



Rewards in Heaven

Luke 19:11–27

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“To him who has, more will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. Now bring here my enemies, who did not want me to reign over them, and execute them before me.”
(Luke 19:26)

Levels of Reward

Can you notice the differences between the Luke and Matthew versions of this parable? In Luke the servants all receive the same and (except for the one foul one) perform differently, whereas in Matthew they all receive differently and perform the same (as a percent of the master's initial investment).

If they are different parables, how can they both be true? You might say that Matthew's version says that God expects us to double his investment in us, no matter the size of that investment, meaning, no matter the amount or quality of gifts we receive from Him. Luke's version, on the other hand, seems to be saying that different people produce different amounts of results using the same amount of gifts. But notice carefully that the master rewards all of them with wonderful rewards. The rewards are proportionate to the fruit produced.

We can see from these parables that God wants us to produce fruit with our gifts, regardless of the amount of gifts we started with and regardless of how small a result we produce. He looks for us to take a step no matter how small.

From the Bible we know that God has a big problem with complete indolence. He is infuriated by hypocrisy, dissipation, ignorance, laziness, and forgetfulness.

In the parable of the ten virgins, the five unwise are shut out completely. Even though they were dressed, carried their lamps, and waited, they were not prepared with their lamps lit.

Incidentally, notice the number ten, both in the parable of the ten virgins and here in this parable of the ten servants and the minas. It means we are dealing with a complete set of believers. These are the followers of Christ, the people who go to church.

“He called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’ (Luke 19:13)

But his citizens hated him and rejected him.

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’ (Luke 19:14)

Despite their hate, the lord *has already received the kingdom*. These are his servants (the Christians), and they rejected him, but he inherited the kingdom anyway. He comes to call them to account.

“And so it was that when he returned, *having received the kingdom*, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. (Luke 19:15)

This parable is an image of judgment day. We are all going to be called to account for how we performed. Some of us are going to grumble and blame others for our non-performance. We will blame Adam, we will blame Eve, we will blame the serpent, we will blame our parents, we will blame everyone but ourselves.

Just as Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, in this parable, the lazy servant blames even his master! The one who is sinful blames even his master! The one who is sinful in life is sinful even on the day of judgment!¹

'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' (Luke 19:21)

From the parable, we see that each servant received according to his performance. The inference from this parable is that in heaven we will inherit according to our labors.

"And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' (Luke 19:18-19)

Levels of Punishment

If that is the case about rewards in heaven, then what about punishment in fire? Should we worry about being punished in fire? Are we safe because we are not murderers, robbers, adulterers?

¹Can you imagine someone standing before the throne of judgement with the Messiah standing there looking like a slaughtered lamb with the wounds of sacrifice for atonement for the person, and that person blames Christ! Why is Jesus telling this story? Is he drawing this out of thin air? Where is this coming from? It is a giant head slap from heaven, to wake us up! Sleepers wake, the bridegroom is coming!

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. (Luke 18:11)

Does God resist the *murderers*? Does God “bring down” the *adulterers*?

“You will save the humble, but Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down.” (2 Samuel 22:28)

“You will save the humble and bring down the haughty.” (Psalms 18:27)

“God raises the bowed.” (Psalm 145:14, 146:8)

“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

God has a serious problem with the sin of pride. He is infuriated by those of us who are like whitewashed tombs, clean outside and dirty inside. He is enraged by those of us who worship him with our lips but inside we are just a jumble of rules and regulations learned by rote.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:21)

These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. (Isaiah 29:13)

This is a wake-up call to those of us who rehearse prayers by rote, who tell others what to do or what to think, who do not practically speaking bestow our hearts to the Lord. God is calling us. We need to soften our heart and go to him.

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)

Servants have to pay attention. If we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, the fiery indignation of the Lord awaits us.

If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31)

Definitely sin will be punished. We saw different levels of reward in heaven. Will there similarly be different levels of punishment in hell?

“And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. “Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city! (Matthew 10:14-15)

Those who reject the Word, when it reaches them, do not worry about them, leave them. Their punishment will be worse than Sodom and Gomorrah who were punished for homosexuality and adultery. To reject Jesus Christ and his representatives will have more punishment. Can you imagine that. So, yes, there are levels of punishment and levels of eternal fire.

Nota bene. Not as we evaluate does God evaluate.

Stick to the Bible. Get wisdom. Get a sound understanding of the Word of God. Get a healthy grasp of how we will be judged. Ignorance will not be an excuse for us!

The Lord accepts all people. We may say, “He is a very bad person.” You know what, there are many people who are servants of the Church (like the five unwise virgins), who do not believe in the Word of God, who do not believe practically in the Blood of Jesus.

Rewards in Heaven

Let us get back to the rewards, because they are promising, and to conclude with them is good. How does the Lord depict differences between those who do good?

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. (1 Corinthians 15:22-23)

So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." (Matthew 20:23)

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11:11)

So there are levels. Do your best. "I'm waiting for you," says Jesus. If we understand this well, every minute in our life will be spent very profitably. Come, let us serve Christ. Let us not waste time. God will evaluate us with His great judgement. Those who did not do great and who are blaming someone else, even in that judgment, are going to be disappointed with their judgement. The people who did great are waiting and looking to their future. Let us do our best and profit God's kingdom with the gifts he gave us.

Few points about this parable to keep in mind:

- Everyone took one mina, meaning you took sufficient blessing.
- But we have to trade.
- There are differences in reward

All of us will pass the barrier of death. The angels are ready to take our souls to the good place. If you are not, you will go to the other place. The souls will return the the body in the day of resurrection in order that everytone take according to his work. The souls in waiting are in great anticipation of that that day that they might be rewarded. They are not rewarded yet. They are waiting. The heart attracted to the rewards is waiting. In the day of resurrection the souls will return to the bodies. The Lord will appear as a lamb who was slaughtered. The signs of slaughter will be there, not signs of shame or curse, signs of love. It will be the same with anyone who sacrificed, with those who were suffering for times in their lives, they will appear, yes, I think, with this same body that says, “We suffered for you; these are the signs of our love for you.” Now we see an old person, but no, our mind and body will be changed. The signs of suffering will not be reflections of weakness but signs of eternal joy. We are to be glorified for eternity, to experience the glory of God on us, living for eternity.

The orders of God experience the Glory of God in different degrees. That is amazing. May God help us to benefit from every minute of our life.

So in this series, we got the story of life from Lazarus to these parables to see what happens before death, at death, after death, and at resurrection.