Admiration Is Not a Qualification

What most people believe about the road to heaven

Ask people whether they want to go to heaven, and almost all of them will answer without hesitation: “Yes.” For many, this wish already seems to be half the journey. “If I sincerely want eternal life,” they think, “God will take it into account.”

Next to the wish comes praise. The religious person admires God’s works: the starry sky, the beauty of nature, the wonder of life. He thanks Him, sings to Him, goes to church, lights a candle and says a prayer. Without saying it outright, he believes that all of this will make God receive him into the eternal world. The more he praises, the closer he thinks he is.

The strange thing is that in everyday life nobody thinks like this. No employer pays a salary to someone who praises his company but does not work in it. No coach puts the fan who shouts loudest in the stands onto the team. In every other field we know that wishing and admiring are only the beginning. Only in religion do people imagine that they are enough to receive the greatest gift there is.

The man who admired a Mercedes

Think of a man who admires Mercedes cars. He knows every model, follows every launch and praises their quality wherever he goes. He hangs a photograph of his favourite model on the wall and dreams for years of owning one. He might even write the factory a letter full of kind words about its products.

Would this man believe that, for all his admiration, the factory will send him a car as a gift? Not even he believes that. He knows very well that his praise, however sincere, does not take the place of the price. If he really wants the car, he has to work, save and give up other things, perhaps for years, until he has gathered the sum he needs. The wish sets him in motion, but it does not qualify him. Admiration gets him started on the road, but it does not bring him to the end of it.

And yet the same man goes to church on Sunday and thinks differently. He believes that if he praises God for His works, sings to Him and tells Him how much he longs for heaven, he will persuade Him to open the gates of eternity. What he would never expect from a car maker, he expects from the Creator of the universe.

What eternal life really asks

The illustration has its limit. Eternal life cannot be bought with money, nor with good deeds put on the account. Its price is not a sum but a change: the person himself must become fit for the world he wants to enter. A world where no one lies, cheats or hurts another cannot receive someone who still carries pride, envy and untruth in his heart. Not because God is stingy with

His gift, but because such a person would bring with him the very evil that world is free from.

Praise, singing and prayer are not bad. They are good when they spring from a heart that wants to change. But they become a delusion when they take the place of change. God complained about His people for exactly this: “These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honour Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me” (Isaiah 29:13). And the Lord Jesus said plainly: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

God is not looking for admirers, but for children who resemble Him. True admiration does not stop at words; it makes a person want to become like the One he admires. And on this road no one is left alone: God offers to shape him, if he lets himself be shaped.

That is why the decisive question is not “Do I want heaven?” Almost everyone does. The question is a different one: “Am I becoming the kind of person who could live there?”

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