

2. God Rewards

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Today is Appreciation Sunday, which is our annual (dedicated) Sunday service when we communicate special appreciation all the saints in the house who have volunteered throughout the year, and:

- Served faithfully
- Prayed fervently, and
- Given generously

Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV) *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.*

- We show our love for God, among other ways, by serving His people
- God doesn't forget our work & labor of love when we minister to His people, and He will reward us for our faithfulness
- Heaven 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 our rewards

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.*

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

1. Our "works" follow us to heaven

Revelation 14:12–13 (NKJV) *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

- This speaks about the patient endurance of believers, who:
 - Keep the commandments of God
 - Keep the faith of Jesus Christ
 - Patience: (Strong's Lexicon): "The characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings"
 - John said he heard a voice from heaven "...Yes," says *the Spirit* ..."
 - the saints who die can now rest from their labours
 - their works follow them
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- Sometimes people say:
When we die and leave this earth, we can't take anything with us
 - That's not entirely true:
When we as believers die & go to heaven, we take our works with us

Works: Gr. ergon (DBL. "the result of one's work")

- Our serving of others is a "work" of our faith in Jesus
- Our fervent prayers for others is a "work" of our faith in Jesus
- Our reaching out to lost people is a "work" of our faith in Jesus
- Our financial giving into the work of God on earth is a "work" of our faith in Jesus

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV) *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, **always abounding in the work of the Lord**, knowing that **your labor is not in vain in the Lord.***

2. Our "works" will be tested & examined in heaven

1 Corinthians 3:6,8–15 (NKJV) *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. **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. **10** According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But **let each one take heed how he builds on it.** **11** For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if anyone **builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,** **13** **each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each***

one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Apostle Paul speaks about his, & the work of others in God's kingdom
- ... *each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor* ...
- Paul planted & laid the foundation of the church in Corinth
- He says: Someone else builds on that foundation
- ... *let each one take heed (be careful) how he builds on it.*
- Then Paul lists two types of building materials (figurative terms)
 - Gold, silver & precious stones (superior & durable materials)
 - Wood, hay & straw (inferior & combustible materials)
- Every person's work will be tested by fire to reveal what sort it is
- ... *the Day will declare it* ... (The day on which the Judgment Seat of Christ takes place)
- *If anyone's work ... endures* (after it is tested by fire) , *he will receive a reward*
- *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss* (of reward)
- ... *but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*
 - Salvation is always by faith alone, irrespective of our works
 - Rewards are given only in response to our works produced (with the right motives)

3. Our remaining "works" will be rewarded in heaven

Finis Dake: "Rewards are not given according to success of labor, but according to motive and faithfulness in service."

1 Corinthians 9:16–17 (NKJV) *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.*

- Paul was called to preach the gospel
- He said:
 - *if I do this willingly, I have a reward*
 - *but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship*
- The indication here is that we are only rewarded for our work if we serve God with a willing heart
- Those who serve God grudgingly will miss out on rewards

- Our motive and attitude in our service to God & fellowman determines if we will receive a reward

Matthew 6:1–4 (NLT) Watch out! **Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward** from your Father in heaven. **2** When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! **I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get.** **3** But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. **4 Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.**

- Those who do charitable deeds for glory-seeking get no rewards
- Those who quietly do their charitable deeds with a pure motive will be rewarded

Matthew 6:5–6 (NLT) When you pray, don't be like the **hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them.** I tell you the truth, **that is all the reward they will ever get.** **6 But when you pray,** go away by yourself, **shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private.** Then **your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.**

- Those who pray with a motivation “to be seen by men” get no rewards
- But those who pray to the Lord with a right attitude will be rewarded

Matthew 5:11–12 (NKJV) *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.*

- Those who continue to serve, pray and give, especially in difficult circumstances, will get a greater reward in heaven

The take-away from Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6 is:

- Keep your spirit sweet
- Keep your motives pure
- Constantly check your heart, for its content & condition will determine your reward in heaven