

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 3:12-15**.

Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **13** each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. **14** If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. **15** If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

B. This morning, I spoke on some of the perils (dangers) of being a servant.

C. But there are more positive rewards than negative. It is worth paying the price of being a servant.

I. SOME CONSEQUENCES OF SERVING.

A. You will give, forgive, forget, and release your own will. You will obey God to the maximum and wash dirty feet with an attitude of gentleness and humility. And after all that, you will GET RIPPED OFF occasionally.

B. Peter tells us it is entirely possible and; probable that we will suffer for doing right (1Pet. 2:20-24). For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God. **21** For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, **22** WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; **23** and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; **24** and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

C. Remember again how servants get treated (2Cor. 4:7-8). They are:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; **8** *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

1. AFFLICTED... feel pressured, harassed, and oppressed.
2. PERPLEXED... in doubt, at a loss, confused, and without a way.
3. PERSECUTED... intimidated, assaulted, and attacked.
4. REJECTED... struck down, thrown aside or cast off.

D. How to cope with the consequences of serving:

1. Nothing touches a servant that has not passed through the hands of God. Nothing. We may never know why things happen as they do. But it is no accident to God, and He can use it for good (Rom. 8:28).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

2. Everything I endure is designed to prepare me for serving others more effectively. God wants me in the "image of His Son" so trials and temptations are ways to learn joy and obedience (Heb. 5:8; Jas. 1:2-4).

(Heb 5:8) Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

(Jas 1:2-4) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

II. THE REWARDS OF SERVING.

A. Serving definitely has rewards, and they are numerous. They far outweigh the consequences. When we think about them, they motivate us to keep going.

B. Notice three things about rewards (**1Cor. 3:10-15**):

1. Most rewards are received in heaven, not on earth.

You can't have it twice! You will either receive your reward here (from men), or later in heaven (from God).

2. All rewards are based on QUALITY, not quantity.
We are most impressed with size and volume, noise and numbers. But God's eye is on the motive, authenticity, and the truth beneath the surface--not the external splash (Mt. 10:41-42).
"He who receives a prophet in *the* name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. **42** "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward."
 3. No reward that is postponed will be forgotten.
No act, no matter how small or trivial, will be forgotten by God. It shall have its reward. You can be a "nobody" in the eyes of the world, and still be "somebody" in the eyes of God.
- C. We see the action while God sees the motive (Heb. 6:10-12).
For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. **11** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, **12** that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
1. God is not unjust He remembers the love that prompted the work!
 2. Therefore:
 - a. BE DILIGENT--not sluggish in doing good.
 - b. HAVE HOPE--expect a reward at the right time.
 - c. HAVE FAITH--fully assured you are doing the right thing.
 - d. HAVE PATIENCE--to wait for the inheritance (future reward).
- D. Some other meaningful scriptures showing a reward for those who serve:
1. Outer affliction means nothing (2Cor. 4:16-18).
Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. **17** For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
 2. God will meet all your needs (Phil. 4:19).
And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
 3. Your labor is not in vain (1Cor. 15:58).
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.
 4. We shall reap in due season (Gal. 6:9-10).
And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. **10** So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
 5. We shall receive back from the Lord (Eph. 6:7-8).
With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, **8** knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. We can summarize by saying the following:
 1. Every act of servant-hood --no matter how small or large--will be remembered by God.
 2. God takes special note of the heart--He knows the love behind our actions.
 3. As we serve others, X's, life is modeled, and we learn how to give and be humble.
 4. Special and specific rewards are reserved in heaven for those who serve.
- B. May we strive to IMPROVE OUR SERVE and cultivate the art of unselfish living.
- C. Which will it be, a throne or a towel?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.