

THE REALITY OF REWARDS¹

Many Christians do not realize the way they live their lives now matters not only for this life, but for the life to come. The Bible teaches it very much matters how we live our lives after we receive the gift of salvation by faith. We are going to give account for our Christian lives to Jesus and from Him receive reward or rebuke.

Many Christians are living the way I drove the simulator. As far as they know their sin is forgiven and they're going to heaven when they die. It doesn't matter how they live their lives while they wait to go to heaven. Like me, they will be shocked to find themselves standing in judgment before Jesus.

Why don't more Christians know it matters how we live as Christians?

Perhaps they are not listening carefully to their teachers. More likely, it is because they have not been taught about the Judgment Seat of Christ and rewards.

The doctrine of rewards is called *Misthology* from the Greek word for *reward*, *misthos*. *Misthology* is the missing doctrine of our theology. The doctrine of rewards is one of the most neglected doctrines in the Bible. There are many references to rewards in the New Testament, but we hear little about them. The doctrine of rewards teaches:

Jesus will reward faithfulness in this life with honor and authority in the next; likewise, Jesus will rebuke unfaithfulness in this life and deny us the honor and authority He so wants to give.

The Bible reveals a day is coming when each Christian will stand before the Lord Jesus; it is called the Judgment Seat of Christ.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12

We are going to give an account for our Christian lives.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ our Christian lives will be evaluated by Jesus.

Not only will the Judgment Seat of Christ be a time of evaluation, it will also be a time of compensation.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, Jesus will compensate us for the works we did in our Christian lives whether good or evil.

We will receive what is due for the good or evil we have done in this body.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF REWARDS?

Rewards are one of God's primary means of motivating us to obey Him.

God uses love (1 John 4:19) and fear (2 Cor. 5:11) to motivate us. He also uses rewards. He used rewards with His people Israel (Deut. 7:12-15). Jesus constantly spoke of rewards (Matt. 5:11-12, 6:19-20; Luke 6:35). The Apostle Paul's letters are filled with references to reward such as we see in Colossians 3:23-24.

¹ Based on a series preached by Dr. Richard Strauss.

WHAT IS THE BASIS FOR REWARDS?

The answer to this question is again very clear.

The basis for our rewards is our works since being born again.

This is consistent with what Jesus revealed during His first coming in the gospel of Matthew (Matt. 16:27).

The basis of our rewards will be the good or evil works we have done since receiving justification salvation. We are very clear justification salvation is by faith alone in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, in His burial and His resurrection. But while we are not saved by works, we are saved for works. Ephesians makes clear the relationship between faith and works in Ephesians 2:8-10.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT REWARDS?

After all, if I get into heaven, isn't that good enough? What difference does it make if I don't get any rewards? We should care about rewards because:

Jesus longs to honor us as His partners in God's kingdom work.

Part of our reward is praise from Jesus, the One person who will be more important to us in that day than anyone has ever been. His words, "Well done," will mean everything. But not every Christian will hear those words. In the story of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), two of the servants were praised, "Well done, you good and faithful servant." while the third servant was rebuked and called worthless by the Master. That's the kind of thing that will happen at the Judgment Seat of Christ. You will either receive praise and honor from Jesus or you will receive rebuke and loss from Jesus. The choices you make every day are moving you in one of these two directions.

Even though I was shocked and embarrassed, in the end I was very grateful to learn what I did in the driving simulator mattered. I had time to adjust to the way things really were and was, in the end, able to graduate and receive my driver's license. I hope you, too, will realize it matters how you live your Christian life. I hope you will adjust your life to the reality of rewards and will renew your commitment to live for Jesus.

⇒ **April VOM Items: Donations for filling Action & Med Packs**

⇒ **Church Business Meeting This Afternoon / 4PM / Childcare provided / Bring a snack to share!**