

“Good People Go To Heaven”—MythBusters (4 of 4)

Today I want to finish our series called, “**MythBusters**” by looking at the myth that simply says, “**Good People Go To Heaven.**” Over the course of the past few weeks we’ve looked at the myths that people buy into when it comes to God, religion, and Christianity.

We’ve looked at the myth that says, “*God Wants Us Happy,*” the myth that says, “*All Paths Lead to God,*” and last week Eric spoke about the myth that says, “*Following Christ=No Suffering.*”

As our key verse for this series is found in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 where we read, “*For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths.*” 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NLT) The Apostle Paul writes and says that some people “*can’t handle the truth,*” and search after anyone who will pacify their mind and heart with teaching that sounds like the truth, but is really far from it.

In other words, we rather believe the myth than the truth, because the myth fits better with my world view—whether or not you can back it up with truth.

In looking at today’s myth; that “**Good People Go To Heaven,**” I’d like to share the...

Two Assumptions People Make:

1. Most People Think That They Are “Good.”

And we all know that “good people go to heaven,” right? The good people from every group will go to heaven (Baptist, Catholics, Buddhist, etc...) The common denominator is that there are “good people.” God is going to gather up all of the “good people” from the world.

Some of you believe this. Why? If I asked you “*Why do you think you’re going to heaven*” you would answer, “*I go to church, I give, I serve, I do my best and I’ve certainly never killed anyone!*” “*I’m not perfect.*” But I’m certainly not a “bad” person.

Oprah on YouTube!

2. Most People Think That It Will All Work Out In The End.

The Great Cosmic Scale

Illus: How Bad or How Good Are You?

A few years ago Time magazine that 8 out of 10 Americans believe that there is a literal place called heaven. The same number of people believe that they’re going to make it to that heaven.

Many people believe that they’re going to heaven based upon their good deeds and moral behavior. But does that really make sense?

I mean, it seems like a “fair” system, right? After all, you’ll make the cut, right?

Besides, what’s so wrong with this? It motivates us to do “Good,” and how bad can that be?

It’s very consistent with our idea of a “good God.”

It makes common sense. It’s easy to buy into.

In fact, it makes so much sense that we never really stop to think about it.

Three Questions We Should Ask:

1. Who Determines Your “Goodness?”

If we need to know what is “good,” then we need to know “How good is good enough.”

Is God keeping a list, checking it twice. Is he going to find out who is naughty and nice?

God owes it to us to explain what is really “Good” and “How good is good enough” to make it.

(Illustration: Catholic Video)

A. The “Good Book” Test

If this is your standard, then you won’t make it. 10 Commandments, etc...

Look at what Romans 3:10 sets up as a standard: “*As the Scriptures say, ‘No one is good—not even one.’*” Romans 3:10

(NLT) If “the Good Book” is your standard, then you won’t make it.

B. The “Do What Is Right” Test

O.K., who determines what is “Right?”

- A Christian Crusader killing Muslims in 1192?
- A white southerner beating slaves in 1850?
- An Aryan German exterminating Jews in 1942?
- An Islamic terrorist flying a plane into the world trade center in 2001?

So who’s right? Who determines what is right? After all, sincerity alone doesn’t ensure truth.

Many people “try” to do right, but who determines what is really right? How do we know?

“For no one can ever be made right in God’s sight by doing what his law commands. For the more we know God’s law, the clearer it becomes that we aren’t obeying it.” Romans 3:20 (NLT)

It’s interesting to note that our system of what is “Right” changes as we get older. When we’re young we let it rip, but then as we get older we mellow. The Baby Boomers were the ones who said, *“Don’t trust anyone over 30,”* now they’re saying, *“Don’t trust anyone under 60.”*

Just use Dr. Benjamin Spock as an example. He used to be the “expert” on child rearing. Nearly every mom in the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s raised children by his teaching. However, before he died he renounced his former teachings.

Or look at Madonna. She used to be the Material Girl and an advocate for outspoken sexuality. Now she’s the Spiritual Girl and writes children’s books and denounces all of the smut in music.

Who determines what is “Right?”

C. The “Final Grade” Test

What is an “A, B, C, D, F?” Is it 100%, 90%, 80%, 70%, 51%

Do some things weigh more than others? *“If you’ve never killed anyone do you get extra credit?”*

When does the grading start? When you’re 2. When you’re 12? When you’re 25? Man, some of you don’t have much time left! Get busy!

Illus: Hood to Coast Race that is unfair.

But God is not unclear. *“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.”* Romans 3:23 (NLT) How many of you are here today? You’re part of the *“Everyone.”* We get an “F.”

2. What Did Jesus Believe?

Just say that “Jesus lied!” We like to think that “he didn’t really say that.”

Unlike us, Jesus didn’t think that good people went to heaven. He thought that forgiven people went to heaven. Look at this passage about Jesus’ death.

“Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.’ And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

“The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.’ The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. They called out to him, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ A sign was fastened to the cross above him with these words: ‘This is the King of the Jews.’

“One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, ‘So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!’

“But the other criminal protested, ‘Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.’

“And Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.’” Luke 23:32-43 (NLT)

A deathbed conversion doesn’t add up to a whole lot in a “Good Enough” system.

Here's what Jesus believed: *"Good people don't go to heaven, Forgiven people go to heaven."*

3. What Does Jesus Offer? (Repeat out loud each point)

A. Everybody Is Welcome

"For Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." Romans 10:13 (NLT)

B. Everybody Gets In The Same Way

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'" John 14:6
(NLT)

C. Everybody Can Meet The Requirement

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NLT)

Close with Stool Illustration (not trust, semi-trust, fully trust)

"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (NLT) Believe

+ Accept = Become

Where are you at with your Belief? Where are you at with your Acceptance?