***Rewards are Earned
RO176-01***

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We are studying Romans 14:1-12. Our subject is "The Spirit of Toleration." This is segment number 11.

**Eternal Heavenly Rewards**

In Romans 14:12, the apostle Paul says. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Here he is declaring that every Christian of the church age will answer to God for the life that he lived as a Christian. God the Holy Spirit calls some lost sinners from the mass of humanity into eternal life in heaven. Once a called person has been born again spiritually, he is to serve God his Father with divine good works which have been planned for him. For such divine good works, the believer will receive rewards in heaven after the rapture of the church, when all believers are removed from this earth and taken to heaven.

The foundation of the church and of the individual believer is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul, in his missionary service, has been laying the foundation of Jesus Christ for local churches as well as for individual Christians in their lives. Other Christian workers have followed Paul and his associates, and they are building on the foundation of Jesus Christ, which Paul laid down for these churches and these individual believers.

Therefore, the apostle Paul warns other ministers and teachers of the Word to take care how they build upon the foundation of the local church, Jesus Christ. Paul himself made it very clear that he wanted to please the Lord Jesus in all that he did. He viewed himself as the loyal servant of the Son of God.

In Galatians 1:10 Paul says, "For do I now seek the favor of men or of God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Any minister of the Word of God knows that if he is to be the true and loyal servant of Jesus Christ, he cannot please men. He cannot be the good buddy who goes along to get along. He is well aware of the fact that he takes his stand on the authority of Scripture, and that that stand is not popular in our society today.

The apostle Paul had that same attitude in the pagan society of the Roman Empire. He said, "I am not interested in being exalted or being favored by man. I'm not interested in their running special events to commemorate me. I do not want them to gather in the Coliseum to have 'The Apostle Paul Day,' in order to exalt me. I'm only interested in people understanding what they face with a righteous holy God some day after death. And I am His servant, and therefore, I am interested in being loyal to Him, and that means being true to Scripture.

So, Paul was very much concerned that at the end of his life he would receive that commendation that the Lord Jesus referred to in the parable of the good servant in Luke 19:17, where the master says to the servant, "Well done, you good servant. Because you have been faithful in very little, you have authority over ten cities." So, here Jesus is indicating that there will be an evaluation of the lives of those who are the servants of God. They will be honored for the service they performed that is genuine, divine-good service. And they will be rewarded in heaven for that.

**Justification**

The apostle Paul had come to the pagan city of Corinth, where he had preached the gospel, and then formed a local church of those who had believed, and thus were justified before God. Justification meant that they possessed, to their credit, the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. Paul taught this new congregation in Corinth elementary Bible doctrine truths. The Bible refers to this as "the milk of the Word of God."

**Sanctification**

The Christian life, however, Paul pointed out to them, does not consist only a justification, but it also consists of sanctification, which means growing in spiritual maturity; resulting in godly living; and, in performance of divine good works. Most Christians that you are acquainted with, within the Christian community, get to justification, and that's as far as they go. Yes, they are going to heaven. But when they get up there, they're going to be poor people in heaven – minus rewards, and minus the enrichment that God says that He is ready to give each believer.

The reason for this is that these Christians do not understand that beyond justification is sanctification – finding increasingly that your life is set apart to the purpose of God. And that purpose is what you do in your service to Him, and how you live each hour of the day. Such godly maturity, however, is the product of advanced Bible doctrine in the soul – the things that the Bible calls "the deep things of the Spirit of God."

Many Christians are never really fed on God's word by their pastor-teachers, and for this reason, year-after-year goes by, and they remain spiritually weak babies in Christ, unable to handle the advanced Bible doctrine, and therefore, unable to grow spiritually, and therefore, unable to perform divine good works for which God can reward them.

The Judgment Seat of Christ, for some of you, is going to be a very happy event. For most Christians, it is going to be a very sad event, because most Christians in most churches don't even realize what is being done to them, and what they're being denied. And there's always Satan edging Christians on – egging them on to say, "Hey, over there, with the glamor and the programs are – that's where it's at. It's not just in some simple little church where you go to, and you sit as if you were in a classroom, and you're learning the doctrines of Scripture. Look at all these parties. Look at all the social programs. Look at all the (and this is the word that is the most damaging word in Christian community) "fellowship."

**"Fellowship"**

I have seen more Christians destroyed in their spiritual lives because they shoved off to seek fellowship. They actually thought that having a social life was more important than having a spiritual life. They actually thought that having fun, and friendship, and all of the things that are included in fellowship was more important than, first of all, above all, coming to know what God Almighty thinks.

Well, those people are going to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and I can assure you that they're going to regret the day they ever learned the word "fellowship," and they're going to pour tears out of their eyes as they remember all the trivial things that they exchanged for a place that introduced them to what God thinks, so that they could become people in the image of Jesus Christ; and, thus to take into heaven with them, that enormous enrichment that our Father has planned for each one of us.

This is the problem, which is described in Hebrews 5:11-14, where the writer says, "Of whom we have many things to say" (that is, concerning Jesus Christ, our High Priest: "We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing that you are dull of hearing."

One of the reasons most preachers don't try to get into the deep sense of the Word of God is because it turns off the congregation. And the reason that the congregation is turned off is because they have never been trained from elementary things, in the basics of doctrine, and they have never been oriented to the fact that doctrine is their life. I don't care whatever else you do in life; whatever else you possess; whatever else you become; wherever you go; or, whatever may happen, nothing substitutes for the fact of the knowledge of the doctrines of Scripture. Doctrine is your life. And if you're dumb enough never to understand that, you're going to muddle around like some poor, simple, little animal that's wounded and whimpering, and you're going to go into heaven that way. But if you want to become somebody, and you want to start living as the royal prince and princesses, that is your position in the body of Christ, then start getting with the Word of God. Start being a student of the Word of God, and start being faithful to these Sunday morning and Sunday evening services, which are your anchor point in the instruction in the Word.

Hebrews 5:12 says, "For when, for the time you have to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and they become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. Now that does get discouraging. When you have a bunch of dummies who are sitting out there in the congregation, and they never get hold of the Word of God, so that you can give them more than entertaining stories, and cute little illustrations, and make them laugh, and make them laugh, and make them go out and feel: "Well, wasn't that an inspirational sermon?" And you have nothing to carry you through the hard times when Satan and his team start working on you.

It is the Word of God that carries you through, even as it carried Jesus Christ through when He was on the cross itself. And the Bible reveals to us that, in His mind, He was going over the great basic doctrines of Scripture, and what was ahead for Him after that cross event was over. He knew doctrine. He knew where it was taking in, and that's what He hung onto in that moment of agony.

Verse 13: "For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to them that are of full age. Even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." There are some people who think that the apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews, and if he did, you can see that he's emphasizing here the same principle that he's emphasizing back in these other Scriptures that he wrote, concerning getting on with the deep things of the Word of God. The reason many Christians are always elementary and shallow in their spiritual lives is because they don't understand that they need to know Scripture. They don't understand that they need to know the doctrines of the Word of God. And worse, they keep going to churches where the services are frittered away on inspirational talks and irrelevancies that do not carry them into the meat and substance of the Word of God.

This kind of a Christian inevitably is carnal. He is spiritually weak. He is worldly in his lifestyle. And worst of all, he does not produce divine good works. Carnal Christians are self-centered. They have little interest in the plan of God for their lives. And they are less interested in Christian service. In the city of Corinth, the widespread carnality was evident by disunity and conflicts in the local church. What Paul is saying is that when he went to Corinth, he laid for them the foundation of Jesus Christ. They had what they needed to build on, and the people who were following him as teachers were blowing it. People were not being oriented to the dangers that faced them in their Christian lives, and what they were doing to themselves.

**The Church at Corinth**

Corinth was a horrible church. It was rife with carnality from one end to the other. Some of the worst sins imaginable were taking place in that congregation, and tolerated. Turn over to 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, which reflects this carnal condition of disunity. Paul says, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual." Do you know what he means by "spiritual?" You should now have a very clear idea exactly what "spiritual" means.

**The Concentric Circles**

"Spiritual" means that there is this outer circle of eternal fellowship that you enter at the point of salvation. There is the inner circle of temporal fellowship which you also enter. You leave that inner circle when sin enters your life. When you confess it, you get back in. The inner circle is the area of spirituality. And the area outside of the inner circle, but still inside of the outer circle is the area of carnality.

So, if you're inside of the outer circle, but outside of the inner circle, you're still saved, but you're carnal, and you're nothing. If you're inside the inner circle, where God the Holy Spirit is operating, this is the territory of God the Holy Spirit. The area outside of the inner circle, but still inside of the outer circle, is the territory of the old sin nature. When you're under the sin nature's government, you're totally carnal, and you're zilch – nothing. When you're inside the inner circle, and the Holy Spirit is running things, you are spiritual.

**Being Spiritual**

So, don't think that "spiritual" means that you do the crazy things that the charismatics do, by holding your hand over your head, and rolling your eyeballs heavenward, and falling over backwards in a faint, and making a fool out of yourselves. If that were all that was required (and some of you have a great deal of talent for doing that sort of thing), you'd be the most spiritual people we ever saw. But being spiritual is something more than just making a fool out of yourself in public. It is being under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

How do I do that? You admit to him, when you've taken over your life, and say, "Father, this is wrong? 1 John 1:9: you confess your sins. And with that, you come back into that inner circle.

**Divisions in the Church**

Now Paul says, "I couldn't deal with you people because you're so carnal; you're so uneducated in the Word of God; and, you're babies in Christ. You've been Christians for a long time, and yet, you're nothing but infants." So, Paul says, "I fed you with milk, and not with solid food, for to this time, you're not able to bear it. Neither are you now able. For you are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions. Are you not yet carnal, and walk as men?" That is, as unsaved people: "For while one says, 'I am of Paul,' another says, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal?" There was this conflict of division within the church.

Paul's point is: "Why should this be? I came to you. You were a bunch of pagans headed for hell. I gave you the gospel, and God the Holy Spirit snatched you out; gave you understanding; and, brought you into Christ. And we formed the local church. And through that salvation, God has given you the foundation for your local church life as well as your personal lives: Jesus Christ. He's the foundation." Yet these Christians we're creating divisions by rallying around different spiritual leaders. And that kind of division indicated that these church members were out of temporal fellowship. They were out of the inner circle, and they were acting like a bunch of immature little babies.

In 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, Paul explains the role which he and Apollos actually had in the church at Corinth. Paul was an evangelist. He was a missionary. And Apollos was an itinerant preacher. He was an evangelist, too. He was a younger man, and had a great gift for communication. Verse 5 says, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" So, Paul, right off the bat, said that both he and Apollos had received their ministries from Jesus Christ – a ministry that was very specific. Each of them had a specific task to perform, which is the way the ministries of every Christian always is.

Paul says, "Both Apollos and I were brought into this work by Almighty God, and each of us had a specific job to do." Paul says, "I have planted; Apollos watered; but, God gave the increase." These men were not in competition with each other. They were united in fulfilling the will of God. And here you notice that Paul is comparing this local church congregation to a field in which he planted Bible doctrine. Apollos came and built upon that, and watered it, and cultivated that further. And then God caused that seed of doctrine to germinate, and to grow in spiritual maturity in the lives of some of them.

So, the only key essential person in all of this was God the Father. Therefore, Paul's point is that we Christians should be devoted to God, and to His Son, Jesus Christ – not to some human communicator that is the channel that God may use.

Verse seven says, "So then, neither is he that plants anything; neither he that waters; but, God that gives increase. Now he that plants, and he that waters are one." He and Apollos were one in spirit in their objective of fulfilling God's work for this church. And here's the key: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." Paul also knew that both he and Apollos would be rewarded in heaven if they did their specific jobs right – the jobs to which God had called each of them.

Furthermore, Paul was pointing out in this way that they are answerable to God alone for their ministries. They are God's stewards. They are God's servants. They're going to answer to Him. And they weren't interested in other people criticizing them and saying, "Well, this is not the way you should be doing it. This is not the thing you should be emphasizing – this teaching of doctrine, and this demanding of separation and sanctification." Paul says, "Do what you want. I know what is true. I've been taught by God Himself, and I'm delivering to you true Bible doctrine. What you do with it is up to you. And I can see by looking at you," Paul says, "that you've been doing very badly with it. That's why we have such carnality. That's why you have this division. That's why you're rallying to individual human leaders.

Then Paul says in verse 9: "For we are laborers together with God; we are God's cultivated field; and, we are God's building.

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-14, Paul changes his metaphor from describing the local church as a field to describing it as a building. Christians, he said, are united in the church to form God's temple on earth. And this temple is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. In verse 10, Paul says, "According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder and architect, I have laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ. And another builds on it, but let every man take heed now how he builds upon it." Paul now warns other Christian ministers of their responsibility for what they build in this local church on the foundation of Jesus Christ that he laid when he first led them to salvation. Others are going to come after Paul, and Paul says, "You people who are going to teach in this congregation had better be very careful how you handle that job.

Verse 11 says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is Jesus Christ." Some Christian leaders build spiritual maturity in congregations with divine good works of sound doctrine, which they are taught, while other ministers actually destroy spiritual maturity of the individual Christians, because they teach them false doctrine, or they don't teach doctrine at all, or they just belittle the doctrines of Scripture.

So, our pulpits are full with preachers who are doing the job that Paul says must be done: building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. And pulpits are filled with preachers who are undermining that objective. Many local churches, as a matter of fact, continue to operate, even after being led away from sound Bible doctrine by their ministers. They have a local church operation that's great. They have lots of people; lots of pews; and, lots of programs, but God's not in it. And the evidence of being out of line to the Word of God is clearly evident.

A mother from one of our metroplex Bible church called and said, "Can I ask you a question?" In the process, she gave me the story of her son who is about to get married in May. He's marrying a young woman who is attending a church. In this church, they have several ministers, because it's a big and going operation. And one of those ministers is a woman. When you come to this church to be married, you get married by whose turn it is of the staff to perform the ceremony. When they got there, guess who they got? Yep, they got the lady preacher. This Son, who's been reared in this good Bible church, recoiled and said, "That's out of line with the Word of God. Please give us one of the men." This church said, "Nothing doing. There's nothing wrong with a lady preacher in the pulpit. And it is her turn to perform the ceremony, and that's who's going to do it."

That's like saying, "We're going to have peace if we have to shove it down your throat. We are going to do it our way." He said, "Well, let me take you to Scripture. And this mother said, "When my husband and I talked to him, he said, 'Well, here's a problem in Scripture. The Bible is explicit about this. Women are not in authority in spiritual matters over men.'" And they said, "Well, that's just a cultural thing. That was how it was with Paul. That was the attitude of men then. They were all chauvinistic."

**Chauvinism**

I said, "Thank God." I said, "I'm glad I was talking to her, because I'm one of the most chauvinistic of all." This poor lady probably isn't smart enough to even know where the word "chauvinism" came from. She probably never even heard of Nicholas Chauvin, the corporal in Napoleon's army. Napoleon, after Waterloo, said, "We're through. We're going to have to surrender." And Chauvin said, "No, General, you are the greatest. There is nobody as fine as you are as a military man. Don't give in. We will conquer. You're the best."

So, what is chauvinism? Chauvinism is a great respect for what you are, and, as a Christian, what you are in Jesus Christ. And that is a form of great pride. And only the most ignorant Christian man does not want to be chauvinistic, and take his position as leader in spiritual things.

I haven't had the report. They were going to have a meeting this past Monday. I hope she calls me back. I gave her some appropriate things to say to this woman preacher, and suggested what they might want to do about it.

But this is what we're talking about – local churches that are so offbeat, but in the eyes of the world, they're the greatest, most going concerns they have. They have it all together, and they really don't need God. Yet they're completely out of line with the doctrines of Scripture. And the Christians are so ill-taught in that church that they did not rise up and say, "Wait a minute. We cannot have a woman in this pulpit, preaching in our public services, in places of spiritual authority, in the gathering of men and women."

So, Paul in verse 14, says, "If any man's work abide which he has built upon it (the foundation of Jesus Christ), he shall receive a reward." So, Paul says that every minister's work in the local church will be judged by Jesus Christ to reveal whether it was divine good or human good. Paul himself was awed by the thought of standing at the Judgment Seat of Christ to be evaluated for his life's work. And for this reason, later on, in 1 Corinthians in 9:27, Paul says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself shall be a castaway." And this word castaway looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "adokimos." The word "adokimos" means "to be disapproved after being tested."

What's he talking about? Paul says, "I take seriously standing at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and it really concerns me. It burdens me a great deal to think of standing before Jesus Christ. And when he tests my life's service, to find that it is flammable things that are destroyed by His judgment." Paul says, "I want to be tested and proven to be divine good in my works. I do not want the test to show that what I did was the product of my sin-nature human good, and thus worthless.

The opinions of people about Paul's ministry is not going to matter. The wisdom of the world and the wisdom of carnal Christians is foolishness with God. So, here in 1 Corinthians 3, the passage we're looking at in greater detail, Paul is in effect saying, "Those of you who are ministers and teachers of the Word of God in this local church ministry that has been based upon Jesus Christ, be careful how you build upon it." The same principle applies to you as individual believers. Your life is founded upon Jesus Christ. You take care how you build on that life.

In 2 Corinthians 5:10, Paul expands this principle of being judged for your works to every believer, not only to special spiritual leaders. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 Paul says, "For we must all appear (every one of us, as Christians) before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good (beneficial), or whether it be bad (worthless).

So, every Christian is to take care what he builds on the foundation of Jesus Christ in his own life. You will account for that. But every one of us, as Christians, should also, as 1 Corinthians 3 basically points out, take care of what we build in the local church ministry in the lives of other people. For that local church is based upon the same foundation as your personal life is; namely, Jesus Christ. And you will build on that foundation something.

So, in 1 Corinthians 3:14, we read, "If any man's word this work." This word "if" is the Greek particle "ei'." This is a first-class condition "if." Therefore, you may translate it as "since." This "if" does not indicate a doubt. It is indicating something that is true: "Since any man's work." It is true that some work that Christians produce survives at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every Christian is building something on the foundation of Jesus Christ in his life. Spiritual Christians are in that inner circle of temporal fellowship, so they're building a superstructure of divine good through the Holy Spirit. Carnal Christians are outside of that inner circle of temporal fellowship, so they're building a superstructure of human good works through their sin nature on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

**Each Christian**

The word "any man" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the word "tis." It's an indefinite pronoun, and it means "any man or woman." It is men and women. It is anyone. And what is referred to here is as their works is their Christian Service: "Since any Christian man's or woman's service abides." That word is "meno." This word means to remain. Here it connotes surviving the fire of God's evaluation at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is the constant status. It is present tense, which means that this is indestructible. It is active voice, which means that it is the condition of the works themselves because they are divine good works. Therefore, they're indestructible. The works remain. They're non-flammable.

What works? Well, he's referring to the works which he has built upon. And here we go to that word we've had before: "epoikodomeo." "Epoikodomeo" refers to your lifestyle as a Christian. And when he says, "If any man built upon it," he's referring to that foundation that he talked about back up in verse 12, where there is a foundation which is Jesus Christ. This is your lifetime as a whole being viewed. This is Christians in their day-by-day actively doing something with their lives.

**Receive**

That person is going to receive something. What he's going to receive is in the future. It is going to be given to him by Jesus Christ. He is not going to do it for himself. The word "receive" looks like this: "lambano." And "lambano" here is passive voice. It means that you don't pick your own rewards. It means that you get what you have coming. It is the result of God's decision.

**Earned**

What do you receive? Here it is. You get a "misthos." This word in the Greek Bible refers to something that is earned. Therefore, you're not dealing here with unearned grace salvation such as is described in Ephesians 2:8-9. If it's a reward, this word "misthos" indicates that you deserve it. You bought it. You paid for it. You earned it. It refers here to rewards which will enrich your eternity as a believer.

**Rewards**

The nature of this reward is not revealed. We are only told that those who receive them will experience enormous personal happiness. It'll mean a source of great joy to you to have these rewards. These rewards may involve a place of responsibility and authority in God's work in the Millennial Kingdom, as indicated in Luke 19:17.

**Medals of Honor**

These rewards, of course, also include the four rounds of honor (the medals of honor) that some of you believers are going to receive.

**The Crown of Rejoicing**

Some of you will get the crown of rejoicing – not all of you. This is the crown for maximum divine good production in life. This is for the Christian who consistently was a divine good producer: not an up and down; nor, now he's in, and now he's out (like most Christians – out). This is the Christian who gets on a high level, and he is consistent in divine good living. That Christian is going to be marked for all eternity with a crown on his head – a crown of rejoicing.

**The Crown of Righteousness**

There is the crown of righteousness for the Christian who spends a maximum of time logged in the inner circle of temple fellowship for Godly living. This is the Christian who stays in the inner circle, and isn't bouncing out forever into carnality. That Christians is going to be recognized for that kind of consistent living with the crown of righteousness.

**The Crown of Life**

There is the crown of life, which is for those few who advance up to super grace level of spiritual maturity – the Christians who build the five sides of the Pentagon of spiritual maturity which we have studied in the past. For the Christian who gets up to that super grace level and stays there consistently, there will be a crown of life to honor him.

Then there is a specialty crown – the crown of glory. This crown is only given to pastor-teachers – those who concentrate on feeding the flock with Bible doctrine truth. They among the ministry will be recognized as having done that with a special crown of glory.

These rewards are, in fact, you should understand, a bonus to your eternal life in heaven. And it is contingent upon divine good production and service.

Revelation 22:12, near the end of the Bible, interestingly enough, hits this business of rewards one more time. The book is almost through. The Bible is almost completed. And what in the world does God the Holy Spirit says in verse 12 but: "And behold (Jesus says), "I come quickly. And My reward is with Me to give every man (again, the word is everyone – man or woman) according as his work shall be." Now how clear could you be? And yet this is a doctrine which is practically unknown among most Christians. They don't have the foggiest idea about the principles of rewards: zilch – nothing about it. And yet the book of the revelation, the capstone of the Bible, before the Holy Spirit puts the pen down for the last time, He says, "I'm going to remind you one more time, it's not all on this side. You get your justification here. But the consequences of your setting yourself apart to God's service (your sanctification) – you take into eternity with you as well. And it's going to make a big difference of what kind of an eternity you have.

In 1 Corinthians 3:15, we have the other side. This is the loss for human good works. Here again, it begins with the word "if:" "If any man's." Again, it's the Greek word "ei." It is first-class condition. It is again "since," because some Christian's works are not going to survive. Instead: "If any Christian's work is burned up." The word "burned up" is the Greek word "katakaio." "Katakaio" means "to be consumed" or "to be destroyed." The first part of this word, "kata," is a preposition which emphasizes the idea of destruction. This word "kata" means here "down." So, it means "to be burned down." It means "gone completely." It's the Greek way of intensifying a concept.

Here the idea is (we would translate it as) "utterly burned up." And a lot of church activity on the part of a lot of sincere Christians who think they're serving God, and who think they're pleasing God, are going to find that all that they sent up there is going to be burned before their very eyes to a pile of ashes. This refers to a future event because this is a future tense, meaning the future Judgment Seat of Christ. It is, again, passive voice. This is not going to be done by you. You're not going to stand up there and say, "Oh, that's junk; that's junk; and, that's good." God is going to make the decision and say, "That's junk. Put the torch to it. That's good. That stays." It is a passive decision. It is made on the part of God, not us.

**Loss**

Those of you who suffer that are going to suffer loss. The word is "zemioo." This means "to forfeit something." Here you're going to forfeit rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Christian forfeits eternal rewards which, I must remind you, God is so eager to give you, based upon his plan of works for you. This is future. This loss will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It's passive. This is done to the Christian by God's judgment of his works. It's indicative mood – the statement of a fact here.

This loss includes two things. It includes the worthless human good works that you offer to God. But unfortunately, it also includes the loss of those beneficial divine good works that He laid out for you to do, and which you never did. So, you lose on both sides. You give him junk, and he burns it up. So, you suffer loss of rewards. He gives you quality that you refuse to take hold of and perform. So, you lose that. And, actually, when you lose divine good potential works, which sometimes is teaching people the Word of God; evangelizing; or, leading people to salvation – those people don't lose out. God simply turns to another believer who is standing by and says, "I know you're tired. I know you're strapped. I know you have more than you can carry. But I want you to take over because this Christian doped up, and I need you to take up the slack." And how many Christians among us have we seen, indeed, who step in and take up the slack, where others are sitting around and riding in their rose gardens?

The loss of reward is the result of following the desires of your own sin nature in the use of your time; your talents; and, your treasures: nothing more; and, nothing less. And you need not compliment yourself. This is what it's all about. You decided, under the guidance of your sin nature, to follow your own time; your own talents; and your own plans for your time, your treasures, and your talents.

Christians who are experiencing loss will remember one day what they could have done in God's work to have made their lives merit eternal rewards. You will remember what could have been. That's going to be tough. Your memory goes out with you. Therefore, 1 John 2:28 tells us what many Christians are going to experience, probably most because of their being so ill and unprepared: "And now, little children, abide in Him." That term "abide in Him" means to stay in temporal fellowship, so that you're on track with God's guidance: "That when he shall appear (the Judgment Seat of Christ), we may have confidence going into His presence," knowing that we have been operating under the conscious purpose of obeying the guidance of the Spirit of God, and we knew enough about Scripture to know how to be compatible with how God works: "That we would be made into His presence with confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Yes, a lot of Christians are going to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, shuffling their feet around, looking down at the ground, just as ashamed as they can be, as the record comes up of what they performed. It's going to be a sorry record for most of the Christian community, because pastor-teacher's aren't doing the job.

This is a chilling and a sad word, I think, in the Bible. And it will result (this kind of shame – this kind of memory of what they could have done). And worst of all, what they were planning to do someday, but they just never got around to it. They're going to be ashamed, and then tears are going to start coming down their cheeks. That's why we read in Revelation 21:4, at the very end, again, of Scripture, near the end of the Bible, which tells us that: "God Himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There should be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things are passed away." Finally, the record is in. The decision is made. And the Lord can't change the record. What you did, you did. What you sent up there, you sent up there. And what was trash is trash. It was trash when you sent it, and it's going to be human-good trash when it gets up there. But He is going to come and put His arm around you; wipe the tears away; and say, "OK, let's go on. You've got eternity before you. You're here. You're not in the lake of fire. And you're not going to be as enriched as some of these other believers are. You're not walking around with a crown of recognition of honor on your head, but it's going to be great." And you yourself will say, "Yes, Lord, you're right. I've got exactly what I deserve." That will be a more painful admission, having now been informed.

**Human Good vs. Divine Good**

So, what constitutes work that survives? It's not entirely the work itself that determines its value. Please remember that. It's what is done under the motivation of the filling of the Holy Spirit. That's what makes the difference. The Spirit-filled Christian is moving in the plan of God, and he's producing divine good works. The carnal Christian is moving outside of the plan of God, and he is producing human good works. Both Christians may be doing the identical same thing. They both may be meeting human needs. They both may be financing God's work. They both may be teaching the Bible. But one does it under the motivation of the sin nature with all the glory and eyes on yourself; and, the other one does it for the Lord's glory with his eyes on the Lord, under the motivation of the Holy Spirit. That's what makes it human good or divine good. Indestructible works of divine good are motivated by the Holy Spirit, while destructible works of human good are motivated by Satan. But they may be the same identical work – the same identical act of Christian service. One set of works brings glory to God. The other set brings glory to man.

It's more than just engaging in local church activities. Worthy works are produced by a spiritual maturity structure, while unworthy works are produced by the loss patterns of the old sin nature. Indestructible works are the product of divine viewpoint motivation. Destructible works come from human viewpoint motivation. The apostle Paul himself, here, as we indicated in 1 Corinthians 9:27, was concerned that he would operate on the capacities of human abilities, and thus pursue human viewpoint ideals.

**But He Himself will be Saved**

However, there is a point of comfort, even in this dark picture. For in verse 15, after the inevitability of suffering loss for human good production, Paul goes on and says, "But." The Greek word is "de," indicating an instant clarification. In contrast to the loss of the reward, the Christian will not lose something else because of his carnal lifestyle: "He himself." This word "he himself" is expressed in the Greek Bible in a way that is emphatic. Great stress is put upon the fact that the very same Christian, who is shedding tears over the loss of rewards he could have had, is not going to lose another thing – the very same Christian. "He himself will be saved." The Greek word is "sozo." The word "sozo" refers to personal salvation from the lake of fire. It's future tense. At the time of the Judgment Seat of Christ, he doesn't lose his salvation. He just loses his rewards. It's passive. It is always passive when you deal with salvation, because God does it. It's not your decision. It's not your works. It's done by God alone. This is passive voice again. It's indicative mood.

The Christian's carnal life does not affect his personal regeneration. Being born-again spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ simply cannot be reversed. John 10:28-29, for example, make that clear when Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand. My Father, who gave them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

To that you may add 1 Peter 1:3-5, which reemphasized that same point: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again, unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept." Kept in what? "Kept in your salvation by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

The Christian who suffers the loss of rewards in heaven does not suffer the loss of eternal life in heaven. Passive voice stresses salvation dependent upon the God's action, not upon the believer's actions. Salvation is secure because no man cannot do what God has done in providing that salvation.

**God has Ordained our Good Works**

The carnal Christian, therefore, retains the benefits of Ephesians 2:8-9. Let me read that again. He retains the benefits of: "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that (salvation), not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." But what he loses is the next verse, verse 10. He retains Ephesians 2:8-9 of grace salvation. What he loses is verse 10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has ordained that we should walk in them."

Have you got that? God has ordained a pattern of specific good works that He has for you to perform. He give you spiritual gifts – abilities to perform. He gives you the logistical grace to provide you with the means to do it. Now all you have to do is get up and get rolling. He has a plan. He has an outline. He has a purpose. And what you do is perform. If you do not, you lose out on Ephesians 2:10, even while retaining Ephesians 2:8-9.

There is no evil of sin or human good from the sin nature in the life of a Christian which will not exact a fearful and eternal total. And I hope that I have made that clear.

1 Corinthians 3:15 says, "He shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire." The Greek word is "pur," and it refers to fire as we know it. Here it is a picture of God's evaluating judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It pictures the Christian escaping the flames of hell through the flame of God's evaluation of his life.

**The Time of the Judgment Seat of Christ**

The time of the Judgment Seat of Christ is after the rapture when believers are in heaven. In Luke 14:14, we're told that rewards are associated with a time of resurrection. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 tell us that the Christian's resurrection is part of the rapture event. This is part of the first resurrection when the church saints are raised. Rewards for service thus come with the resurrection of the believer: either from the grave; or, going alive into heaven at the rapture.

Revelation 19:7-8 has this, to summarize for us. This, furthermore, indicates that the rewards are at the point of resurrection, after the rapture, when the Judgment Seat of Christ will be held: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the land is come, and His wife has made herself ready (referring to the church, the wife of Christ – His bride), and to her (the church) was granted that she should be arrested and fine linen, and clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints." You have the plural righteousnesses of saints. When we come back, at the Second Coming with Christ, after having been in heaven for seven years during the tribulation period, and are being judged for our lifestyle and our works, what are we going to come back dresses in? You're going to come back dressed in your divine good works. This righteousness does not apply to the righteousness unto salvation. That would be singular. Righteousnesses – this is very explicit by the Holy Spirit to let you know that He's talking about your divine good works.

Some of you who are very stylish conscious, and some of you who like to wear designer clothes, which never made much sense to me. I always wear designer clothes. I've worn them all my life. Every object I've ever worn, somebody designed. So, those of you who are kind of elitists, and who like labels (I suppose that's what you mean by designer clothes – you like labels), just think what you're going to look like that Easter Sunday morning, when you put your duds on of your divine good production, because that's what you're going to come back wearing.

This is not the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers for justification. That's singular. This is the rewards which you have received up there in heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ. These rewards in the Bible are associated with that day when Jesus comes for his own (1 Corinthians 4:5, 2 Timothy 4:8, Revelation 22:12). All of that is referring to the rapture day.

So, the awarding of the Christian takes place between the rapture and the Second Advent of Jesus Christ after the seven-year tribulation period here on this earth. I leave these verses for you to read on your own as the admonition for you this day to choose whether you will obey God's call to service, and the pursuit of storing treasures in heaven: Mark 8:34-37, Titus 3:8, Luke 12:15-21.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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