

"A Disciple's Reward"  
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March 22, 2020

"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities." (Matthew 10:40-11:1)

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In discussing his first major point, Pastor Wally said that a disciple's reward is founded on a message that is worthy to be received because of its source. He said that the message that Jesus received from the Father that Jesus passes on to his disciples is trustworthy because the integrity of the message has been maintained much like a piece of evidence's "chain of custody". Much like on NCIS, each person who handles the evidence is required to sign their name to a chain of custody document attesting to the fact that the evidence hasn't been tampered with or altered...that the evidence is today as it was when it was first received. How trustworthy have I been when it comes to handling God's message? Explain.

In Philippians 2:5-8, I'm reminded to "...look not only to [my] own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Do my interests normally, usually come before "the interests of others"? If so, why so? If not, why not?

Jesus was willing to go so far as to die on a cross for the "interests of others"...for my interests. How far am I willing to go for "the interest of others"?

Pastor Wally said that there is a misperception or misunderstanding in many Christians' minds that we need to overlook the sins of others – to disregard someone's sins. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 I'm told that "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." I'm told to not hold someone's trespasses against them (which is not the same as ignoring their trespasses). So, what message of "reconciliation", if any, that was entrusted to me do others see in me and why?

In 2 Corinthians 5:20, I'm told that "...we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." An ambassador is one who is "A minister of the highest rank employed by one prince or state, at the court of another, to manage the public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power and dignity of his sovereign...a messenger - Webster, 1828. Am I truly an "ambassador for Christ", do I represent "the power and dignity of [my] sovereign"? Explain.

Being reconciled means being "[b]rought into friendship from a state of disagreement or enmity" (Webster, 1828). Paul implored, he asked earnestly, he begged people to be "reconciled to God". If I'm not willing to "beg" someone to be brought into friendship with God from a state of enmity, then what keeps me from doing it?

Pastor Wally's second major point was that a disciple's reward is based on the work of someone else's message...on what Jesus did for us on the cross. Pastor Wally reminded me that my sins were imputed to Jesus and his righteousness/holiness was imputed to me. Discuss Pastor Wally's statement that Jesus got credit for my rebellion and I got credit for Jesus' obedience.

In what way(s) does my understanding of what is "fair" get in the way of sharing the free gift of God's grace through what Jesus did for me on the cross to family, coworkers, and/or neighbors in my life?

Proverbs 10:16 tells me that "[t]he wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin" and in Proverbs 11:18 that "[t]he wicked earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward." In what way(s) do wicked people earn "deceptive wages"?

Have I been receiving any "deceptive wages" from Satan lately? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Pastor Wally's final major point is that a disciple's reward is maintained through faithfulness in all things and he focused on "the little ones", the marginalized, the "insignificant" people in my life. Who are some of the "little ones" in my life? (List them by name)

In Matthew 10:40, Jesus tells me that "...whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." (see Mark 9:41) Pastor Wally spoke of the "cold water"...the "living water" (John 7:37-38) that will forever refresh those who are thirsty. How well am I "faithfully" sharing the message of His "living water" with others? Explain.

Of course, there is this passage of Scripture to consider: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:30-40) Are there any "least of these" in my life whose needs I've been overlooking for whatever reason? If so, what do I intend to do about it? Explain.

What "reasons" have I bought in to justify my not caring for the "least of these" in my life?

In 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Paul tells Timothy that he has "...fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." Paul starts by listing what he has done. He has: 1) fought the good fight; 2) finished the race; and, 3) kept the faith. How about me? Can I say the same? If so, why so? If not, why not?

Pastor Wally challenged me to be bold in sharing God's message that He has entrusted to me and reminded me that not all, but some will hear and take heed. The Southern Gospel group, Greater Vision sings a song "Just One More Soul" and the chorus reminds me that "...if just one more soul were to walk down the aisle, It would be worth every struggle, It would be worth every mile, A lifetime of labor is still worth it all, If it rescues just one more soul." Do I feel that way about my "Who's Your One" – that all the work is still worth it all and am I being faithful in praying for that person, in sharing His "living water" with that person, and ministering to this "least of these" that God has brought in to my life?