

Rewards And Recompenses

2 Peter 1:8-11

⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8-11 (NIV))

Within most everything that takes place in the events of our daily lives, there seems most often to be some form of a sure and certain “reward or recompense” that follows, depending upon the reactions and responses that we have chosen to have to those events.

But with that being the “norm”, may I quickly also add that that is not an absolute truism. I know because I have done some really wrong and dumb things and have not had to suffer the consequences that I deserved. Thanks be to God’s mercy and His grace, many of my due penalties for those careless decisions and wrong behaviors have not taken place.

But with that being said, the reality of what usually does take place as we react and respond to all the many circumstances of our daily life is that there usually will be some form of “reward or recompense” that will follow. “Whatsoever we sow, we reap”. Or to quote a much used expression, “what goes around, comes around”.

Here in our scripture text today, God is being gracious and kind as He instructs us concerning our behavior and responses to the transactions of our daily life. He begins first by giving a promise of pleasant rewards for those who do things rightly. And that is especially so in verses 10 and 11. but here also, He gives a clear warning about recompenses that most always follows wrong behavior.

Here He tells us first that

⁸ For if you possess these qualities (these seven qualities of Godly sanctification, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love) ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

But if we fall short and we do not follow His guidance, then there is a recompense, a consequence. Verse 9,

⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (2 Peter 1:9 (NIV))

It is so very important that we keep in mind that these words are being given to us by the all-knowing and all-powerful Holy God who reigns over all that takes place on the earth. And He has the ability to bless you and me beyond measure, but also to curse us. And He really will, at times, “let our sins find us out”. But thankfully, though He be a Just and Holy God, He is also a compassionate and loving Father who wants, with all His heart, for you and me to do well and to be upright.

And He has a constant and intimate watch-care over us at every moment, over and over again stooping to attend to our most basic of needs. Listen carefully concerning God’s loving watch care. In Psalm 139, we read,

⁵ You hem me in (oh God) -- behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:5-10 (NIV))

And in verses 139:17-18, we read

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. (Psalm 139:17-18 (NIV))

He knows us so much more and better than we know ourselves. He is ever and always knowing our thoughts and our behaviors. And, like a loving father, He wants only the best for us. In verses 139:1-4, we read,

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. (Psalm 139:1-4 (NIV))

Our God is a sweet loving Father. And no matter how much we “gum things up”, He always wants the very best for us.

But what then is our part? What is to be our response to God’s great love for us. Simply put, you and I must fully agree with God that righteous behavior is our only

acceptable response. And if we are to have it, we must pursue after it with all that we have within us, ever adding His sanctifying character into our own.

And so we read here in our text,

⁸ For if you possess these qualities (these seven qualities of Godly sanctification, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love) ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

And the reward that comes to us for our obedience is that we will be blessed beyond measure. And we

¹¹ . . . will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11 (NIV))

But again, if we are not obedient, if we make choices that are not in keeping with God's righteousness, then there is most often a "just" recompense. Verse 9,

⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (2 Peter 1:9 (NIV))

There is a recompense, a consequence when we fail to have the righteous behavior that God desires of us. But please to remember that God's recompenses to His beloved children are always for the purpose of "reclaiming" them. And here, as God's children make wrong choices and choose other paths, He begins His reclaiming process by giving them over to some of the consequences of their behavior. They become "nearsighted" and "blind", and they forget that they have been cleaned from their past sins.

Here in this passage, we have the implication that these dear saints were not moving forward in "increasing measure" in their maturity and in their knowledge and understanding of God. And in these words, God explains the "why" behind His urging them on. It was because

⁹ . . . if anyone does not have them (these seven qualities of sanctification, then), he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (2 Peter 1:9 (NIV))

Note the choice of words that God uses. He tells us that without these qualities of Godly sanctification, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love, we are "nearsighted" and "blind". The dictionary defines "nearsightedness" as only being able to see things that are up close. And the

implication in these words is that in our “nearsightedness”, we are consumed only with matters of the moment and have no regard for any future consequences.

And that is so accurate in describing the self-centered personalities of our day. There was an article in the news recently that accentuated this modern-day cultural malady. The article told about a young man who was taking a “selfie” of himself. And as he stretched carelessly out over a precipice, he fell off and was killed, a decisive recompense for foolish behavior.

But his is only one of many such “selfie stories”, most of which do not end so violently, but are still representative of a corrupt, self-centered and narcissistic culture, seeing only themselves and only up close, no real sense of future consequences, and no regard for anyone or anything beyond the immediate moment.

And the other word that God uses here is “blind”, and it further bespeaks the condition of our souls. Being only able to see the self-filled immediate moment, there is a total blindness that engulfs the soul, keeping us from seeing the much better future promises of God.

Again, the reminder. These words are for people who are saved and ought to be able to see God’s future promises. But they can’t because they have not built up their faith with God’s sanctifying graces of virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. They have gotten saved yes, but they have somehow settled into a routine of perhaps only an obligatory fifteen minutes of bible reading each day, along with five minutes of prayer, and then church on Sunday. And there is little real intimacy with Christ. And so, they walk each day with blurred vision, even blindness.

And how sad it is for them! They do not realize that the blessings and the graces of God are just a hand-reach away, that as a Christian, they can be enjoying so much, much more, that if they will only have eyes to see, they will see that God’s blessed kingdom is really all around each of them every day, even as they walk through the many difficulties and circumstance that are common to them.

The scriptures tell us clearly that as believers, we are actually already living within the “Kingdom of God”. His kingdom, with all its many blessings and provisions, has already come to earth and is all around us, God’s future promises actually being poured out upon us even now.

But unfortunately, we get too consumed with taking “selfies” of ourselves to see His precious gifts being showered upon us. And our attention is so focused upon ourselves that we forget that we have been cleansed from all our past sins and sinful behaviors, and so, we find ourselves falling right back into doing some of the same old things we used to do, breaking God’s heart and making a mess out of our lives and the lives of those who love us.

But again, thankfully, here we find God doing as loving fathers should do. He is gently sitting us down and saying to us, “My son, My daughter,

¹⁰ . . . be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, (⁸ . . . if you possess these seven qualities of Godly sanctification, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love) you will never fall, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11 (NIV)

Here in these words about making our calling and election sure, God is not warning that we might “lose our salvation”, and neither is He saying that possessing these qualities of sanctification is a way of earning salvation. He is simply exhorting us to “produce fruits” that lead to righteousness, to be eager to make our calling and election evident, both to ourselves and to everyone who would witness our behavior and conduct. We are to “nail it down”, to make our calling and election “an evident witness and reminder” both to our own souls and to all those around us.

And if we are doing the things of a “saved person”, then we will not fall into sin and disrepute. We will lead ourselves and our loved ones safely through the many minefields of daily life. And we will not be hurting ourselves or them with our behavior.

And it is then that the complete fulfillment of God’s promises will become ours, the “blessings”, the “rewards”. Verse 11,

¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11 (NIV)

May I ask, what are your thoughts about what God is saying here, about our entering the “eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”? Does that thought frighten you? Or are you eager to go there? What if it were to take place today? Is the idea of going to heaven “today” an exciting thought, or are you a bit uncomfortable about that possibly taking place so soon? Many otherwise devout believers in Christ have fears concerning death. Do you?

As we all know, death really is one of those “sure and certain” events. And as we have studied about on other occasions, there is actually a specific time that is “appointed” for each of us to die, and then to stand before Christ in judgment. Do those thoughts frighten you?

For myself, I do admit that the thought of that special moment of judgment which lies just in-between me and my future “mansion” is a little bit fearful and daunting. I have no real doubt about the Lord Jesus welcoming me into heaven, but I also know that my report card will probably have a lot of marks on it, especially in the “behavior” section. And contrary to what so many want to believe, the scriptures are clear. We will have a time of accountability for all the many things that we have done in the flesh, whether those things be good or evil. You can find those scripture proofs in 2 Corinthians 5 and in Ecclesiastes 12.

But with that being said, I am not really afraid, because “I do know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that He is able to keep me until that day”.

And I know that these very words here in verse 11 will be fulfilled for me, that I will
¹¹ . . . receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11 (NIV))

Why am I so sure? Can anyone really be absolutely sure? The answer is yes, for several reasons! First, I know that I “have the Son of God”.

¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)

I know that I have the Son of God, and I know that I have life.

And then secondly, for some years now, I have been very aware that I am already living within the “Kingdom of God”. His kingdom is here and it is very, very real to me, even while I am still in the flesh. So, I have already been experiencing God’s “rich welcome” into His kingdom.

But while that is true, I do also know that the life I am experiencing with Christ today will not compare to the life that I will experience with Him in heaven. And so, I do so much, look forward to that day. May I leave us with these words from text . . .

¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
(2 Peter 1:10-11 (NIV))