

Crowns at His Feet

Part Two

From: Every Deed: Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works

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The Reward of Answered Prayer

What pleases God? Faith. By believing in Him, we have pleased the Father.

Hebrews 11:6 NASB

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.

Faith also includes believing that He rewards those who seek Him. The word “seek” in this verse does not mean to merely look for God. Some translations add the word “diligently” in an attempt to amplify the meaning, but “diligently” is not in the original text. To complicate matters, in some religious circles “diligently” has come to mean faithfully completing a list of spiritual disciplines (to prove diligence).

**God is not impressed with our efforts
to accomplish what He already has.**

The word “seek” here could rightly be seen as seeking God expecting that He will answer and not giving up until we see the answer. God is pleased when we believe He will reward us by granting our petitions when we seek Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ 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.

You might wonder, “Doesn’t the Bible teach us that believers will not come into judgment? Then why is there a ‘judgment’ seat of Christ?” We need to understand that this judgment will not determine whether or not we go to heaven. That was determined when we believed in Jesus. Our sins were forgiven. We were made righteous and holy. When he comes again, sin will not be an issue. We will be accepted by our Savior by grace through faith.

Hebrews 9:27-28

*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, **apart from sin**, for salvation.*

So, then what are we to understand about the nature of the Judgment Seat of Christ? Please take time to carefully read this passage. You might be surprised by what you see. Comments follow each section.

1 Corinthians 3:9-17

For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.

- Paul is writing the Corinthians about divisions among them about whose followers they were. When he says “we,” he means those who minister to the body of Christ. “We” are fellow workers with God. God’s building is the body of Christ—those to whom “we” ministered.

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.

- Paul was the first to minister to them; thus, in this illustration, he laid the foundation for the building there in Corinth. Others also taught among them building upon the foundation Paul laid.

¹⁰ 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.

- This is a warning to those who were teaching them. Jesus is the foundation, and those who build on that foundation should continue to preach Jesus.

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.

- Paul continues his admonition to those laying on the foundation. If they built with gold, silver, and precious stones, which here represent truth; or, if they built with wood, hay, and straw, which represent error, then this would be made evident. He says “the Day” will declare it. He is speaking of the Judgment Seat of Christ. These teachers would one day give an account of how they built upon the foundation. “Fire” which is often used to refer to purging, will test each one's work. Was it truth or error?

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.

- Now we see clearly that it will be their “work” of teaching that will be tested with fire. All of them will be saved, but their dead works, again, their teaching, would be burned.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

- This verse is normally not taught in context. Clearly, “the temple of God” here does not refer to our physical bodies. He is talking about building the body of Christ, who we are, and His Spirit dwells in us. He is not saying that if we defile our physical bodies, God will destroy us. Of course, we should not destroy our bodies, but Paul is not talking about sin here. God will not destroy us for sin because He dealt with sin at the cross. He is saying that if someone defiles the body of Christ by adding falsehood to the foundation, God will destroy him, and just so we are not confused, he clarifies by saying “which temple you are,” referring to the body of Christ as a temple.

It is interesting to note that the words “defile” and “destroy” are the same word in different tenses. Here is Strong's definition.

phtheirō (fthi'-ro)

To shrivel or wither, that is, to spoil (by any process) or (genitive) to ruin (especially figuratively by moral influences, to deprave): - corrupt (self), defile, destroy.

That would translate, "If anyone is corrupting (is destroying, is defiling) the temple of God, God shall be corrupting (shall be destroying, shall be defiling) him. Again, this is clearly in the context of those who are building the body of Christ. You can hear the heart of God for His children here. "If you are corrupting my kids, you will be hearing from Me." Perhaps this is what James meant when he wrote the following.

James 3:1

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Those who teach in the body of Christ have the ability to build well the body of Christ or to tear it down. Just as there will be a special crown for overseers who have served well, so will there be an accounting for those who have not.

All believers, not just pastors and teachers, will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. This is where our deeds, good or bad will be judged and our future rewards bestowed.

In essence, it comes down to this: if our works were done in love for the glory of God, we will receive a reward. If we have harmed each other, that work will be burned.

I know of a church that had a reputation for "chewing up the new pastor and spitting him out." No matter who came to minister at that church, eventually, those attending who perhaps did not feel they could control the pastor would begin to spread rumors and undermine his work there. The pastors would eventually get the message and move on or keep trying and end up wounded. The people doing the undermining probably thought they were doing the Lord's work. When they stand before the Lord, those "works" will be burned. They will be saved, but their "work" will perish.

Many are the wounds caused by some in the body of Christ. I have heard of it so many times that it breaks my heart to recall. Do you think cruelty done to one of God's sheep will go unnoticed? It will not. Though offenders continue in ministry as if nothing has happened and the situation remains unresolved, one day we will all stand before our Lord. He will balance the books, so to speak. That person who wronged you and felt justified doing so will stand before God for it.

That is why the Lord says, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." We need not then take matters into our own hands. God knows the truth. He sees both good deeds and evil deeds in His body. All good deeds will remain before our feet as gold, silver, and precious stones. Worthless deeds will be burned. Do any of us want to have a pile of burned wood, hay, and straw

at our feet on that day? I think not. Then let us love His people and do them good and not harm. Let us teach the truth and not another gospel.

1 Peter 1:17 AMP

If you address as Father, the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in [reverent] fear [of Him] and with profound respect for Him throughout the time of your stay on earth.

What a Day That Will Be

What images do you have in your mind of what that Day will be? Will we stand in line for seven years waiting to receive our rewards while a loudspeaker announces them, or will it be like Christmas in the house of so many people—everyone opening their gifts simultaneously? Will the Day happen to each of us when we pass away, or will we all be together on one particular Day?

Over the years, an image has formed in my mind. I see billions of us all standing before the Lord, so full of happiness that we will be crying tears of joy and singing songs of praise. I will be dancing around wildly. My cousin Nancy will be prostrate on the ground. Others will stand there weeping tears of great joy.

What will it be like to have put on immortality and incorruption? How will we look? How will immortality feel? There will be so many precious things happening that we will shake the heavens with our jubilation! Jesus will quiet us, and all at once our works will be individually judged. Those whose works were not what they should have been will look down and see mostly ashes at their feet. Each one will know where they erred. The principle of love covering a multitude of sins is why I do not believe these dead works will be publicly exposed. We will each just know the truth. While there will be regret, there will also be relief because the dead work is gone and only the gold remains. Others will look down, perhaps amazed to see their good deeds before them and surprised that Jesus did remember EVERY deed as He promised. The reward for giving a cup of water to a prophet in His name is as much as the prophet received. Every kind thought, every encouraging word spoken, and every deed done in love will endure. Our faith that pleased Him will remain as well. Perhaps someone with a large pile of gold, silver, and precious stones will have a few ashes, but it will not matter any longer.

Those Christians who treated you unjustly will be there also. That group of “friends” who never saw you as good enough to fellowship with them, that church that shunned you for your beliefs, those who offended you in ministry and never knew or cared that you were suffering. That friend or relative who told you to never communicate with him again because he did not want to hear your views, the spouse that unjustly divorced you.

Those works of theirs will be ashes at their feet and they will come to you to be reconciled. You hopefully forgave them while on earth, but the pain of their abuse will be released.

I can imagine a mighty wind of God will rush through the scene and all the ashes will be blown away. That person who offended you will finally be sorry, and if you carried any pain from the offense, you will be healed. All strife will cease because the King of Kings will have spoken. Who could argue with His verdict?

We will each receive what we did while in the body. Then any reward we received along with our crowns of life, righteousness, and glory we will throw at His feet for we will be acutely aware that only He deserves the glory for the good He has done through us. Picture endless miles and miles of crowns and awards as far as the eye can see surrounding Him, all of us attesting to His greatness.

Then He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servants. Enter into the joy of your Lord." We will all go walking and leaping and praising God and He will swirl about us all with singing, embracing us with His presence.

Matthew 16:27

*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will **reward** each according to his works.*

Revelation 22:12

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Reign with Him

After the Judgement Seat of Christ and the Great Tribulation, the thousand-year reign of Christ on this current earth will begin. Think of that—a thousand years. Satan will be bound during that time. He will not be able to deceive the nations, but "after these things he must be released for a little while."¹

Those who died without faith in Christ will remain dead during the millennium. Those who died in Christ during the Tribulation will be raised. Those who are still alive after the tribulation will be allowed to continue living on the earth, but there will be no Satan to deceive them. The nations will be governed by those God appoints. Wars will cease. Justice will prevail. The lifespan of those living on earth will be greatly extended. The redeemed will go in and out of the New Jerusalem and reign with Him.

¹ Rev. 20:1-3

Revelation 20:4-6

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

While writing this book, I am digitizing thousands of old family photos. There are pictures of relatives from over a hundred years ago. My grandfather was born in 1898. There are pictures of my great-grandparents who were born over one hundred and forty years ago. Seeing all of their faces and remembering their stories causes me to consider the difficulties they faced and the tragedies that transpired in their lives. Even those who are still living have heart-wrenching stories to tell. Imagine a thousand years with none of that—no sorrow, no pain, no sickness, no dying among those who believed. We will have been changed to be immortal and incorruptible. Those sufferings we experienced on earth will be as a speck of dust compared to the glorious life we will live in those years, and we will live them with those who we now call “deceased” who will have risen with us at the rapture. My heart begins to surge with joy as I imagine seeing parents and grandparents and all those who have passed away in Jesus worshipping God together and all of us ruling and reigning with Him.

Our family recently suffered a horrible loss. My cousin’s son was needlessly shot shortly before his fortieth birthday. We are all heartbroken. Yet, in light of the millennium, I can picture Ryan reuniting and rejoicing with his mother and father and young son and all of our family before the throne of God.

Not only those we love and hold dear, but consider that the people of your church and other churches you have attended in your life will all be there. Your dear friends who trusted in Jesus will be there. I imagine former students of mine coming up to greet me, old neighbors, friends of friends, people we met on social media. Everyone who believed in Him, rich or poor, unknown or famous, of every nation and tribe—all of us rejoicing in His presence and doing His work for a thousand years.

We will rejoice when we find out who received Him after the rapture. Can you imagine loved ones who currently resist the message of Christ becoming aware that you, a believer in Jesus, are one of those who

vanished off the earth? The gospel you shared with them will immediately come to mind. Many of them will immediately reach out to Jesus. Can you imagine your joy when they come up to greet you? Then consider that all of us will be immortal and incorruptible, and we will reign with Him a thousand years. These are only some of our rewards for believing in Jesus.

Romans 8:18-21

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The Glories of a New Heaven and a New Earth

A thousand years of peace sounds wonderful, but God will have more glories to bestow upon us. For reasons about which we can only speculate, Satan will be released from his chains “for a season.” He will go out and deceive the nations. Yes, after 1,000 years of peace, there will be holdouts—people who are fine with peace, but still refuse to believe in and receive Jesus. Satan will deceive many, and they will stupidly organize to war against Christ.

There is no comprehension of how people could know of the events prior to the thousand years and see the peace on earth and still follow after Satan when he comes to deceive them. They will come against Jesus and be easily and promptly defeated. This will root out all those who are evil.²

Then will come the final judgment called the Great White Throne Judgment. Hell, which was “prepared for the devil and his angels,” will be the final destiny for all of mankind who rejected God’s offer of eternal life through Jesus.³

Then, something amazing will happen. God will create a “new heaven and a new earth.” Some believe that by “heaven” it means a new universe. Then to this new heaven and new earth will come the New Jerusalem in all of its glory.

Revelation 21:1-4

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New

² Rev. 20:7-10

³ Rev. 20:12-15

Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

After the Great White Throne Judgment, there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. If a thousand years is hard for us to conceptualize, try getting hold of "forever." The earth will be redeemed, the people in it will be redeemed. This is our reward for believing in Jesus.

Planet earth is beautiful, but can you imagine what a new heaven and a new earth will look like? Imagine with me also that perhaps our bodies will be free of earthly limitations. Will we see colors that our current eyes are incapable of seeing? Will we be able to fly like birds and swim underwater as long as we would like? Will we, like Phillip be able to go from here to there at the speed of thought? All animal life will be friendly. Have you ever wanted to cuddle with a polar bear or ride a cheetah? Maybe extinct animals will be with us again—yet all of them friendly and subject to us as in the Garden of Eden. Maybe these will be some of the "pleasures forevermore." These are our rewards for believing in Jesus.

Our Greatest Reward

Even if God removed the amazing honor of ruling and reigning with Him for a thousand years, the new heaven, the new earth, the New Jerusalem, taking away what now causes us pain, and blessing us forevermore, the gift of living forever with our God would be more than enough reward for us.

Genesis 15:5

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

His love for us and the love for Him this generates in us is all we could ever want or need. Yet, He wants to overwhelmingly bless us and bring us joys we cannot imagine. Time will be no more. We could endlessly bask in His presence and never grow tired of it. Even so, He will give us an overwhelmingly meaningful existence and we will enjoy His goodness forever.

Eternity—I have tried but I cannot comprehend it.

Revelation 22:16

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

He will return and do as He promised, and His endless rewards are with Him. Until then, let us believe in Him and love one another while proclaiming His good news to the lost and to His people. Let us fight the good fight of faith. Let us worship Him for all He has done, all He is doing, and all that is to come. Let us enjoy His presence and receive His blessings. After all, this is what we will be doing for all eternity with Him. These are our rewards for believing in Jesus.

**I am the Root and the Offspring of David,
the Bright and Morning Star.”**

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”

And let him who hears say, “Come!”

And let him who thirsts come.

Whoever desires,

let him take the water of life freely.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says,

“Surely I am coming quickly.”

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

**²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all. Amen.**

Revelation 22:16-17, 20-21