**Blessings from Jesus**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Matthew 16:24-28**

**Sunday Morning**

**October 23, 2022**

**Matthew 16:24-28**

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. 28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

**Our Lord Jesus Christ will Evaluate the Life of Every Believer**

We can take comfort in the fact that each person will be examined based on his or her works, not on how that individual compares to others and their achievements.

This judgment, however, includes more than just an assessment of what we’ve done. It also will be a time when Christ will reward us for the godly choices we made in life. Even the smallest good deed will not escape His evaluation.

The honors He gives at this time will include various rewards for godly living, including a number of crowns for faithful service.

**1. What is the Nature of our Rewards?**

Saints, the apostle Paul wrote that in:

**1 Corinthians 3:8-9**

8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

Although we work with other believers toward common goals, Christ will reward us individually for our obedience to Him. Jesus will honor us for every righteous act if we did it with the right motivation.

No good deed goes unnoticed by the Lord, even an act as seemingly insignificant as giving someone a drink of water!

**Matthew 10:42**

"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Saints, there will be different degrees of rewards because God gives each of us different opportunities. For instance, the Bible mentions specific honors in heaven for a “righteous man” and a “prophet”

**Matthew 10:41**

“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward”

Saints, those who are given greater opportunities are called to pay a higher price in terms of increased sacrifices and responsibilities. For instance, one who lays down his life because of persecution will receive a great reward.

**Mathew 5:11-12**

11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Is it Possible to Earn No Reward at all for a Good Deed?**

**Absolutely!**

For instance, Saints, if someone’s intent was to impress others and receive the praise of others, that person will forfeit God’s blessings because of his or her impure motivation (Matt. 6:1-6).

**Matthew 6:1-4**

1 “Be careful! When you do good things, don’t do them in front of people to be seen by them. If you do that, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 “When you give to the poor, don’t be like the hypocrites. They blow trumpets in the synagogues and on the streets so that people will see them and honor them. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward.

3 So when you give to the poor, don’t let anyone know what you are doing. 4 Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

One caution Saints: godly lives aren’t always rewarded here on earth.

Be careful not to place your hope in material, temporal things when God has promised us eternal, heavenly honors for our righteous choices.

**2. What Rewards might we Receive?**

The Satisfaction of Hearing Jesus say,

**“Well Done My Good and Faithful Servant”**

To some people, this doesn’t sound like much of a reward. But imagine if you had performed a heroic act, and the wealthiest man flew to your town to congratulate you at a special ceremony.

You would probably be honored and gratified that such a high-ranking official acknowledged your efforts.

Now picture how much awe you will feel when Christ Himself—the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords—praises you for a job well done.

**Matthew 25:23**

"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

**One of the Privileges of Meeting those whom we were Influential in Leading them to Jesus**

Saints, this reward will be given to those who are a part of someone else’s conversion, whether their role is small or great. For example, every time you support missionaries financially or pray for the success of their ministries, you earn heavenly rewards!

**What Rewards might we Receive?**

**Daniel 12:1-3 (New Century Version)**

1 “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will stand up. There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations have been on earth, but your people will be saved. Everyone whose name is written in God’s book will be saved.

2 Many people who have already died will live again. Some of them will wake up to have life forever, but some will wake up to find shame and disgrace forever. 3 The wise people will shine like the brightness of the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.

**Rapture Slide>**

**Our Assigned Position of Service in Eternity**

Saints, if we have faithfully handled the tasks God gave us on earth, He will give us positions of authority in His eternal kingdom

**Revelation 22:5**

5 There will never be night again. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light. And they will rule as kings forever and ever.

Saints, this is one reason why it’s important not to be slothful or lazy. The Lord will judge us based on three criteria:

**1. How much truth did we know?**

**2. What talents, skills, and opportunities did we have?**

**3. What did we do with the opportunities God provided?**

**What Rewards might we Receive?**

**Our Eternal, Undisturbed, Complete Intimacy with Christ**

In eternity, our fellowship with Jesus will depend to some extent on how we lived while on earth. Intimacy between a husband and a wife is nothing compared to the awesome spiritual closeness a believer can enjoy with our holy God.

The more we are conformed to the image of Jesus during our earthly lives, the less our intimacy with Him will be hindered—both now and in heaven

**Romans 8:29-30**

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

**The Capacity to Show Forth the Glory of Christ**

What does this phrase mean? The glory of God is the radiance of His holiness, His love, and His power.

Once we’ve been purified by the judgment, we will share that glory to some degree, although we will never be equal to the Lord.

**2 Thessalonians 1:10-12**

when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3. The Types of Crowns**

Saints, in addition to the rewards listed above, the Bible mentions the crowns we can win as a result of faithful service on earth.

**The Crown of Victory or the Incorruptible Crown**

Saints, most of us should receive this reward. It is given to those who do not give up in the face difficulties, hardships, and trials

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

**The Crown of Rejoicing**

Saints, Believers who share their faith with others earn the right to rejoice over those whom they led to the Savior

**1 Thessalonians 2:18-20**

18 Therefore we wanted to come to you--even I, Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

**The Crown of Righteousness**

Saints, Christians who have lived a godly life, longing for the Lord’s return, will receive this one.

**2 Timothy 4:8**

"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Saints, although Christians still sin on occasion, they are quick to confess and restore their fellowship with God.

**1 John 1:9**

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

**The Crown of Life**

Saints, not only do trials allow us the opportunity to grow spiritually and experience more of God’s comfort, we will one day be honored for persevering through them.

**James 1:12**

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

**The Crown of Glory**

Saints, this reward is reserved for faithful pastors, ministers abd teachers who shepherd their flocks well, resist the temptation to please men instead of the Lord, and don’t compromise the truth of God’s Word.

**1 Peter 5:1-4**

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

**What is the final destiny of these Crowns?**

**We will cast them at the feet of Jesus**!

**Revelation 4:10-11**

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

Saints, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ equipped us to perform good deeds. That’s why He deserves all the glory and honor—not us!

**In Closing:**

Every moment that passes brings you one step closer to the day when you will stand before Christ. Are you ready to give the Ruler of the universe an account of your life? Spend some time alone with God and ask yourself questions such as these:

**1. Am I living righteously?**

**2. Is my life counting for the kingdom?**

**3. Am I being obedient to follow what the Lord has asked me to do?**

**4. Am I making a difference in anyone’s life?**

Saints, when we meet Jesus, it will be too late to earn spiritual honors for our choices on earth. My prayer is that you will evaluate your life and begin living today with His final judgment—and heavenly rewards—in mind.

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**