

13% and the Assurance of Heaven

When the Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ were here on May 17-19, they canvassed Delaware, Delhi, and Earlville, as well as the Lake Delhi area and the rural area north of Earlville. That is, they went door-to-door and asked people where they thought they'd go when they die and why they thought so.

Of those who were home that day, nearly everyone expected to go to heaven, and most were members of Christian churches. But of the 114 people who were home that day, only 15 knew how to get there. That's only 13%. (The national average is about 29%.) Hopefully, by the end of our canvassing, since the Ambassadors shared the Gospel with them, that number increased as people were brought to faith through the Message, but we only got to 218 homes, including those who weren't home where Gospel tracts were left.

What does this mean? It means that there are literally thousands of people in our little corner of Delaware County who, unless they're told how to avoid it, will spend eternity in hell. It means that we need, on an individual level, to talk to our friends and neighbors about heaven and tell them how to get there! That might be uncomfortable, but "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Le 19:18 Mt 19:19 22:39 Mr 12:31,33 Lu 10:27 Ro 13:9 Ga 5:14 Jas 2:8—Yes, it occurs nine times in the Bible!) means loving him enough to show him the way to heaven.

Thankfully, most (but not all) of the members of St. Paul's who were surveyed knew the way, but for everyone's benefit (and it's a great reminder), you can't get to heaven by "being good." What you do has nothing to do with getting to heaven. It's all about what God has done for you. Since God demands perfection, nobody is good enough to get to heaven, but God took care of that. He paid the price for your sin by sending His Son, Jesus, to live that perfect life for you and die in your place. Through the faith He gives us through His Word & Sacraments, we get to go to heaven, prepaid! It's that simple.

If you had a cure for cancer, you'd share that cure with anyone who might possibly need it. Yet that cure, while it would save them from cancer, wouldn't stop them from dying of heart attacks or any other number of illnesses or accidents. We, however, have been given the cure for death. It

costs nothing that hasn't already been paid, it's available to all people, and its only side effects are a better world as those who have been forgiven respond with thanks by loving their neighbors.

(Matthew 9:35-38, NIV) Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

And listen: He may send you.