

## WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO NEVER HEAR THE GOSPEL?

**Question 1:** Isn't it arrogant for us to believe that Christianity is the only true path to heaven? ... If you believe God can do all things, it isn't that much of a stretch to believe He could offer up several different pathways to heaven. He created all of us, He loves all of us, it seems to me a much bigger stretch that He'd omit some simply because they were born and raised in cultures who were following one of the other paths.

**The real question:** Not is Christianity arrogant, but is Christianity true?

**C. S. Lewis:** Christianity claims to give an account of facts — to tell you what the real universe is like. Its account of the universe may be true, or it may not, and once the question is really before you, then your natural inquisitiveness must make you want to know the answer. If Christianity is untrue, then no honest man will want to believe it, however helpful it might be; if it is true, every honest man will want to believe it, even if it gives him no help at all.

All religions claim to give the \_\_\_\_\_ concerning spiritual reality.

And if you come to the conclusion that one is true and the others are not, you would not want to believe the ones that are false, and you wouldn't want anyone else to, either.

### (1) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS IN BELIEVING THAT JESUS IS JUST ONE OF MANY WAYS TO GOD?

(A) You \_\_\_\_\_ Christ.

**John 14.6:** I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If Jesus was wrong about who he is, why would you listen to him about anything else?

**C. S. Lewis:** A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg – or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.

(B) You \_\_\_\_\_ God.

If the death of Jesus was not required to save us, but God the Father sent him anyway, knowing he would be tortured, crucified and killed, then God would be \_\_\_\_\_ of a horrific crime.

To believe there are other pathways to God, you must believe that the death of Jesus was not \_\_\_\_\_ for us to become right with God, but the Father decided to send him anyway, and you turn God into a monster.

**(C) You Make The Apostles into \_\_\_\_\_.**

History tells us that all of the apostles were martyred for preaching Christ, except John who died in exile on the island of Patmos.

The early followers of Jesus were not killed for telling others to love their neighbors or that they should live virtuous lives.

They were martyred for preaching that Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Acts 4.12:** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

**(D) You Should Tell Those Who Are Being \_\_\_\_\_ For Their Faith in Christ to Apostatize.**

If faith in Jesus is not necessary, Christians who suffer for their faith are not noble; they are fools and their suffering is \_\_\_\_\_.

They should pick the religions of those who are persecuting them and save themselves.

**(2) WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR SOME OF US TO CLAIM THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO GOD?**

**(A) You may be More of a “Gracer” than a “Truther.”**

**John 1.14:** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus was perfectly balanced in how he combined grace and truth in his life and in his ministry.

We tend to lean in one direction or the other.

**If you’re a “truther,”** you believe what Jesus said – the truth will set you free – so you want to make certain people hear the truth from you or from someone else.

**The problem with truthers:** we can be too \_\_\_\_\_ in how we tell the truth; we can tell the truth when people aren’t ready to hear it; and we can end up pushing people away.

**“If you’re a “gracer,”** you know that Jesus changed the lives of sinners by spending time with them and treating them as persons of \_\_\_\_\_.

**The problem with gracers:** we are so concerned about not coming across as judgmental or condemning that sometimes we don’t tell people the truths that \_\_\_\_\_ and the truths they need to hear.

Sometimes the most \_\_\_\_\_ thing you can do is tell someone the truth they need to hear.

And if you are too gracious to tell people what Jesus said about himself, that's not a strength and that's not Christ-like.

It's a \_\_\_\_\_ about what grace really is.

**(B) We have been Influenced by the Spirit of our \_\_\_\_\_.**

In our time and culture it's very difficult to talk about truth claims without people misunderstanding what you're doing.

We live in an age that has made \_\_\_\_\_ its highest cultural value.

True tolerance is a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Voltaire:** I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend to the death your right to say it.

But in our culture tolerance has come to mean that no truth claim is more \_\_\_\_\_ than any other.

**Allan Bloom:** Openness used to be the virtue that permitted us to seek the good by using reason. It now means accepting everything and denying reason's power.

Tolerance now means no one saying that anyone else's views concerning morality or spirituality are \_\_\_\_\_.

Tolerance now means accepting all views about reality as equally valid not because they are equally true but because they are \_\_\_\_\_ to the people who hold them.

**Rabbi Shmuley Boteach:** I am absolutely against any religion that says one faith is superior to another. I don't see how that is anything different than spiritual racism. It's a way of saying that we are closer to God than you, and that's what leads to hatred.

Being "open" is a good trait, but it's not an end in itself.

**G. K. Chesterton:** Merely having an open mind is nothing. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid.

We should be tolerant of those who believe differently than we do and we can support their right to believe what they believe and proclaim whatever they desire.

But we can't let a decadent western culture that has lost its way and that doesn't believe there are any over-arching truths that apply to all of us, convince us that what God has \_\_\_\_\_ is just one of many truths.

### **(3) WILL PEOPLE WHO DON'T HEAR ABOUT JESUS GO TO HELL?**

**“He (God) created all of us, He loves all of us, it seems to me a much bigger stretch that He'd omit some simply because they were born and raised in cultures who were following one of the other paths.”**

**Question:** Would God omit some simply because they were born some place where people follow another path and perhaps never hear about Christ?

**Answer:** No one goes to hell because they were born in the wrong place or because they never heard of Christ. People go to hell because they are \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 3.10:** There is no one righteous, not even one.

**Romans 3.23:** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Sin is anything and everything that doesn't measure up to God's standard – that includes actions, words, thoughts and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 6.23:** The wages of sin is death.

Sin separates us from God; God is the source of life; separated from the source of life we will \_\_\_\_\_, physically in this world and spiritually in the world to come.

God would be \_\_\_\_\_ in condemning every one of us and sending us away from his presence forever.

### **IS IT POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE WHO NEVER HEARS OF JESUS TO BE SAVED?**

**No one will be saved for any reason other than Jesus Christ died for his or her sins.**

There is one Savior and his name is Jesus.

There is one act that saves people and that is his death on the cross.

**No one will be made right with God by living a \_\_\_\_\_ life or by religious or charitable deeds.**

**Ephesians 2.8-9:** For by grace are you saved through faith ... **not by works** ....

**No one will be made right with God because they followed their \_\_\_\_\_ faithfully.**

**No one will be saved because he has a \_\_\_\_\_ heart.**

**Jeremiah 17.9:** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

**Mark 10.18:** (Jesus) No one is good except for God alone.

**If someone hears the Gospel preached and rejects Jesus, he rejects God's offer of salvation.**

**John 3.36:** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

## **“A Case for Being Saved Without Hearing About Christ”**

### **1. We know that some people will be in heaven who never \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus or believed in him.**

Who? The Old Testament saints, for sure.

They lived before the time of Jesus and so were not able to believe in him.

### **2. Why will these people be in heaven?**

#### **A. Because the \_\_\_\_\_ covered their sins.**

**Revelation 13.8:** ... the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

#### **B. They knew they were \_\_\_\_\_ in themselves and they trusted in God’s grace.**

#### **Psalm 130.3-4, 7-8:**

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,

O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness;  
therefore you are feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.

O Israel, put your hope in the Lord,  
for with the Lord is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.

He himself will redeem Israel  
from all their sins.

### **3. It is \_\_\_\_\_ for persons to be convicted of their sins without hearing about Christ.**

People in many cultures have the sense that they are \_\_\_\_\_ before God.

And it is possible that God’s Spirit can convict people of their sins directly without their hearing the Gospel preached.

### **4. It is possible for persons who sense their guilt before God to believe that they cannot save themselves, to know that they need \_\_\_\_\_, and to ask God for that grace, and trust in nothing else.**

**It is Possible For Someone who never Hears of Jesus to be Saved – but not \_\_\_\_\_.**

The natural tendency of fallen human beings is to trust in ourselves, to put our faith in our own efforts, and to deny how sinful and lost we are.

In other words, to believe that by our own efforts we can save ourselves.

And if we do that, we are lost. (See – Pharisee and the Publican, Luke 18.9-14.)

Grace is \_\_\_\_\_ to the human ego and people don't come to it easily.

This natural human tendency to trust in self is made worse by the fact that most of the world's \_\_\_\_\_ teach people to trust in their good deeds and their religiosity.

And trusting in self is the opposite of trusting in God and his grace.

Saying that it's possible does not mean it's common or likely and it in no way diminishes the importance of sending \_\_\_\_\_ to other cultures and to people who have never heard of Christ.

People are much more likely to acknowledge their guilt, feel their need for grace, and trust solely in God's mercy if they hear the \_\_\_\_\_ proclaimed.

Without hearing the Gospel, it is possible but not often that people will do so.

Without hearing the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus, it is hard for people to humble their hearts, get rid of their pride, quit trusting in themselves, and ask for and solely cling to the \_\_\_\_\_.

## **YOU ASKED FOR IT!**

Week 1: Is Christianity Arrogant?

Week 2: What about those who Never Hear the Gospel?

**Week 3: What Should Christians Think about Homosexuality?**

Week 4: Why Are Women so Weird?

Week 5: Why is it so Hard to Live a Christian Life?

Week 6: What's Hell Like and Who Goes There?

Week 7: How Do I Balance Family, Work and Faith?

Week 8: Does God Predestine Some People to Heaven and Others to Hell?

## **WAYS TO COMMUNICATE – PLEASE DON'T SEND ME EMAILS.**

1. Write your thoughts, questions, tirades and invectives at: [QuestYouAskedForIt.com](http://QuestYouAskedForIt.com)
2. Come to breakfast on Wednesdays (beginning January 25) at the Waterway Marriott 6:30 – 8:00 am.

**KAIROS WEEKEND** – take part in a life-changing weekend (March 15-18), leading inmates in the Walls Unit in Huntsville to a closer relationship with Christ. The team training is just starting. To learn more, contact me at [rrenfroe@twumc.org](mailto:rrenfroe@twumc.org).

**The Woodlands United Methodist Church**

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