

1. God Rewards

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Subtitle: We appreciate people, but God rewards people

In one week we have Appreciation Sunday scheduled, which is our annual (dedicated) Sunday service when we appreciate all the saints in the house who have volunteered throughout the year, and:

- Served faithfully
- Prayed fervently, and
- Given generously

Our church is what it is because of all the selfless efforts & contributions made by all the saints throughout the year.

Church can be likened to a buffet table that is fully laden with all kinds of delicious foods. Of course, somebody has to buy the food, prepare the food and serve the food, so we can all sit down and enjoy a delicious feast.

Well, a great portion of the work done in the church is done by our wonderful volunteers, members of our church family, who give of their time, use their talents and bring of their treasure to make it all happen.

Hebrews 6:9–12 (NKJV) *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, **things that accompany salvation**, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

- Vs. 9 ... *Things that accompany salvation* ...
Serving accompanies (echoes) salvation
We serve, not to get saved, but because we are saved
- Vs. 10 ... *God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name* ...
God does not forget our work & labour of love, but He rewards us for our faithfulness
- ... *in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister*
We show our love for God, among other ways, by serving His people

- Vs. 11 ... *each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end...*
Keep serving, keep praying, keep giving, until it's time to go to heaven
- Vs. 12 ... *do not become sluggish ...* (careless and lazy)

God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love

- God sees everything
- God hears everything
- God knows & remembers everything

Matthew 10:41–42 (NKJV) *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**. 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.**"*

God has various & specific rewards in store for those who minister to His people, all specific to their own setting and situation:

- A prophet's reward for those who receive one of His prophets
- A righteous man's reward for those who receive one of His righteous men
- A reward to those who give a cup of cold water to one of His little ones

Dake Annotated Reference Bible:

"The minutest details of goodness, if done for the right person and with the right motive, will be rewarded".

God has a precise method of recording every one of our good deeds, done with the right motive, to ensure that we do not miss out on His rewards.

Revelation 20:12–13 (NKJV) *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, **and books were opened**. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And **the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books**. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And **they were judged, each one according to his works**.*

- God has a very precise method of book keeping in heaven

- Every word, action & attitude on earth is recorded in books in heaven
- Sadly, in the case of Rev. 20:12-13, the deeds of the dead were brought before heaven's courts at the Great White Throne Judgment
- This judgment deals exclusively with lost souls, who will be eternally separated from God & eternally damned in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14)

Revelation 20:14–15 (NKJV) *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

- The Book of Life records all the names of all of God's people who have surrendered their life to Jesus Christ

Philippians 4:3 (NKJV) *And I urge you also, true companion, help **these women who labored with me in the gospel**, with Clement also, and **the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.***

- At the time of a person's conversion (salvation through Jesus Christ), their name is written in the book of life
- Once a person is saved, they no longer appear at the Great White Throne Judgment
- The saints of God are dealt with at a different judgment

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV) *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

- We, the saints, must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ
- The Judgment Seat of Christ would be better termed "the Reward Seat of Christ", since at this event Jesus will reward His saints for the things we have done "... in the body ..."
- In the body – during our lifetime on earth since we've been saved

Romans 14:10–12 (NKJV) *... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

- The Judgment Seat of Christ will take place in heaven
 - After the rapture of the church
 - Before the Second Coming of Christ

- God gave the revelation of the Judgment Seat of Christ to Apostle Paul
- Paul knew that all the saints will stand before Jesus Christ one day, and give an account to Him of how they have lived their lives
- That's why Paul continually urged & encouraged the saints of God to:
 - Live holy lives
 - Serve God joyfully
 - Give cheerfully

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NKJV) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, **3** *remembering without ceasing **your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.*