

## ***Session 6: Why We Should Desire Eternal Rewards***

Tonight we are going to continue in our series in “Studies in the Millennial Kingdom,” or studies on heaven coming down to earth—specifically, what it is like to live on earth in a heavenly environment and why we should desire eternal rewards.

To some people, it is obvious. To other people—they say, “I desire eternal rewards,” perhaps for wrong reasons. For many this is a very unimportant subject. I hope that you feel stirred out of that place, because to be passive about eternal rewards is unbiblical. Jesus is the One who taught most on this subject, because He had the most insight on it.

Why should we desire eternal rewards? There are three different positions I run into.

Those who have the understanding from the Scripture as to why; those who desire it, but for wrong reasons; and those who do not think much about it; which is where the majority of the Church is.

### **OVERVIEW OF MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**

Roman numeral I: the millennial kingdom is the time that the saints will reign on the earth for 1,000 years. In the last five sessions we have been developing the details of that theme. It is the understanding of the millennial kingdom that gives us insight into what the Lord is preparing us for now in this age, in terms of the age to come.

The Lord has a very specific agenda that He is preparing us for. Our seventy years on the earth right now are really an internship. Our assignment in this age, though in its own right has its importance and value in terms of its impact on people right now, is not only about impact.

We are interacting with God’s heart and we are preparing ourselves for our yet greater assignment on the earth that happens after the second coming. It is preparation time for us.

Your primary earthly assignment comes when you get a resurrected body in the age to come when Jesus returns. That is a new idea for a lot of people, but it is a

real established idea in the New Testament that the apostles referenced all the time. Paul the apostle was very focused on the idea that what he was enduring was working for him a weight of glory, which was far greater than anything he was walking in during his apostolic ministry on the earth.

### **RIGHT VIEW OF ETERNAL REWARDS AND GREATNESS**

Roman numeral II: having a right view of eternal rewards. First and foremost, we value eternal rewards because Jesus does and He taught us to. Jesus taught more on eternal rewards than anyone else in Scripture. It says in Matthew 5:19 (paraphrased), “Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches other people to do so, that man or woman shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does the commandments and teaches others shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” This is not talking about this age. It is talking about the age to come. These men and women are born again, but in the age to come they will be called least.

Paragraph A: the Sermon on the Mount, as far as I am concerned, is the core teaching of the kingdom of God. It is the foundational teaching. I call it the constitution of the kingdom.

In it Jesus invites whosoever to be great in His kingdom. This is one of the primary teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, the call to greatness or the call to eternal rewards. You cannot repent of a longing to be great. The reason you cannot repent of that longing is because God built it into your spirit and you were designed with a longing for greatness.

We can and must repent of seeking to be great in a wrong way and with a wrong spirit. And we can repent of neglecting to seek greatness. Some people seek greatness in a wrong spirit and need to repent. Others neglect the whole subject and they need to repent. I am sure the Lord will use this to call you out of a passive attitude about a theme and truth so critical to your life.

Without the paradigm of being on a journey to greatness, you will not be able to sustain your zeal for God; even the apostles could not. The apostles sustained their zeal for God with a vision to be great and to receive rewards. Peter, Paul, James—all of them reference rewards in a personal way. Hebrews 11:6 says (paraphrased), “He who comes to God must believe that God is a rewarder of the people who diligently seek Him.” We must believe that God rewards our responses to Him. It is a critical part of having a vibrant faith.

Paragraph B: there is a great difference in the measure of glory and the measure of reward that every believer will have. I am guessing there will be several billion believers in God's eternal family. Every one of them will have a different degree and different measure of greatness. Some will be called great and some will be called least, and then there is a large group in between those two streams. In Revelation 19:1–8, the born-again believers gather around the throne—both the small and the great. It is describing people in resurrected bodies. There will be the small (the least) and there will be those called the great. Some of you will be called great in the eternal kingdom. Greatness is not based on gifting; it is based on heart responses. It is based on diligence in seeking the Lord.

Jesus revealed a new paradigm of greatness:

Number one: it is to be great in His sight, not in the sight of men. Number two: it is a greatness that is fully manifest in the age to come, not now. Number three: it is based on heart responses, not on our natural gifting or ministry opportunity and resources. It does not matter how big your ministry impact is right now. As a matter of fact, your impact is irrelevant in terms of your place before God in the age to come.

Receiving rewards and being great is one of the primary themes that Jesus taught on. Already, that alone makes this teaching very important. Again, the vast majorities of believers neglect this subject and know nothing about it. They think about it very rarely. I believe the Lord wants you to repent in a zealous way from that negligent attitude about your life and your destiny.

Do not put all your focus on getting more now. Put your focus on the big picture. A couple examples, and there are many—Matthew 5:11–12 (paraphrased): “Rejoice, for great is your reward in heaven if you endure persecution.” Matthew 5:19 (paraphrased): “Whoever teaches the Word of God will be called great.” Luke 6:35: “Love your enemies . . . and your reward will be great.” Matthew 6:20 (paraphrased): “Lay up treasure in heaven.” Luke 18:22: “Have treasure in heaven.” Do you have treasure in heaven? Is that something you are thinking about? Are you laying it up? This is not an idle teaching. Jesus said, “Even if you give people a cup of cold water” (Mt. 10:42, paraphrased).

## **MOTIVATION FOR REWARDS**

Jesus motivates people to be detailed in the way they serve and to be attentive. He says, “Even something small, you will not lose your reward.” Jesus did not talk just about the nobility of being a servant. He talked about the reward of being a servant. It is noble to be a servant. Sometimes it is good enough because it is noble. The Lord says, “No, I want you to know that I will remember it. I will esteem it and I will reward even the nobility.”

When Jesus talked about coming back to the earth the second time, the issue that He stressed most with His own lips was the fact that He was coming back to reward individuals. If you study all the times when Jesus says with His own lips, “I am coming back” almost every time—and most of the time—He adds that He is coming to reward individuals. This is a huge reality, that Jesus would tie these two themes together: the second coming and the individual reward of faithful believers.

It says in Matthew 16:27 (paraphrased) “The Son of Man will come and He will reward each one according to their heart responses, what they do with their life.” In Revelation 22:12 (paraphrased) Jesus says to John, “I am coming and my reward is with me to give it to individuals, according to their heart responses.”

Look at what He told Peter in Matthew 19:27-30 (paraphrased).

Peter said, “Lord, we left everything and followed you. What do we have? We left it all.”

You might have said, “Is it not enough Peter that you are with Jesus for three and a half years?”

Jesus answered, “I assure you, in the regeneration (in the time of my coming - when the earth is regenerated in the millennial kingdom), when the Son of Man sits on His throne, you will have thrones.”

Jesus motivated His disciples to continue whole-heartedly by showing them their place in the government of the age to come. Jesus thought it was a noble way to motivate people.

The twelve apostles took hold of it and it shows up in their teaching in a major way. Have you taken hold of this? Is it something you ask the Lord for insight on?

If not, now is a good time to start doing it. Ask Him for insight.

“Lord, show me Ephesians 1:17-18 (paraphrased), give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Show me the hope or the confidence of my calling; what it is and what it is going to result in, not just in this age, but even in the age to come.”

I am not saying that He will tell you that you will sit on a throne in Israel like He told those twelve, but you might be surprised how He might give you strength and courage in your spirit about the fact that you are being prepared for something important in the age to come.

Over the next couple weeks, we are going to be surprised at how many individuals in the Bible the Lord—by the spirit of prophecy in the Old Testament or Jesus in the New Testament—had revelation of their role in the age to come. Not just the twelve apostles. I have a whole list of them and it is a theme that is significant in the Bible.

Paragraph F: Jesus taught on God’s invitation for our greatness more than any other person in scripture. He taught on it in a direct and an indirect way. He called us to be great, to receive riches, to be a ruler over many things, to have authority over cities, power over nations, to sit on His throne, to inherit authority, to be first in authority, to gain treasure, to receive rewards, to be exalted, to receive honor, to be chosen for honor, to gain crowns, to gain garments—it goes on and on.

These are from the lips of Jesus, eternal rewards, external expressions of our internal love for Jesus. In the age to come, we will actually wear tokens of our devotion to the Lord in the age to come; the gold, the garments, the thrones, the glory will be on and in our resurrected bodies. They are all expressing outwardly, that which we walked inwardly in this present age.

Eternal rewards are not about strutting in front of people or boasting in being over people.

This is what strikes a lot of folks, when they think of rewards, “I do not want to be over people and have work to do.” That is a completely wrong paradigm of authority.

## **ETERNAL REWARDS AS EXTERNAL EXPRESSIONS**

Paragraph A: rewards, eternal rewards, are tangible, physical expressions in eternity of our intangible, invisible responses to Jesus right now on the earth. What

we are doing in our heart, the movements of our heart to love Jesus right now, will be remembered forever in God's heart. They will be expressed in our personhood forever.

What you are doing today at 2:00pm and then tomorrow at 8:00pm is indescribably important. God remembers it, He esteems it, He rewards us forever, and "we wear it." Rewards from heaven express forever the devotion we have for Him right now in this age.

In some ways, it is similar in a limited sense, to a wedding ring now. People wear or give a wedding ring, or jewelry as a token of love. I am just giving you a different paradigm of viewing rewards. It is not about being over people and pushing people around. That is not what rule and authority is about in the age to come. This seems pretty obvious, but surprisingly it is the point where a lot of people say that they are not interested.

Paul talked in 1 Corinthians 4:5 (paraphrased) about the coming of the Lord.

He said, "When the Lord comes, He will bring to light, both the things hidden in darkness and He will reveal the movements, the councils, or motives of the heart. When He does it, each person will receive praise from God."

We think it is bad when the councils of our heart, or the motivations of our heart, or the movements of our heart are revealed.

Paul says, "No, when they are revealed, you receive praise and honor from God."

1 Peter 1:7 says the same sort of thing. In that time, we receive praise and honor from God for the councils of your heart; the movements of your heart today. In choosing righteousness and humility you are warring against the pride and the many types of lusts in this world. Each time that you have chosen the Lord in love, He records it and you will have reward in the age to come that openly expresses the internal struggle you had to show love to God—even in this age.

What cannot be seen right now will be expressed openly for all to see in the New Jerusalem; even what you cannot fully see in your heart. You know you have love and you know you are pressing, but you cannot really see it or feel it in the way that you will see it and feel it in the age to come.

In the age to come you will actually understand your commitment to the Lord—more than you do now. You will look back on it with insight from the Holy Spirit, supernatural memory, with anointed senses, and a glorified body. Even the remembrance and the gratitude for the exchange you had with the Lord will be something that is a part of the glory of God that will be on us in the age to come.

In Luke 8:17-18 Jesus refers to this principle of that which is on the inside being expressed on the outside. He is saying this in a positive way here in Luke 8:17-18 (paraphrased), “Nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor is anything hidden that will not be openly known.” It will all come to light, “for whoever has, to him more will be given (v.18).” This is in context to receiving from the Lord in the age to come.

Whenever we hear something secret being revealed, our natural response is, “Oh no, something hidden is coming to light.” What about the movements of your heart to love Him?

The spirit of condemnation comes against you and says, “you are a hopeless hypocrite, give up and give in.”

The Holy Spirit says it is not true, “You love Jesus. Your love is real.”

Your love may be weak, but weak love is still genuine love. It still moves the heart of God.

Sometimes we think our love is only real after it is mature. A little child genuinely loves their parents though their love is weak and immature.

Jesus says, “There is nothing, there is no movement of your heart (in the positive sense) that will not be revealed.”

There is nothing you have done in your secret obedience, in your secret devotion to the Lord that will not come to light.

Not just that others would see it, but you yourself will see it in its full glory. You will wear it. Crowns, garments, and the spirit of glory on your resurrected body, and the dwelling place you live, and the treasure you have, the gold God gives you.

All of it will express and bring to light the movements of your heart with the Lord, even in this age.

Luke 8:18 (paraphrased), “Whoever has,” that means the person who has even weak but genuine devotion and obedience to the Lord, that has genuine faith. “To anyone who has, more will be given to them.” The thing will multiply and increase. Not just their abilities, but also their devotion and their obedience will be given to them in a greater measure. They will have a greater ability to walk it out. This is spoken in Luke 8 in a positive context.

In Luke 12:2-3, a little later, Jesus speaks the same truth but in a negative context. It is true, both positive and negative in both settings.

He says (paraphrased), “Nothing will be covered up that will not be revealed, nothing that is hidden will not be made known. What you have spoken in the dark will be made known in the light.”

He is speaking this in context to the Pharisees who are plotting His death.

You think, “Oh no, what about that?”

No, if you really repent of it, it is covered in the blood and it will not be brought up again.

Here is the problem. A lot of believers justify their compromise and so they never repent of it.

They come up with Bible verses to back up what they are doing. Then on the last day, there will be dialogue at the judgment about our unrepentant sin.

Do not look at Luke 12 and say, “I am a believer, and this will not apply.”

The Lord will say, “What was that about? My spirit was striving with you and telling you to renounce it. You never did.”

The things that you speak in the darkness or in other words, in secret and over to the side, can be about your obedience to the Lord and whatever is spoken in our devotion to the Lord will be heard in the light.

Paragraph B: We will be rewarded openly for the counsels or the movements of our heart that we cannot see right now. They include our decisions for righteousness, our motives, and our love for the Lord and for people.

Our emotions, even though they are not mature, are still real. I am talking about positive emotions. Every movement of our heart is seen by the Lord and remembered. Beloved, there is nothing that you are doing that is in vain. This makes your life; every hour of every day, tremendously powerful.

God knows the costly and painful obedience that you are reaching for. He is watching you seeking His face, trying to connect with Him and putting yourself before Him even without feeling the full inspiration that you have a vision to feel.

The Lord says, “I see the longing of your heart to be in My presence.”

The gold, the garments, the treasures, the positions of authority in the age to come are all tangible expressions of the movements of our heart even now. Jesus says in Revelation 3:18 (paraphrased), “Buy from me gold, buy from me white garments.” They will give sight, and touch and sound and expression to what has been happening on the inside of us. The rewards will openly express what others cannot see now. Thus these rewards, gold, garments, crowns, are metaphors in this age but, they are literal in the age to come where they merge together.

We have gold in our love for God now and He actually rewards us in gold in the age to come; like the Olympic marathon champion. I am thinking of the person, the man or woman, who wins the gold medal. The value of the gold medal is not the financial value of the gold in the medal. It is probably worth an insignificant amount of money compared to the years that they have labored. The reason the gold matters is that it expresses the commitment they had for years and it is represented by that gold.

### **RIGHT VIEW OF AUTHORITY IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**

Roman numeral IV: the way we view authority shapes the way we seek rewards. For a lot of people, their automatic view of authority is being over people and having the ability to enforce more privilege.

If that is their view of authority then it is understandable that they say, “I do not care about eternal rewards, I just want to love Jesus.”

This is because their view of authority is rooted in a secular paradigm of pride. – this is not the kingdom view of authority.

Paragraph C: The bridal paradigm of authority is based not in being over people, but it is based on the desire to be with Him where He is, doing the things that are dear to His heart; establishing a world wide Kingdom.

He is going to be closest to the people in partnership who are establishing it with Him. Everybody is working with Him in the general sense, but just like when He was on the earth, He had Peter, James and John, and He had the twelve, then He had the seventy, then He had the 120. There were even the 5000 that He appeared to in the resurrection. Then among all these there was John who laid his head on the Lord's breast—who called Himself the disciple whom the Lord loved. I am sure the others could have had that confession, but John is the only one who says it.

In the age to come, not everyone will have an equal relationship with the Lord, just like when Jesus was on the earth the first time. Everybody will have equal access to God's heart, in the sense that everybody will have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside. They will be able to speak and receive His presence and receive communication from Him.

But, in terms of the nearness of proximity to the Man Jesus –the resurrected Man, the Son of David, the Jewish King on a throne in Jerusalem– we will not all have equal access to Him in person.

Many assume that they and all two to three billion saints will all be walking with Him in the park everyday.

I say, “What happened to the other three billion people? Are they just waiting for you to finish the walk in the park?”

“I do not know, I just picture Jesus and me in the park.”

Jesus will have a physical, resurrected human body. He will be on a throne. By the Holy Spirit, we will all be able to connect with Him. He will have those in

leadership and government who will be interacting with Him more than anybody else by far.

I want to be in leadership. It's not that I want to be over you, it's that I want to be near Him. I want to be involved in what is dear to Him and near to Him. I want to be involved in what He is involved in—in terms of the mandate from the Father to disciple all the nations in the age to come. That task of bringing every single sphere of every nation in total obedience to the Lord is what the millennial kingdom is all about.

The discipling of the nations is far more than preaching Jesus to the nations. It is bringing every institution into full obedience to Him. We will preach the gospel and there will be a witness of the Gospel in every nation before the Lord returns, but every nation will not be discipled before the Lord returns. I want to be involved in that with Him.

Here is what Jesus said in John 17:24 (paraphrased), “Father, I desire that those you have given me will be with me where I am that they would see my glory.” There is a sense of how all the several billion will be with Him in the New Jerusalem. There are degrees of this. I want to be with the Man Jesus where He is, as much as possible. Jesus said in John 14:3, “I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am, there you may be also.” I do not just want to be in the same 1500-mile city. I want to be in the same room with Him. I want to be strategizing with Him as He trains the nations in the full counsel of His heart.

The highest description of glory that the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1-4) receive is that they will follow the Lord wherever He goes. That is the 144,000. It is going to be hard to get in front of that line to talk with the Lord.

“Hey Lord. Guys, stop. Shhhh, shhhh. Hey Lord, I just want to ask you this question.”

I do not know how it is going to work, but I know this, when Jesus is on the earth ruling, He will be a resurrected human being in a physical body. He will be omnipresent, by the Holy Spirit and we will have communication with Him. I do not just want to be on the city with Him, on the earth with Him, I want to be in the room with Him.

The Lord says, “You can, based on your responses to me in this age.” Not based on how gifted you are. It is based on how abandoned you are to Him. It does not matter who you know.

You may be someone who says, “I do not know anybody. I have not networked with anybody. I do not have any contacts, I have no impact that I can even measure.”

The Lord says, “That is not what it is about.” “I do not know what my giftings are, I do not have a great education, and I do not have great opportunities.”

None of these matter in the millennial kingdom. It is all about heart responses.

We want to be involved, paragraph C, in what He calls precious. The greatest part of our authority is in our closeness in which we work with Him. Not just how near, but in what we are doing, how dear it is to Him. All the tasks will not be of equal importance to Him. All the people will be equally important to Him, but their nearness in proximity in relationship will all differ. We will cherish working with the One we love and discipling the nations. Not only is it that we are working with Him, that is the ultimate, but we are also blessing people that we love.

Those who are greater in reward will be a greater blessing to the people they love. They will have a greater sphere of anointing and a greater sphere of power. It will matter. This is a paradigm based on love and desire; a paradigm of eternal rewards. It is not based on being over others.

Paragraph D: the Father gave Jesus all authority over all nations. When He gave it to Him, He gave it to Jesus in profound trust, affection and respect of Jesus’ dedication to Him. The Father entrusted to Jesus the mandate of bringing every nation into total obedience in every area of their lives. There is nothing dearer to the Father’s heart than this mandate. To bring all the people of all the nations into full obedience to Him.

In the millennial kingdom, there will be those with resurrected bodies, but there will also be those who have natural bodies who are the unsaved survivors of the tribulation period that resisted the Antichrist. They will continue to populate the earth. There will be billions of people who will need to be saved and trained. All the institutions will be brought under the leadership of Jesus.

## **JOY IN PARTNERSHIP**

Paragraph E: Jesus said this in Matthew 25:21, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful in a few things, I will make you a ruler over many. Enter into the joy of your lord.” There will be joy in ruling. It will not be boring and it will not be irrelevant. There will be great enjoyment in the task. There will be such a privilege to be working with the Lord so closely.

Jesus enjoys working with His Father. Our view of ruling with Jesus is the delight of intimate partnership with Him and the delight of working with other anointed people in a way that serves them and enriches them in the glory of God. We will all have different capacities in the anointing in the age to come. I want as much capacity as God has ordained for me to have.

Think of the person you love and admire the most; someone you really admire, and for whom you have great respect, or great love. Maybe you live with them. Maybe it is somebody in another part of the world. You would naturally want to work with them in the glory of God. It would be a great privilege. That is what rewards are about.

## **INTERACTING WITH THE NATIONS**

Paragraph F: also in the millennial kingdom, there is another intimacy dimension. When Jesus returns and the glory of God is on the earth we are going to be living in the New Jerusalem in resurrected bodies. The New Jerusalem is coming down to the earth. We will interact and we will come and go to and from the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem will be our residence.

We will have places of leadership across the earth. We will interact with people in their natural bodies. We will train them and teach them the ways of the Lord. As the life expectancy goes on, the number of people on the earth will be quite large, far bigger than it is now. There will be billions of them eventually. Not immediately but over 1000 years. They will have long lives. Many of them will live to be hundreds of years old, it says in Isaiah 65:20, and if they only live to be 100 it will be thought that something is wrong. The age process that reversed after the flood, when everybody used to live five or six hundred years and then the age expectancy lowered, will go the other way.

Many of you will have teaching ministries on the earth, far beyond your ministry right now. When we teach in the age to come, we will not be studying the libraries of heaven and just giving data. We will be teaching the nations out of the truth of what we did in this age. We will be teaching the nations about humility. We will not read a book on Paul's humility. We will talk about what we did when pride confronted our heart.

Everything will have to be in truth. All the teachings about calling the nations into intimacy, holiness, and righteousness will be the fruit of what we did in this age.

“Ah Lord, I want to teach them about humility.”

“When you had a natural body and sin was in your members, how did you confront pride? What did you do?”

That is how you will teach them.

The Lord may say to one person, “You did not really do that much.”

To another person, “You have volumes of things to teach out of your true interaction with me. Because the people you are teaching will have natural bodies.”

We will teach them in a spirit of truth. Not just memorizing what somebody else learned. We will teach out of the truth of what we live in right now. It really matters what we are doing.

I want to teach men and women about purity, meekness, and seeking God under the difficulties of having a fleshly body and not being face to face with the Lord in the way that we want to.

The Lord's answer would be, “If you want to teach that stuff, press into it now and teach them what you did. Do not teach them theories. Teach them out of life and what you did.”

It really matters what we are doing now.

## **ETERNAL ASSIGNMENT**

Roman numeral VI: eternal circumstances, or temporal ones. The Lord wants us to see the value of our eternal assignment, or our larger assignment on the earth.

Paragraph A: Life on the earth in this age I like to compare to a seventy-year internship. It is preparing us for our next assignment on the earth that is far more important than our assignment that we have right now. This is not to minimize the people we are touching right now. That is important. But, that is not the end of the story of what is going on in your life today.

This is the time that we are preparing for our primary ministry. My primary ministry is not what I am doing right now. This is important what I am doing. It is important what you are doing. But, it is preparation. When I meet the Lord I get my primary ministry or assignment. We have our seventy-year assignment now, and then we have our 1000-year assignment coming next.

Billy Graham, as famous as he is, and as many people as he has touched, is an intern right now. He really is. He is an intern. He has not begun to touch the potential that he has in the grace of God to impact the nations. He is at the beginning of it.

The analogy I like to use is the analogy of a medical student.

If a young man or a woman says, “Hey, I want to go to school for ten years and invest a couple hundred thousand dollars for education, ten hard years to be a doctor.”

Nobody would think it was strange. They would think it would be wise to invest ten years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to have fifty years in the profession.

Ten years of training and hundreds of thousands of dollar of investment, but you get fifty years to be a doctor. If that is wise, why is seventy years hard to understand as an investment for a 1000-year assignment?

It makes sense to give ten for fifty. How much more to give 70 for 1000 years? There are a lot of financial sacrifices. There are time commitments. By the grace of God, this is what I want to lay hold of.

Paragraph B: In our seventy-year internship, we have two major issues to decide.

Issue number one, do you want to be a part of God's eternal family?  
The answer is yes. You are born again. You commit yourself to Jesus.

Issue number two, do you want to be a part of His government in the age to come?

For a lot of people, their answer would be, "I never think about it."

I just say as a friend and shepherd in the kingdom that it is a really important decision to think about. It does not take care of itself any more than a young man or woman going to a university with no direction. They do not just end up a doctor one day.

"I was just kind of walking around the campus and one day I was a doctor."

Just going about life and one day they are in government in the kingdom. It does not happen that way. They are focused. They are obeying the command of Jesus. They are taking seriously the invitation of Jesus to be great in the kingdom. I unashamedly want to be great in the kingdom. I want to be great in God's sight, not in man's sight, because it is a biblical reality. Choices that we are making now are determining our assignment in the age to come.

That is what the study in the millennial kingdom is about. Our ministry in the age to come has nothing to do with how much we accomplish in this age now. It has everything with how much we develop internally in this age. Part of our internal development is in serving people. The ultimate development is servanthood. I am not saying that we are not connected to impacting people. Absolutely we are.

More than anything, we are connected to obey the Holy Spirit. A lot of folks under the banner of serving people and bringing the Word to people, they get thrust and swallowed into perpetual networking to increase their influence; it is like a magnetic force. It is not really about touching people that much. It is about getting more influence and a greater sphere of influence. This tricks many folks and they think they are genuinely serving God and ministering to people.

They are just getting more well known. They spend their time and energy. They will do anything just to get a little more influence. I want to encourage you to lock into something bigger than just trying to get a few more doors open in this age.

In Stephen Covey's book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he said, "A good leader begins with the end in mind."

Well, Jesus and Paul began with the end in mind. I want to encourage you to begin with the end in mind, with where you want to be in 500 years. For real, I am as serious as can be. Where do you want to be? Work back from that.

Paragraph E: Our calling in the millennial kingdom is far more than our circumstances now.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 (paraphrased), "Our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction . . . is but a moment" He is talking about persecution, fasting, and prayer. He is not just talking about the negative only, but the rigors of his lifestyle.

It is working for us a more exceeding weight of glory. He was not just talking about all that he was doing, earning the resurrection. He had the resurrection—that was a free gift. He had eternal life as a free gift because of the gift of righteousness. He was talking about embracing the rigors of his calling and lifestyle, that it was working in him something that was not automatic. The eternal weight of glory is not talking about salvation. He is talking about something working in him. It has to do with his assignment in the age to come.

Romans 8:18 (paraphrased): "I consider the sufferings of this present time," and it is not just the beatings and the whippings. Certainly that is at the top of the list. It was the way that he dealt with his life in the culture of pleasure.

Paul says, "I consider the sufferings of this present time, they are not worthy of being compared with the glory revealed inside of me."

### **JESUS' AFFIRMATION OVER US**

Roman numeral VII: Jesus' affirmation of our heart, of our choices, of our achievements.

Jesus says in Matthew 25:21, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Paragraph C, we need to have a vision. Most have this vision to hear the Lord say, "Well done." Most believers I know have that vision, but there is no practicality to it. It is like that young college student wandering around the campus, hoping that he turns out a doctor.

A lot of folks say, “Well done.”

“What are you doing about it?”

“I’m trusting in the grace of God.”

That is not going to get it done. What is your action plan? What do you do with your time and money? What are you doing Monday morning and Monday night? What about Saturday morning and Saturday night? What do you do with your decisions? Do you take every opportunity you have for pleasure and increase, or do you say no to things so you can be in the presence of God?

You are not going to just show up one day with a life bridled under the grace of God and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is going to take an intentional and sustained focus to have this kind of testimony from the Lord on the last day.

I say that we all need to have the vision. Most do, but most do not have any action plan behind the vision.

I heard one preacher say, “Without a plan, any road will get you there.”

Meaning just enough vision to kind of go for God in any way and hope they end up right. Ten years go by and they are no deeper in God. I have been in ministry now for thirty years. I have seen many guys go hard for five years. I see them ten or twenty years later. They have less relationship now. Many. I am talking thousands. I do not just mean a few bad examples.

We want to have an intentional, deliberate going after this thing. We want to seize this vision and give ourselves to it in a thought-through and intentional way—not a casual approach. This reality of our relationship with God is the most important thing in our life after we are born again.

Paragraph D: God takes into account our weakness. David said in Psalm 103:14, “He knows our frame; He remembers we are dust.” David had revelation of this. Our best efforts only produce flawed faithfulness. All of our own faithfulness is flawed just as David’s was and Paul’s was. God’s editing process of grace takes into account our weakness. Our faithfulness is flawed and fails on occasion.

However, if we consistently make resolve to rise up and encounter the Lord, to war against the thing with which we stumble, our life is still considered faithful.

When we come up short in our failure and we renew our resolve to remain steady, the Lord looks at it and sees faithfulness in our spirit. Our vision is to be faithful, but the Lord's view of it takes into account our weak frame. That it is doable is the point. It works with people like us. I was saying earlier, it does not happen automatically one day. We have to be intentional, focused, and sign up for it thousands of times in our life.

Paragraph E: We can receive tokens of “well done” even now. There are times in our life when we sense the Holy Spirit's pleasure over our pursuit. Not our attainment, but our pursuit. We can enter into the joy of Jesus looking and saying, “I see the pursuit. You are going hard. You have not attained to everything. You are pursuing and when you fail, you sign up immediately to go after it again.”

Paragraph F: Every hour is sacred with this revelation. The Lord is watching us. Every hour is for our benefit if we seize the opportunity. We must sense the joy of this revelation, the fact that we can be found faithful and He says, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Even in our weakness, we can have a sense of that now that washes our heart and invigorates our spirit day by day. Maybe it is exaggerated to say day by day, but that truth can invigorate us through the weeks and through the months—the truth and the glory that our hours are important. They may not be making a great impact on anybody and we may not feel a lot in that particular hour. The fact that we are reaching for Him and we are choosing Him, He esteems it and remembers it and rewards us for it.

Boredom or burn out doesn't have room in this paradigm of life. They are eliminated to the degree to which we connect with this reality—the idea that every day matters, every hour matters. We do not have to feel power in that hour to make that hour to matter to God. We do not have to have the breakthrough in the attainment of maturity for that hour to be remembered by God.