Session 6 Why We Should Desire Eternal Rewards

1. review: the saints will rule with Jesus for 1,000 years on the earth
   1. The Millennium is the time when the saints will reign with Jesus on earth for 1,000 years. Understanding the Millennium gives us insight into what God is preparing us for.

4I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those…beheaded for their witness to Jesus…they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years…6They shall be priests…and…reign with Him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4, 6)

10“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:10)

* 1. Jesus will establish peace and righteousness as the kingdom will be manifest worldwide, affecting every sphere of life (political, social, agricultural, economic, spiritual, educational, law enforcement, family, media, arts, technology, athletics, environment, social institutions, etc.).

1. having a right view of eternal rewards: Jesus emphasized their value

19“Whoever breaks [consistently] one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches [encourages] them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt. 5:19)

* 1. God invites “whosoever,” literally *everyone*, to be great in His kingdom. This is a primary teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). We cannot repent of the desire for greatness because God designed our spirit with this longing. We must repent for seeking greatness in a *wrong way*. We must also repent for *neglecting* to seek greatness (because Jesus designed and called us to be great in His sight). Without the paradigm of being on a journey to greatness, the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle is much more difficult to sustain.

6He who comes to God must believe…He is a rewarder of those who…seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

* 1. Jesus taught that there is a great difference in the measure of glory and greatness that we all experience in God’s kingdom. Some are called the least and some the greatest.

5A voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!” (Rev. 19:5)

* 1. Jesus revealed a new paradigm for greatness. We are to focus on being great *in His sight* rather than in the sight of men. We understand that this greatness will be *fully manifest* in the age to come, not in this age. Our greatness will be based on our *heart responses*, not on natural gifting and resources and thus, it is available to *everyone* (the “*whoever*” of Mt. 5:19; 20:26-27; 23:12).
  2. Promotion and greatness in God’s sight is *available to all*. God invites all to greatness, without regard for outward achievements, but for the development of the heart in love and meekness.

6“Whoever desires t o become great among you, let him be your servant.” (Mt. 20:26)

* 1. Receiving eternal rewards and being great in God’s sight was a major theme in Jesus’ teaching. He emphasized this in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:5, 12, 19, 46; 6:1, 4, 6, 18, 20; 7:2).

12“Rejoice…for great is your reward in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets…19Whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom…” (Mt. 5:12, 19)

46“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?” (Mt. 5:46)

35“Love your enemies, do good…and your reward will be great.” (Lk. 6:35)

20“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven…” (Mt. 6:19-20)

22“You will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Lk. 18:22)

42“Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” (Mt. 10:42)

27“The Son of Man will come…then He will reward each according to his works.” (Mt. 16:27)

12“I am coming…My reward is with Me to give to every one according to his work.” (Rev. 22:12)

27Peter said, “We have left all and followed You. What shall we have?” 28Jesus said, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration [Millennium], when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel…30But many [majority] who are first [prominence, gifting, and privilege, etc.] will be last, and the last first.” (Mt. 19:21-30)

* 1. Jesus taught about God’s invitation to greatness more than any other man in Scripture. He spoke about this directly and indirectly as He called us: to become ***great*** (Mt. 5:19; 18:4; 20:25-26; 23:11; Mk. 10:42-43; Lk. 6:23, 35; 9:48; 22:26); to receive ***riches*** with God in heaven (Lk. 12:21; 16:11; Rev. 2:9; 3:18); to be ***ruler*** over many things (Mt. 25:21, 23); to have ***authority*** over cities (Lk. 19:17, 19); to have ***power*** over nations (Rev. 2:26-27; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 22:29-30); to sit on Jesus’ ***throne*** (Rev. 3:21); to inherit ***authority*** in the earth (Mt. 5:5); to be ***first*** in authority (Mt. 19:30; 20:16, 27); to gain ***treasure*** in heaven (Mt. 6:20; 19:21; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 12:33; 18:22); to receive ***rewards*** (Mt. 5:12; 6:4, 6, 18; 10:41-42; 16:27; Mk. 9:41; Lk. 6:23, 35; Rev. 22:12); to be ***exalted*** (Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11; 18:14); to receive ***honor*** from the Father (Jn. 12:26); to be one of the few who are ***chosen*** for honor (Mt. 20:16; 22:14); to gain ***crowns*** (Rev. 2:10; 3:11); to gain heavenly ***garments*** (Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 16:15; 19:7-8).
  2. Our reward is given partially in this life, but mostly in the age to come. However, when God does release tokens of our reward in this life, it is mostly by a release of His Spirit in our inner man; secondarily, it is an increase of blessing in circumstances (honor, money, and comfort).
  3. The few who do focus on receiving God’s rewards commonly emphasize receiving rewards in this age in their circumstances instead of their inner man.

1. eternal Rewards: external expressions of our internal love for Jesus
   1. Rewards are tangible, physical expressions in eternity of our intangible spiritual responses to Jesus while on earth. They express openly for all to see in the New Jerusalem what cannot be seen in the secret place of our hearts now on earth.

5Until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)

17“For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light…18For whoever has, to him more will be given…” (Lk. 8:17-18)

2“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light…” (Lk. 12:2-3)

* 1. We are rewarded openly for things that cannot now be seen. These are referred to as the counsels, or the movements, of our hearts. They include our decisions for righteousness, motives, attitudes, love, and emotions. Every movement of our heart in loving obedience to Jesus is seen, and thus, is not in vain. Only God knows our painful and costly decisions to love and seek Him.
  2. Jesus taught that the work of our hands will not receive a reward if our hearts are far away. Our Father openly rewards what we do in secret, including our internal heart responses.

4“Your charitable deed…your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly… 6pray…and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly…18Do not appear to men to be fasting…your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Mt. 6:4-18)

* 1. The gold, garments, treasures, and positions of authority in the age to come are tangible expressions of the movements of our hearts. They give sight, touch, and sound to what has happened in our hearts. They express openly what could not be seen in our love for Jesus. The intangible becomes tangible. Thus, r**ewards of gold and garments are both metaphorical and literal.**

18“Buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed…” (Rev. 3:18)

* 1. Jesus calls us to buy gold from Him. This speaks of our heart being refined in the fire of obedience. It is a metaphor for our life in this age. In heaven, however, we will receive literal gold that will express the measure of the movements of our hearts. It will publicly reveal our love for Jesus. The quality and quantity of the gold is all about the quality and quantity of the love we cultivated for Jesus in this age. It openly expresses that which only God has fully seen.
  2. An Olympic marathon champion values winning a gold medal not because of its financial value, but because it expresses the work that went into becoming the best runner. In eternity, our rewards are a tangible expression of every movement of our heart in this age.
  3. Part of the reward is the ability to openly express our love and to more fully experience it. The unseen and undefined will be fully grasped and experienced by all five senses in our resurrected body in a way we can only experience spiritually in this age.

34“The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light…36If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.” (Lk. 11:34-36)

43“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Mt. 13:43)

* 1. There will be a vast range of degrees of glory in our resurrected bodies and our greatness in God’s kingdom. Our rewards in eternity greatly differ from person to person.

41There is one glory of the sun…and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)

1. having a right view of authority in the Millennial government
   1. Our view of authority dynamically shapes our attitude to seeking rewards in the form of ruling the nations with Jesus. If we see authority as being over people so that we may establish our honor and secure more privilege, then we may not be interested in authority in the age to come.
   2. The secular paradigm of authority is one that seeks self-glory in ruling over people so as to dominate them. This paradigm is based on pride.

25“The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and…exercise authority over them…” (Mt. 20:25)

* 1. The bridal paradigm of authority and reward is based on our desire to be with Him where He is and to do what He is doing. We desire to be involved in what He calls precious. The greatest part of our authority will be found in the closeness in which we will work with Jesus. We will cherish working closely with the One we love in the details of discipling the nations and in bringing people we love to experience more of the Father’s blessing. This paradigm is based on love.

24“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me…” (Jn. 17:24)

3“I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be.” (Jn. 14:3)

1A Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000…4These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes… (Rev. 14:1-4)

* 1. The Father gave Jesus all authority over the nations in His profound respect, trust, and affection for Jesus. The Father entrusted to Jesus what was precious to the Father, when He mandated that Jesus disciple the nations to bring them to the fullness of blessing.
  2. We will have great joy or enjoyment in ruling in close partnership with Jesus. Jesus enjoys working with His Father. Ruling with Jesus in the millennial kingdom is to walk in the delight of intimate partnership with Him and His people in a way that serves and enriches all. Receiving positions of authority is about close partnership with Jesus in establishing on earth what is dear to His heart. Think of the person you most love and admire. You would naturally want to work closely with that person to glorify God.

21“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy [enjoyment] of your lord.” (Mt. 25:21)

* 1. In the millennial kingdom we will impart the intimacy, meekness, and righteousness that we walked out in our relationship with Jesus. Thus, it is essential to overcome temptation in this age to rule in the age to come. We will give insight to others from what we lived out while on earth.

1. motivated to righteousness now by ruling in the age to come
   1. Jesus gave great promises to even the most carnal (believers at Laodicea) in the first century. He motivated them to resist compromise by offering them a place of government in the millennial kingdom. This is the same way that He sought to motivate the apostles (Mt. 19:27-28).

21“To him [Laodiceans] who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne…” (Rev. 3:21)

27Peter said, “We have left all and followed You. What shall we have?” 28Jesus said, “I say to you, that in the regeneration [Millennium], when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones…” (Mt. 19:27-28)

1. kingdom paradigm: Eternal circumstances instead of temporal ones
   1. Our life on earth in this age can be likened to a 70-year internship (Ps. 90:10), which prepares us for our life on earth in the age to come. Our next stage of life will be in the Millennium. This is the time when our primary ministry calling begins. (Rev. 20:4-6; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 22:5).  
      1. Our preparatory assignment is a ***70-year assignment*** on earth in this age (our internship).   
      2. Our primary assignment is a ***1,000-year assignment*** on earth after Jesus’ second coming.
   2. In our 70-year internship we have two issues that we are to determine in the grace of God. First, to decide if we want to *be in God’s family* as voluntary lovers. Second, to decide if we want to *function in Jesus’ government* (initially for 1,000 years in the Millennium, then for all eternity). The choices we make now determine our function in our 1,000-year ministry assignment. The measure that we develop in *love*, *meekness*,and *revelation* (of His Word) determines our place and function in His eternal government (Mt. 7:14; 19:30; 20:16, 26-27; 22:14; Lk. 13:24).
   3. Our ministry in the age to come has nothing to do with how much we accomplished outwardly in this age, but rather how much we developed inwardly.
   4. In Stephen Covey’s best selling book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he said, “Good leaders begin with the end in mind.” Jesus and Paul both lived with their end goals in view.
   5. Our calling in the Millennium is more important than our circumstances now. Paul knew that the difficulties that made his outer man perish caused his inward man to be renewed (grow in meekness). It worked for the benefit of his main millennial calling, an eternal weight of glory.

16Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory [includes ruling in Millennium]… (2 Cor. 4:16-17)

18For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom 8:18)

1. Well done: Jesus’ affirmation of our heart, choices, and achievements
   1. We can exchange faithfulness over a “few things in this age” for “many things in the next age.”

21“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (Mt. 25:21)

* 1. At the time of the second coming, Jesus will settle accounts with His people (Mt. 25:19). We are evaluated according to what has been entrusted to us, not what we do not have. Some have such anxiety, anger, or despair over what they do not have that they do not invest what they do have. We are not evaluated by what others have, or by what we do not have.
  2. It is not enough to gain an entrance into heaven; the Lord offers us grace to live in such a way that we will hear Jesus say, “Well done.” We must have a vision to hear “Well done” at the end of our life, and set our heart to walk in excellence in our relationship with Jesus. People easily settle for second best when obstacles or opportunities come their way, causing them to conclude that the season is not right for them to fully press into God with diligence and faithfulness.
  3. God takes our weakness into account. Our best efforts only produce flawed faithfulness. God’s editing process in grace takes into account our sinful weakness. Our faithfulness will fail on occasion. However, our consistent resolve and war against our sin and weakness to fully obey God and walk in meekness is what the Lord counts as a life of faithfulness. In the Lord’s kindness, the saints are esteemed as faithful and, thus, we are rewarded beyond what we deserve.

14For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. (Ps. 103:14)

* 1. We can receive tokens of Jesus’ affirmation, “well done,” even now. We enter His joy as we understand that He esteems our attempts to grow in righteousness, and by having confidence that the choices we make matter to God because our efforts in small things matter.
  2. Every hour is sacred with this revelation. Every hour is for my benefit if I seize the opportunity. We must let this joy wash our spirit and invigorate our heart with the glory of how relevant and important each hour of our life is. Boredom and burnout have no place in this paradigm. They are both eliminated to the degree that I connect with this reality. We replace boredom and burnout with the wonder of the daily adventure of encountering and pleasing Jesus. We can live with a bright spirit because of this revelation (Jn. 5:35; Lk. 11:33).