

Message #88

Luke 18:28-30

There have always been those and there will always be those who want to have some type of relationship with God as long as it doesn't cost them too much. Then there are others who are willing to totally commit themselves to God, regardless of the cost involved.

It has never been easy to give up things for the Lord. Some have given up careers, savings accounts, houses, family and friends for the cause of Jesus Christ. Other people believe in Jesus Christ, but they seem to have a lesser commitment and make lesser contributions.

Does God keep records of this? Does God keep track of who gives what? Does God keep track of who sacrifices for Him? You get the answer in this text directly from Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ had just informed everyone that it was totally and completely impossible for a man to do anything to save himself. **The only way any sinner may be saved is by believing in Him in a child-like faith (Luke 18:17, 27). Faith in Jesus Christ plus nothing will take you to heaven.**

To Peter and the other Apostles, that did not seem quite fair. After all, not only had they believed in Jesus Christ, but they had left everything. They had walked away from jobs, homes, religion, relatives and friends to completely follow Him.

For the Apostles, it was a total and complete sacrificial commitment. Now they have just heard that anyone can get into the kingdom by simple faith in Jesus Christ and they didn't think that was quite right.

So what Jesus did was teach them a very important truth:

WHOEVER HAS BELIEVED IN ME AND MADE SACRIFICES FOR ME WILL BE RICHLY REWARDED BY ME.

Any believer who has made sacrifices for Jesus Christ will be compensated by Jesus Christ.

Now in the course of years of ministry, we have come across some who say it is not spiritual to think of rewards. Well Jesus Christ, Himself, is the one who brings up the subject.

According to Jesus Christ, **future remuneration should be a key motivation for living a life that makes sacrifices for Him. Future remuneration has always been a supreme motivation for making major sacrifices.**

Jesus Christ wanted His own disciples to realize that the one who is willing to believe in Him and then follow Him, no matter where that may be, is one who will eventually receive abundant compensation and remuneration.

We will notice from **verse 28**, that the first person to speak up when he heard that it was impossible for man to do anything to be saved was Peter. The Greek text is emphatic, “the Peter, he said.” Peter is a guy who at times speaks before he thinks.

By what he says, we know what he is thinking. He basically says, “Wait a minute, if the only way we may be saved is by simply believing on Jesus Christ, then what is the point of what we have been doing?”

Dr. Richard Lenski, the Greek scholar of the 1800’s, made an interesting observation here when he said these disciples go from one extreme to the other. They first fear none of them can be saved (18:26); now after their fears have been put to rest, they fear that their sacrifices mean nothing (**18:28**) (Richard Lenski, *Interpretation of Luke’s Gospel*, pp. 922-923).

There are two main subjects that are developed in these verses:

SUBJECT #1 – Peter mentions to Jesus Christ the sacrifices the disciples have made. **18:28**

This must have really impressed Jesus Christ when He has left Heaven to come here to earth to die so that any who believe in Him may be saved. Frankly, the disciples should have said what an honor to be here with you in person, to know you and to travel with you. But that is not what they said.

Now what Peter says here well we have done what the rich young ruler would not do. Peter says “we have left our homes and followed you.” But now we realize that that is not what saves us because it is impossible for us to do anything to save ourselves, so what is the point of us giving up everything to follow you.

It is absolutely true that these disciples did leave everything and they literally did follow Jesus Christ (Luke 5:2-11, 27-38). This is the truth Peter is saying. But when you get to travel with the God/Savior/Messiah/King, why should that matter?

Peter says we will have left everything and followed you. The participle “left” and the verb “followed” are both aorist tense. When you have this construction in composition, it refers to pointed simultaneous action. What this means is at the same time they decided to follow Jesus, they also decided to leave everything to do it.

So near the very moment in time they committed themselves to Jesus Christ, they left their own self-interests, which would include family, property, friends, homes, businesses - everything. When these disciples committed themselves to Jesus Christ, they literally abandoned their personal goals and ambitions.

Before we move on, let us clearly understand something. Jesus Christ was literally, personally here on earth as the God/Savior/Messiah/King and He is the only One who is worthy of this kind of commitment. He still is the only one worthy. It is true that sacrifices we make for the Lord are important and will be rewarded. However, in this church age, they are slightly different.

When Paul writes all the church epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians, he does not demand that all believers sell everything and move. When Jesus addresses the seven churches in Revelation, He does not demand that believers do this either. What both Paul and Jesus did expect is that the believers would be very serious about hearing the Word of God and applying it to their own lives and developing for the Glory of God. They expected believers to be transformed into God-honoring people in the church. But Paul did not demand that believers leave their place of residency and follow him around the Mediterranean world.

Every now and then there are these cult leaders who surface who demand this type of commitment to them. Only when Jesus Christ was here on earth could this kind of commitment actually occur.

SUBJECT #2 – Jesus discusses the rich compensation that will be given to one who made sacrifices for Him. **18:29-30**

Jesus Christ wanted to encourage His disciples who had committed themselves to Him and made sacrifices for Him.

He wanted all to know that even though it is true that **no one can be right with God by his own merit or works, however, one who does believe in Jesus Christ and then does make sacrifices for Him will merit great remuneration and rewards.**

Making sacrifices for the work of Jesus Christ does pay rich dividends in any dispensation.

For example, Paul said that one who is generous with finances in the work of the Lord in this grace age does store up “treasures” in heaven (I Tim. 6:18-19).

Now there are three main facts that Jesus Christ brings out to His disciples here:

Fact #1 - All will be compensated. **18:29a**

Notice the adverb that begins this “truly.” When Jesus Christ uses this word, He is stressing the dogmatic certainty of the matter. G. Abbott-Smith says that this word is used by Jesus Christ to “introduce solemn statements of our Lord” (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 25).

Not only does He use the adverb “truly” but then He emphasizes “I say this to you.” So what Jesus is doing there at the beginning of the verse is emphasizing what I am about to say to you is of supreme and solemn importance.

What He says is there is “no one” who has given up anything for Me and My work who will not be richly compensated. The words “no one” are strong, meaning there is absolutely no one who has given up things for God who will not be richly rewarded. Every person who has believed on Jesus Christ and then made sacrifices for the work of God will be richly rewarded.

There is no one who has at a point of time “left” (aorist tense) a house or a wife or brothers or parents or children, who will not receive great remuneration for it. If a commitment to Jesus Christ resulted in making this type of sacrifice, it would lay up great treasure.

But carefully notice the prepositional phrase “for the sake of the kingdom of God.” **Clearly the promised compensation will be given if the reason for the sacrifice is consistent with the word of God, the will of God and the program of God that is centered on Jesus Christ.**

Matthew says the sacrifice must be made “for Christ’s name” (Matt. 19:29).

Mark says the sacrifice must be made “for My name’s sake and for the gospel’s sake” (Mark 10:29).

It is not just any sacrifice that will be compensated. It is specific sacrifices made because we desire to enhance God’s program that will be compensated. The sacrifices must be made for the purpose of spreading gospel truth pertaining to Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God that are consistent with His name.

So in this Church Age, it would be sacrifices made that are consistent with church age truth that will be compensated. Let me illustrate the point.

Worship in this church age is to be decent and orderly and reverent. The church is to be a place that carefully teaches the Scriptures and it is to be a place of prayer. Now there are people who have given hundreds of thousands of dollars to turn a church into a night club. They put in lights and smoke machines and a stage for a band and people give to this. Based on my understanding of the word of God, they will not earn one treasure in heaven for any of this. I don’t care how much they gave or sacrificed. It is not consistent with the word of God.

If you left everything and went to the Jordan River valley and started proclaiming repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That would not be consistent with God’s plan for this age and the sacrifice would not be compensated.

If on the other hand you did something or gave something even small in the context of what is consistent with Church truth, those sacrifices are carefully monitored by God and will be rewarded by God, even right down to the level of giving a glass of water (Mark 9:41) or a small offering (Luke 21:1-4).

No matter what the sacrifice, God will reward it if it is consistent with His name and His program. This is a “truly” promise from Jesus Christ.

Fact #2 - Some compensation will occur in this life. **18:30a**

The words “many times” are words that refer to a much greater level. These words grammatically refer to the present time and the future time.

Christ is encouraging His disciples that anyone who has committed himself or herself to Him, and has given up things for Him and the work of God, will receive compensation even in this life.

God will divinely compensate one who is making sacrifices for Him and some of that compensation will be experienced in this life.

Now the text does not say that the compensation will be the same as the sacrifice, but it does say the compensation will be more than the sacrifice. In other words, if you gave up a mate, it does not mean you will have many more mates. However, you will see amazing compensation and blessings for your sacrifice.

The more we are willing to give God and the more we are willing to sacrifice for God, the more we will see God use us and bless us. That is a “truly” promise of Jesus Christ for this life.

I believe this is absolutely true. Sometimes God does richly and abundantly bless one after that one has made a sacrificial investment in His work. This has happened many times.

But when God does do this, keep in mind Psalm 62:10, “if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.”

There are two attitudes to always keep in mind when God gives His blessings:

1) Contentment; 2) Generosity.

Fact #3 - Greatest compensation will occur in the next life. **18:30b**

Not only will one who made sacrifices for the work of the Lord be richly rewarded in this life, but he will also be richly rewarded in the next life as well.

Matthew and Mark says if you have left things for God and they add to the list “farms,” you will receive a hundred times as much now in the present and then in the age to come you will have a rewarded eternal life (Mark 10:30).

I want you to think for a moment about what happened in eternity for these Apostles:

1) They became the foundation for the church. Eph. 2:20

2) They will have their names forever honored in the New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:14

I would say from just those two things, that their greatest compensation is in eternity.

What Christ is basically saying in response to Peter is **“Peter, it is true you have left everything and followed Me but that is not why you are saved; it is why you will be rewarded.”**

Let's go back to where we began. Some people who are believers at church faithfully and sacrificially give to the Lord, and some don't.

The Apostle Paul taught exactly the same thing Jesus teaches for the Church. He said, “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver” (II Cor. 9:6-7).

This passage of Scripture is very clear to bring out two key points directly from Jesus Christ.

(Point #1) - Salvation is not by any works, sacrifices or merit. It is by faith alone in Christ alone. Only God can save a sinner (Luke 18:27).

(Point #2) - Rewards are earned by works, sacrifices and merit. After one believes in Jesus Christ, all sacrifices lay-up treasures in heaven (Luke 18:29-30).

Any investment you make for the Lord's work will bring great return on your investment.

There are costs and sacrifices involved in doing the will of God, but there is also a big paycheck promised by Jesus Christ Himself.