

General Topics :: When I wake up tomorrow...**When I wake up tomorrow... - posted by rhophi, on: 2010/8/8 17:43**

I don't know if this has been discussed here before, but I'd like to challenge current evangelism techniques.

As a child, I only held to the "Die and go to heaven" belief loosely for the first few years (less than 10) of my life. As I grew to see the wonderful things that God does and can do, I kind of lost the emphasis on solely posthumous eternal consequences, because seeing what God can do even in this phase of my eternal life was convincing enough for me to love Him.

Now, I have seen the current, mass evangelism techniques, and to me they seem almost like desperate, last resort kind of attempts to scare a few gullible (this doesn't mean I don't believe in Heaven and Hell) people who have never heard about the afterlife. The one in particular that I am referring to, though most seem very similar, is the "If you die tonight, do you know that you will have a home in Heaven?" This is usually emphasized by "Or will you burn for an eternity in Hell?"

To me this seems like a Halloween scare tactic (and has been visually reproduced in at least one location in every major American city as a Halloween scare tactic). This usually works for a week or two to make a few fairly dedicated Christians until the emotional shock wears off and people realize that they did not die on Halloween and have made it through half of the following month already and will probably have at least another decade to live while hoping they do not die "tonight". That does not seem like any way to live in my book. Honestly, it seems like we have bastardized the gospel to a simple "Four Spiritual Laws" with a frightening clincher to seal the deal, acting like God does not have anything to offer us in this material world (not in the "expensive clothes and cars" sort of way, but in the "physically made of matter" sort of way... the clothes and cars ARE His to use and bless us with if He wants, though), but that we have to wait to die to reap the benefits.

So what happened to overcoming by the word of our testimony? Certainly none of us have the testimony "You can die and go to Heaven just like I did." What can we tell people about living for God after they wake up tomorrow? Is it a frightening lifestyle, this living for God while waiting to die, or does God have wonderful things in store for us the more that we give of ourselves? Is it a joyous walk, or a nerve-wracking wait? It seems the unchurched are worn out by our traditional, time-disproven methods (the Church hasn't grown in almost half a century, if I have my numbers right, we just shift from congregation to congregation).

My point in this is to say, maybe we need to revise our entire approach to evangelism, and start winning people to US and then to God. By showing that God has made us healthy, stable, wise, mature people who can function without brow beating strangers, people may want to know more about why we are so happy. In seeing that God is wholly beneficial, they will WANT GOD, not just to selfishly avoid flames as if God is some Eternal Life Insurance policy. Living our lives as constant testimonies glorifies God, and they will know us by our love. Befriend people, and then let them see God in your entire lives. I have known quite a few people that have gone from spiritual death and depression to vibrantly alive in God just by seeing God in someone from our church and falling in love with Him through that person's living testimony.

Just food for thought. Selah.

Re: When I wake up tomorrow... - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2010/8/8 18:41

Look at the way that evangelism happened in the early church and New Testament. People had an encounter with the living, personal, true LORD and Savior and then HE called them to follow and testify to the saving grace of GOD and the truth of the gospel!!!

Re: When I wake up tomorrow... - posted by Areadymind (), on: 2010/8/8 19:06

It seems that many are waking up to these kinds of truths Rophi. Even if it has been discussed probably lots of times here on SI, it is marvelous every time someone starts to see this. I hope that we can work amidst those who do not see this without being divisive, but are able to say the Emperor has no Clothes with grace and compassion, realizing that many are just simply blind to this.

We need to pray for revival, and I think many whom are experiencing personal revival today have been shocked by the very reality of what you are asking here Rophi. If the gospel does not have a reality in us now...what good is it in eternity? If we have not been overcomers through the gospel now, will God lie and say, "well done good and faithful servant?"

If you read the book of Romans looking for the "If you just say this prayer you will go to heaven and not hell gospel" you will not find it mentioned once. Romans is all about salvation and repentance from sin, being saved by Christ now, and how that works out in our lives.

It is amazing. The word heaven is only used twice in the book of Romans and it is never used in context as the result of receiving the Gospel. Heaven should be explained a little bit better to people as well. To put it simply, if you do not want what and who Christ is now, you will not want heaven later. As there will be no escape from Him because He will be the light whom lights all of heaven. There will be no shadow in which to hide from the fire of his gaze.