

Servanthood – The Rewards of Serving Part Two – Lesson Nine

2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 15-18

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

God reward system is arranged in a fashion of both temporal and eternal rewards. One of the temporal rewards of serving is the idea that we walk around with God's spirit dwelling within us and guiding us. We can find peace in the quiet awareness that the life of Jesus Christ is being modeled through us; our actions and the motives behind them are visible expressions of Christ to others.

When we take up the role of servant, there is a joyful realization that a thankful spirit is being stimulated. We cannot sacrifice and serve others, allowing God to shine through us, and not have those served be touched with thankfulness toward God.

Matthew 10:41-42

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

On top of the temporal rewards, God has promised us eternal rewards. Matthew 10:41-42 helps us see that serving begins with little things; an understanding embrace for one who is hurting, a brief word to one who is lonely or feeling forgotten, a cup of cool water to one who is parched (biologically and/or spiritually).

God Takes Special Note Of All These Things.

Matthew 25:31-40

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Notice in Matthew 25:31-40 where the “judge” is handing out rewards; even though the servants did not remember what they had done, the judge remembered! A list of rewards would not be complete without mentioning the five eternal ‘crowns’ set aside for God’s servants.

The Incorruptible Crown

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

This crown is promised to those who victoriously run the race.

Taking into consideration verses 26-27, it is clear that this reward will be to those who consistently bring the flesh under the spirit's control, refusing to be enslaved by their sinful nature.

Romans 6:6-14

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

The Crown Of Rejoicing

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

This crown will cause those who receive it to rejoice. This is the crown that Paul twice claims in Philippians and Thessalonians. This is the 'soul-winners' crown and will be given to those servants who have faithfully declared the Gospel, led others to salvation, and helped establish them. Remember; this reward will be based on quality, not quantity!

1 Corinthians 3:13

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

The Crown Of Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:7-8

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

This crown is for those who live each day loving and anticipating His return; those who conduct themselves and their lives with eternity's values in view.

The Crown Of Life

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

This crown is not promised to those who simply endure suffering and trials, but to those who endure their trials, loving Jesus through it all! It is the dual motive of loving God and having the desire that He be glorified in and through our trials that gives us endurance.

The Crown Of Glory

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

This crown is promised to those who faithfully shepherd the flock in accordance with verses two and three. Those under-shepherds who fulfill these qualities (willingness, sacrificial dedication, humility, an exemplary life) will receive this crown. What will we do with these crowns?

Revelation 4:9-11

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

God remembers every act of servanthood, no matter how small or large it be. He takes special note of the heart; He knows the love behind our actions. As servants reach out to others, Jesus Christ's life is modeled and a spirit of thankfulness is stimulated. Special and specific rewards are reserved in heaven for those who practice the art of unselfish living. To those who serve, to those who stand where Jesus Christ once stood many, many years ago, He promises a reward.