***Principles of Storing Rewards in Heaven  
  
RV55-02***

We are studying the letter to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:7-13. In Revelation 3:10, we read, "I come quickly. Hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown." The Bible makes it very clear that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ as one's substitute in payment for sin, and is received as a gift from God. The Bible also makes it very clear that God has a plan of Christian service for each believer which receives awards in heaven in addition to the salvation gift.

**Rewards**

The Greek word for "rewards" is "misthos." "Misthos" means "wages." It is something that a person earns, and it is something that he has coming. Therefore, it has nothing to do with the gift of salvation. Salvation is a grace gift received by faith. Rewards are something that we earn once we have become born-again believers. These rewards for divine good production will affect the nature of one's eternity. The Bible says that, for some, there will be gain in heaven; for others, there will be loss in heaven.

This divine good production requires the production of a spiritual maturity structure in the soul of the believer, as well as maintaining the position in the inner circle of temporal fellowship. Spiritual status is controlled by God the Holy Spirit. When He controls, we are in the inner circle. We have confessed all known sins. Then we are spiritual believers, and then we can produce divine good to the degree of our spiritual maturity.

The Bible warns believers not to become discouraged in Christian service; not to lose your zeal; and, worst of all, not to become indifferent. There are many people who do not take the Bible seriously, or who do not appreciate the character of God. Some of these people will never be born again because they do not take the Bible seriously. They believe what Wellhausen told them. They believe that Wellhausen knew what he was talking about when he suggested that the Bible was just a patchwork of information put together by men on their own. This will cost them their souls. There are other Christians who do not take the Bible seriously on the subject of rewards. There is a great deal of resistance to this among believers, and there's a great deal of resistance to this among preachers. This is very interesting because this is exactly where you would expect Satan to focus his efforts – to discourage believers from seeking to earn rewards, which means that they would not be concerned about maintaining the spiritual capacity to perform that service. They would not take seriously what they do with their lives.

So, we have got a great deal of indifference. There are Christians who go from day to day of their lives through mundane routines. They are doing things that need to be done, but which are not done in terms of the perspective of being done in order to prepare them for opportunities of Christian service. There are some Christians that have gone through this whole week, and they have done one speck of Christian service. Those people are indifferent. They're just real cool cats when it comes to the business of rewards in Scripture. But I must remind you again that when we deal with an absolute God, there are going to be some absolute conclusions. In the very near future, we are all going to find out who's right and who's wrong about the business of taking the Bible seriously, and about the business of taking rewards seriously.

You can review your own life, and you can see how much it was worth to you this week, in terms of eternity, compared to the long time that that eternity is going to be your dwelling place. You can just look through, and make your judgment. If you haven't given it a Fig Newton's thought, then I guarantee you that that's exactly what you're going to get back from God – not a Fig Newton's worth of reward. God does not compromise His integrity on salvation, and He doesn't compromise His integrity on rewards. The word "misthos" means "wages." God is not in a welfare program. He's not going to hand out any rewards and treasures to people who did not earn them.

So, the Bible tries to be very definitive on the hazards of ignoring the business of rewards. Let's look at just a few Scriptures that point this out to us. In Galatians 6:9, we read, "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we don't faint." Have you ever gotten tired of divine good production – something that maybe you've done every summer for many years, or something that you've done on a regular basis? And I'll tell you something else that the devil does. The devil goes around and uses human beings to try to discourage you from doing divine good service. You will be sneered at; you will be scoffed at; and, you'll be made fun of. One of the things that the devil will say is, "Haven't you done this long enough? You're doing this all the time. Isn't it time to do something else?" And if you're a sucker, you'll eat that up. Just know that you're listening to the voice of Satan, and that you're listening to a soul who is disoriented to God's thinking.

Just don't forget the bottom line. When you stand at the "bema" of Jesus Christ, and they take out your record, there's only one person they're going to talk to, and there's only one person that's going to experience the consequences: you. It won't be all those big mouths that try to discourage you. It won't be all those smart mouths who tried to belittle you and degrade you. They're going to be home free. It's not going to be their problem. It will be your problem. And don't you ever forget that the privacy of the priesthood of the believer means that you stand on your own two feet before God. So, you take your personal responsibility seriously.

Paul knew that he was writing to a group of people here in Galatia who were blowing it left and right when it came to their Christian lives. They were hung up in legalism. They were destroying their spiritual maturity. Along with it, they were discouraging themselves in Christian service. They were incapacitating themselves for any kind of divine good production. "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we don't faint.

Hebrews 12:3 says, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself (the Lord Jesus Christ), lest you be wearied and faint in your mind." Look at the Lord Jesus Christ who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. Who are you and I to go around and feel sorry for ourselves because people are ugly to us? They don't appreciate us. They treat us indifferently. They make fun of us. They think we're a bunch of nuts. They contradict what we say is the truth, and what God thinks, even though it's based on the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered that and infinitely more. He stood in there firm and true. He didn't knuckle under, and He didn't collapse. The writer of Hebrews says, "Don't you do it either."

2 Thessalonians 3:13 says, "But you, brethren, be not weary in well-doing." Don't get tired of divine good production and the storing of treasures in heaven.

Then, in Philippians 1:23-24, Paul says, "For I'm in a strait (I'm in a bind) between two: having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." The apostle Paul says, "I really would like to go to heaven. I am tired of the drag. I am tired of the demands. I am tired of the pressure. I'm sick and tired of being beaten up, and run out of town, and scoffed at, and everything else. I really would like to go home and be with the Lord. That sure would be a lot nicer." But even when that longing rose in his heart, he had to remind himself that what he had to offer in divine viewpoint information was so important to the people to whom he ministered that it overrode all his personal inconvenience and suffering. He could say, "While I'd like to be with the Lord, for your sake, I have to stand here and keep cranking out Christian service."

I want to remind you that the apostle Paul is only an example of service to you and me. You are in no different position. You may consider yourself the most unworthy and insignificant person, and the most innocuous and unobserved individual, but I guarantee you that there are people in the circle of your acquaintances to whom you are the choice line of communication. And if you don't come across, then their securing of God's blessing is going to be infinitely harder to come by. This is what the Lord has called you to do: to stay here; to stay under the gun; and, to be a soldier in the angelic conflict. Paul had to do it, and you and I have to do it.

So, it's easy to get enthusiastic in the strong side of our old sin nature. All of our sin natures have a strong side and a weak side. Out of the weak side comes all that lasciviousness. Out of the strong side comes all human good. Both of those qualities, sins and our human good, are evil in God' sight. Nothing that the old sin nature produces is anything but evil. But out of that do-goodism side of our sin nature, there pours out an enthusiasm that gets very high on doing some kind of service for God. But there is little consistent service performed apart from the stability that comes through doctrine and God the Holy Spirit. Christians lose their rewards because Satan influences them to be inactive in serving the Lord.

How many Christians are careless about the service of financial support of the local church ministry? That's one of the great services we perform, some to a greater degree than others, because they are gifted in that way and prepared to do that. But everybody serves the Lord with a responsible financial contribution and support. How many these Christians are standing in church singing, "Jesus, my Jesus, How I love Thee?" Then are they playing the con game with their financial status and their good life that they lead? While they strip down the work of the Lord in the local church operation, the workers who are busting their backs are trying to do with little to accomplish a great deal? How many promise to assume a church responsibility, and then they ignore it? Boy, I could give you a list of people like the son whose father said, "I want you to go out in the field and work." He said, "No, I won't," but then he did. At least that wasn't too bad, but then he had the other son who said, "Yes, I will," and then he doesn't show up. How lopsided we are in the Christian community! We have all the sons who say, "Yeah, I'll do it," and then we never hear from them again.

That's the old whale technique. They're up on top, blowing out the blow hole and getting all excited about serving the Lord: "I'll do it." Then they sound off, and we're up on top waiting for it to happen. We're looking around. The seas are getting choppy: "Where is this guy? We don't see him. They're not there. Then after a while, sometime later, he surfaces again; shoots out the blow hole; says, "I'll do it;" and, then he goes down again, and we're standing around waiting to get it done. So, don't kid yourself about this Christian Service business. The devil is out there making people whales who like to make pronouncements of promises, and then disappear under the waters.

Some people have sloppy preparation and performance in a ministry. Many Sunday school teachers are grabbing their literature the morning of the class, or late the night before, to try to learn what they're going to teach those kids: eternal welfare – the planting of the seed of the Word of God, and they're coming into it with that kind of a sloppy performance. Or they can't even show up on time, or they haven't prepared themselves with the Word of God or with prayer. Christians are telling us they have to save their time and their strength for supposedly important matters, because, at the moment, Christian service isn't that important. They have tremendous other so-called responsibilities that they must be faithful to. Boy, am I looking forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ. Am I looking forward to the rapture, when all these con artists are really going to get it? I'm going to push right up to the front row and watch every one of them go by. They have all the important things that they have to do in life.

One of the evidences of the con artist is his sloppy church attendance. He's got an arrogance that he can make it without the instruction in the Word of God, and without being jerked back into reorientation of the Word of God. Pretty soon the devil's got him. Or they substitute an emotional orgy in order to convince themselves that they are devoted Christians. But when it comes to Christian service, they are zeros. You go ahead and kid yourself. You go ahead and con yourself. You go ahead and pretend. You go ahead and carry on your delusional Disneyland imagination world if you want to. But I guarantee you that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, this is going to become serious business, and all the pretense is going to be stripped away.

**Not Doing Something Else**

So, Christian Service, and staying with it, is very important to you personally in terms of rewards, to all the people who are going to be informed and influenced by you when you stay on the job, and you incorporate your life into the Lord's service. Again, I remind you, that the basic principle of Christian service is not doing something else. So, please don't come to me tell me why you couldn't do something that you could do for the Lord because you have something else to do. I already know that. The issue of Christian service is that you don't do something else, so that the Lord's service can have a priority.

**Spiritual Reversionism**

There are certain principles that I want to call to your attention now before we get into the subject of crowns. That is the final stage of the rewards study. These are the principles of Christian service and the techniques that the devil uses to con you out of rewards. First of all, there is the principle of spiritual reversionism. This is a very important principle for you to be aware of. All of us are well-acquainted with the law of spiritual growth. When children come into our home, one of the things we discover about them is that they grow. And they always grow in one direction. They get bigger. They never shrink. Mothers are not afraid of washing their children for fear they're going to shrink. They're always getting bigger. The more they eat, the bigger they get. The growth goes in one direction. It doesn't go back in the other direction.

Christians tend to apply what they observe in physical growth to the pattern of spiritual life. That's not true. In spiritual life, the growth is not always in one direction. There is a certain arrogance on the part of some people who have attended church all their lives. They are the old pillars of the church type. And they assume that because they've been around all this time, that they have always been moving in the direction of growth. That's not true. A lot of those people who think they are very staunch members of the body of Christ have been shrinking into nothing. In the spiritual life, the growth is up and down. The growth can go up, but you can shrink back down.

This is indicated several places in the Bible. For example, in 1 Corinthians 2:10 through 1 Corinthians 3:3, we have the teaching about the fact that there are two kinds of Christians. There is what is called the carnal Christian, and there is the spiritual Christian in that passage. And what that passage is telling us is that there is a realm of eternal fellowship such that a person trusts in Christ as savior, and he enters that circle of eternal life. Then there is the realm of temporal fellowship, and he enters that at the point of salvation, and he is in the status of being a spiritual Christian, because here God the Holy Spirit runs his life. But when he sin (when he rebels), he steps out of that circle, and now he's in a place of carnality. He is now a carnal Christian. He is still saved, but he is no longer storing treasures in heaven, and he is no longer capable of divine good production. So, the very fact that the Bible teaches us that this relationship is possible indicates that people go up and down in their spiritual lives. They go forward, or they slide backwards. The spiritual life is an inclined plane. You're going up, and when that motion stops, you're going to go back the other direction. This is a very important principle to observe: the law of spiritual growth.

This is also indicated to us by 1 John 1:9 which gives us the technique of the confession of known sins. Once you're out of the inner circle of fellowship, the only way to get back in is to confess personal sins. So, you resort to 1 John 1:9 which promises that citing those sins to God brings immediate restoration to temporal fellowship. You are forgiven for what you have done. Until you do that, you are not forgiven. Don't go to God and say, "Please forgive me of my sins, because God is saying, "What are you talking about? What sins?" He wants you to cite them: "This is what I thought; this is what I said; this is what I did; this was my mental attitude; and, it was wrong. Here's the human good, and it was evil. I confess it." That restores you to the inner circle of fellowship. So, the very fact we have 1 John 1:9 shows us that the Christian life is an up-and-down situation.

Then in Mark 6:11, we have this fact that the spiritual growth is up and down indicated by the fact that negative people are to be left behind. Mark 6:11 says that we are to leave behind those who are negative in our ministry, and we are to shake the dust of our feet off against them, and we are to move to somebody who is positive. This shows us that people can be negative and positive. They can go in both directions. This is true not only of unbelievers – it is true believers as well.

You and I, knowing that, should be aware of the fact that those whom we minister to in Christian service (those that we teach) can go in either direction. We have no assurance of what the spiritual status will be of people under our direction and care. We have no assurance whatsoever. We can have a Christian who is spiritually six feet tall, who overnight can revert to a two-foot infant because of negative volition. That's all it takes: rebellion against God. And here's somebody that you took a great deal of satisfaction in. You put a lot of time in; you put a lot of effort in; you taught him; you spent time with him; you put yourself out; and, you were so delighted to see the spiritual progress, and now he slides all the way back down. What do you do? The devil says, "You see, it isn't worth it." And you say, "You're right." You throw your hands up, and do exactly what the devil wants you to do – to quit serving. When you do that, you quit storing treasures in heaven.

So, my point is: learn this spiritual principle. You can only deal with people in their present status. Some people are very volatile. They go up and down spiritually. Some are a joy of spiritual consistency, while others are a disappointment of spiritual adultery. They're always getting tangled up with the world. They're always getting tangled up with the system that Satan has devised, and they do not go forward consistently.

**Demas**

One of the saddest examples of this that we have in the Bible is a fellow named Demas. In Colossians 4:14, we have some very delightful record about this man when he was on positive volition. He was an associate of the apostle Paul – part of his touring group. Colossians 4:14 says "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." That expression right there indicates that Demas is part of the team. He's with the apostle Paul. He's one of the people who's working, and the apostle Paul is so delighted to have him on the team. He's proud of him, and he sends greetings from him.

In Philemon 24, we read, "Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke: my fellow workers." That's an honored company for Demas to be mentioned in. People like Mark, Luke, and Aristarchus are the elitists of Paul's ministerial traveling group. Demas is one of them.

Turn to 2 Timothy 4:10, and see what the apostle Paul had to learn about serving the Lord, because something strange happened to Demas along the line. Here is the last letter that Paul ever wrote in his life. Not long after he finished this letter, his head was put on the chopping block, and he was executed in Rome. But in this final letter that he wrote, he gives us the sad report about Demas: "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed into Thessalonica." Demas forsook Paul. He fell in love with Satan's world system. That's tough, isn't it? This was a man who was on his staff; a man that you hold in the highest esteem; and, a man whose name you include as greetings from the leaders of the New Testament church. Then later you have to say, "The guy deserted us. He went spiritually insane." That's what happened to Demas. He went spiritually insane. When you depart from a group that is sound in the Word of God; that's doing the Lord's work; that's teaching the Word of God; that's explaining it from the original languages of Scripture; that's standing against the world's system; that is not impressed by the world system; that's not intimidated by the world system; and, that is willing to call the world's system the degraded thing that it is, and you desert such a church, you're crazy. You have gone spiritually insane.

If you were capable of thinking things through, you'd be able to go back and say, "I sat in church one day, and I heard this, and I went negative. I saw this, and I went negative. I got this mental attitude; it created a root of bitterness in me; and, it started me on the downward path. I violated the mental attitude patterns of Scripture. I finally went spiritually insane." And when you go spiritually insane, your mentality becomes the inverted lens of a photographer's camera, and everything comes out backwards. So, you love the people you should dislike, and you dislike the people you should love. All of your loyalties are false. All of your choices are just the opposite of what God wants them to be. Spiritual insanity is a terrible thing. And don't think that you are above it. Demas was riding high as an example to everybody. Then he began going negative to the Word of God and to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and he went crazy. He went out to the world.

**Means for Maintaining Spiritual Stability**

There are certain means for maintaining your spiritual stability. They are briefly this: Obviously, feeding on the Word of God daily. This is the intake of Bible doctrine into the mentality of the soul. Then there is positive volition response to the doctrine which you have learned under the grace system of perception. Then there is maintaining the status of spirituality through the use of the technique of the confession of known sins. Then there is Christian service done as unto the Lord under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is not done for personal glory, or by intimidation, or because somebody has pressured you into it. Then there is the use of the battle tactic of prayer above all. If you do those things, it would be very difficult for you to go spiritually insane. I would say that is practically impossible.

It is when you fail in these things: feeding on the Word of God daily; positive response to the doctrines that you've heard; maintaining confession of known sins; serving as unto the Lord for the Lord's glory (but you're serving – you're not sitting around bemoaning your condition, but you're fighting it out even under adverse conditions); maintaining the fellowship with the local assembly, even when all the people aren't as nice as they should be (and you still know how to get along with them, and tolerate them); and, using the battle tactic of prayer – this is what wins every time. Now, because some of the people we teach fall into reversionism spiritually, that is no justification for dropping out of serving the Lord.

**John Mark**

Another man that was a disappointment to the apostle Paul was John Mark. John Mark was on the original team of the first missionary tour with Barnabas and Paul. Mark got out on the trail, and after a while, he found what a tough job it was to be a missionary, and he turned tail and went for home. That's a loathsome thing to do. That's why I try to be more emphatic in our summer camp ministry to warn people what it's like. I've had them do that many times, and I pitied these people. They all think they're so smug, and high and mighty, and wonderful folks. They get into summer camp, and something twists their nose out of joint, or they came for the wrong reason. Then they turn tail, and suddenly they go home. That's a John Mark. We have to go to Scripture and say, "Well, what is your attitude toward a person like that?" Here you are, depending upon them. They have a duty responsibility. The organization has been set up counting on this person. Now they leave a hole, because something about their own personal lives is more important at that point than the lives of those to whom they have committed themselves in that ministry of camp.

John Mark deserted. Nobody likes a deserter in combat. When you are in a Christian service activity, it's a combat situation. What did Paul do? Did Paul say, "I'm sick of this training of these missionaries? These kids are no good. They're not like they used to be in the old days, and I'm not going to fool with them anymore." No, instead Paul said, "I'm sorry about Mark. I won't take him." Mark's uncle, Barnabas, said, "Oh, let's give him another chance. Paul said, "Not on my tour, you don't." The contention came so great that Paul finally said, "Look, Barnabas, you set up another team. You take Mark, and you go with him. I'm going to set up another team. I'll take Silas, and I'll go with him, and we'll go out separately, because I'm not going to go out in the field again and find that the people on our team desert us when we're in the middle of the battle.

However, Paul didn't quick training missionaries. He saw Timothy on one of those tours, and he grabbed him, and he trained him. He saw Titus on another tour, and he grabbed him. Both of those were real princely guys, and he developed his missionary personnel. In time, the Word of God indicates to us, Paul looked back and he said, "John, Mark is of great service to me. John Mark got his head screwed on straight. We don't know what happened to Demas, but Mark came back. Mark got back on the trail. Mark started storing treasures in heaven once more. In time, he grew tall again and was a valuable member of Paul's team.

Therefore, a Christian worker with a divine viewpoint frame of reference always recognizes the possibility of reversionism in those to whom they minister. Don't be squelched. Don't be disappointed in the fact that you have tried your best to minister to somebody, and they bomb out. You can do the same. Pity them that that has been their situation.

I want to remind you that what people do with their spiritual opportunity is their responsibility. You will not answer at the Judgment Seat of Christ for what other people do. You will only answer for what you do. Your job is to inform. What they do with it is up to them. Can you imagine the agonizing, sleepless hours that I (as a pastor-teacher) would go through if I were going to have to answer for the negative volition of people who listen to me? It is a great comfort to me to know that my job is to tell you, and your job is to suffer for your bad decisions. And you will. The negative volition of others is a matter of your personal priesthood. Others are not held accountable.

**Noah**

So, keep on as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, setting forth the Word of Life, and leave the results with God. One great example of that is this fellow named Noah. In Luke 17:26, the Bible recognizes and honors Noah for the fact that he stayed on the job while others were turning their backs on him and being negative to his ministry: "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate and drink; they married wives; and, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came, and destroyed them all." Just remember that the pathetic end of the story is that the people who are indifferent to your ministry (that should not discourage you from keeping on in your ministry) are all going to be destroyed. Their negative volition is going to be very expensive.

In Noah's day, there were seven people who believed Noah: his family. The rest of the world, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of human beings, dismissed him as a fundamentalist nut. They kept going around saying. "Ah, that fundamentalist Noah – he's building that crazy boat. He thinks that water is going to come up, and he's going to be able to float." Of course, they were right. It had never rained, so how could you get water out in the middle of a field. Only a crazy, stupid fundamentalist would do a thing like that. But Noah kept saying, "Yeah, it is dumb, but God told me to do it. So, I'm building it here. My sons believe me, and they're helping me. And their wives believe them, and they're standing by their husbands, and my wife believes me, and she's standing by me." And sure enough, the day came. Noah and a sample of the animals were preserved. The rest of them died.

**Lot**

We also have the example of Lot in Luke 17:28, where a man who stood by pronouncing the truth and did not get discouraged, so his rewards continued: "And as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted; they built. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Then adding to this, 2 Peter 2:7-8 looks at the same experience of Lot: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy manner of life of the wicked, for that righteous man dwelling among them in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." This man suffered a great deal because he was a godly man. He was not always a wise godly man in his choices, but he was a godly man. It was an agony to him – the filth that surrounded him in his society. The society that he tried to witness to, anchored in homosexuality, just went on into destruction in time.

So, principle number one to remember is the principle of spiritual reversionism. People that you minister to do not always go forward, and it will discourage you. I guarantee you that the devil will throw this up into your face when it happens to discourage you from keeping on in your service for the Lord.

**The Security of Rewards**

A second important principle is the principle of the security of rewards. Somebody rushed up after the last session and said, "What happens to my rewards that I have earned when I go negative?" That's a good question. I'm happy to tell you that every believer has, in effect, a warehouse in heaven. This warehouse is designed to contain all of the rewards that God has for you as the result of a plan of Christian service which has been tailor-made for you specifically. In Ephesians 2:10, we read, "For we believers are His (God's) workmanship created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of good works, which God has (very specifically) before ordained, that we should walk in them:" a pattern of good works designed by God for our specific execution. Every Christian has a warehouse in heaven for storing his treasures that result from his divine good production, and that result from his execution of God's plan for his life of service.

Therefore, in Matthew 6:19-20, we read "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Storing treasures in heaven is a reality. It is not just some kooky idea that preachers have invented. God has provided a store room of proper capacity for filling with the treasures that He has designed for you. What's the disappointment then? The disappointment is going to be partial storage. Christian service which is done in the direction and the power of God the Holy Spirit is divine good, and that is going to be rewarded by the Lord.

In Mark 9:41, we read, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name (that means because I have led him – because you belong to Christ), verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." I like that verse because it points up to us that it isn't these spectacular big things that God rewards you for. It isn't because you speak to stadiums full of people who move out of the isles and get saved. It is because, in little ways, you execute what God the Holy Spirit lays upon your heart to do. That's the kind of service most of us do, and that's the kind of service that God has designed for us which is going to fill our storehouse in heaven. He has provided a storeroom of proper capacity.

It's just disappointment to get to heaven, and look into your store room, and realize how many rewards you have lost. When the Bible speaks about loss of rewards, it means lost opportunities of Christian service for storing treasures in heaven. Once you have stored a treasure in that storehouse, it's there. You can become the most carnal creature on the face of the earth, but whatever treasures you have stored, they're secure, as your salvation is secure. They are there, and God's integrity will not allow you to go unrewarded for what you have done under the leading of the Spirit of God. The disappointment is going to be for you to look into your storehouse and see the thing half-empty or three-quarters empty, and then you're going to realize what might have been. There is no greater tragedy than to stand in heaven and realize what might have been had you gotten your life on track with the leading of the Spirit of God.

For this reason, our investment of service for one who turns negative is not lost either. Each believer's rewards are secure, even if the one for whom he earned the rewards should fall into reversionism. People who are completely negative toward the Word of God can be the instrument of your earning rewards. It's not what they do; but it's what you do. 1 Corinthians 3:8: "Now he that plants and he that waters are one. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." How other people respond does not affect your reward.

All past rewards are safe and secure, even if you become a reversionist yourself. Falling into reversionism just stops the storage – that's all. You don't go any further. So, don't let Satan discourage your service because of your spiritual failures. Your rewards are untouched. Just get back into temporal fellowship.

**Lag Time for Results**

Then there is one more principle that the devil uses to keep you from storing churches in heaven. That is the principle of the lag in results. There is lag time in spiritual results. In the parable of the sower and the seed, we have exemplified for us the process of a farmer. Christian service is like a farmer's work. The seed is planted, and then it takes time to germinate and to grow to maturity. There's a time lag between when you put the seed in, and when you get the results of your planting. In mark 4:28-29, we read, "For the earth brings forth fruit of itself. First the blade, then the ear; after that the full grain in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come." So it says: first the blade; then the ear; and, then the full grain. That is a very important verse. This is how spiritual progress comes about. This is the way you invest your life. You're sowing seed, and the seed you're sowing is the Word of God. That seed is going, in time, to produce. But it is necessary to keep on cultivating the plants to keep out the bugs; the weeds; and, the predators. Spiritual nurturing is constantly needed, if that that you have planted is going to reach spiritual maturity.

So Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Hebrews 10:25 says that we are not to neglect the assembly of ourselves together because that's where we're cultivating and nurturing what we have planted. So, Satan tries to discourage us because our planting shows such slow results. Christian workers are often ready to doubt the worth of their efforts in the Lord's service because there's such a time lag between the planting and the visible results of the seed that is growing.

It is the job of Christians to inform other people – to plant doctrine in the minds of those believers. It is the job of God the Holy Spirit to bring forth the fruit. You are rewarded because you planted the seed. For every unbeliever that you take an introductory tape to that tells them how to go to heaven; you give him that; and, if he listens to it, the seed has been planted. You receive a reward. He may go negative and spend eternity in the lake of fire, but you receive a reward no matter what he did. However, if you become discouraged because so many people do not believe, you will be sidetracked from service, forgetting that many times it takes a while before the seed which has been planted comes alive. Your job is to keep planting. It is the job of God the Holy Spirit to bring the maturity (the germination).

In 1 Corinthians 3:5, we read, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed? Even as the Lord gave to every man, I have planted; Apollos watered; but, God gave the increase. So that neither is he who plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase. He that plants and he that waters are one, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God. We are God's cultivated field, and we are God's building. So, here's the point: the people who do the work are simply the planters, and it is God who is the one who brings the thing to fruition.

Notice that the one who does the planting and the one who does the watering and the cultivating are working the same process, but they're not the important ones in this verse. You don't get that idea from a lot of preachers who like to parade around as being magnificent, miniature popes of great importance. The communicator is not important. Only the truth of the Word of God is what's important. There are a lot of negative people who don't like the communicator for some reason. They don't like something about it. It may be something that is legitimately objectionable or undesirable about him. But don't let the devil con you into saying, "Well, I don't like this guy, so I'm not going to listen to the truth that I get from him." The wise Christian says, "The Word of God is the Word of God, and that truth planted is going to bear its fruit when I go positive to it. So it is the job of God the Holy Spirit to bring forth the fruit."

Galatians 6:9 tells us that we shall bear fruit in due season if we do not faint – if we do not quit. So, don't look for short-term spiritual binge results. Reject Satan's discouragement in Christian service. Just because you don't see the results, don't go around and be so foolish and say, "I don't see the good of it. You don't have to see the good of it. All you have to see to is that you're letting people know what God thinks. Your job is to plant divine viewpoint. It is God's job to bring it to fruition. It is God's job to bring it to maturity. You planted; you cultivated; and, you give people a chance. Then when they reject it and you say, "I worked so hard, and I don't see any results," you go on to the next person. Do not let Satan discourage you, because the devil is out to keep you from having rewards in heaven.

So, here is the principle of spiritual reversion. People do not always keep going forward. They fall back. Don't let that discourage you. The principle of the security of rewards – what you have earned and stored is forever secure, even if you yourself should fall by the wayside. Then the principle of the lag in results – your investment is not always immediately evident. And therefore, don't look for it that way. Count on the fact that the Word of God is alive and powerful, and when you plant it, something is going to happen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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