



What Is My Reward?

*And let us not be weary in well doing;
for in due season we shall reap,
if we faint not.*

Galatians 6:9

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FORWARD

It is a divine privilege to serve the Lord. We serve him because we love him, however, there is the motivation of receiving eternal life, as well as many rewards in this life.

Peter began to question Jesus as to what their reward would be for following Jesus.

Even today all believers look forward to receiving reward in this life as well as the reward of eternal life in heaven.

Matthew 19:27-30

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; **what shall we have therefore?**

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

In the Bible, God gives rewards to his people according to his justice.

In the Old Testament, obedience often brought reward in this life (Deut. 28), but obedience and immediate reward are not always linked.

If they were, good people would always be rich, and suffering would always be a sign of sin.

As believers, our true reward is God's presence and power through the Holy Spirit. Later, in eternity, we will be rewarded for our faith and service.

If material rewards in this life came to us for every faithful deed, we would be tempted to boast about our achievements and act out of wrong motivations.

Jesus assured the disciples that anyone who gives up something valuable for his sake would be repaid many times over in this life, although not necessarily in the same form. For example, his or her family may reject a person for accepting Christ, but he or she will gain the larger family of believers.

Jesus turned the world's values upside down.

Consider the most powerful or well-known people in our world—how many got where they are by being humble, self-effacing, and gentle? Not many!

But in the life to come, the last will be first—if they got in last place by choosing to follow Jesus. Don't forfeit eternal rewards for temporary benefits.

Be willing to make sacrifices now for greater rewards later. Be willing to accept human disapproval, while knowing that you have God's approval.

Chapter 1

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:3-12

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Jesus began his sermon with words that seem to contradict each other. But God's way of living usually contradicts the world's.

If you want to live for God you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world.

You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse.

By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive everything God has in store for you.

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

There are at least four ways to understand the Beatitudes.

- (1) They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers.
- (2) They contrast kingdom values (what is eternal) with worldly values (what is temporary).
- (3) They contrast the superficial “faith” of the Pharisees with the real faith Christ wants.
- (4) They show how the Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new kingdom.

These beatitudes are not multiple-choice—pick what you like and leave the rest. They must be taken as a whole. They describe what we should be like as Christ’s followers.

Each beatitude tells how to be blessed.

“Blessed” means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate or enviable state of those who are in God’s kingdom. The Beatitudes don’t promise laughter, pleasure, or earthly prosperity.

To Jesus, “blessed” means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

With Jesus' announcement that the kingdom was near (Matthew 4:17), people were naturally asking, "How do I qualify to be in God's kingdom?"

Jesus said that God's kingdom is organized differently from worldly kingdoms. In the kingdom of heaven, wealth and power and authority are unimportant.

Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and they have different attitudes.

Are our attitudes a carbon copy of the world's selfishness, pride, and lust for power, or do they reflect the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus, your King?

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Jesus said to rejoice when we're persecuted.

Persecution can be good because

- (1) It takes our eyes off earthly rewards.
- (2) It strips away superficial belief.
- (3) It strengthens the faith of those who endure.
- (4) Our attitude serves as an example to others who follow.

We can be comforted to know that God's greatest prophets were persecuted (Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel).

The fact that we are being persecuted proves that we have been faithful; faithless people would be unnoticed. In the future God will reward the faithful by receiving them into his eternal kingdom where there is no more persecution.

Chapter 2

The rewards that believers will receive at the judgment seat of Christ.

1. The incorruptible crown given to those who mastered the old nature.

1 Cor. 9:25-27

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Paul asserts that he has freedom to do anything; in. He emphasizes a life of strict discipline. The Christian life involves both freedom and discipline.

The goals of Paul's life were to glorify God and bring people to Christ. Thus he stayed free of any philosophical position or material entanglement that might sidetrack him, while he strictly disciplined himself to carry out his goal.

For Paul, both freedom and discipline were important tools to be used in God's service.

Paul gives several important principles for ministry:

- (1)Find common ground with those you contact;

- (2) Avoid a know-it-all attitude;
- (3) Make others feel accepted;
- (4) Be sensitive to their needs and concerns; and
- (5) Look for opportunities to tell them about Christ.

These principles are just as valid for us as they were for Paul.

Winning a race requires purpose and discipline.

Paul uses this illustration to explain that the Christian life takes hard work, self-denial, and grueling preparation.

As Christians, we are running toward our heavenly reward. The essential disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and worship equip us to run with vigor and stamina.

Don't merely observe from the grandstand; don't just turn out to jog a couple of laps each morning. Train diligently—your spiritual progress depends upon it.

At times we must even give up something good in order to do what God wants.

Each person's special duties determine the discipline and denial that he or she must accept. Without a goal, discipline is nothing but self-punishment. With the goal of pleasing God, our denial seems like nothing compared to the eternal, imperishable reward that will be ours.

When Paul says he might be disqualified, he does not mean that he could lose his salvation, but rather that he could lose his privilege of telling others about Christ.

It is easy to tell others how to live and then not to take our own advice. We must be careful to practice what we preach.

2. The crown of rejoicing – given to soul winners

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that wins souls is wise.

A wise person is a model of a meaningful life. Like a tree attracts people to its shade, his or her sense of purpose attracts others who want to know how they too can find meaning. Gaining wisdom for yourself can be the first step in leading people to God.

Leading people to God is important because it keeps us in touch with God while offering others eternal life.

Daniel 12:3

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Many people try to be stars in the world of entertainment, only to find their stardom temporary. God tells us how we can be eternal “stars”—by being wise and leading many to God’s righteousness. If we share our Lord with others, we can be true stars—radiantly beautiful in God’s sight!

1 Thes. 2:19-20

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

3. The Crown of Life given to those who successfully endure temptation.

James 1:2-3

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

James doesn't say *if* you face trials, but *whenever* you face them.

He assumes that we will have trials and that it is possible to profit from them. The point is not to pretend to be happy when we face pain, but to have a positive outlook ("consider it pure joy") because of what trials can produce In our lives.

James tells us to turn our hardships into times of learning.

Tough times can teach us perseverance.

We can't really know the depth of our character until we see how we react under pressure.

It is easy to be kind to others when everything is going well, but can we still be kind when others are treating us unfairly?

God wants to make us mature and complete, not to keep us from all pain. Instead of complaining about our struggles, we should see them as opportunities for growth.

Thank God for promising to be with you in rough times. Ask him to help you solve your problems or to give you the strength to endure them. Then be patient. God will not leave you alone with your problems; he will stay close and help you grow.

Rev. 2:10

Fear none of those things that thou shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

4. The Crown of righteousness given to those who especially love the doctrine of the rapture.

2 Tim. 4:8

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

In our society, much emphasis is placed on physical fitness, but spiritual health (godliness) is even more important. Our physical health is susceptible to disease and injury, but faith can sustain us through these tragedies.

5. The crown of glory that is given to faithful preachers and teachers.

Acts 20:26-28

Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

We often feel that life is a failure unless we're getting a lot out of it: recognition, fun, money, success.

But Paul considered life worth ***nothing*** unless he used it for God's work. What he put *into* life was far more important than what he got out. Which is more important to you—what you get out of life, or what you put into it?

Single-mindedness is a quality needed by anyone who wishes to do God's work. Paul was a single-minded person, and the most important goal of his life was to tell others about Christ (Phil. 3:7-13). It is no wonder that Paul was the greatest missionary who ever lived. God is looking for more men and women who focus on that one great task God has given them to do.

Paul's relationship with these believers is a beautiful example of Christian fellowship. He had cared for them and loved them, even cried over their needs. They responded with love and care for him and sorrow over his leaving.

They had prayed together and comforted one another. Like Paul, you can build strong relationships with other Christians by sharing, caring, sorrowing, rejoicing, and praying with them. You will gather others around you only by giving yourself away to them.

Chapter 3

The Rewards of the Righteous in this life

Romans 2:6-11

Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

For there is no respect of persons with God

Although God does not usually punish us immediately for sin, his eventual judgment is certain. We don't know exactly when it will happen, but we know that no one will escape that final encounter with the Creator. For more on judgment, see John 12:48 and Rev. 20:11-15.

Paul says that those who patiently and persistently *do* God's will find eternal life.

He is not contradicting his previous statement that salvation comes by faith alone (Romans 1:16-17).

We are not saved by good deeds, but when we commit our lives fully to God, we want to please him and do his will. As such, our good deeds are a grateful *response* to what God has done, not a prerequisite to earning his grace.

People are condemned not for what they don't know, but for what they do with what they know.

The thing will judge those who know God's written Word and his law that they do know.

Those who have never seen a Bible still know right from wrong, and they will be judged because they did not keep even those standards that their own consciences dictated. Our modern-day sense of fair play and the rights of the individual often balks at God's judgment.

The Reward of Grace:

Ephes. 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We become Christians through God's unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness, and not merely to please ourselves.

While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church (Ephes. 4:12).

We are God's workmanship (work of art, masterpiece). Our salvation is something only God can do. It is his powerful, creative work in us. If God considers us his works of art. We dare not treat ourselves or others with disrespect or as inferior work.

Chapter 4

The Parable of the one-day wage

Matthew 20:9-16

And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

And when they had received it, they murmured against the good-man of the house,

Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

This parable is not only about rewards but about salvation. It is a strong teaching about *grace*, God's generosity. We shouldn't begrudge those

who turn to God in the last moments of life, because, in reality, *no one* deserves eternal life.

Many people we don't expect to see in the kingdom will be there

The criminal who repented as he was dying (Luke 23:40-43) will be there along with people who have believed and served God for many years.

Do you resent God's gracious acceptance of the despised, the outcast, and the sinners who have turned to him for forgiveness?

Never be jealous of what God has given to another person? Instead, focus on God's gracious benefits to you, and be thankful for what you have.

The Parable of the ten virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

This parable is about a wedding. On the wedding day the bridegroom went to the bride's house for the ceremony; then the bride and groom, along with a great procession, returned to the groom's house where a feast took place, often lasting a full week.

These ten virgins were waiting to join the procession, and they hoped to take part in the wedding banquet. But when the groom didn't come at the expected time, five of them were out of lamp oil. By the time they had purchased extra oil, it was too late to join the feast.

When Jesus returns to take his people to heaven, we must be ready. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute. Our relationship with God must be our own.

The parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:20-23

And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou delivered unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

The master divided the money (talents) among his servants according to their abilities. No one received more or less than he could handle. If he failed in his assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed. Failure could come only from laziness or hatred toward the master. The talents represent any kind of resource we are given.

God gives us time, gifts, and other resources according to our abilities, and he expects us to invest them wisely until he returns. We are responsible to use well what God has given us. The issue is not how much we have, but how well we use what we have.

Jesus is coming back—we know this is true. Does this mean we must quit our jobs in order to serve God? No, it means we are to use our time, talents, and treasures diligently in order to serve God completely in whatever we do. For a few people, this may mean changing professions. For most of us, it means doing our daily work out of love for God.

Chapter 5

Is it Wrong to Want a Reward

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Believing that God exists is only the beginning; even the demons believe that much (James 2:19-20).

God will not settle for mere acknowledgment of his existence.

He wants a personal, dynamic relationship with you that will transform your life. Those who seek God will find that they are rewarded with his intimate presence.

Sometimes we wonder about the fate of those who haven't heard of Christ and have not even had a Bible to read. God assures us that all who honestly seek him—who act in faith on the knowledge of God that they possess—will be rewarded. When you tell others the gospel, encourage them to be honest and diligent in their search for truth. Those who hear the gospel are responsible for what they have heard (see 2 Cor. 6:1-2).

There is Hope Beyond This Life

1 Cor. 15:19

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

There will always be people who say that Jesus didn't rise from the dead. Paul assures us that many people saw Jesus after his resurrection: Peter; the disciples (the Twelve); more than 500 Christian believers (most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote this, although some had died);

The resurrection is an historical fact. Don't be discouraged by doubters who deny the resurrection.

Be filled with hope because of the knowledge that one day you, and they, will see the living proof when Christ returns.

This James is Jesus' brother, who at first did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah (John 7:5).

After seeing the resurrected Christ, he became a believer and ultimately a leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13). James wrote the New Testament book of James.

Paul's most important credential to be an apostle was that he was an eyewitness of the risen Christ (see Acts 9:3-6).

The other apostles saw Christ in the flesh. Paul was in the next generation of believers—yet Christ appeared to him.

As a zealous Pharisee, Paul had been an enemy of the Christian church—even to the point of capturing and persecuting believers (see Acts 9:1-3).

Thus he felt unworthy to be called an apostle of Christ. Though undoubtedly the most influential of the apostles, Paul was deeply humble.

He knew that he had worked hard and accomplished much, but only because God had poured kindness and grace upon him.

True humility is not convincing yourself that you are worthless, but recognizing God's work in you. It is having God's perspective on who you are and acknowledging his grace in developing your abilities.

Philip. 3:8

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

After Paul considered everything he had accomplished in his life, he said that it was all “a loss” when compared with the greatness of knowing Christ. This is a profound statement about values: a person’s relationship with Christ is more important than anything else. To know Christ should be our ultimate goal. Consider your values. Do you place anything above your relationship with Christ? If your priorities are wrong, how will you reorder them?

Chapter 6

Eternal Joy with God

Psalm 16:11

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

It is human nature to make our own plans and *then* ask God to bless them. Instead, we should seek God's will first. By constantly thinking about the Lord and his way of living, we will gain insights that will help us make right decisions and live the way God desires. Communicating with God allows him to counsel us and give us wisdom.

By saying that he "will not be shaken," David was talking about the unique sense of security felt by believers.

God does not exempt believers from the day-to-day circumstances of life. Believers and unbelievers alike experience pain, trouble, and failure at times (Matthew 5:45).

Unbelievers have a sense of hopelessness about life and confusion over their true purpose on earth. Those who seek God, however, can move ahead confidently with what they know is right and important in God's eyes. They know that God will keep them from being moved off of his chosen path.

This psalm is often called a Messianic psalm because it is quoted in the New Testament as referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Both Peter and Paul quoted from this psalm when speaking of Christ's bodily resurrection.

David's heart was glad—he had found the secret to joy. True joy is far deeper than happiness; we can feel joy in spite of our deepest troubles. Happiness is temporary because it is based on external circumstances, but joy is lasting because it is based on God's presence within us. As we contemplate his daily presence, we will find contentment. As we understand the future he has for us, we will experience joy. Don't base your life on circumstances, but on God.

David stated confidently that God would not leave him in the grave. Many people fear death because they can neither control nor understand it. As believers, we can be assured that God will not forget us when we die. He will bring us to life again to live with him forever. This provides *real* security

Isaiah 35:10

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This highway, the “Way of Holiness,” is the way that righteous pilgrims will take from the desert of suffering to Zion (Jerusalem).

It is found only by following God. Only the redeemed will travel God's highway; they will be protected from wicked travelers and harmful animals.

God is preparing a way for his people to travel to his home, and he will walk with us. God never stops at simply pointing the way; he is always beside us as we go.

Chapter 7

Your Heavenly Reward

Philip. 1:21

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

This was not Paul's final imprisonment in Rome. But he didn't know that. Awaiting trial, he knew he could either be released or executed. However, he trusted Christ to work it out for his deliverance.

Paul's prayer was that when he stood trial, he would speak courageously for Christ and not be timid or ashamed. Whether he lived or died, he wanted to exalt Christ.

As it turned out, he was released from this imprisonment but arrested again two or three years later. Only faith in Christ could sustain Paul in such adversity.

To those who don't believe in God, life on earth is all there is, and so it is natural for them to strive for this world's values—money, popularity, power, pleasure, and prestige

For Paul, however, to live meant to develop eternal values and to tell others about Christ, who alone could help them see life from an eternal perspective. Paul's whole purpose in life was to speak out boldly for Christ and to become more like him.

Thus Paul could confidently say that dying would be even better than living, because in death he would be removed from worldly troubles, and he would see Christ face to face (1 John 3:2-3)

If you're not ready to die, then you're not ready to live. Make certain of your eternal destiny; then you will be free to serve—devoting your life to what really counts, without fear of death.

1 Tim. 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

This statement is the key to spiritual growth and personal fulfillment. We should honor God and center our desires on him (“godliness,” see Matthew 6:33), and we should be content with what God is doing in our lives (see Phil. 4:11-13).

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most people still believe that money brings happiness. Rich people craving greater riches can be caught in an endless cycle that only ends in ruin and destruction.

How can you keep away from the love of money? Paul gives us some guidelines:

- (1)realize that one day riches will all be gone (1 Tim. 6:7, 17)
- (2)be content with what you have (1 Tim. 6:8);
- (3)monitor what you are willing to do to get more money (1 Tim. 6:9-10);
- (4)love people more than money (1 Tim. 6:11);
- (5)love God's work more than money (1 Tim. 6:11);
- (6)freely share what you have with others (1 Tim. 6:18).

Chapter 8

The Promise of a Better Resurrection

Hebrews 11:35

Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

The Old Testament records the lives of the various people who experienced these great victories. Joshua and Deborah conquered kingdoms (the book of Joshua; Judges 4-5).

Nehemiah administered justice (the book of Nehemiah). Daniel was saved from the mouths of lions (Daniel 6).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were kept from harm in the furious flames of a fiery furnace (Daniel 3).

Elijah escaped the edge of the swords of evil Queen Jezebel's henchmen (1 Kings 19:2ff). Hezekiah regained strength after sickness (2 Kings 20).

Gideon was powerful in battle (Judges 7).

A widow's son was brought back to life by the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:8-37).

We, too, can experience victory through faith in Christ. Our victories over oppressors may be like those of the Old Testament saints, but more likely, our victories will be directly related to the role God wants us to play.

Even though our bodies deteriorate and die, we will live forever because of Christ. In the promised resurrection, even death will be defeated and Christ's victory will be made complete.

These verses summarize the lives of other great men and women of faith. Some experienced outstanding victories, even over the threat of death. But others were severely mistreated, tortured, and even killed.

Having a steadfast faith purpose of our suffering. But we know that God will keep his promises to us. Do you believe that God will keep his promises to you?

Many think that pain is the exception in the Christian life. When suffering occurs, they say, "Why me?" They feel as though God deserted them, or perhaps they accuse him of not being as dependable as they thought. In reality, however, we live in an evil world filled with suffering, even for believers.

But God is still in control. He allows some Christians to become martyrs for the faith, and he allows others to survive persecution. Rather than asking, "Why me?" it is much more helpful to ask, "Why not me?"

Our faith and the values of this world are on a collision course. If we expect pain and suffering to come, we will not be shocked when it hits. But we can also take comfort in knowing that Jesus also suffered. He understands our fears, our weaknesses, and our disappointments (see Hebrews 2:16-18; Hebrews 4:14-16).

He promised never to leave us (Matthew 28:18-20), and he intercedes on our behalf (Hebrews 7:24-25). In times of pain, persecution, or suffering we should trust confidently in Christ does not guarantee a happy, carefree life. On the contrary, our faith almost guarantees us some form of abuse from the world. While we are on earth, we may never see the

Like Finding a Treasure in a Field.

Matthew 13:44

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

The kingdom of heaven is more valuable than anything else we can have, and a person must be willing to give up everything to obtain it. The man who discovered the treasure in the field stumbled upon it by accident but knew its value when he found it. The merchant was earnestly searching for the pearl of great value, and, when he found it, he sold everything he had to purchase it.

There shall be an earthly reward and a heavenly reward, but the greatest of all rewards is spending eternity with Christ and all those who have joined him there.

We cannot bring our loved ones back, but we can go to them.

Your reward is great.

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