

Leo Post - Our Reward

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Class, to open this discourse with prayer.

Our gracious and loving Father, we lift our hearts to Thee and thank thee for this another privilege of gathering together with so many of those of thy children who are striving diligently to do those things that are pleasing in thy sight. To bring honor and glory to thy name, and we pray forgiveness when you've come short and at this time, we thank thee that thou hast sent so many of the brethren. Who have looked into thy word, and found words of comfort and encouragement and strength.

And that they are ministering unto us, and we pray thy blessing, especially at this time, upon our dear Brother Leo Post. That the words that he speak may truly be thy words, and that we may receive them into good and honest hearts, and may they become a part of us and a part of our character.

So that we may be following faithfully in the footsteps of our beloved Master. Be with us now as we wait before Thee, and be with thy children in every place we ask in Jesus, your name. Amen.

To have your name on a convention program, and underneath it it says the dawn seems to me to be one of the singular privileges of life, and we're thankful again for the privilege of having Brother Post here with us from the Dawn, and he has chosen for his subject this afternoon God's reward. Brother Post.

My dear brethren, it's indeed a privilege to be here in your midst, and I hope you don't mind getting a second load of love from our New York brethren, from the dawn family, and just like Brother Joe Pannucci's dear wife, Lucy, Mine also sent her love along. But she didn't saddle me with that second requirement. She didn't tell me about the chairman.

So that means I can talk really well. Except that Larry is quite a big man. I've been here in the west now for a few weeks, and I've also picked up a load of love as I've gone along serving the Brethren in this area. As quite a few I've seen of the Syllimar.

And many of them are here, though not all of them, and so I'd like to add to this other load of love the love that the Brethren have voted to send. From Palo Alto and San Francisco and Sacramento and Chico and Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, and up in Canada from Victoria and Vancouver and Vernon. Also Pincher Creek and then at Havre. I think the Friends are all interested in Paul and Vivian.

And I'd like to just say this much. That because of Vivian's diligent care, Paul is holding his own still takes pain medication every two hours throughout the day. But they send in love, and so does Sister Clark, and then on to Kalispell and Sandpoint and Spokane and Medellin Falls and Clarkston, and there the Thomases want to send their love and ask for your prayers as.

As well as the Nalithka family asking for your prayers, and then Wenatchee and Boise, Sacramento sent a second load of love, and Fresno, San Luis Obispo, Bakersfield, Phoenix and San Diego. All these brethren sent their love, and I'm very happy to deliver it.

Our topic is based on the words of our Lord is found in the sixth chapter of Matthew, the first and the second verses, and it reads in this Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen

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of them. Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

These words of our Master indicate that there will be many zealous religious people who will not receive the reward that they expected to get because unwittingly they chose to accept another kind of reward, and so it's going to be our goal today to examine why this happened to them, why this will happen to them, and also for us as the Lord's people who are interested in God's reward, to see how we can be assured of getting this reward and how we can avoid getting the wrong kind of reward.

We have many illustrations of the Scriptures. You heard of one this morning by Brother Chandler of the race course, and he talked about the prize at the end of that course. He gave us many beautiful lessons in that. In that particular example, that lesson, it involved competition, prize, energy in pursuing it. We also have other illustrations that are intended all to help us understand God's plan better, such as the illustration of the bridegroom and a bride.

And there we have chastity and purity and patience and waiting. As a lesson. We also have the lesson of the vineyard and the workers. I want to come back now again to the thought of a reward and attitude towards fellow workers, and it's along that line that we want to particularly direct our thoughts this afternoon, because the particular Greek word that we're going to be looking at, that's translated reward, has in it the thought of wage or hire.

And it's very much like what we find today in everyday life. The people who get compensation for doing a certain service, whether that person is a stenographer, a secretary, or a professional person, or a factory worker, or even a floor sweeper. Because we know that in today's society there are people of ability, and also, many times they also have the capital, and they have an idea that they want to either provide something that everybody would like to have or service or whatever.

And they need the help of other people in order to do this, and so they're willing to pay them wages or salaries in order to have them help them do this work. That's very much like what our Heavenly Father is doing, too, in the work that he is carrying out in this gospel age. But there's a difference. Our Father doesn't really need our help, but he chooses to do it that way.

He chooses to enlist our services in assisting him in the wonderful work of finding the church, the people for his name that will be used in dispensing the blessings of the millennial kingdom.

And only our Heavenly Father is in a position to reward us. When we analyze this matter, I think we'll conclude that this is true of any reward that anyone will receive at any time in the future. Because as he has so plainly told us that everything that's here upon this earth really belongs to Him. I'll just use one scriptural reference, and that's the one that's found in the 50th Psalm, the one that you know well, and it tells about how all the cattle.

This is the 10th to the 12th verses. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills I know. All the fowls of the mountains and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee.

For the world is mine and the fullness thereof. The world belongs to the Lord and the fullness thereof, and so it's only God that can reward us. Because he is the One that possesses everything here that can be used in the form of a reward, whether it's in this life or in the future life.

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But maybe we should rephrase that statement and say that really only God has the right to reward us. Because as we get into our subject, we'll find out that there will be rewards offered from other sources. Can't forget Satan, because he usurped all of the the wealth here upon this earth. Why, you remember how it was when he tempted our Lord Jesus? He showed him all the kingdoms of the world.

He says, now, if you just would fall down and worship me, you can have These right now. That's the point. Right now. You won't have to go through some of the experiences that are ahead of you.

And so he is the one that is offering a substitute reward. We shouldn't forget that. The fact that he can do so is brought out in the Scriptures. For example, in one of the references I have here, Acts 1:18, having to do with Judas, it mentions that Judas accepted a reward for what he did. It's that same Greek word, wage or hire.

He was hired to do this also in Jude, and that's the 11th verse of the book of Jude. There are several people mentioned in that. Maybe we ought to read that one where it mentions Cain, Balaam and Korah, and everybody knows what Cain did says, woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain and ran greedily after the heir of Balaam for reward.

Again, there's that word which means wage or hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah, and you may recall that Balaam in particular was a prophet of the Lord who was being hired to curse Israel, and the Lord told him he shouldn't do this, and he did everything possible in order to get the reward. He wanted to curse Israel, and even though the Lord didn't make it come out that way, and he blessed them instead of cursing them, it turned out that eventually he was successful in getting the reward because he was successful in cursing Israel.

But that's beyond the scope of what we have to say. Just want to mention, there are rewards like this that are associated with the wage and hire that comes from the adversary.

The reward that we're interested in is the one that our Lord has so plainly told us about. But that has certain conditions involved. We know that the Christian today is being asked to resist three foes. In particular, he has to fight against his own flesh. He has to fight against the world.

He has to fight against the adversary. But for so doing he will be rewarded, and in the earlier chapter of this wonderful Sermon on the Mount that we have taken our textbook from, our Lord gives us this particular outline of our course. If we turn to the fifth chapter of Matthew in the very beginning, the tenth to the twelfth verses, where we have all of these beatitudes given to us by him. As he started on his wonderful sermon, he came to the finally to the 10th verse where he says, blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil. Against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you. Now the same thought is brought out in the sixth chapter of Luke. I like to read that reference too.

And it's the sixth chapter of Luke the 22nd and the 23rd verses. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy. Now notice how Luke adds this outward demonstration of your happiness at the fact that you are suffering for Christ. For behold, your reward is great in heaven.

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For in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. Now one of the things that I know we all realize is that it's not an easy thing to do. What our Lord has told us is going to happen to us. It's not easy to go contrary to the human flesh and the human bent, we all want to be loved, to be well thought of. We like to avoid trouble.

Everything that Jesus is telling us is just the opposite. He says, people are going to hate you. They're going to reproach you and you're going to have a lot of trouble. You're going to get persecuted. But we know from other Scriptures that the final reward, just as our brother Chandler brought out this morning, is the divine nature, is the privilege of sitting on the throne and not being before the throne.

We have also in the sixth chapter of Luke that we're looking at another statement by our lord in the 32nd verse where he says, for if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye for sinners also love those that love them, and if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye for sinners also do even the same, and if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again. But here's the thing that is so different from what we're expected to do. But love ye your enemies and do good, and lend hoping for nothing again.

Now notice that point. Notice that we're to do all of this without the expectation of getting any kind of recognition for this. That's the point. So he says, and lend hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest, for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. So this is the underlying principle that our Lord wants us to understand that in this present life going to have all kinds of experiences, they're not going to be pleasant, and that we should expect these, but that our reward is future.

You're not going to be rewarded. Now, every once in a while, when some brethren get overwhelmed with trials, they somehow or other feel that they're not children of God because if they were, God wouldn't do this to them. Now it gets to the point where they think that it's beyond what they can endure, and really what it amounts to is they are expecting something today that was true of Job. Remember what the adversary said to our Father in heaven.

He said, oh, sure, it's easy for Job to be a good man. You put a hedge around here, take away the hedgehog, and he'll curse you. Well, it didn't work out that way, and of course they're not going to be able to say that it was easy for Brother Smith or Sister Brown to be a Christian because look at how the Lord protected them. It's not going to be that way.

They're going to. They won't be able to say that because of our experiences.

But you might ask him, because you've heard some of this said today. Don't the Scriptures say that the Gentiles are supposed to behold our good works? Or even in the case of the qualifications for eldership and for deacons, that we are supposed to do things honest in the sight of all men? And it's true that these scriptures, such as one of these is second Peter 2:12 or first Peter 2:12, and the other is first Timothy 3:7. Both of these definitely do say this.

But you'll notice that the one in Peter in particular, which was already quoted today, makes it very clear that the people, even though they behold our good works, will speak of us as evil doers. They're not going to praise a sport. They're not going to think highly of a sport. But the point that is being made in both of these texts is that we should be blameless, not faultless. No one can be faultless, but blameless as much as possible to stay clear of doing something that they can accuse

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us of, such as being a murderer or a busy body, a thief, or any of the terrible things that go on in the world.

We should not be accused of these things. But they're not going to really speak kindly of us, and you might ask, well, what does this mean? Does this mean that nobody can ever say anything nice about me? Well, that's not the point.

The point is that they're probably not going to say anything nice about you because of your religion, and you've already had that experience, and I'm sure that you've been able to endure this experience successfully. But the point that the Lord is making is that we are not supposed to desire or elicit the praise of people for the good that we do, and that's the lesson that our Lord is giving to us, and so let's turn to our Scripture again in Matthew, the sixth chapter and start examining it very, very carefully.

Reading these texts together says, take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them. Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee. I'd like to stop there. Is that possible?

Is it possible that when you are performing certain acts of religious piety or worship of God, that you could be like the person described here, sounding a trumpet before you, calling everybody's attention to it? You have to examine yourself in order to answer that question. But Jesus said this. Don't be like that. Don't even think of being like that.

And as he continues, he says, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. In other words, they want the glory of men, and they get the glory of men, and that's all they'll get. That's all the reward that there will be for them.

They have their reward, is what Jesus is saying. It's today. It's not going to be tomorrow. Tomorrow they will not get what they think that they're supposed to get, and as he continues, he says, but when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret, and thy father, which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

You'll get the reward. No one else will know about it, and he continues, and when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which isn't sacred.

And thy father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly, and he continues to make some comments about prayer and I'm going to just skip that part and just go down to the 16th verse, and where he continues with the same trend of thought. He says more Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Notice all of these acts of devotion to our Heavenly Father, of piety, of religious fervor, giving of alms, prayer, fasting, that all of this is to be done in such a way that others aren't seeing it, and in a way being impressed by how holy you are, how devoted you are. But as our Lord says, you do

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these things in secret, and your Father will bless you and reward you for doing it in this manner, and we come back to this question again. Why is it that the Heavenly Father wants to withhold a reward from us if we are observed by others as being religious and pious? And why does he really take this course?

Can't as we ask the question before anyone, speak well of us? And the answer comes back to the same answer I gave you for that he doesn't want us to desire or to seek the praise of men, and you might say, well, that's not my problem, because the people that I associate with are the Lord's people, and so I'm not trying to get to the praise of men out there, and the people that I work with, they know about my religion and they don't really think very much of me because of that.

In fact, they hate me. But notice that Jesus was giving these lessons to the nation of Israel, who were set apart from all of the rest of the Gentiles of the world, and they were a religious people, and just as we, as the Lord's people, are set apart from all the rest of the world, and we meet with each other, our lives are with one another more than they are with others in the world, of course, except for our daily work as a rule, and therefore we may feel kind of secure that this isn't going to happen to us.

But again, you know, we have to be wary of the adversary who is a wily foe, and he can even take a situation where our own brethren are involved. After all, they're men. They're men, too, and we can try to get their praise and seek their praise in such a way that we would get a reward.

Today, we might ask another question along this line. Does this mean that we can't honor our brethren or observe how faithful they are? Can't we show our love towards them and appreciation for their zeal, their devotion to God? Of course we should do this. By all means we should do this.

We should always be on the alert to see how faithfully our brethren are carrying out their covenant of sacrifice, and it should thrill us as we see the evidences of the love that they have. It's just like our brother Joe Panici was telling us just a short while ago, how we should rejoice in our brethren, rejoice in the Lord, rejoice in our brethren as we see their good works.

But the point is this, that we should never select just a few of the brethren and say, now these brethren really, they're really consecrated. They're really the ones that are faithful to the Lord and then become so attached to them now that we ignore all the rest of the body of Christ. Because when the Apostle Paul gave us this wonderful illustration, as he does in the 12th chapter of First Corinthians concerning the body of Christ, a lesson we've heard several times here today about the unity, that's the text that we have here, too, the unity in the body, and how we're all. Well, the lesson of coordination. Remember, you're supposed to put your finger up to your nose and show that everybody is needed in the body of Christ.

The point is that we should be willing to honor and to esteem all of the members of the body, and not just a few. Because if we start picking on just a few, we're in danger. We're in danger of trying to kind of elicit praise from just a few, or feeling that they're the only ones that are really doing the Lord's will, and one of the lessons that the Apostle Paul gives us on that 12th chapter, and it's a wonderful lesson, he says that the comely members of the body don't need any praising. It's the uncomely members.

The ones that you don't think that much of are the ones that need the encouragement and the help. They're the ones that need some additional help and praising and honor. Of course, it's not up to us to honor anyone. The Lord places every member in the body as it pleases him. That's made plain

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by the Apostle Paul in that 12th chapter.

But we should help those that are the uncomely members, and that's not the way it usually works out for us. We tend to gravitate towards the ones that are the more comely members, and so as we look at the lessons that we have here from our Lord, what is the practical side of the whole matter? And we're going to suggest some practical approaches to how we can fulfill what the Lord is telling us to do here in this Sermon on the Mount.

What are the danger signs? Well, one of the danger signs is when we become hyper critical. I like to think of that as the blowing of a trumpet. Really. There are many things that we're involved in all the time.

We're involved in studying the Scriptures, looking at the writings of Pastor Russell, witnessing for the lie, Christian conduct, helping one another in our problems. Well, if in any of these things, if any of these things, we start thinking that the way brethren are doing these things, whether it's their individual study or their class studies or their interpretation of doctrines or whatever is involved along these lines, that they're not doing things that. Well, maybe what we're really thinking is that we're the only ones that are doing it the right way or the most effective in our witnessing or the most effective in our study, or we have absolutely the right ideas on some of the Scripture interpretations in handling or Christian conduct or even handling of the problems of the Lord's people. See, hypercriticism, it attracts people as a rule, and before you know it, somebody will have a following, and when they have a following, they have to answer for themselves.

You know, is this what I want? Is this really the Lord's will? Because the desire to be prominent is a strong desire that is everywhere among the brethren, and this is why there have been problems among the brethren, and so this is why we have to be on the alert to resist all of these ensnarements of the adversary.

Another danger sign is a failure to allow for human weaknesses. Oh, we all understand the fall of man and the fact that we're under the. As in the Adamic family, everybody came under condemnation. They all are imperfect. They have weaknesses of the flesh.

But somehow or other it often happens that some will fail to allow for these weaknesses and expect more of each other than they should, and the higher up somebody gets in the service to the brethren, the more likely he's to come under scrutiny and his weaknesses become blown up, sometimes out of proportion because we all have him, and it's strange how sometimes the ones that will be most critical along this line of other people's weaknesses fail to see their own. It's almost an amazing thing that it happens that way, but it does, and some of us sometimes should be thankful to the Lord that he hasn't placed us in a position where we can come under scrutiny or given us a service that puts us in a position where somebody can examine us all the more carefully.

That's why James says, be not many of your teachers, you're going to receive a severe judgment, and a third danger sign is hurt feelings.

As a rule, we all have this weakness where we like to have people think well of us, but they're not going to do that. Many times they're not going to think well of us at all, and if we have feelings that are easily affected along this line, it may mean that we want them to think well of us and we get hurt if they don't think well of us. But what really is important, brethren, is that we have our Lord think well of us. It doesn't make any difference what others think of us.

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Oh, up to a point you might say you shouldn't be obnoxious by any means. But it is more important what God thinks of us than what others may think of us, and especially not to have hurt feelings. Along that line we have a very excellent admonition by the Apostle Paul, Paul on this point in Second Corinthians 10, 17 and 18. But he that glorieth or boasteth, let him boast in the Lord.

This is a very sound principle that is found in many places. It's found in Jeremiah, it's found in the first book of Corinthians. The apostle Paul has made that point, but here when he mentions it, he also says this, for not he that commended himself is approved. Now if somebody commends himself that doesn't give him approval, but whom the Lord commended, that's the one that is approved, and this is the one that will receive God's reward. Now I think in these three danger signs we can make a practical self examination of ourselves to make sure that we are not seeking the wrong kind of reward.

And I'm sure that we all want the right reward, even as John told us in his second epistle in the eighth verse where he says, look to yourselves. That's always good advice. Look to yourself. I'm to look to myself. You're to look to yourself that we lose not those things which we have wrought.

Brethren, we've been in the way, some of us, for a good many years. We've worked hard, we've tried hard to do what is pleasing in the Lord's sight, and John says, look to yourselves that we lose not those things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward by the Lord's grace. Dear brethren, may his words be true of you and of me. May the Lord have his blessing.

God's reward. Thank you very much, Brother Post.

Brother Post has asked that we sing in conclusion, hymn number four, My goal is Christ.

My goal is Christ and Christ alone
My goal is high and Christ the Lord
virtues will perish her beauty
fading like a flower
I go with Christ and I go home
against this power this is my failing
in the glory I am the thing I am
My goal is Christ Am I alone?

Following Brother Post's prayer, we'll convene in the hallway to the rear of the auditorium like we did at noon for our evening meal, and at this time would ask Brother Post not only to close with prayer, but also to ask the Lord's blessing upon our temporal food.

Our most kind and loving Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. We thank thee, Father, for the many wonderful admonitions of Thy holy word, and we pray that indeed we may take heed so that we may receive a full reward, and now, as we further wait upon thee, dear Father, we thank Thee for the manifestations of thy love that are shown in so many ways unto us. As we partake of the evening meal, may our hearts go up in gratitude to Thee, recognizing that Thou does provide for our every need.

And may we be thankful and grateful to Thee and Father, as we fellowship with one another. We pray thy blessing that Thou would give us the the spiritual food as we partake of the literal as well, and all these blessings and favors we ask of thee in Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you.