

I have a \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with brother, sister, mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, friend, etc.) who is the most devoted person I know, godly, kind, merciful, and I can't believe that God would not give \_\_\_\_\_ (him/her) a home in heaven.

That is one of the most common statements we face in standing for the truth of the gospel.

The apostle Paul wrote in  
Rom 10:1-2 Brethren, my heart's desire and my  
prayer to God for them is for their salvation. (2)  
For I testify about them that they have a zeal for  
God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

But he then went on to say,  
Rom 10:3-4 For not knowing about God's  
righteousness and seeking to establish their own,  
they did not subject themselves to the  
righteousness of God. (4) For Christ is the end of  
the law for righteousness to everyone who  
believes.

What a heart breaking realization!

The Jews had a zeal for God!

It was not in accordance with knowledge!!

They did not submit to God's righteousness.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the  
mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he  
may exalt you,

Act 23:1 And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.”

What a man who could say such a thing!

He was on fire for the God of heaven, punishing those who differed with him in their understanding of the Scriptures.

Act 8:1-3 ... And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ... (3) But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Paul considered Christians as blasphemers, worthy of death.

Act 26:9-11 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. (11) "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

1Ti 1:12 I thank him who has given me strength,  
Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful,  
appointing me to his service,<sup>13</sup> though formerly I was  
a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But  
I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in  
unbelief,

1Ti 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full  
acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to  
save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. (16)  
Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the  
foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect  
patience as an example for those who would believe  
in Him for eternal life.

Act 10:1 Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, (2) a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

Act 10:21 Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?" (22) They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you."

Cornelius' servants thought he was a "righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews."

Surely, this man was worthy of heaven as he was.

But he was not!

Act 11:11-14 And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. (12) And the Spirit told me to go with them, ... These six brothers also accompanied me, ... (13) And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; (14) he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

The Holy Spirit, who fell on them such that they spoke in tongues, did not deliver the saving message.

Cornelius, and his household, for all their goodness and charitable works among the Jews was still lost in sin!

Without the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, Cornelius was condemned to the depths of hell.

Why? Because he sinned and had not yet obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Act 18:24-26 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. (25) He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. (26) He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

There are some who would say, “See, he just needed it explained to him so he was fine.”

Not so, for three sentences later, the Holy Spirit reveals more men who had the same problem.

Act 19:1 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. (2) And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." (3) And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." (4) And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." (5) On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Remember Paul's words, written about 2 years later,

Rom 10:1-3 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (2) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Does it break your heart that your loved ones will not turn to God?

Don't let it deflect you in your stand for the gospel or your desire to see it spread through all the world.

2Pe 3:15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ...

*There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*

Don't think that it is always the hard things that drive men away from the Lord, their lack of humility before God's word can cause them to stumble over the smallest of things.

Eph 5:11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

2Co 3:12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, (13) and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. (14) But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. (15) But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; (16) but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away

Why do people cling to the Old Covenant?

Psa 33:2 Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;  
Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.

Mal 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing  
Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In  
tithes and offerings.

2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit,  
and where the Spirit of the Lord is,  
there is liberty. (18) But we all, with  
unveiled face, beholding as in a  
mirror the glory of the Lord, are  
being transformed into the same  
image from glory to glory, just as  
from the Lord, the Spirit.

Why do they insist on worshiping  
idols?

Act 17:29 "Being then the children  
of God, we ought not to think that  
the Divine Nature is like gold or silver  
or stone, an image formed by the art  
and thought of man.

Why do they believe that they cannot fall from grace, once they have accepted Jesus – your destiny has not been planned before the foundation of the world, such that you cannot change it.

Gal 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Why do they not believe that believers need to be immersed for the remission of sins?

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Rom 10:3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

You are not ignorant of God's wishes – when will you humble your heart before God?