

Call to Obedience #474
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God Is A Rewarder

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A reward is a gift given to someone for their service or contribution. God is a rewarder. Since He is a rewarder and a benevolent God at the same time, it is obvious that He must be the best rewarder in the world because He has unlimited resources. It is one thing to be rewarded by our fellow man with his limited resources; it is entirely different to be rewarded by God! Now, the fact that God is a rewarder makes Him easy to live with. And although He has revealed His goodness and His benevolence unconditionally to all men, He will not reward all men equally and unconditionally. In other words, you have to do something to receive rewards from Him beyond the ordinary blessings extended to all.

Let us talk a little more about the unconditional and the conditional giving of God. As to His unconditional giving, Jesus said that God lets the rain fall on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45). All of us get rained on once in a while, whether we be thieves or saints; no one is left out. The beauty of the sky and the splendor of sunrises and sunsets are for all of us to enjoy. So are all the colors. God could have created everything in just black and white. What would that do to the world of art? No, God gave us 3 primary colors which by being blended together provide hundreds of different hues of color for us to enjoy. He shows His extravagance to all of us in the fish in the sea, in the creeping things and in the hopping, running and flying creatures on earth, etc. I can go on and on with all the reasons why every man should have good reason to praise the Lord. The great English writer Malcolm Muggeridge said that the greatest sin of man is to think that God is not good. God is good!

But above all of the general goodness, which is unconditionally bestowed upon all men, God provides additional rewards to all of His servants who serve Him for His glory. He does not reward any sinner for any good that he does. The sinner's goodness, whatever it may be, always remains nothing but filthy rags to our Savior and can never suffice to draw His favor from the skies. Therefore, man cannot buy his way into heaven by good deeds and bypass the cross. Only saints are rewarded from God's treasure house and His eyes ever

run to and fro throughout the earth seeking for men who are worthy to be rewarded in special and abounding ways.

Let us now consider the following scripture: God *...is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him* (Heb. 11:6). This is referring to those who diligently seek Him. It is in our seeking after God that we are blessed beyond the benevolence given as gifts to all mankind. This is not because we are just seeking Him once in a while, but we are seeking after Him diligently all the time (Matt. 6:33). Seeking Him means loving Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. It is at that point that we get under the umbrella of His reward system, and do we ever get rewarded.

Here is an illustration: God thinks that preachers are worthy of being rewarded. Not only does God reward them, but He also wants us to reward them. Of course, preachers draw back from saying this lest they be accused of wanting to enrich themselves. But I am not a preacher; I am teacher. I must unapologetically lead you into all truth. The fact is that Jesus, while on earth, showed His love to His disciples by even washing their feet. And He also said: *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* (Matt. 10:42). The smallest gesture of kindness that we provide to a preacher, something that even the poorest person can do, will set us up to receive a reward from God.

Sadly, some of you withhold a cup of cold water from your preacher. You refuse to refresh or reward him for this or that reason, and God notices that as well. Let me ask you a few questions. Do you want God to be as fussy with you as you are with your preacher? Are you a better layman than your pastor is a preacher? How are you in your prayer life, in winning souls to Christ, in keeping the commandments, in church attendance and giving? What does your checkbook say about your love for God? Are you over-blessing yourself with what is in your house or in your garage? How are you doing with your spouse and with your children? Are you just additional clutter in your church or are you a bright light and a lifter? Do not judge using unrighteous judgment.

The Bible teaches us that we are to give a cup of cold water to a man of God for the simple reason that God has called him and that God has sent him to us. *How beautiful... are the feet of him who brings good news...* (Is. 52:7). Jesus loves His preachers, even the imperfect ones. We should not get fixated on their performance, but we should focus on the fact that they are God's

called ones and if we despise them, we despise and reject Jesus (Luke 10:16). This is most serious.

Now let us consider the woman from 1 Kings 17 who understood this principle a long time before Jesus came. During a famine, God sent Elijah to a widow of Zarephath. She had enough food for one meal before she and her son would die of starvation, but Elijah had the audacity to ask her to feed him first. Believe it or not, the Bible says she gave him her last meal because she knew he was a man of God. She was willing to die with her son to let the man of God live another day. Did God see that? Oh yes! She gave her last meal to a man of God and then she went to the kitchen and found adequate flour and oil for the next meal, and the next and the next, until the famine ended. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Is it possible that some people are poor, physically, emotionally and spiritually simply because they do not take care of God's servant who was sent to them?

If you go through trials, tribulations and hardships, and remain faithful, not complaining but keeping the joy of the Lord, do you think God sees what you are doing? Oh yes, He does. The Apostle Paul was in an awful storm for several weeks on the way to Rome (Acts 27-28). I am convinced that throughout it all, he rejoiced evermore because that was his daily routine no matter what. Do you think God rewarded him for that spirit? Oh yes, the time came for the reward. After he was shipwrecked and landed on the island of Malta, he found *himself* in a great revival. People were saved and healed. And then in Rome, because of his faithfulness, he was placed before the Emperor. And eventually, Jesus Christ Himself became the greatest force in the Roman Empire, replacing all the emperors. God is a rewarder.

Here is another story. A woman named Anna held a prayer vigil in the temple for some 60 years all by herself. You should not go to prayer meeting on the basis of who is there or whether you see something happening. You should go there because Jesus wants you to be there. He wants to commune with you and He wants you to reach the world through your prayers. Anna was one woman praying alone for 60 years! Do you think God noticed her faithfulness? Did He ever. Near the end of her life, she got to hold the Christ child in her arms, the Creator of the universe, the Savior of the world, the Lord of lords and King of kings. God is a rewarder and He does not forget those who are faithful. What kind of a mansion do you think God had for her in heaven? Someday you will see it. *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy* (Ps. 126:5). Here is the

bottom line: God rewards those who are faithful. I would like to shout this from the housetops. He does not judge on how big or how many but on faithfulness.

Let us finish with some teachings of Jesus. Do you remember Jesus saying: *...because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities* (Luke 19:17)? Did you see the word faithful here? What do we call a person who is in charge of 10 cities? It would be something like a governor. Did this man who became governor have a grand scheme or a great plan to become a governor? Was he a planner and plotter of great things? No, he kept his eye on the little things and God did the rest. There is a song that says: "When you have done your best, let Jesus do the rest." As you read through the Gospels, notice that Jesus never missed the little things: the children, the rejected lepers, the blind, the lame, the broken-hearted, the man who climbed a tree, the man who hung on a tree and the man who stood under a tree. Most of us sin through our neglect of little things. That is why God cannot trust us with more and also why we have to struggle so much to get something done. We are living without having His tailwind. God is a rewarder, but His rewarding is conditional on what you do and how you do it.

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