

Same Old †hing

Recently, I've been spending a few minutes each evening participating in some internet discussion boards, discussing computers, etc. One of the ongoing discussions went from the topic of a technology TV show to a discussion on sin, forgiveness, and good works. Most of the Christians participating in the discussion (It's not a "Christian discussion board," so many non-Christians read and respond, too.) have stated that they believe that salvation comes from a combination of faith and works. This belief leads to beliefs like, "There is a limit to how many sins you can commit and still be forgiven (People like Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Ladin are past that point)," and, "If you sin, you're not saved until you ask God for forgiveness."

Imagine going through life wondering how many sins is too many, or worrying that, on your death bed, you might have a sinful thought at the moment of death, thus suffering hell for eternity in spite of your faith that Jesus died for all of your sins.

I'm sometimes asked why we tend to cover the same topics over and over, especially Jesus' death and our forgiveness because of Him. The above is the answer to that question. God creates and strengthens faith through the Gospel, not the Law, so as St. Paul said, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2, NIV.) The more you hear about God's forgiveness, the stronger your faith in that forgiveness will be, and the better you are able not only to resist the devil's temptations to trust yourself instead of God, but also to share Jesus with others that they may have the same saving faith and assurance.

You are, in fact, forgiven, no matter how great your sin or when the sin occurred, because we believe very strongly in salvation by works: Jesus' works on our behalf. In Jesus' name,
Amen.