

“THE LIFE GOD REWARDS”

Big Idea . . . Part 6: The Question of Your Life

INTRO: What we do on earth after we trust Christ impacts what we do in heaven after we die. An unbreakable link is that our behaviors on earth have consequences in eternity, whether one’s destination is heaven or hell. As with heaven, all in hell do not experience hell in the same way (degrees–Matt. 11:23-24; 23:14; Rev. 20:13). Heaven never gets worse, only better; hell never gets better only worse! Most of the events of our forever life take place after death. This includes a time of repayment, as often promised by both Jesus and Paul. God as our Redeemer and Rewarder promises to bless and honor those who “take care of His business until He returns” (Lk. 19:11-15). To “engage” (take care) is to intentionally and diligently watch out for “His business” – to spread the gospel and glorify the Father. That’s our business. So, I ask you, “How’s business?” A lot happens when we get into heaven . . . “What might our most powerful desire be?” eat heavenly food (and stay fit!), catch up with loved ones, ask God questions we always wanted answered, . . . My thinking is we’ll be desperate out of gratitude to serve and worship (often interchanged in Scripture – Matt. 4:10). In heaven we will desperately crave to serve (Mk. 10:43-45; Rev. 4-5)

ILLUS: When we deeply love someone, sometimes words are not enough. We are compelled to DO something for the one we love (Ex. . . .). This is even more true in our relationship with God – having received from Him the greatest gift of all. *We desperately crave to do something to express our love and devotion. In this lesson we shall see the direct connection between how we manage our life for God on earth and how much our Lord will allow us to serve Him in heaven.*

THE QUESTION OF YOUR LIFE “How will I steward all the Master entrusted to me while He was away?” Jesus told stories about servants who take care of valuable assets belonging to Him (time, talents, treasures, vineyards, money, etc.). He often called these servants “stewards” – not owners but managers of another’s assets. Two examples: Parable of the Talents, very familiar (Matt. 25:14-30) and Parable of the Pounds or Minas (Lk. 19:11-26), lesser known and slightly different. Read Lk. 19:11-26 . . . Each servant got an equal amount (one mina = 3 year’s wages). Our biggest asset is our life on earth – sum of our talents, abilities, interests, personality, etc.). Our opportunity is to faithfully manage them until we go or He comes. If

we put our “treasures” to use for Him, our hearts will follow as will our rewards in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). That’s our assignment. The first servant had tenfold increase on the Master’s investment and receives ten cities to rule. The second a fivefold return and gets five cities to rule. The third simply returns the one mina given him.

INSIGHTS ON STEWARDSHIP FROM THE THREE RESPONSES that expose three common misbeliefs about stewardship and Jesus’ response.

1. (vv. 13-17) *We think* when God invests in us that He is unbothered if we don’t make the most of the opportunity. The truth of the First Steward *God expects* us to take what He entrusts to us and multiply it for Him.
2. (vv. 18-19) *We think* that if God does reward us for serving Him, His reward will be a general compensation that will equally apply to everyone, and won’t change our future opportunities in heaven. The truth of the Second Steward is that *God’s* rewards for us will be in direct proportion to how much we multiplied our resources for Him. His response has eternal impact.
3. (vv. 20-26) *We think* that if we don’t serve God with all He’s given us, the worst that could happen would do no reward. But the truth of the Third Steward is that if we do not use what God places in our care for Him, we will suffer loss – of both potential reward we could’ve earned and the opportunity to serve God more fully in eternity!

Notice, the highest reward for serving is *ruling*. Ruling is the reward for serving according to these two parables (Lk. 19:16-20; Matt. 25:20-23). **POINT?** Serve faithfully here, rule eternally there!

HOW SERVE FAITHFULLY AND WELL? Done with God’s love, by God’s power, and for God’s glory!

CONC: So Carpe Diem – Seize the day! What’s your answer today to His question: “How faithfully am I stewarding all He has entrusted to me?” There is still time. You’ve not died and He’s not returned. Still time to do business! The opportunity to serve now prepares us for what we will desperately crave to do in heaven – serve and worship. If we do, we’ll hear, “Well done . . .”