



### **Do you go to heaven if you 'half-believe' and half don't?**

At the end of our most recent 4-6th Grade Group meeting, we read through the account of the Magi (wise men) following the start to come and worship Jesus. The story led to lots of questions. (I probably got enough questions for a year's worth of "Question for Pastor" articles! - It was great!)

As usually happens, many of the questions had to do with heaven. The question above is one of those.

It's always a good idea to make sure you and the questioner are thinking along the same lines before giving an answer. Otherwise, you may end up answering a question they really aren't asking. So, I pressed for a little more information about what they meant by 'half-believe.' I found out that they were equating 'believing' with 'understanding.' For example, they couldn't understand how God can be everywhere all at once or how God can hear the prayers of maybe a billion people all at once. Guess what? I don't understand that either!

So, this was my answer: "God doesn't require us to understand everything about Him or everything He says. He realizes that there are lots of things about Him that we won't understand, *because He's God and we aren't.*"

It's similar to how my dogs can understand a few key words I use with them ('treat' and 'ride' come to mind as examples), but if I tell them I can't take them for a ride because I have to write a sermon, they won't have a clue what I am doing or why. They'll never understand what 'writing a sermon' means simply because they aren't human.

We are in good company when it comes to not understanding how God can do something that we can't do. When the angel came to tell Mary that she would become the mother of the Son of God, she asked, "How can this be?" i.e. "I don't understand how this can possibly happen." The angel responded by saying something we would all do well to remember: "Nothing is impossible for God." i.e. "You don't need to understand how, just trust that because He's God, He can do it!

I told the kids, "I am *glad* I can't understand everything about God. If I could understand everything about Him, that would mean He's no different than me - no better than me! And I REALLY want a God who is better than I am - as in: more powerful, wiser, more loving, etc..."

Bottom line: John 3:16 doesn't say, ... "whoever *understands* Him will have eternal life." Thank God for that! Rather, it does say, "whoever believes in (trusts) Him will have eternal life."

Thanks for asking,  
Pastor David

Send your questions to [pastor@livingwordlutheran.net](mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net)