

“The Saint’s Reward”  
2 Timothy 4:8  
(Preached at Trinity, November 13, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul had been suffering greatly, He was in the infamous Mamertine prison. It was dirty, dark, and unsanitary. The smell of human waste was no less extreme than the stench of human despair. Paul was under clothed and could not warm himself. He admonished Timothy, “Come at your first opportunity. And bring my coat.”
2. His condition was undeserved. He was charged with sedition, which was unfounded. He was a man of high birth, from a good family of wealthy means. He was a Roman citizen, which carried all the benefits that came with Roman citizenship. None of this mattered now. He was alone and abandoned by his friends and followers with little hope of being released from his chains.
3. Anyone outside of Christ looking upon Paul’s miserable condition could only come to one conclusion. Paul was a wretched failure. He had lost everything and had nothing to show for his effort. But Paul knew different.  
**2 Timothy 4:8 NAU** - "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day"
4. Such a reward wasn’t reserved for Paul alone. It was for all who continue in the faith. For those who endure till the end we have a blessed promise of reward. Paul describes it as a crown to be placed on the head. The victor’s crown. A great trophy given to the faithful.  
This morning I want us to examine the saint's reward. May it serve to bring us great joy and encourage us to press on until the end.

- I. Throughout the Bible there is a running principle of the consideration of our final destiny
  - A. We are promised a great reward  
**1 Corinthians 2:9 NAU** - "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."
    1. This is not our primary consideration for serving God
    2. Our primary consideration is based upon His person, not upon us.
    3. Our resolve must be to serve Him regardless of our own desires – Christianity is a dying to self
    4. We should always ask ourselves, "Would I serve Him if there were no reward?"
  - B. This does not mean, however, that our reward is not a consideration
    1. Jesus told us to rejoice at the consideration of our reward  
**Matthew 5:11-12 NAU** - "Blessed are you when *men* cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. <sup>12</sup> "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

2. We must always keep our eye on eternity  
**2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NAU** - "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."
- C. Paul's confidence in death also resulted in a confidence of his reward
1. In the context of the passage the basis of Paul's confidence rested in the outward demonstration of his conversion.  
 Three times Paul speaks in the perfect tense signifying completed action with continuing results. He says, "I have"
  2. Paul had examined his life and saw the fruits of conversion.  
 Paul never presumed upon God's grace. Paul would have surely agreed with Peter:  
**2 Peter 1:10-11 NAU** - "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."
  3. This in no way lessens Paul's dependence upon God's grace – In the end nothing matters but His grace  
**2 Timothy 1:12 NAU** - "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."  
 But those who are recipients of God's grace persevere until the end
  4. Regrets always bring doubts  
 Satan will always use them to his advantage – he brings us to be morbidly preoccupied with self.
- II. The Crown of Righteousness – Paul is talking of the saint's reward
- A. Our entrance into heaven will be based entirely upon being clothed with the righteousness of Christ.
1. Nothing in our salvation is by our merit – it is all by the merit of Christ  
**John 15:5 NAU** - "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."
  2. All of our works, all of our fruit is by His working in us.
  3. We saw in **Verse 1** that Jesus will come as the Judge who sees and knows all. Here we find that He will be a righteous judge giving to every human being that which he deserves.

B. The Bible teaches degrees of reward and punishment

1. Punishment will be given according to the degree of light given  
**Luke 12:47-48 NAU** - "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, <sup>48</sup> but the one who did not know *it*, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."
2. The Bible also seems to point to degrees of reward based upon our labors for the kingdom – this is a great mystery – it is still by grace alone
  - a. Jesus spoke of laying up treasures in heaven  
**Matthew 6:20-21 NAU** - "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
  - b. Jesus spoke of a great reward for those who suffer for the kingdom  
**Matthew 5:11-12 NAU** - "Blessed are you when *men* cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. <sup>12</sup> "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
  - c. The Bible teaches that our reward will be commensurate with our works  
**Matthew 16:27 NAU** - "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."  
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**2 Corinthians 5:10 NAU** - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."
  - d. Our reward is never meritorious but always according to God's mercy and grace. Our very best is still no more than He demands  
**Luke 17:10 NAU** - "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'"
  - e. It is God who always enables us to love and serve Him  
**Philippians 2:13 NAU** - "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure."  
**Colossians 1:29 NAU** - "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

### III. The Bible tells us several things about our reward

#### A. The Bible speaks of several different crowns

1. There is the crown that consists of those we bring to Christ  
**1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 NAU** - "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? <sup>20</sup> For you are our glory and joy."
2. James speaks of the crown of life – everlasting life for the saints  
**James 1:12 NAU** - "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him."
3. Peter speaks of a crown of glory or honor reserved for faithful pastors  
**1 Peter 5:4 NAU** - "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

#### B. It is called "A crown of righteousness"

Is this "righteousness" to be understood as the source of the crown or the nature of the crown? Is the crown the reward for our righteousness—the crown pertaining to righteousness. Or is righteousness the reward itself?

There are aspects of both.

1. We are saved unto holiness and good works.  
**Ephesians 2:10 NAU** - "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."
  - a. In this sense our crown is the result of our righteousness.  
**Revelation 19:7-8 NAU** - "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."
  - b. We need to understand, our salvation is entirely the work of God. Our righteousness is not our own. We bear the righteousness of Christ. But the Bible promises a reward for our faithfulness.
2. We are promised an eternal crown of righteousness as our reward—that is, the righteousness we will enjoy in heaven is our reward. We are awaiting our glorification. This is our long awaited reward when sin will be no more.
  - a. This is our true joy, our treasured crown.
  - b. Our greatest heartache in this life (sin) will be removed
  - c. Jesus said that those who have this hunger shall surely be satisfied  
**Matthew 5:6 NAU** - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

#### C. This crown is to be given to all believers - Στέφανος

1. It is a victor's crown - It is given to those who love His appearing
2. It is given to those who love His first advent –
  - a. We love the life of Christ, we love His work, we love our relationship with Him
  - b. Those who love Him obey Him

3. It is given to those who love His second advent.
  - a. For the world, they will tremble at His coming
  - b. For those who know Him they long for His return  
**Philippians 3:20 NAU** - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"  
**1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:1 NAU** - "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words. "

#### Conclusion:

1. Our greatest reward is Jesus Christ Himself. He is our treasure, our glory, our highest love. Listen to Paul's words.  
**Philippians 3:8-14 NAU** - "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; <sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
2. May these things cause us to look back over our own life. To examine ourselves. To take inventory.  
 May these things cause us to stay the course. To fight the good fight of faith. To hold fast to sound doctrine.