

## "You Can Have Eternal Life"

Many worry they can never live the Christian life and have eternal life in heaven. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today our message is this: you can come to Christ and have eternal life.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Lord's Way is not only the way to heaven, not only the right way, it's the best way to live. God will bless us with an abundant life when we follow Him. He's made His way available to every person through the scriptures. And His grace is open to all. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Hope is to the soul what breath is to the body. You simply can't live without hope. Many years ago, while knocking doors seeking people to study the Bible with me, I met a woman who believed that God would not hear any of her prayers. "They don't go above the ceiling," she said. "God just doesn't care about me and isn't interested in me. Do you think there is any hope for me?" I told her there was hope for her then, and I'm saying to you there's hope for you now. You can find God and you can go to heaven! That's the greatest news you or I will ever hear. There is hope!

G. K. Chesterton said, "There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as the expectation of something better tomorrow." We all live in hope. And life here on this earth may be good, but it's not perfect. We wish for something better, something purer, kinder, stronger, and more lasting. Man is desperate for something better for many reasons. We live in an imperfect world and know one day we're going to die. Well this imperfect world is filled with sin, disease, ignorance, poverty, and prejudice. And we all long for peace and love and security! We hope life will be better than what we have now. We want an abundant, eternal life with God!

Now we offer this study free on the hope for a better life. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

And the Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1:17 to 21, and explore our opportunity to live eternally.

Our reading today comes from Peter's first letter, chapter 1, verses 17 through 21. "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." Oh I'm thankful that we have the Lord Jesus, who is our hope, and what we look forward to in eternity.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful for the gift of Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was able to redeem us and give us reconciliation, so that we could live with You and with our Lord forever and ever. May Your name always be praise, and help us always to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Job asked the question "If a man dies, will he live again?" (Job 14:14). Is there anything beyond this life? Is heaven real? Is there any hope that life beyond this life will be any better than what we already know? The answer is yes, a thousand times yes! God's plan for us all is to bless us richly. Jesus died on

the cross so that you could go to heaven! He lived His life on this earth so that you might know how to live the very best kind of life, free from the destructive things that arise from sin. Everything about Jesus Christ breathes hope and life and good and love. The joy of Christianity is found in the hope that it brings.

The problem for many is not whether God is willing to forgive them but whether they can live the life of a Christian. More than a few times, I've met people who believed they could never live up to Christian standards. They believe their past is so evil that they have no hope of salvation. If that's not enough, some churches teach the false idea that God arbitrarily selects those He wants to save and He rejects all others. They actually teach that no one can change his eternal destiny; that God has already decided who is saved and who is lost. If that's the case, why did Jesus come to this earth preaching repentance? Why did He preach to all?

Jesus Himself said in John 3:16 to 17, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." Now this passage has a "whoever" in it. Whoever believes can have eternal life. Jesus came to save not to judge. The reason Jesus commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to all is because God wants all people to be saved. And they can be saved if they're willing to come to Him penitently in faith and obey the gospel! There is hope for every person, everyone!

The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 2 and verse 9, "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death, and how He was crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." Jesus died for every single individual, every man, every woman, every boy, and every girl. The idea that Jesus died for some but not for others denies what the Scriptures say and it mocks what Jesus did on the cross. The apostle John in 1 John 2, verses 1 and 2, agrees with the Hebrew writer. He states in very clear terms that Jesus died for every person in the world.

"My little children (John writes), I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." The word "propitiation" refers to Jesus as our "atoning sacrifice." That His death on the cross atoned for our sins. God punished Jesus for your sins. Jesus took the punishment that was due to you and me for the evil things that we've done. We didn't have to force an unwilling God to provide the way of salvation. God in his grace and love gives us freedom from sin through the blood of Jesus.

Now Jesus' death came at a very high price for the Father and for Jesus himself. One can only imagine the pain in the heart of the Father to watch his Son Jesus die cruelly upon the cross. The Father observed every evil thing done to His Son. He was there when Jesus was beaten and mocked. He heard the slander and the way they laughed at an innocent Jesus. He heard the crowds shout "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" He was there when Jesus was scourged. He saw the wagging heads and the nails pierce his hands and feet. He watched as they suspended Jesus between heaven and earth on the cross. He watched as they gambled over his clothes.

And God heard Jesus' cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" The Father did not spare His Son but put the punishment upon this perfect sacrifice. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21, that "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus died so that you could become righteous. He was innocent, and we are sinners. But God put your sins and mine on that righteous One, so that we might leave our guilt

and become righteous. Such love is far beyond what any of us deserve or even understand. God has given us a great gift—the most precious gift—His Son.

The gift that Jesus gave was a very personal one. He gave his brow to a crown of thorns, his back to the scarring whip, his hands and feet to the nails, and his side to a spear. He gave up his life at the young age of 33, so that you could live forever. Jesus was nailed to a cross to die. He would not be taken down alive. His last words were, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23, verse 46). God would never have sacrificed His Son Jesus if there were no hope for you. He sacrificed his Son Jesus to give the greatest hope that you could imagine, a hope for life, for righteousness, for forgiveness, and for heaven itself with eternal life.

At this point someone says, “Well Phil, you don’t understand. I’ve been a very wicked person. I’ve done terrible things and don’t deserve to go to heaven.” Well sin is a terrible thing, and none of us deserves to go to heaven for our goodness. But I would say to you, no matter what you’ve done, no matter how you’ve lived, and no matter how you feel about yourself, “God still loves you and sent His Son to die for your sins too. And there is hope for every soul that will believe in the Lord Jesus and come to Him penitently and obediently. The blood of Jesus is greater than all our sin. And you can go to heaven, whoever you are.”

Paul writes to the church at Corinth a message that we all need to hear. This was a young church, when he wrote to them. And many of them came from a very sinful past. And he wrote them, however, with hope. The sins they committed were terrible, but the grace of God gave them an opportunity to change, and gave them hope. He said in 1 Corinthians 6:9 to 11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, (none of these) will inherit the kingdom of God. (And then he looked at them and said) Such were some of you”

Now if this passage had stopped here, there would be little hope to tell you about. But the passage doesn’t stop there. Even though some of these people had committed terrible sins, there’s hope for them. And at this point it says, “but,” which means there is more truth to be told: “but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” God washed them, sanctified them (and made them holy), and justified them (declared them righteous or judged them as innocent). And He did this in the name of Jesus Christ, because of the power of the blood of Jesus to change lives and destinies.

Now if the Father could embrace the penitent prodigal son, if the God of heaven could hear wicked King Manasseh’s prayer, if God could forgive penitent David’s murder and adultery, if God could save the chief of sinners Saul of Tarsus, God can forgive and save you. You’re not worse than they were. Jesus, the Lamb of God, came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Make no mistake, both the Father in heaven and the Lord Jesus knew how sinful this world was and is still. They’re not naïve. And while God hates sin, God loves you. While God hates evil, God loves the people that He created enough to send Jesus to die for those sins.

You remember, as we’ve mentioned, Romans chapter 5, Paul speaking in verses 6 to 8, he says “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The Father and the Lord Jesus wanted to demonstrate their love to us. Forgiveness is not just talk to them. They acted in love to forgive those who are helpless, ungodly and sinners. They wanted you to know their

hearts. They love you even when you have not loved them. Jesus paid a price for his enemies.

God's love ought to wake us up. God wants to help all of us go to heaven. And He's paid the price for our sins by crucifying His Son. He's given us the Bible to tell the story that Jesus has given His life, and has built His church, and given its members the responsibility of telling the gospel story again and again, to every person. But God's not going to twist our arms, making us respond to Him. He's going to open the door but not force us to go through. We must decide to respond to His love and grace by loving Him, by trusting in Him, by repenting of our sins, and by taking up our crosses to follow Jesus each day. God has made His commitment to you. Will you make a commitment to Him?

Put the Lord first in your life. And if you want the hope of heaven, don't keep the Lord at arm's length. Many people become ashamed of themselves and rather than draw near to God in penitence and obedience act like Adam and Eve and hide themselves from God. Then they wonder why God seems so far away. God has taken the first step in offering His Son on your behalf. And He's holding out His hand for you to take it and come to Him in obedience to the gospel. Don't turn the Lord away. He is your hope. He is your salvation. He is your life. And that's why getting close to Him is so very, very important.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 11:28 to 30, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Jesus invites us to come to Him and promises us an easy yoke and a light burden. I tell you, Christianity is not an impossible faith. One can live the Christian life, and in fact millions have followed Christ!

You can go to heaven. You can be the Christian that you want to be. You can live victoriously, faithfully, lovingly, and positively serving God and loving every minute of it! You were created to be a child of God who loves God! You were created in Christ Jesus for good works not evil. The Lord Jesus believed in you enough to die for your sins, so that you could become a servant of God. Don't sell yourself short. You can, you can, you can go to heaven!

Let's pray. "Father we're thankful for the blood of Jesus our Lord that was shed on the cross so that we might have freedom from sin and might become Your children. Father help us to love You, to serve You, and to be obedient to Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen."

Don't let Satan discourage you by thinking, "I can't live the Christian life." Satan is not interested in your going to heaven. He wants to discourage you from following Christ. Of course, you can become a Christian! And don't let anyone tell you it's impossible. You can be God's child with God's help. You can go to heaven, and you can go for an eternity! You can find all the joy of living close to God, the hope of heaven, and the love of God in Christ Jesus, if you draw near to Him and obey Him as His child.

Drawing close to God begins with faith. Trust Him enough to do what He asks of you in the word. Trust Him enough to let go of your sins—to give them up completely and begin living as Christ teaches us. You can't hang on to the world with one hand and try to please the Lord with the other. The message of Jesus to a lost and dying world is trust in Him and repent of your sins. You cannot have access to the blood of Christ that cleanses you until you're united with Him in baptism. Now Ananias told Saul, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." (Acts 22 and verse 16).

Now if you wish newness of life, be baptized into Christ. Paul said in Romans 6, verses 3 and 4, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? And therefore we've been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was

raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might have newness of life.” Now if you want the newness of life, trust the Lord, repent of your sins, and be baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

We hope and pray that today’s study emphasizing our opportunity to serve Christ has encouraged you. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry”, that’s all one word. And we also offer, along with that, free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don’t worry, if you get a hold of us, we’re not asking for money. We’re here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God today by worshipping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there’s probably a church of Christ that’s in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.