

There are so many ways to gamble these days! Casinos that used to be found only in Las Vegas now seem to be everywhere. People gamble on sporting events, at racetracks, and in state lotteries. Others risk their hard-earned money in the stock market, which is always a gamble! But even if you have never placed a bet, if you are not saved, *you are gambling with eternity.*

You might be thinking, “I don’t use that word saved,” but I wonder if at some time in your life you’ve sung that most beloved of all Christian hymns, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that *saved* a wretch like me.” You may have sung the song, but are you saved? We call the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior; well, the purpose of a Savior is to save people! Has He saved you?

The Bible says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, *and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31). If you are wondering what you have to believe about Christ to be saved, the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians,

**“I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...by which also ye are saved... how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).**

Most people have heard that “Christ died for our sins,” but they fail to realize that when He died for our sins He *paid for* our sins. So the only question now is, do you *believe* God when He says your sins are paid for? Do you *trust* Him when He says that? If you do, the Bible says you are saved!

If you are not sure what I’m trying to say, suppose for a moment that you have a serious gambling problem, and that you have racked up a million dollars in gambling debts. One day some very bad men threaten to kill you unless you pay your debt. Naturally, you are terrified, because you don’t have the money. But just then a friend emails you to say, “I heard about your problem, and I paid your debt.”

Now you have to ask yourself, “Do I *believe* my friend when he says he paid my debt? Do I *trust* him when he says my debt is paid?” If you *don’t* believe him, you’ll have to keep trying to pay your debt on your own. But if you *do* trust your friend when he says he paid your debt, you’ll thank him, and simply rest in what he did for you.

That’s all God asks of you to be saved from your sins. Believe that Christ paid for your sins, *and rest in what He did for you.* If you’ll do that, the Bible says you are saved. If you won’t, well, you’ll just have to go on trying to pay for your sins in your own way, by doing good works—something the Bible says you can never do:

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...” (Titus 3:5).**

**“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works...” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

If you are still not sure what I am trying to say, I have a little exercise for you. Later today, or perhaps tomorrow, you are going to do some good deed, or avoid doing something sinful. At that moment, you will be tempted to think, “I just helped pay my way to heaven.” When that happens, *stop yourself*, and say, “No, the Bible says that the only way I can get to heaven is by believing that Christ died for my sins.” Just keep that up, and eventually you’ll learn to trust what Christ did on the cross to pay for your sins, and rest completely in what He did for you.

They say life is a gamble, and I suppose in many ways it is. But don’t gamble with *eternity*. The stakes are much too high.

I promise you this: A thousand years from this moment, you will remember this moment. And whether you remember it with joy or eternal regret depends on the decision you must make right now to *trust Christ as your Savior*.

—Pastor Ricky Kurth

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# Gambling

A hand of playing cards is shown on a green felt background. The cards are fanned out, with the Ace of Spades and Jack of Spades prominently displayed. The background is dark with a pattern of falling white confetti or chips.

## With Eternity