

Application Guide: “The Life God Rewards Pt. 3” (1 Peter 1:3-8)¹

June 19th, 2005: Pastor Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church, went to several other New Testament passages to emphasize again what the Bible says about rewards for Christians, the Day of Judgment, and our motivation for serving Christ. Not only should Christians be thinking about the Day of Judgment but our eternal inheritance as well.

1. “The judgment seat of Christ should serve as a potent incentive for holiness” (Wilbur Smith). Pastor noted that the promise of future rewards ought to be a strong motivation for us to serve Christ.
 - a. How does the motivation of reward fit in with the other motivations such as a love for Christ or fear of punishment? Is there a hierarchy of motivations for doing what is right?
 - b. When you think about rewards in heaven, what do you think about? Are there certain types of eternal rewards that we should value above others? What is the greatest reward we should desire as a follower of Christ?
 - c. Is it possible that being motivated by reward can become a form of idolatry? How can we be mindful of the truth of rewards yet keep from becoming more focused on crowns and treasures in heaven than on Jesus Christ himself?
 - d. If God is our father, should we expect him to motivate us in the same way that earthly fathers motivate their children, by gain or loss of reward? If we were not born with a sinful nature, would we need to be motivated by reward?
2. Kimber reminded us that the standard we use to judge others will be used to measure our own life (cf. Mt. 7:1-5; 2 Cor 5:10; James 2:12-13). In other words, because you set your own standard, the Day of Judgment holds a different measuring stick for each believer.
 - a. What kind of thoughts do you have in response to this principle? How does it compare to “The Parable of the Talents” (Mt. 25:14-30)?
 - b. What does it look like to be people who live by the principle, “If we make a mistake, we make it on the side of love”? Do you give people the benefit of the doubt when their motives or desires are questionable – or do you instantly assume the worst?
3. In the midst of persecution and trial, we need to be reminded that God is testing our faith in him, that God won’t allow any suffering in his name to go unnoticed, and that self-denial is at the root of being a follower of Jesus Christ.
 - a. What does self-denial look like for wealthy Americans in 2005? If we are going to take Christ’s call of self-denial seriously, to take up our cross daily, what should we do?
 - b. How do you respond when trials or difficult circumstances come into your life? If we truly desire our faith to grow and we value our faith like God values it, should our first response to trials be to try to get out of it or pray for God to remove it?
 - c. If we value our faith more than gold, if it is of our greatest concern, how will we respond to suffering, and what will give us a “blessed hope” as we go through trials for Christ?

¹ Kimber noted numerous other passages in this sermon, including Gen. 22; Mt. 19:27-30; Lk. 6:22-23; Jn. 3:16; Acts 12:21; Rom. 8:18; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; 2 Cor. 4:17; Heb. 10:35; 11:24-26; & Rev. 20:11-15.