangerous drop-offs. What picture was Jesus painting about the road that leads to heaven? Was it meant to be easy? (See Lk 9:23)
 2. (Lk 9:23) implies that self-denial may not be easy, but it doesn’t mean it can’t be rewarding. Share examples where you have denied yourself of comforts in order to achieve rewarding physical or mental achievements.
 3. How did Jesus describe the road to hell in (Mt 7:13) above? Why is self-gratification easy? What signs in our society demonstrate that “many” of us seek self-gratification, and “few” seek self-denial? (For further study, see LK 12:13-21 and Lk 18:18-30 concerning the “wide road” to riches and “ease”).
Note: The USA is the biggest debtor nation in the world. We “gratify” by spending more than we earn.

Ending Thoughts:

- The Words of Jesus in this study are difficult to accept because they are blunt and concern eternal consequences.
- We may think life offers many different options to choose from. In reality, we have only two...heaven or hell, Jesus or self.
- A growing trend is to think that God is too loving to send anyone to hell. If this is true, then Jesus suffered and died for nothing. And if this is true, God will have to apologize to those who died in Noah’s flood and to the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Grace isn’t cheap. We can’t merely believe in Jesus for salvation and continue to live life like the majority who are going to hell. If we are truly following Christ, our lives will look different then the lives of the majority on the wide road (Rom 6:1-2, 13-14).
- We are all sinners (Rom 3:23). Therefore we all have the natural inclination to gratify our desires....and to gratify them quickly. This means that we must deny these desires and “take up our cross daily” and follow Jesus, the “narrow road” (Lk 9:23, Mt 7:14).
- Our own works (our efforts) can not get us to heaven....only Jesus (the “narrow road”) can get us there. However, if we are truly following Jesus, good works will result. If we want to test ourselves to see if we are walking the narrow or wide road, we need only to check the Scriptures. (For further study, see Mt 22:36-40, Mt 25:31-46, Jn 15:5-6).
- No one can drive us off the narrow road as long as we follow Jesus (Jn 10:27-29). But we can choose to leave it. And if we do, the Holy Spirit will prompt us to repent. If we habitually ignore His prompting, we can be lost on the wide road (Heb 6:4-6).