

What Really Matters ?

Text : **Matthew 6: 1-18**

INTRODUCTION :

A. In previous lessons we have considered the judgment of God.

1. His judgment is certain.
2. It is completely just.
 - a. God is not a respecter of persons. (**Everyone receives equal treatment.**)
 - b. He judges each person individually. (**Not responsible for sins of others.**)
3. When Jesus judges, he evaluates :
 - a. All of the deeds done here on earth. ... **II Cor. 5:10**
 - b. Every idol word spoken in life. ... **Matt. 12: 36**
 - c. The motives for all deeds, words & thoughts. ... **Heb. 4: 12-13, Jer. 17: 10**
4. God even holds us accountable for the things we could have done, but didn't.
 - a. **James 4: 17**
 - b. **Obadiah 10-11**

B. This makes us aware that nothing one does on earth is insignificant.

1. Everything we do say or think matters.
2. God is infinite in all His attributes.
 - a. He never forgets.
 - b. He is totally just.

C. HOWEVER ... God is not predisposed toward vengeance and punishment.

1. God takes no pleasure in punishing wicked people. ... **Ezek. 33: 11**
2. He patiently appeals to people to repent and avoid punishment. ... **II Pet. 3:9**

D. God's very essence is love.

1. **I John 4: 8- The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**
2. The God of love desires to bless (cf .. **Deut. 30: 16**) not to curse.
3. We who are created in God image get pleasure from rewarding, not punishing.

With this lesson we'll observe three things about the blessings God desires to give.

- 1- What are the Christian's rewards ?
- 2- How does one qualify for God rewards ?
- 3- How does Jesus determine our rewards ?

I. What are some of the Christian's rewards ?

A. Everything we do is observed by God. (Whether good or evil)

1. Nothing is missed and nothing is insignificant.
2. Everything we do for God is rewarded.
3. Everything we give up for God is rewarded.

B. God's rewards are eternal.

1. **Matt. 6: 19-21** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.
²⁰ "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;
²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
2. **I Cor. 9: 25** - Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable. (*Nothing one achieves on earth lasts.*)
3. **Everything you can see will perish; because this world is temporary.**

C. There are three crowns faithful Christians will receive which will never perish.

1. We will receive an eternal crown of righteousness.
II Tim. 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
2. We will receive a crown of eternal life.
James 1:12- Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Cf- **Rev. 2:10**)
3. We will receive a crown of glory.
I Pet. 5:4- And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (Cf - **I Pet. 4:13**)
4. **The crowns for which those in the world strive are temporal so they fade away.**
 - a. The Christian's crowns last forever .. for eternity.
 - b. How does one know for which crown he is striving ?
Matt. 6: 21- for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
 - c. One's heart FOLLOWS his treasure. (**spending time and money == priority**)

D. We will be rewarded by setting with Jesus on His throne. (share glory)

1. **Rev. 3:21-** He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
2. **Phil. 3:12-** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

E. Christians will share in all that Jesus has and possesses.

Rom. 8:16-17- The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

F. Christians will receive a new eternal body which is appropriate for new status.

I Cor. 15: 42-44 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

G. Christians will receive an eternal home in Heaven for their new body to dwell in.

John 14: 2-3 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

H. Christians will have direct fellowship with God Himself.

Rev. 21: 3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

* **These are just some of the rewards awaiting the Christians.**

THEREFORE : Our reward will be much more than we give up to follow Jesus.

1. **Matt. 19: 29-** And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.
2. **Rom. 8:18-** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

II. How does one qualify for God's rewards ?

A. There is no list of actions which will "earn" God's rewards. (gifts .. wages)

B. There are some reasons God will reward Christians. (*Only Christians*)

1. God will reward those who seek Him.

Heb. 11:6- And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

2. God rewards those who deny themselves for Him.

Matt. 16: 24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. **25** For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. **26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **27** For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.

C. God rewards Christians who serve those in need.

Matt. 10:42- whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

D. God rewards those who share their blessings. (*Who love their neighbors.*)

I Tim. 6:17- 19 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. **18** Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, **19** storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (Compare ... **Eph. 4:28** ... earn to share)

* **Lay up your treasures in Heaven by sharing on earth.**

THEREFORE : Nothing we do on earth is insignificant.

This should change the way we live each day.

The day-to-day decisions we make affect our eternal destiny.

Thank God for Jesus.

There is nothing anyone can do or say that will earn Heaven.

It is only those who are IN CHRIST who can anticipate any rewards.

III. How will Jesus determine each Christian's rewards ?

Or ... How will He determine which deeds He will reward ?

- A. Jesus will take into consideration the quality of a man's work for Him.
1. **Read ... I Cor. 3: 10-15** (*Wood, Hay, Stubble = little commitment*)
 2. **Notice Vs. 15 ...** One can lose reward without losing salvation. (i.e. *Heaven*)
 3. **The belief that the only difference is just Heaven or Hell is not scriptural.**
- B. God evaluates ALL thoughts, words & deeds on the basis of relationship.
1. Remember the greatest, the most important command. ... **Matt. 22: 37**
 2. The Ephesian church did many good things, **but they were condemned.**
Rev. 2: 2-5 I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; **3** and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. **5** Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.
 3. God does not reward anything that is not done out of love for Him.
ILL. - This is why I seldom preach on giving. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." **The heart follows the treasure. When my heart is dedicated to God, my treasure will be His.**
*** An earthbound heart spends its time and treasure on the earthly.**
- C. Jesus will judge the motivation for our thoughts, for our words and for our deeds.
1. Many people are active in clubs that do good deeds, **but** they're NOT done for God.
 2. **I Cor. 10: 31-** **Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.** (*Nothing that is not FOR God is to His glory.*)
 3. This involves a conscious decision to direct the "credit" (honor, glory) to God.
 - a. Remember our text ... **Matt. 6: 1-16** ... **Our getting credit negates reward.**
 - b. **Compare ... Matt. 5: 16** ... When OUR light shines GOD must be glorified.
- D. Therefore, we must be constantly evaluating the motives for everything we do.
1. Do we do the things we do for God ? *or for* ...
 2. Is everything we do consciously done "to the glory of God ? "

CONCLUSION :

A. As Christians, knowing that God is looking for ways to reward us, we should :

1. Cause us to love Him even more. (*We live in anticipation, **NOT** fear.*)
2. Cause us to pay more close attention to the day-to-day decisions we make.
(*Give us a whole different outlook on life.*)

B. Knowing this life is the only time given to us to lay by in store for the next should :

1. Motivate us to serve God more industriously.
2. Cause us to direct our efforts more toward the future than on this perishing world.
 - a. Where my treasure is tells me where my heart is.
 - b. *“I can’t take it with me, but I do have a choice :
I can send it on ahead or I can let it cause me to be left behind.”*
3. How I spend my time and my money tells me where my heart is.

C. Knowing that all of God’s eternal rewards are ONLY for those in Christ :

1. Motivates me to make sure I am in Christ.
2. Motivates me to make sure I stay in Christ.
 - * **Satan tempts us with many things on this earth,
but all he gives will perish with this earth.**

INVITATION :

1. Are you in Christ ?
2. Do you look forward to receiving all that God has to offer ?
3. God does not want to punish anyone, **but** He is totally just.