

Rewards of God I

Rewards Earned for Good or for Evil

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I talked to a person one time who said, ‘Why should I expend any energy at all for salvation, because after all, I’m going to be saved in the second resurrection?’ That’s quite a startling statement! He was a brave soul to mention it, but there are some who think it, but never express it.

- Is it worth it to be in the first resurrection?
That’s another way of framing the same question!
- What is the reward of the firstfruits?

I think we’re going to find this very, very provocative, interesting and some other things that perhaps we haven’t really understood before.

- Why should a person rejoice in tribulation?
- Have you never had any tribulation in your life?
- Why should we enjoy being called to a life of tribulation?

Remember, Jesus said, ‘*In the world you will have tribulation; be of good cheer, I’ve overcome the world.*’

- What is it that God is going to give us—or offer us—that’s going to make it all worthwhile?
- How do we know what it is?
- How can we work for it, if that is the case?

So, let’s talk about rewards! We’ve heard about rewards, the reward of the saved. We’ve heard about the things that Jesus has said about reward.

First of all, we need to understand that there are the rewards of the wicked, and there are also the rewards of the righteous. Let’s define a reward: *something that is different than you expect!* It’s a little different than a wage.

- *a wage* is something that you *earn*
- *a reward* is something that is *given*

You can earn a reward in the sense that your own works will do a lot to help; however, you can’t determine what that reward is going to be by your own determination, by saying, ‘God, if You do this, I’ll do that.’ *We don’t bargain with God on that basis!*

Here we find some very interesting things concerning God’s way; Psalm 109:1: “O God of my praise, do not keep silent, for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened

against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue” (vs 1-2). *That could also be a prophecy of what Jesus went through!*

When you stop and think about it, what was it that Jesus really went through? *That’s another whole topic!* Lot’s of times people feel this way, just like in v 2.

Verse 3: “And they surrounded me with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. In return for my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good and hatred for my love. Set a wicked man over him, and let an adversary stand at his right hand” (vs 3-6).

That’s getting into the reward of the wicked. There’s another place where it says, ‘O Lord, surely You have set them in slippery place,’ but only when he went into the house of God to understand it.

Psalm 94:1: “O LORD God to whom vengeance belongs, O God, to whom vengeance belongs, show Yourself. Lift up Yourself, Judge of the earth; **render recompense**... [reward] ...**to the proud**. How long shall the wicked, O LORD, how long shall the wicked exult?” (vs 1-3)—*or triumph!*

This is part of the problem that people are confronted with:

- Is it worth it to keep God’s Laws? *They are not looking at it in the way that they ought to!*
- Is it worth it to go through the trials that we go through?
- What good is going to do in the long run?

That’s all part of the things that you may go through!

Psalm 91:8: “Only with your eyes you shall behold and see the recompense of the wicked.” *So, the wicked have their reward!*

Sometimes the reward or the penalty doesn’t come when we think that it ought to. *But it surely is on its way!* If you see these things happen to the wicked, then also look at the reciprocal. God’s promises to you are also going to be fulfilled. *God’s way for you is also going to be done!*

Prov. 11—again we see this reward of the wicked and the reward of the righteous, contrasted back and forth. Here’s one of the promises:

Proverbs 11:17: “The merciful man does good to his own soul, but *he who is cruel* **troubles his own flesh.**”

We’re see a lot of that today. There are people who are just cruel, not only to other people but to themselves in very vicious ways. Some of that gets down into disfigurement of the body, tattooing, walking on coals and things like that.

Verse 18: “The wicked makes a deceitful work, **but one sowing righteousness *has a sure reward.***” *In this case, the reward is something you don’t expect!*

When we get down to it, we will get close to what the reward is, but we won’t be able to say exactly what it is.

- God is the One Who is going to give it!
- God is the One Who is going to provide it!
- God is the One Who is going to make it sure!

Verse 19: “As righteousness *tends* to life, so one pursuing evil *pursues it* to his own death.” *That certainly is absolutely true in the way that God has set it up!*

God told us to choose life, or to choose death. Let’s see how this contrasted. Let’s see how this bears an awful lot on what we do, and how we do it! It bears an awful lot:

- on our attitude toward God
- on our willingness toward God
- on our love toward God

or the lack thereof! Rom. 2 tells us how this is all tied to:

- our own thoughts
- our own attitudes
- our own way

It’s very, very important in God’s determining what He will do with us, and for us, and to us!

Romans 2:1: “Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges *another*; for in that in which you judge the other, you are condemning your own self; for you who judge *another* are doing the same things.”

I think we need to understand very, very deeply that human beings by nature are evil. In other words, most people are willing to accept for a human standard, partly good, partly evil and hopefully the good will come forth and that will do more than the evil.

That’s the way that human nature is. However, there is no such thing as a truly righteous

person in the sense that God is righteous, unless God gives that righteousness. We are not capable of ourselves or with any might, will or self-strength to make ourselves righteous. That’s the whole story of Job. As I mentioned before, the first time I read Job I thought God was wrong. I couldn’t understand that.

But the biggest problem that you have—and you see this time and again—those people who stand up and do all the condemning, they’ve got a lot of skeletons in their closet. This is just a truism in life. The reason is that God is going to do the judging. Granted, we have to judge ourselves before God, but we take care of ourselves before God.

Verse 2: “But we know that the judgment of God is according to Truth upon those who commit such things.” *All the things that are listed in Rom. 1 that God is going to do!*

You can get a real good idea of what is going to happen in society. How long ago was it that we said that San Francisco was going to become the first AIDS ghost city in America? It’s overburdened with crime, AIDS and it’s going to fall on its own weight. Wait and see! *God will do it!*

Verse 3: “Now, do you think yourself, O man... [any human being] ...whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?”

God’s judgment comes into the reward aspect of what has given, what God gives, whether for good or evil!

Verse 4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that **the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?**” *That’s quite a profound statement right there!*

It is ***God’s goodness and grace*** that leads you to repentance. ***The Holy Spirit convicts you of sin!*** You don’t know what sin is until God reveals that to you. It’s by God’s grace that He reveals this to you, that it is sin. So, it’s God’s goodness that leads you to repentance.

What makes you want to repent, other than the fact that you got caught? Just take the average person in the world, not convicted of God’s Spirit, not having God’s Holy Spirit. If they do something that is wrong, are they willing to repent? *No! They’re just sorry that they got caught!* You can see that time and time again!

So, Paul is saying here, ‘Don’t get so high and mighty in your thoughts and condemnations and think that you’re so good. Because it is:

- God has called you
- God has brought you to repentance
- God that has done this for you

Verse 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works” (vs 5-6).

We’re going to find that with reward, that works or deeds—same Greek word ‘ergon’—which means works:

- What you’re producing in your life?
- What you do?
- How you do it?
- What is it that God has to control?
Everything! The infinite and the finite!

Since He’s given free moral agency and choice to human beings. When you give choice, then you have to have parameters beyond which that choice cannot go, but still have it full and freely operating within those parameters.

- What is the parameter that God has given to human beings to allow choice? *His laws and commandments!*
- What goes along with that? *Choice, faith and belief!*
- What is the parameter, the outer limit of all this? *Death!*

Death is the limit that God has given on our choices! We can operate within that—for good or evil—to the point of death. That’s so that God is still in control, though He gives free moral agency. Otherwise He wouldn’t command us to choose.

Here we have attitude and works all involved in God’s judgment for a reward!

Verse 7: “On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works...”—*well-doing, not the ‘do-gooders’ of the world*, but well-doing according to God’s will and God’s way.

“...are seeking... [constantly doing] ...glory and honor and immortality—eternal life... [that is what God is going to give] ...on the other hand, to those who are contentious and **who disobey the Truth...**” (vs 7-8)—*which is a whole sermon in itself!*

God’s Word is Truth. Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’ All of that ties in with it.

“...but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the Jew* first, and

of *the Greek*” (vs 8-9). *God is no respecter of persons!* We’re going to see that:

- there are rewards in this physical life
- there are rewards in the spiritual life to come
- there are rewards and blessings for good, for what we do
- there are rewards and cursings for evil that we do

In between all of that comes the trial that the Christian has to go through, which also results in great reward!

Verse 10: “But glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the Jew* first, and to *the Greek*, because there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned within *the Law* shall be judged by *the Law*” (vs 10-12). *The wages of sin is death!*

Verse 13: “Because the hearers of the Law are not just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.” *In all of that comes the situation where that there is a matter of:*

- choice
- belief
- faith
- attitude
- works, and also degree of works

All put together! This is something that is not very easy to separate out. It all depends on how we yield ourselves to God.

We find something that’s very important in God’s way. He said to Abraham, ‘**I will be your exceeding great reward**’ (Gen. 15:1).

1-Sam. 24—here we’re going to find the comparison of the rewarding of evil for good. This was at a time when David was on the ascendancy, while Saul was still chasing him.

1-Samuel 24:1: “And it came to pass when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, they told him, saying, ‘Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En Gedi.’ And Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men upon the front of the rocks of the wild goats” (vs 1-2).

Here’s David who is supposed to be very righteous, a man after God’s heart, having been given the Spirit of God already, to be anointed as king by the prophet Samuel.

- What is David doing?
- What kind of reward does David have so

far?

- *He's being chased all over Southern Palestine!*

He's being chased by King Saul!

The Springs of En Gedi are very interesting and really very beautiful. However, it's in the middle of a desert! It is dry and hot; that's why it says, "...the rocks of the wild goats." Have you ever tried to follow a wild goat around? *This is not great living!*

Verse 3: "And he came to the folds of the flock on the way where there *was* a cave. And Saul went in to cover his feet... [to take care of a normal bodily process] ...And David and his men remained in the side *chambers* of the cave. And the men of David said to him, 'Behold, this is the day of which the LORD said to you, "Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand so that you may do to him as it shall seem good to you."' And David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly" (vs 3-4).

Imagine how sharp that sword had to be! Have you ever tried to cut cloth with a butcher knife? It would make a huge mess! But this was so sharp that David just reached over and swiped and it fell to the ground, and Saul didn't even know it. Can you imagine how softly they had to be breathing? Just picture yourself, if you were one of the 24 men in there with David, how quiet you had to be!

Verse 5: "And it came to pass afterward that David's heart struck him..." *In spite of all the faults and problems of David, he did have a tender heart! What do we have here? Attitude!*

"...because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said to his men, 'Far be it from me, by the LORD, if I will do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, since he is the anointed of the LORD.' And David held back his men with these words and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul rose up out of the cave and went on *his* way. Then David arose afterward and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, 'My lord the king!' And Saul looked behind him..." (vs 5-8).

You can imagine looking up on this rocky cliff and here's David up there saying, "...My lord, the king!..." *So, Saul looked up!*

"...And David bowed his face to the earth and prostrated himself" (v 8). *Talk about an attitude that was really something! Respecting the office that God had given!*

- even though David knew that Saul was condemned

- even though David knew that he would take Saul's place
- even though David was told that God would deliver the enemy into his hand

Verse 9: "And David said to Saul, 'Why do you hear man's words, saying, "Behold, David seeks to do you evil"?' Behold, your eyes have seen this day how the LORD had delivered you today into my hand in the cave. And *one* said to kill you. But *I* had pity on you. And I said, "**I will not put forth my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.**" And, my father, behold! Yes, see the skirt of your robe in my hand... [David held it up to Saul for him to see] ...for in that I cut off the skirt of your robe and did not kill you, know and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet, you hunt my life to take it. **May the LORD judge between me and you...**" (vs 9-12).

This comes right down to almost the same thing that Jesus said; *We're to turn the other cheek!* Isn't this almost the same thing, where David had the opportunity to take it into his hands, and he didn't!

Verse 13: "As the ancient proverb says, "Wickedness proceeds from the wicked." But my hand shall not be upon you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog? After a flea?" (vs 13-14). *That's quite a taunt, but it's also quite a revealing attitude of David's thought to himself! After all, who was he? A dog? A flea?*

Verse 15: "May the LORD, therefore, be Judge, and judge between you and me, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of your hand.' And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' And Saul lifted up his voice and wept" (vs 15-16).

Even though the evil spirit came upon Saul, there were times when he still had his own senses. He came to his senses here and he wept! A knife that sharp to cut off the robe could have gone right through one of his ribs, very quietly, and that would have been it. When they put in the knife in the fifth rib, and you put it at an angle, it goes right up into the heart and cuts the heart in two, and you're dead in just a short time. So, Saul came to his senses and said, 'Wow! Look at this!'

Verse 17: "And he said to David, 'You are more righteous than I, for you have rewarded me with good, but I have rewarded you evil.'"

We're going to see some things later on where God says that 'if your enemy is hungry, feed

him! If he is naked, cloth him! In so doing you heap coals of fire upon his head.' Why? *Because God is the One Who is going to take care of the evil and the wicked!*

That doesn't mean that we just stand by let everything happen that can happen. It doesn't mean that we let everything go to pot in our lives and just wait for God to do everything. But when it comes time for God's judgment to come, that is in God's hands. *Here again we see the contrast between the reward for good, and the reward for evil!*

Verse 18: "And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me because when the LORD shut me up into your hand, you did not kill me; for if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go completely away? And **may the LORD reward good for what you have done to me** this day. And now, behold, I know well that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand" (vs 18-20).

- what a way to humble the wicked
- what a way to really get to him

Lot's of times there are things that need to take place, and God needs to create the circumstances to bring them about so that everyone is going to understand.

Proverbs 25:21: "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you shall heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward you" (vs 21-22).

Notice that it always is God Who is the One Who is doing the rewarding. How will God reward someone for doing what is right? We know that the reward of unrighteousness that Baalim wanted. Immediate benefit. Remember that in sin there's always a benefit, that Satan says will be yours.

Many people look at a benefit as a blessing when it's not. Where was a reward given that you can think of that went for all time, from that day forward? *Rahab the harlot, that's one!* What did she do? *She diverted the enemy from Israel!* There's a good example that you don't have to tell the enemy all the truth.

The thief on the cross is another example. I'm thinking of Eleazar when they had the problem of fornication with the Moabites and the plague hit the camp. There was a man who took a Moabite woman right in the eyes of Moses, and started committing adultery with her, and Eleazar came, took a spear and thrust through both of them. God said that He would always have someone of his line 'standing before Me,' to minister unto me.

Somewhere before God—wherever there are those serving God—there is someone of the line of Eleazar who is serving God, because God said that that would be,

That was a reward, and that's why God said to Abraham, 'I will be your exceeding great reward.' What were some of the things that were said to Abraham? *In blessing I will bless you! I will bless those that bless you, and I will curse those that curse you!*

- How is that done?
- Is it a measurable thing that he can say that there a hundred blessing over here and a hundred cursings over here?
- *No! It's an indefinite thing, but it's there and it's tangible!*

That's how it's going to be with the rewards! We can think of the fact that this built right into the Ten Commandments, and in particularly the second commandment. How is this reward given?

Exodus 20:4: "You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me**" (vs 4-5).

The next time you see any reports on other civilizations that we know of—in particularly more of the primitive ones—*ask yourself how much idolatry is involved!* Lot's of times they bring up all the sickness, all the disease, all the problems that these people have. Just look at India. What a terrible, horrible filthy rotten place to live, and they have all these diseases. But look at their 'religion.'

- How many of the commandments of God are they breaking?
- How much are they into idolatry?
- How much of these things go back over quite a period of time?

An awful lot of it does, because these are all *living, living laws!* These things continue to go on. But notice this:

Verse 6: "But showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments." *There you have the reward to the wicked, and the reward to the righteous built right into the Ten Commandments!* Then there's another reward built into one of the other commandments. We find that in the fifth commandment:

Verse 12: "Honor your father and your

mother **so that your days may be long upon the land**, which the LORD your God gives you.”

Are there people who honor their fathers and mothers, that God gives a blessing to them of long life? *That's a living law to all people!* Yes, there are lives that are cut short because of other commandment-breaking, but you've seen that time and time again where you read of someone who has lived to be a great old age, generally speaking you'll find someone who has honored his father and mother; 99 chances out of 100 that's going to be the case.

There is a reward! What can a person do to earn, say another 20 years of life? ***Couldn't! You can't!*** So, there's the intangible factor of the tangible thing that God said that your 'days may be long on the earth.'

Now let's look at it the other way: How many young people get killed because they don't listen to father and mother, and go out and do what they want to do? Howbeit with cars, drugs and things like this. There's the opposite end of the scale! *It's a living law! These things work all the time, constantly!*

Proverbs 17:13: “Whoever rewards evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.” *Again, a living law!*

Can you think of an example where that happened in the Bible? Rewarding evil for good? *Evil departed from his house from that day forward!* We find that in the life of David (2-Sam. 12).

Why has the Bible been written? *So that we would have the Words of Life, on whom the ends of the world have come!*

You know the account of David and Bathsheba, and how that David brought in Bathsheba's husband—Uriah the Hittite—and said to 'go and be with your wife.' David wanted to cover up his little fiasco! But Uriah said, 'No, my lord, I won't go be with my wife, because my men are still in the field and there is still battle. I would not think of doing that.' ***So, David rewarded evil for that man's good!*** David told Joab to send Uriah right in the middle of the fight so that he die, *and Uriah died!*

When this was brought very vividly to David's attention by Nathan the prophet, and we know the account how that Nathan told David about the rich man and the poor man. The rich man had everything and the poor man had one little ewe, which was taken. When David heard this...

Sometimes you can trap someone in their own difficulties. This is exactly what Nathan did!

2-Samuel 12:5: “And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die'”—*for taking that Lamb!* So, Nathan used quite an analogy here!

Verse 6: “And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.’ And Nathan said to David, **'You are the man!'**....” (vs 6-7).

I don't imagine that Nathan was looking out at the wall! I imagine that he was looking at David eyeball to eyeball, and said, “...**'You are the man!'**....”

“...Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel... [Was that a blessing? Was that a reward? *Yes, it was!*] ...and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that was too little, I would have given to you such and such *things* besides’” (vs 7-8).

That shows the great breath of reward. It's something that God is going to determine. God in His goodness and love and mercy is going to do it!

- Does God delight in doing good? *Yes!*
- Does God delight in doing evil? *No!*

God says that He doesn't even delight in the death of the wicked, but there has to be judgment! There has to be reward with the judgment for behavior.

Verse 9: “Why have you despised the Word of the LORD to do evil in His sight? You have stricken Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife *to be your wife*, and have killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, **the sword shall never depart from your house** because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife” (vs 8-10).

Verse 11: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, **I will raise up evil against you out of your own house...**’”

- Does God control the finite?
- Does God control the infinite?
- *Yes!*

Notice the active word **I**: God, because that is a judgment that God has brought about.

- Is God capable of carrying out His judgments? *Yes!*
- Did God carryout His judgments? *Yes!*

Read the rest of 2-Sam., and how that by the

time that David got to the end of his life, he was really a broken and horribly wretched old man, *unfortunately!*

“...and **I** will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun... [starting today] ...for you did *it* secretly, but **I** will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’ And David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’...” (vs 11-13).

Even notice in this, even in the judgment and bringing the reward of evil upon David, there was still the element of mercy involved.

“...And Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, **this child born to you shall surely die**’: (vs 13-14). *And it died, even though David fasted for seven days!*

There’s a living example of rewarding evil for good. Can we see the difference here between the first account that we read when David was being chased by Saul, and God, in spite of it all, blessed and protected him, David had a good attitude.

Then the reward came of being king! The reward came of all that God said would happen, and then David did what he should not have done and then the judgment.

(go to the next track)

- Could David have chosen not to get involved with Bathsheba? *Yes!*
- Could Bathsheba have chosen not to get involved with the king? *Yes!*

You can see how these things are very fluid within a person’s life. There will be times when you will go through trials because it’s going to be a trial of your righteousness to see whether you’re going to be righteous to God. There will be other trials that you will go through, because of your own inadequacies and sins just like with David. But there is that element of choice that is always there.

Psalm 58:11: “So that a man shall say, ‘Truly, there is a reward for the righteous; truly, there is a God Who is judging in the earth.’”

Right now I think we’re living a time, with all of the prophecies that are taking place, God is apparently letting a lot of evil slide by. A lot of things are happening where there is not the quick hand of the Lord to come down and stop it off. But God says that He’s reserving the day of judgment for the wicked.

- ***Surely it’s going to come!***

- ***Surely it’s going to happen!***

Let’s look at the teachings that Jesus gave us concerning reward and how this is something that God has reserved for Himself. Surely there is a reward for the righteous. We’re going to look at that aspect of it with the teachings of Jesus.

Luke 6:20: “And He lifted up His eyes upon His disciples *and* said, ‘Blessed *are* you, the poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.’”

Blessings are generally what you call a reward. You do have to have your input into it, a certain amount of your works into it, but it is the reward that comes.

We’ll talk a little bit about the Kingdom, differentiating between the kingdom of those who are going to come into the Kingdom of God during the Millennium and afterward, and those who go in as firstfruits. There’s quite a bit of difference, as we will see.

Verse 21: “Blessed *are* those who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed *are* those who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall cut you off, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as wicked, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy; for behold, **great is your reward in heaven...**” (vs 21-23).

Revelation 22:12: “‘And behold, I am coming quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each one according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last... [tying in everything we said, that God controls everything that there is] ...Blessed are those who keep His commandments, that they may **have the right to eat of the Tree of Life, and may enter by the gates into the city**” (vs 12-14).

You can’t earn it! God has to give it, but you still have to work for it. But your working for it does not earn it for you. It would be like this:

I’m going to hire you to work for me for \$6.00/hr. and I want you to do ‘thus and such.’ You do it and it comes time to be paid and I give you your \$6.00/hr and you worked 8 hours, so that’s \$48. I look at you and say that, it’s so nice to have you here and you did such a great job and did far more than what was really expected, so here’s another \$40.

That’s what a reward is like. It is something based upon your work, but it is more than you can earn. In a sense, if you worked eight hours and got the extra \$40, in a sense you were making substantially more.

Luke 6:23: “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy; for behold, great *is* your reward in heaven; for their fathers did these same things to the prophets. But woe to you, the rich, for you are receiving your consolation! Woe to you who have been filled, for you shall hunger!....” (vs 23-25).

- What is their reward for being rich and not doing what they should? *Emptiness!*
- What is their reward for being full and not sharing? *Hunger!*

“...Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep! Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you! For their fathers did these same things to the false prophets” (vs 25-26). *Today it's called self-esteem!*

Same old human problem: *love yourself first, before you love God!* That's the opposite way that God wants it.

Verse 27: “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, *and* do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (vs 27-28)—*very difficult things to do!*

Sometimes you may do it, and say, ‘I really don't feel like doing it, but I know that God said to do it. So, I might as well start.’ What does this do for your attitude? Maybe one of these days you will be in the same position that the one you considered your enemy is in, and you will want a little mercy. That depends upon how *you* are.

Verse 29: “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other *cheek* also; and if anyone takes your cloak, do not forbid your coat also.” *That's virtually what David did in the cave!* He could have done it, but he didn't!

Verse 30: “Give to everyone who asks you; and if anyone takes what *is* yours, do not ask *for it* back. And exactly as you would have men do to you, you do the same to them also. But if you love *only* those who love you, what praise [reward] is it to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good *only* to those who are doing good to you, what praise is it to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive, what praise is it to you? For even sinners lend to sinners, that they may receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; **and your reward shall be great...**” (vs 30-35).

The next phrase is going to be difference in the reward for those in the first resurrection and those who will be saved at a later time.

“...and **you shall be the children of the Highest...**” (v 35). *That's worth a lot of meditating, a lot to think on!* That's something you can't earn, but there are things you have to do so that you can receive it. Quite a reward! What could you do to gain “...*the children of the Highest...*”?

Stop and think about how much money people would give to get some kind of advantage. But here God says the simplest thing. The hardest things are the simplest things! Do the things that He says. It's awfully hard to love your enemy! Maybe we can understand considerably more about the love of God, where it says that *God so loved the world!* Here's a big key! ***God does not require something of us that He Himself has not first done!*** Remember that!

For God so loved the world *when we were all enemies of God!* Did God love His enemies? *Yes!* If they don't repent, God is sooner or later going to have to bring judgment upon them! But if they repent and God brings them to repentance and leads them to it, then God is even:

- fulfilling His own law
- fulfilling His own commandment
- doing what He requires of us

Verse 36: “Therefore, you also be compassionate, *even* as your Father is compassionate. And do not judge *others*, so that you yourself will not be judged in any way. Do not condemn *others*, so that you will not be condemned in any way. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you. Good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom....” (vs 36-38).

Those are all rewards based upon promises that you have to have your work in, but which you cannot set a price tag on.

Matt. 5 & 6 are an expanded version of what we read in Luke 6. But here again we have the thing of the blessings. Again, I want to bring to your attention that to receive a blessing is a reward. That reward then is what God determines.

We're going to see in part 2 of this series how that it's possible that you can diminish your reward, or you can increase your reward, depending on what you do. But how much it's decreased I can't tell you; how much it's increased I can't tell you. ***God alone has to make that determination!***

Matthew 5:3: “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after

righteousness, for they shall be filled” (vs 3-6). A *reward that we have experienced!*

- Is there not satisfaction in that reward?
- Has God not blessed us with knowledge, understanding and grace because we have sought His way? *Yes, that is true!*

I’m sure that it’s repeated by hundreds, maybe thousands, of small little groups all over. I talked to a lady who said, ‘The way the world is going...’ *And the assault that is being done in the world against all forms of Christianity is a frontal assault!* It can be directly, by joke, by innuendo, by putdown, however it is!

Just analyze what they are doing to all forms of Christianity today, seeking to destroy it, to wipe it off the face of the earth. Where is the safest place for you to be so that you’re not exposed? *That’s why God is causing all these different little groups here and there!* At least that’s what I think! There’s a blessing!

Verse 7: “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy.” *Always temper any judgment you have with some mercy!*

There are times when I get huffing and puffing and roaring and steaming, and with three young adult boys there are times when you do that. I always remember that I need some mercy on the other end, too. So, by the time it comes down to what looks like it may be building up to some giant confrontation, it becomes rather quiet.

Verse 8: “Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God. Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake. Rejoice and be filled with joy, **for great is your reward in heaven...**” (vs 8-12)—*which Christ is going to bring with Him!*

There are some other rewards along the way that you may or may not want. It lies in how it is done, the attitude in which it is done, and your love of God that is behind it.

Matthew 6:1: “Beware *that* you do not bestow your alms in the sight of men in order to be seen by them; **otherwise you have no reward** with your Father Who *is* in heaven.”

That will be one of the keys that we will come back to when we combine that with 1-Cor. 3.

Verse 2: “Therefore, when you give *your*

alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, **they have their reward**”—*the very fact that people saw them!*

That’s why Hollywood stardom is so fleeting. They have their reward!

Verse 3: “But *when* you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret **shall Himself...** [God the Father’s direct intervention in your life] ...**reward you openly**” (vs 3-4).

Verse 6: “But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret **shall reward you openly.**”

- maybe that reward is going to be good health
- maybe that reward is going to be understanding of God’s Word
- maybe it could be both or could be other things
- maybe it could be whatever you’re praying for in the way of God answering a prayer
 - Is the answering of a prayer a reward? *Yes!*
 - Did your length of prayer earn it? *No!*

Your love of God, your faith worked into it, but you didn’t earn it!

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 109:1-6
- 2) Psalm 94:1-3
- 3) Psalm 91:8
- 4) Proverbs 11:17-18
- 5) Romans 2:1-13
- 6) 1 Samuel 24:1-20
- 7) Proverbs 25:21-22
- 8) Exodus 20:4-6, 12
- 9) Proverbs 17:13
- 10) 2 Samuel 12:5-14
- 11) Psalm 58:11
- 12) Luke 6:20-23
- 13) Revelation 22:12-14
- 14) Luke 6:23-38
- 15) Matthew 5:3-12
- 16) Matthew 6:1-4, 6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 1
- Genesis 15:1

- 1 Corinthians 3

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