

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

The Most Rev. Mark S. Camp

I would like to ask you a couple of personal questions, my friend. Where do you stand in your relationship to God your Creator? If you were to die this very moment, do you know for certain where you would spend eternity? If you are not sure, read on and let me share with you how you can be sure.

God is a holy and just Creator. God is infinite and sovereign. Man, as a created being, is finite and dependent. Out of his good pleasure and mercy God sustains our every breath. We are totally dependent upon God for our every need. Since God is the Creator, he has the right to set the standards of right and wrong. We were created in God's image, to bear his likeness and to reflect his glory. Our absolute loyalty is due unto him and we are to honor and respect him. In fact, the Bible says that we are to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). God's wonderful character, his rights as Creator, his blessings and his warnings are all designed to remind us of his loving ownership of us. Why is it then that we don't love him with all of our heart, strength, soul, and mind?

We do not love our Creator as we ought because of our sinful nature. Man has willfully rebelled against God and his standards. We think that we are self-sufficient and so we ignore God and want to decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. This rebellion is sin. Sin forms a barrier which separates us from God. In order to be in a right relationship with God this barrier must be overcome. Since man is a sinner by nature, he cannot do anything that would make God want to overlook his sins. The result of sin is death - not just a physical death, but a spiritual death as well. Because God is holy he must react against sin. He cannot tolerate it in any form. And, unless sin is dealt with, man must one day face the judgment, condemnation, and wrath of God. The Bible tells us that after death man is destined to face the judgment of God (Hebrews 9:27). If this is the case, that sinful man is helpless in regards to being reconciled to God, what is the solution?

The solution is to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the merciful Redeemer. Jesus Christ reveals by his words and his life the nature of God to us. He communicates to our conscience by his Word and Spirit. Jesus was sinless and without guilt. God sent him to be a substitute for sinful man. Jesus became the sacrifice that would satisfy God's wrath. Christ's blood was poured out on Calvary's cross in order to cleanse us from our sins and to make us right with God. Jesus is also a King. He has risen from the grave and ascended to the Father's presence where he now reigns as Lord. As a King, Jesus commands us to repent (turn away from) our sins and trust in him for salvation. The King bestows his mercy and grace upon whomever he wills. When we trust Christ as our Lord and Savior, God looks at us through Christ and declares us not guilty. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Since Christ is the merciful Redeemer, what should our response to him be?

We must agree that we are sinful and helpless and that the saving work of Christ on the cross is our only hope. We must repent of our sins and despise them. We must recognize Christ as the necessary payment for the sin penalty. We must acknowledge Christ as Lord and turn every area of

our lives over to his control. We are to confess him as our Lord and Savior with our lips and our hearts. When we do these things, God gives us the gift of faith so that we might embrace Christ and his mercy and thereby become spiritually joined to him. The Bible says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9-10).

Dear friend, find a Bible and read Psalm 51:1-17. Ask God to create a clean heart within you. Ask him for forgiveness. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to save you and give you eternal life. Remember, Jesus said, "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). Then, find a Bible-believing church where you can publicly confess your faith in Christ, follow him in baptism, and serve him in obedience.