



8. True or False: It's Easy to be Saved But Hard to be Lost?

In one of his stories of the early West, Mark Twain tells of the old-time preachers who told the people of "what a beautiful place Heaven is and how nearly impossible it is to get there, and . . . what a dreary place hell is, and how easy it is to get there" (*Mark Twain Tonight*, p. 118).

This same idea lingers today, so much so that the very title of this lesson surprises people. "Didn't Jesus say that God has made the gate that goes to heaven difficult, and that the gate that leads to hell is easy?" they ask. "Isn't that why so few will be saved?"

You would be surprised how many youth (and adults who once were youth) have turned off Christianity completely because they say, "It's just too difficult! Why try so hard when it seems so hopeless to make it anyway?"

Surely what Jesus said has been badly twisted when people today think that it is hard to be saved and easy to be lost! There is nothing "good" about such "news" as that, is there? When Jesus said we should preach the gospel to the world, He meant that we should give the world good news. (That's what the word means.) Our future happiness depends on understanding this clearly.

What Jesus Actually Said

1. What did Jesus say about this "true or false question"? Matthew 11:28-30.

ANSWER: "Ye shall find _____ unto your souls. For My yoke is _____, and My burden is _____."

2. Where does He say that it is "hard" to be lost? Acts 26:14,15.

ANSWER: "Why _____ thou Me? It is _____ for thee to _____"

The "pricks" were the goads used by an Eastern plowman to hasten the slow gait of his oxen. Saul was hurting himself by kicking against the "pricks" of his own conscience. He is not the only one who finds it hard to "kick against the pricks." Everyone who puts off surrendering to Jesus is persecuting Him as much as Saul did. He fights against Him. Nobody goes to hell without kicking like that all the way. In order to be lost, one has to fight against the Holy Spirit. Jesus is right—that's hard to do!

How It Becomes Easy to Be Saved

3. Ever since you were born, what has the Lord been doing to you? *Jeremiah 31:3.*

ANSWER: "I have _____ thee with an _____ (*agape*): therefore with _____"

4. What is another way of saying this same thing? *Romans 2:4.*

ANSWER: "The goodness of God _____"

How has He been doing this? In countless ways—either kindness of parents, friends, teachers, strangers; or favors bestowed; warnings and rebukes of friends who love us; or the impressions of God's Spirit; and the teachings of God's Word. Also Creation speaks to us daily of His everlasting love.

5. How many people are "students" in God's "school"? *John 6:45.*

ANSWER: "And they shall be _____ taught of God."

6. How many people does the Lord actually "draw" (or pull) towards Himself? *John 12:32.*

ANSWER: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will _____"

7. How extremely powerful is this pull the Lord draws us with? *2 Corinthians 5:14,15.*

ANSWER: "The love (*agape*) of Christ _____"

The only reason some have made it seem hard to be saved is that they have not seen or believed this powerful truth of the love of Christ. Leave out this constraining love, and you will find it hard to be saved. In other words, when you see what happened when Christ died, you realize for the first time that you would be dead, you would have nothing even now if He had not died. You are alive today, and you have what you have now, because He died for you.

Once you see that—and believe it—you "henceforth" will find it impossible to live a selfish life as previously you have found it impossible to live a loving life. It's not a matter of trying hard to be a Christian—if you have "seen" the cross, you can't be anything else! You will find you cannot do anything but serve the Lord. That is what it means for the "love of Christ" to "constrain us." (Remember, "restrain" means to hold back, but "constrain" means to push forward.) The path to Heaven may indeed be uphill, as so many people seem to think. But when you begin to see and appreciate the love of Christ, you will find that you have a power-pack that propels you in this upward way.

Why It's Hard to Be Lost

8. When one continues to fight against Christ, and to steel himself against His love, what is he actually doing? *Romans 2:4, 5.*

ANSWER: "_____ thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering? . . . After thy _____ and _____ [you] treasure up unto thyself _____"

This "wrath" is within yourself. Saul of Tarsus had been steeling himself in hardness and an impenitent heart until he finally repented on the way to Damascus. He would have killed himself eventually, had he gone on as he was. "Kicking against the pricks" of one's own conscience is bad for one's health. Fighting the Holy Spirit causes even

premature death.

It's like heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every person's path, barring his/her way to ruin. One must trample upon a crucified Redeemer before one can pass onward to a life of sin.

9. *What do impenitent people do? When Israel resisted Christ, what really happened? Hosea 13:9 (compare Hosea 11:1, 4 to see the setting).*

ANSWER: "O Israel, thou hast _____

This is taught all through the Bible. "He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death" (Proverbs 8:36). "The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son....

"The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness." *Happiness Digest*, p. 11.

10. *Does the Good News of Christ's much more abounding grace motivate you to serve Him?*

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7 "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17