

Alderwood Community Church
July 3, 2016

GOD IS: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD (GOD REWARDS)

It's Not about Now!

Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 16:1-13

Intro: Two men owned farms side by side. One was a bitter atheist, the other a devout Christian. Constantly annoyed at the Christian for his trust in God, the atheist said to him one winter, "Let's plant our crops as usual this spring, each the same number of acres. You pray to your God, and I'll curse him. Then come October, let's see who has the bigger crop." When October came the atheist was delighted because his crop was larger. "See, you fool," he taunted, "what do you have to say for your God now?" "My God," replied the Christian, "doesn't settle all his accounts in October."

The Scriptures remind us that there's a timetable for the harvest: "*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up*". (Galatians 6:9). Like the law of gravity, the law of rewards – like the law of harvest – is always in effect, even when we can't see it. Everything and everyone in human history is headed toward a day of reaping. "*It's appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment.*" "*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*"

I pray that this morning's message will be a wake-up call to a neglected, misunderstood and downplayed doctrine, the doctrine of eternal rewards.

Big Idea: Our choices on earth have direct consequences on our life in heaven.

While our faith determines our eternal destination, our behavior determines our eternal compensation.

Jesus will reward you in heaven for what you do for Him on earth.

1. God promises to reward his children. God is faithful to keep his promises.

The promise of reward in heaven is mentioned often in Jesus' teaching on the subject:

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done." Matthew 16:27

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." Revelation 22:12

“Go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.”
Matthew 19:21

“You will be blessed...for you shall be repaid at the resurrection.” Luke 14:14

These verses seem to suggest that God is keeping track of what you do for him every day.

Let me ask you a question: *If your actions today do have a potential to radically affect your eternity wouldn't that dramatically change the way you think about your life and the way you live your life?*



The dot stands for your whole life here on earth. For most of us, that will be about 78 years. The line represents your life after death in eternity.

Jesus teaching shows that what happens inside the dot determines everything that happens on the line. Even a small choice in the dot can result in an eternal corresponding consequence.

So what does Jesus mean by “reward?” The Bible uses two different words to describe Jesus’ reward.

In Luke 6 the Greek word is *misthos*. Literally it means “wages” *“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward [wages] are great in heaven.”* Luke 6:23 Jesus used this same word in Matthew 20:8 when he spoke of earthly wages: *“Call the laborers and give them their wages [misthos].”*

Everyone who heard Jesus understood exactly what he meant. When you labor on earth, your employer gives you wages. When you labor for me, I pay wages too.

The second word Jesus used for reward in heaven is *apodidomai* which means “to give back, or repay” Jesus said, *“You will be blessed... for you shall be repayed [apodidomai] at the resurrection of the just.”* Luke 14:14 Jesus also used this term when describing what the Good Samaritan told the innkeeper after bringing the injured man to him, *“Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay [apodidomai] you.”* Luke 10:35

Listen carefully to me, *No deed, no good work for God will be overlooked or unrewarded.*

“I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.” Mark 9:41

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you openly.” Matthew 6:6

Listen carefully: This is your purpose: You were created and saved for good works!

As evangelicals, our belief in the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith has led us to make a terrible mistake of believing that works don't matter at all.

There are two very important reasons why works matter. First, in James 2:17 we learn that *"Faith without works is dead."* Meaning that faith that is not accompanied by action or deed is merely an empty profession void of any substance.

You and I are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. This determines our eternal destination. Heaven for those who believe that.

But works play a significant role. Not in your salvation, but in your sanctification, in your efforts to be pleasing and obedient to Christ and in your eternal existence.

Second, while your faith determines your eternal destination, while your behavior [good works] determines our eternal compensation.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-10

These good works/good deeds are things that we do for others in the name of Christ. These good deeds are to bring glory to God. *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* Matthew 5:16 They are certainly to benefit the very people we serve. But Jesus also teaches that they also will yield eternal rewards.

2. What does God reward?

A. God will reward you for seeking him.

"But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:18

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Hebrews 11:6

This verse tells us if you want to please God, you must believe that "he is." That God actually exists, that he is your creator, that you are accountable to him, that he alone provides for your salvation through the sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ. But you must believe something else too, if you want to please God. You have to believe that he is a rewarder. The Greek term for reward

here uses both of the Greek words that Jesus used and means that God is a rewarder, one who pays back your wages in return for what you do for him.

Why does God reward us? For most of us, the prospect of heaven is enough. So why does he reward us? Let me ask you a question, Why do you reward your children? It is because you are generous and it gives you great joy to reward your children for their obedience and their progress in maturity. Guess what? For the same reason, God is simply generous and takes great joy in rewarding his children and going good things for them.

B. God will reward you for submitting to your employer as a faithful servant.

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.” Ephesians 6:5-8

The reason or the motive for throwing all our heart and all our energy into our jobs is because God will reward us.

Your humility that you demonstrate in your submission to your supervisor (manager, boss, executive) will be rewarded. The attitude you display at your work and the quality of your work shape your testimony, your reputation as a Christian. God says he will reward you when you do your work with integrity, when you work hard and when your aim is to do your actual work as if you were directly reporting to Jesus as your supervisor. (Read text again.)

(End of part 1 – see July 10 notes for part 2)

Resources:

Heaven by Randy Alcorn

The Law of Rewards by Randy Alcorn

The Life God Rewards by Bruce Wilkinson