

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE

"How Good is Good Enough for Heaven?"

By Kirk Kasson, Almena Congregational Church

"How Good is Good Enough for Heaven?" or "Scandalous Doctrine"

Consider 6 men. I'll name them alphabetically with the first names that come to mind: Albert, Bob, Charles, Doug, Evan and Frank.

Let's say that on the day Albert dies, we can know for a fact that he has sinned 5,000 times, but has performed 5,001 good deeds. Meanwhile Bob, at the time of his death has sinned 5,001 times and done 5,000 good deeds.

Not much difference between these two men. Do you think either will go to Hell? Which man do you believe is more likely to end up in Heaven?

Let's go on to Charles, who is quite a scoundrel, and has committed 10,000 sins while performing 1,000 good works. His neighbor Doug, however, has been quite a role model for his community. He has performed 10,000 good works while committing only 1,000 sins. If you had to place a significant wager, upon which man would you place your bet? How confident are you that Charles will go to Hell? Perhaps you feel the safe wager would be on Charles' security in Heaven.

Finally, we will take the ultimate extreme. The wretched Evan has performed no good works and one million sins, and Saint Frank has performed one million good works against one sin. Is this an easier pairing to judge?

What I'm about to tell you is, I believe, the most scandalous piece of theological teaching in all of Religion: Christianity teaches us that we can't predict where any of those six men are because we are missing one vital piece of information in each story.

It is like those trick story problems you had in freshman math class; you know the speed of the train but are missing the distance traveled and therefore do not have enough information to calculate the time it will take to reach its destination. The problem is un-

solvable because there are too many variables.

Christ has taught us that the missing variable in the above scenarios is . . . FORGIVENESS. Is Albert forgiven of his 5,001 sins? If so, you will find him in Heaven. If not, he will be in Hell. The same is true of Bob's 5,001 sins. And Charles's 1,000 sins, Doug's 10,000 sins, Evan's 1,000,000 sins, and Frank's one sin.

Christ warned the pious Pharisees that some of them were doomed to

Hell, and promised a villainous crook he would see him in Paradise.

If you don't understand why, then you don't understand the message of Christ.

Romans 3.23 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6.23 The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

Ephesians 2.8-9 It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not of yourself, it is the gift of

God, not of works so that no man can boast.

Are you going to Heaven? Most people tell me they think they are, because they've been a pretty good person. So I have to ask myself, are they Albert or Bob? How good is "pretty good"? What I'm afraid they don't understand is they may be St. Frank and still go to Hell. They may be "Evan the Evil" and still go to Heaven.

"NOT FAIR!!!" you say? I would agree with you; I don't think it's fair.

In all of Christ's teachings I really only see one time when Jesus spent time teaching on the issue of "fairness", and most people don't like this teaching either.

Jesus told a story about a farmer who raised grapes hired some harvesters at sunrise to pick his crop during the day. He promised them a certain wage and they agreed. Later that morning he hired some more and at noon he picked up some more. Shortly before quitting time he added a few more. He paid them all the same wage. Those hired first complained.

Having never raised grapes I can only guess that as the day grew longer he worried the job would not be finished in time—maybe bad weather was approaching—so in desperation he hired whom-ever he could get and by offering a whole days wage he was able to entice the later employees to sign on.

Jesus doesn't give us these details. He simply makes the point that each employee agreed to the terms when he signed on, so none has the right to complain.

Christianity may be the most unfair religion in the world, in terms of what gets us to Heaven. It's not fair at all.

Jesus committed no sins, but paid the penalty for every single one of mine. And yours. And St. Frank's and Evil Evan's.

When it comes to Heaven, the issue isn't how good or bad we've been. It's how forgiven.

Spiritual Conditioning



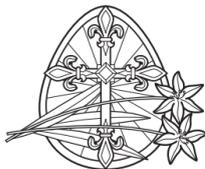
Each shining surgical instrument reflects the bright light overhead. Gowned and masked figures move deftly and quietly. All of this skill and technology is dedicated to one purpose...the assurance that the patient will be restored to health.

There is one condition which all the skill of the surgical team cannot control; the condition of the patient's spirit. It has been proven that those patients with a hopeful, positive, and faithful attitude have a significantly greater chance of survival and recovery.

Romans 12:12 instructs us to "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." We can learn those attributes by worshipping at God's House and by studying His Word. Practice positive spiritual conditioning. It could save your life!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mark	Mark	Mark	Mark	Mark	John	John
8.27-9.13	9.14-32	9.33-50	10.1-31	10.32-52	12.20-50	17.1-26

Scriptures Selected by The American Bible Society
Copyright 2009, Keister-Williams Newspaper Services, P. O. Box 8167, Charlottesville, VA 22906, www.kwnews.com



THE SPONSORS OF THIS CHURCH PAGE DO SO WITH PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY

McMullen Real Estate
Donald McMullen, Broker; Robert Wyatt
McMullen & Wyatt Auctions
Auctioneers - Realtors
• Farm • Estate • Antiques • Households
113 N. State - Norton - Phone 877-3299

Norton Animal Health Center
Complete Large and Small Animal Service
801 W. Holme - Norton - Phone 877-2411
Aaron R. White, DVM
Sarah Ketterl White, DVM
Monday thru Friday: 8-5; Saturday: 9-Noon

Engel's Sales and Service
Complete Auto Repair
Small Engines and
Lawn Care Equipment
• Toro • Lawnboy • Stihl Chain Saws
209 W. Lincoln - Norton - Phone 877-3391

Bridges Group Inc.
"Serving the Norton Area Since 1894"
117 N. Kansas
Norton, Kansas
Phone 785-877-4016

Moffet Drug Store
"Prescription Specialists"
Hallmark Cards and
Russell Stover Candies
102 S. State - Norton, Kansas
Phone 785-877-2721

Whitney Construction and Farms
Dry Fertilizer
Sales and Applications
• Terracing • Dozer Work • Ponds
Route 1 - Norton - Phone 785-877-3745

Nelson Bros. Construction, Inc.
General Contractors
Butler Buildings
Equipment Rental
Route 3 - Norton - Phone 785-877-2554

Ag Valley Co-operative
Elevator - Service Station
877-5131 or 877-5188 - Norton
Clayton Branch -
Phone 785-693-4522

Sander Furniture and Gifts
Sander Bed and Bath
Tuesday through Saturday:
9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Bradley and Kim Sander
301 W. Holme - Norton - 785-877-4974

First State Bank
"Your Progressive Community Bank"
MEMBER FDIC
105 W. Main - Norton, Kansas
Phone 785-877-3341

Norton Shop and Save
"Your Local Affiliated Full Service Grocer"
313 W. Main - Norton, Kansas
Phone 785-877-2422

Security Abstract Company
Abstractors Title Insurance Agents
• Home Loans
Prompt - Efficient - Confidential
214 E. Washington - Norton - 877-2141
Jolene L. Weiser, Owner

Norton Flowers, Gifts and Greenhouse
Fresh and Silk Arrangements
Trees, Shrubs, Bedding Plants
209 N. Kansas - Norton, Kansas
Phone 785-877-3345

Lee Hardy Construction LLC
New Construction • Concrete
Roofing • Remodeling • Decks
— Electrical • Rental Service —
874-4315 or 871-0832-1120 N. State, Norton

American Family Insurance
Curt Wahlmeier, Agent
• Auto • Home • Health • Life • Commercial
"All Your Protection Under One Roof"
111. W. Washington, Norton - 877-5802

Don's Floor Covering
Residential and Commercial
• Carpet • Sheet Vinyl • Tile
Levolor Blinds - Panasonic Vacuums
113 W. Washington - Norton, Kansas
877-3002 - Don Kaus - FREE ESTIMATES

Countryside Veterinary Clinic of Oberlin, P.A.
N. Hwy. 83, Oberlin, Kansas (North of Sale Barn)
785-475-3808 - 1-800-953-3808
Mark R. Olson, D.V.M. • Travis A. Hissong, D.V.M.
24-Hour Emergency Service

deanna braun insurance
Multi-Peril • Crop Hail • Livestock Risk Protection
912 N. State Street - Phone 785-874-4420
Fax 785-874-4421 - Toll Free 866-511-4420
email dsbins@ruraltel.net

Pizza Hut/Taco Bell
Come Join Us for Our
"SUNDAY BRUNCH BUFFET"
Pizza, Pasta, Salad and Dessert
FREE COFFEE or TEA
W. Hwy. 36 - Norton - Phone 877-3359

KPA WORD CLASSIFIEDS

Automobiles
For Sale: 1933 Duesenberg, '57 Bel Air Fuelie, '70 Mach 1 429. "The Branson Auction" April 17-18. Call to bid or consign 800-335-3063. www.bransonauktion.com.

runs. Outstanding Pay Package. Excellent Benefits. Generous Hometime. \$300 Lease Special on Volvos. NATIONAL CARRIERS 1-888-707-7729. www.nationalcarriers.com.

Business Opportunity
100% Recession Proof! Do you earn \$800 in a day? Your own local candy route. Includes 25 Machines and Candy. All for \$9995. 1-888-753-3441.

No Idle Law, No Problem 100% APU Equipped. OTR Drivers wanted. Prepass EZ-Pass. Every 60K mile raises. 2006 and newer equipment. Passenger-Pet Policy. 100% No touch. 1-800-528-7825.

Educational
MISSOURIWELDINGINSTITUTE. Nevada, Missouri. Become a Certified Pipe/Structural Welder. Graduate in 18 weeks, earn up to \$35/hour. Companies calling weekly searching for our graduates. 1-800-667-5885.

Legal Services
Social Security disability claims; Saunders & Saunders Attorneys at Law. No recovery, No fee! 1-800-259-8548.

For Rent
Never Rent Again! 4/BR \$238/Mo! 3/BR \$199/Mo! 5% down 15 years @ 8% apr. More Homes from \$199/Mo! For listings call 1-800-585-3560 ext B737.

Misc.
Airlines Are Hiring - Train for high paying Aviation Maintenance Career. FAA approved program. Financial aid if qualified - Housing Available. Call Aviation Institute of Maintenance. (888) 349-5387.

Health/Medical Services/Supplies
Up to 80% Savings possible on many medications. Generics now available for Arimidex, Boniva, Domperidone, Lamictal, Plavix and all ED Meds. Canada Drug Topeka 1-866-804-6100.

Attend College online from Home. Medical, Business, Paralegal, Computer, Criminal Justice. Job placement assistance. Computer available. Financial Aid if qualified. Call 866-858-2121 www.CenturaOnline.com

Help Wanted
Deliver RVs for pay! Deliver "new" RVs to all 48 states and Canada. Get paid to travel! For details log on to www.RVdeliveryJobs.com.

Sporting Goods
Gun Show! Jan. 24-25. Sat. 9-5 & Sun. 9-3. Topeka, KS. Kansas Expoentre. Buy-Sell Trade. Info: (563) 927-8176.

Extra Income Mailing Brochures. Weekly pay check! Free 24 hour information. 1-888-250-8110.

Steel Buildings For Sale
20x8x8; 40x8x8; 48x8.5x9.5; 53x8.5x9.5 SHIPPING CONTAINERS for rent. Camlock doors, hardwood floors support forklift. Delivery available. 1-785-655-9430 Solomon. www.chuckhenry.com complete web listing, photos, specs, pricing.

Mailing Brochures! Weekly pay + Bonus. Supplies furnished. Guaranteed Opportunity. Call now! 1-800-307-7131.

Wanted
Old Barns Bought and Sold! Salvaged barns and barn wood wanted and sold. www.TheBarnPages.com.

Help Wanted/Truck Driver
CDL-A DRIVERS: Expanding Fleet offering Regional/OTR

SAVE UP TO 50% OFF YOUR NEXT HEATING BILL! Was \$499 Now Only \$279!

Advanced Portable Infrared iHeater™
Saves Money NOW...Saves Money LATER

- ✓ Heats up to 1000 sq. ft. evenly for about a \$1 a day
- ✓ Safe around kids & pets
- ✓ Cannot start a fire
- ✓ FREE shipping
- ✓ Full factory warranty
- ✓ NEW low price!

Call NOW to Order
1-800-469-0456
Order online 24-7 www.iHeaterStore.com

Shown here iHeater™ iH1000 Model iH1500 Model also available (heats 1500 sq. ft.)

Hometown Recipes for the Holidays

The editors of American Profile have compiled the nation's most delicious recipes—straight from their readers

American Profile
HOMETOWN RECIPES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

From the Editors of AMERICAN PROFILE

You will enjoy more than 250 cherished family recipes, special memories, and dozens of beautiful photographs. You'll find the perfect dish for each of your favorite celebrations: New Year's Day, the Fourth of July, Columbus Day, Passover, Easter, Memorial Day, Labor Day, President's Day, Hanukkah, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Cookbook available at the Norton Telegram for \$18.95+Tax

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

215 South Kansas Avenue
Norton, Kansas 67654
Phone 785-877-3361
Fax: 785-877-3732
email: nortontelegram@nwkans.com