

The Parables of Jesus

Are You Ready?

Luke 19:11-27

FBC's Vision: *To see tens of thousands from our church family of all nations standing ready before Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 *For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.*

Our church exists to help people get to heaven and arrive there mature in Christ. **Colossians 1:28** *Christ is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.* We are here to help one another and our neighbors, here and around the world, to stand ready before Jesus, first and foremost, fully accepted as saints, and second, fully approved as servants.

Accepted & Approved: To stand *fully accepted* before Jesus as a saint means to stand before him as a redeemed child of God, a holy one, completely forgiven and granted eternal life as a gift of grace through faith in Jesus apart from any good works on our part. But that is not the end of salvation; it's just the beginning! To stand ready before Jesus has further meaning for the believer. We may have his full acceptance, but that doesn't mean we have his full approval. Every believer will stand before Christ to be evaluated for reward or loss of reward (**1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10**). So readiness to stand before Jesus is a two-dimensional reality for Christians.

THE defining moment in our lives will be when we stand before Jesus as our Judge.

Jesus told a parable that captured the full meaning of this moment for every person in history of the world in **Luke 19:11-27**.

Servants – members of the master's household – 3 outcomes: fully rewarded, partially rewarded, no reward (wicked)

Subjects – though under the master's authority, they reject him as king – 1 outcome: death

By the Spirit's enablement, we must do all God calls us to do to help the Master's *unbelieving subjects* become his *redeemed servants* who are *fully rewarded* because they were his *faithful servants* during their time in this life.

God loves to recognize those who serve him faithfully.

Psalms 62:11-12 *One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Jeremiah 17:10 *"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."*

Ephesians 6:8 *"...you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."*

Revelation 22:12-13 *"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."*

Biblical faith is defined in terms of believing that God rewards. **Hebrews 11:6** *"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."*

Matthew 6:19-21 *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

We fully expect the first "for yourselves"—the pursuit of worldly gain. But the second "for yourselves" is completely unexpected. Jesus calls us to act for our own best eternal interest, which seems to contradict his call of discipleship—to deny self, pick up our cross and follow him. However, Jesus saw no contradiction whatsoever in denying self in a life of sacrificial service and to do so with our own best eternal interests in mind.

While God's glory is always the highest reason for anything we do, Scripture sees no contradiction between God's eternal glory and our eternal good.

Matthew 19:27-29 *"We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."*

Matthew 5:12 *"rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven."*

Matthew 24:45-47 *"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions."*

Matthew 10:41-42 *"Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

1 Corinthians 2:9 *As it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"*

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES ON HEAVENLY REWARDS

1. Lost or gained, rewards do not affect a believer's legal standing before God in Christ. (**1 Corinthians 3:11-15**)

2. There will be some big surprises. (**Matthew 19:30; Matthew 6:1-4**)

3. God's reward system is not based on comparison. (**Matthew 25:14-30; 20:1-16**)

Matthew 25 – A master went on a journey. Before departing, he entrusts enormous amounts of money to three servants. He asks them to manage his assets while he is gone. Each servant is given different amounts of money, according to his ability.

The two servants who produce returns with their master's assets receive the exact same reward and blessing even though their returns were different. They were not compared against each other, but were evaluated in light of what was entrusted to them.

Romans 12:3-6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Luke 12:48 From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Matthew 20 – The same lesson, in the context of time. Different day laborers worked for different lengths of time but each is paid the same at the end of the day. The point: It's not the *amount of time* we give serving Christ compared to others, but what we do with *the time we are given.*

4. The amount of one's reward will be proportionate to his/her productivity. (**Luke 19:11-27**)

In this parable, each servant is entrusted with the same amount of money, and each is rewarded in direct proportion to what was produced from the initial investment.

5. Heavenly rewards will bear an organic relation to the conduct they recognize. (**Matthew 5:10-12** rejoice, be glad, great is your reward!)

Incorruptible Crown = those who get mastery over their old nature (**1 Corinthians 9:25**)

Crown of Rejoicing = soul winners (**1 Thessalonians 2:19**)

Crown of Life = those enduring trials (**James. 1:12**)

Crown of Righteousness = those who love Christ's appearing (**2 Timothy 4:8**)

Crown of Glory = those who feed God's flock (**1 Peter 5:4**)

Anthony Hoekema *"The relation between our works and our future reward ought to be understood not in a mechanical, but rather in an organic way. When one has studied music and has attained some proficiency in playing a musical instrument, his capacity for enjoying music has been greatly increased. In a similar way, our devotion to Christ and to service in his kingdom increases our capacity for enjoying the blessings of that kingdom, both now and in the life to come."*

Leon Morris *"Here and now the man who gives himself wholeheartedly to the service of Christ knows more of the joy of the Lord than the half-hearted. We have no warrant from the New Testament for thinking that it will be otherwise in heaven."*

6. Right now really does count forever. (**Matthew 16:24-27**)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul (life)? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul (life)? 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."

Jesus said this to his disciples, not the mixed multitude. The loss of one's life, here, is the loss of one's opportunity to be a faithful disciple and receive eternal reward for that faithful service.

So, how does the loss of reward line up with heaven's bliss?

Option 1. The reward is subjectively realized and appreciated. Each will have a special capacity to enjoy God's glory. Analogy: People at a concert all hear the same music, but each comes away with a different level of appreciation depending on their capacity to know the art of music.

Option 2. Each will have a certain capacity to glorify God through service or glory. Each will fill that capacity to the full and, ultimately speaking, sense no loss. Each will fully glorify God, but what "full" means to each will differ. Not everyone will serve heaven's glory or reflect heaven's glory to the same degree. Analogy: penlights vs. floodlights.

2 Peter 1:3-11

vv. 3-4: Christ's redemptive work and faith in him is the foundation.

vv. 5-9 *Make every effort to add to your faith* (a conduct of life that reflects the virtues of Christ/fruit of the Spirit).

Present Benefit: *We make certain our election and calling in Christ.* We enjoy an assurance of our salvation, that our faith is authentic. (**James; 1 John**)

Future Benefit: Peter basically assumes his readers are true believers and will enter heaven (accepted), but how they enter (approved) is his concern.

Note: **v, 5** *make every effort to add* comes from a single Greek word, *epichoregeo* (English – choir) - one who fits out a choir with additional supplies.

In ancient times, cities held annual celebrations and a well-to-do businessman sponsored the party. They would *epichoregeo* the event—supply the choir or the entertainment. Each year the businessman would try to outdo what was done the year before. So the term *epichoregeo* came to signify lavish behavior—a "pull out all the stops," or "go for broke" effort.

vv. 10-11 If we make every effort to add to our faith the virtues of Christ, so we do not stumble in our walk with God, we will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom = same word, *epichoregeo*.

Peter picks up on this custom to say, *"If you make every effort (i.e., richly supply; go all-in) these virtues in your life as a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ, God will richly supply (go*

all-out) *your welcome into heaven*. Which is to say, there will be some who will not receive that kind of rich welcome into glory.

Daniel 12:3 *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*