

THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

BECOMING A FAITHFUL -- REWARDABLE -- PROFITABLE SERVANT OR – AVOIDING THE DANGEROUS TRAP OF NORMALCY

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In 1776 – 56 men involved in the First Continental Congress pledged to each other their Lives, their Fortunes and their Sacred Honor to help establish, through a Bible based ideology, the Independent United States of America.

That was not Normalcy or Basic Citizenship.

God has **not** called followers of Christ to live out their salvation based on an ideology – but based on a Biblical Theology. He has called us to live a principled life – principles taught throughout the whole body of the Holy Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (Emphasis Mine)

Profitable = *Ophelimos* – Helpful or Serviceable – that is – Advantageous or Profitable **Used 4 times in the New Testament** – All in 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus

My Concern: I am concerned that we have unwittingly and erroneously **normalized basic Christian Service** as the only requirement for hearing from our Lord at His Judgement Seat – “Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant”.

I believe that the phrase “Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant” – in the Scriptures -- denotes a Servant that has been **profitable** to his Master.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him **to whom we must give account.** (Emphasis Mine)

We will be looking at the kind of life God rewards at the **Judgement Seat of Christ**. All Christians must appear at this Seat (*Bema*) to be judged for their entire – God given stewardship (not their sins) in this life. We will begin by looking at some of the principles dedicated to this subject – beginning with Matthew 25:14-29.

Note – If pastors believe we will be judged for our sins in heaven – then -- there has probably been too much emphasis on not sinning and not enough emphasis on Personal Stewardship.

SOME FOUNDATIONAL BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

..... Principle #1). God expects to get a spiritual return on His investment placed in the lives of His Stewards – Christ Followers.

Note: See the Principles in: The Parable of the Talents –

Matthew 25:14-29 (NKJV) ¹⁴ "For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a **man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods** to them. ¹⁵ And to one he gave **five** talents, to another **two**, and to another **one**, to **each according to his own ability**; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶ Then he who had received the **five** talents went and **traded** with them, and **made another five talents**. ¹⁷ **And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.** ¹⁸ But he who had received **one** went and **dug in the ground**, and **hid** his lord's money. ¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and **settled accounts** with them. ²⁰ So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' ²¹ His lord said to him, '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.' ²² He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' ²³ His lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²⁴ Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.' ²⁶ But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own

with interest. ²⁸ Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. (Emphasis Added and Italics Mine)

When their master returned from his long journey:

Note: The servants with the stewardship of 5 and 2 talents gained a 100% return on the master's resources – for which they received his praise -- “Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant” – and a handsome reward. He made them rulers in his kingdom!

Note: The servant with one talent protected and preserved his master's goods!!

He did just what a normal servant would do. Not what a fervent servant would have done – like the servants with 5 and 2 talents – made their master a sizeable profit.

Note: The unprofitable servant was rebuked by his master who also labeled him as a wicked and lazy servant.

The Conclusion of the Parable of the Talents when servants are called into account:

Matthew 25:29 (NKJV) For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

..... Principle #2). As followers of Christ, we must have this attitude; that within ourselves alone, we are incapable of becoming a Profitable Servant to God. (Luke 17:1-10) (John 15:1-8)

See Luke 17:1-10 → Jesus seems to define/describe an unprofitable servant to the twelve and their appropriate attitude towards doing their basic service.

Luke 17:1-10 (NKJV) ¹ Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come! ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. ³ Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents,

forgive him. ⁴ And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." ⁵ And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." ⁶ So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." ⁷ And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

Unprofitable = a euphemism for *achreios* = useless, good for nothing

Note: Luke 17:10 (NKJV) So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, '**We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.**'" (Jesus) (Emphasis Mine)

Note: I do not believe Jesus is just stressing humility!! He is saying don't just do what is normal – basically required for a servant!!

Question: Is that what we should settle for as we call ourselves Christians – to wear the label of an unprofitable servant? No!!!

Note: I believe God has made this is our choice!! I believe the Scriptures shows us how to become a Fervent – Passionate -- Rewardable -- Faithful -- Profitable – Servant.

Note: Again:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Note: John 15:5 (NKJV) I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (Jesus) (Emphasis Mine)

AS THE GODMAN – SON OF MAN -- JESUS POSITIONED HIMSELF TO BECOME THE MODEL PROFITABLE SERVANT FOR US.

.... Principle #3). Like The Lord Jesus – **“The Model Profitable Servant”** -- by presenting our lives as a living sacrifice for God’s use, we can **POSITION** ourselves to become a follower of Christ that God can work in to will and to perform His good pleasure – **To Produce a Profitable Servant.**

Reference: (Matt 26:36-46) (Philippians 2:5-13) (Romans 12:1-2) (1 Corinthians 3:9-15)

Our Lord’s Surrender -- Positioning of Himself to be the Model Profitable Servant for us -- as the God Man – Son of Man

Note: Three Times Jesus Prayed to His Father – Presented His request to let the Cup of the Cross pass from Him -- then surrendered to His Father’s Will – humbling Himself to the cross of suffering and death – payment for sin – our redemption!!

Note: Matthew 26:42b (NKJV) "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." (Jesus in The Garden of Gethsemane)

The Apostle Paul’s Instructions to the Philippians from prison in Rome – Regarding the Mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5 (NKJV) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:8 (NKJV) And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the **cross.**

Note -- Jesus’ Reward: Philippians 2:9 (NKJV) Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

AND ---

Matthew 28:18 (NKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Paul’s Charge to the Philippians

Philippians 2:12-13 (NKJV) ¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work**

out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Emphasis Mine)

God's Good Pleasure

God's Good Pleasure – To make of each Follower of Christ – a Rewardable – Profitable Servant – Rewarded at the Judgement Seat of Christ!!

NOTE: LIKE JESUS -- WE ARE TO POSITION OURSELVES SO GOD CAN PRODUCE THROUGH US -- A PROFITABLE SERVANT

Positioning ourselves for God to make of us -- a Rewardable – Profitable Servant!!

Note: Romans 12:1 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*

Note: Romans 12:3 (NKJV) For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

..... **Principle #4).** We must ask and trust the Lord to will and to perform through us whatever it takes to become a Profitable Servant – one that bears much fruit.

Note: John 15:8 (NKJV) By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (Jesus) (Emphasis Mine)

THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

1 CORINTHIANS 9

PAUL'S POSITION AND PROVIDENTIAL PRIVILEGES

1 Corinthians 9:1-5 (NKJV) ¹ Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

Note: The Apostle Paul Refused the life of justifiable "normalcy"!

He gave up his providential rights of an Apostle!

PAUL'S BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

1 Corinthians 9:6-15 (NKJV) ⁶ Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? ⁸ Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, "*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.*" Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ **If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?** ¹² **If others are partakers of *this* right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.** ¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings* of the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. ¹⁵ But I have used none of these things,

nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. (Emphasis Added – Mine)

Note: 1 Corinthians 9:11-12 (NKJV) ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, **but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.** (Emphasis Added – Mine)

Also See – Matthew 10:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. ⁹ Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, ¹⁰ nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; **for a worker is worthy of his food.** (Emphasis Mine)

Luke 10:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, **for the laborer is worthy of his wages.** Do not go from house to house. ⁸ Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. (Emphasis Mine)

PAUL'S PREACHING AND REWARD

1 Corinthians 9:16-18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for **necessity** is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ **For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.** ¹⁸ **What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.** (Emphasis Added – Mine)

Note: Similar to Moses and Jonah: The Apostle Paul received a **command** from The Lord!! **No choice** for Moses, Jonah or Paul, but to obey or pay the consequences!! All three were **commanded** – not

given a choice – Moses – deliver the Hebrews -- Paul to preach the Gospel to all Gentiles – Jonah to preach repentance to the Nineveh!!

Note: The Apostle Paul Refused the life of Justifiable – Apostolic - - “Normalcy”! I think he thought this this might make him an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10).

Remember Luke 17:10 (NKJV) So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' " JESUS

PAUL’S PLAN AND PURSUIT TO BECOME A PROFITABLE SERVANT

Paul POSITIONED himself to become a Rewardable – Profitable Servant!!

Note: The Apostle Paul’s Passion and Fervency as a Servant

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NKJV) ¹⁹ For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself **a servant to all**, that I might win the more; ²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; ²¹ to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; ²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. ²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*. (Emphasis Mine)

Note: 1 Corinthians 9:22b-23 (NKJV) ^{22b} I have become all things to all *men*, **that I might by all means** save some. ²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.

Partaker = *sunkoinonos* = co-participant – joint partners

Note: Paul sacrificed to find **common ground** to win him an **opportunity** to preach the Gospel. An unbeliever’s **status** meant nothing to Paul!! Paul – with intense devotion -- **intentionally**

enlarged the harvest field -- to better position himself to become a Rewardable –Profitable Servant!!

PAUL'S PURSUIT TO STAY A GOOD AND FAITHFUL – REWARDABLE – PROFITABLE SERVANT:

Paul was Dedicated – Disciplined and Determined to Win

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NKJV) ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. ²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an **imperishable crown**. ²⁶ **Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.** ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become **disqualified**. (KJV= Castaway) (Emphasis Mine)

Note: Most likely, the Apostle Paul has the Judgement Seat of Christ in mind here.

Compete = *agonizomai* = fervently strive

Temperate = *enkrateuomai* = to exercise self-restraint – self control

Disqualified or Castaway = *adokimos* = unapproved – not standing the test – unworthy; used in testing of metals

Note: As we say today – Paul was in it to win it!!

Note: In 1st Corinthians 3 – works are tested for approval.

In 1st Corinthians 9, we – our character and attitude of fervency -- are tested for approval as we run our race.

WHAT IS THE PRIZE?: I BELIEVE IT IS PRAISE FROM GOD THAT WE WERE A GOOD AND FAITHFUL --- PROFITABLE – SERVANT!!!

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NKJV) Therefore judge nothing before the time, until 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.** (Emphasis Mine)

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S LIFE SUMMARY -- FROM CONTEST TO CROWN!!

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NKJV) ⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.** ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and **not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.** (Emphasis Added – Mine)

Note: Timothy had delivered what we know today as **1st Corinthians** for Paul to the Church at Corinth several years before he wrote his last letter -- **2nd Timothy**. **So Timothy knew exactly what the Apostle Paul was pouring out of his heart to him.**

I BELIEVE:

The Crown of Righteousness is the Prize Paul pursued and is possibly -- also -- Emblematic of God's -- **Approved Profitable Servants.**

OUR RESPONSE

- 1.) While being Spirit Filled and Word Filled (Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16)-- We can begin by evaluating our Stewardship of Seven Major T's in the Scriptures. Our Time, Talents, Treasures, Temple, Trust, Temperament and The Truth.
- 2.) We must realize that just our basic – non-sacrificial obedience – service – that which is expected from a servant cannot earn us God's approval as a profitable – rewardable -- servant. Luke 17:10
- 3.) We should position ourselves to be profitable servants through presenting our bodies to God as living sacrifices -- (Rom. 12:1-2) – While doing all to the Glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)
- 4.) While being Spirit Filled and Word Filled – Running our race -- We should ask and trust God to continually work in us to make us a profitable servant. (Phil. 2:12-13)
- 5.) Stay focused on Jesus – abiding in Him (John 15:4) – practicing the Faith Rest Life. (Matt. 11:28-30)

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NKJV) ¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

C.H. Spurgeon -- Unprofitable Servants – Matt. 25 & Luke 17 -- June 6, 1880 --
Conclusion

“Go on, brothers, and do not think of resting until your day’s work is done. Serve God with all your might. Do more than the Pharisees, who hope to be saved by their zeal. Do more than your brethren expect of you. ... It is to those who blend faithfulness with humility and ardour with self-abasement that Jesus will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant: enter into the joy of your Lord.”

REMEMBER –

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV) ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ **but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.** ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. JESUS (Emphasis Mine)

Romans 11:34-36 (NKJV) ³⁴ “*For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?*” ³⁵ **“Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”** ³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen. (Emphasis Mine)