

Th122 Foundation Doctrines

Lesson Th122 – 27 Eternal Judgment – Judgment of the Saints

Jesus told a parable about judgment. He said that the kingdom of heaven is like this. There was a great man who was going on a long trip. He called his own servants to him, so that he could entrust to them his wealth. Each man had different skills and abilities, so the master entrusted to each of them a quantity of gold that they were capable of managing. The first man was given five bags of gold coins, the second man two bags of gold coins, and the third man was given one bag of gold coins. All three men knew what was expected of them. Then the great man left on his journey, leaving the three servants to manage his wealth.

The first two men quickly set about investing the master's money. But for some reason the third man could not decide what to do with the gold. Eventually he buried the gold in the ground to keep it safe. Sometime later the rich man returned and called his servants to give an account. The first servant said, "Master, you entrusted five bags of gold coins to me. See, I have managed your money well and have doubled it. You now have ten bags of gold coins."

The master was very pleased with his servant and said, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful in a little, so I will put you in charge of much more."

Then the second servant presented himself before the rich man. "Master, you entrusted to me two bags of gold coins. I have doubled your investment and now you have four bags of gold."

Again, the master was pleased and said, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful in a little, so I will put you in charge of much."

Finally, the third servant came before the rich man and said, "Master, you entrusted to me a bag of gold coins. I knew that you expected a profit, but I was afraid so I hid your money to keep it safe. Here is your bag of gold."

The master became very angry and said, "You lazy and wicked servant. You knew that I expected a profit, but you have done nothing! You did not even put my money in the bank, so that I at least would have received interest on it. He then told his men, "Take the bag of gold coins from this worthless servant and give it to the man with the ten bags of gold. He knows what to do with my wealth. Then, take this worthless servant and cast him out of my presence" (Matt 25:14-30).

From this story, we learn that the servants of the master will be judged according to their obedience. All three servants belonged to the master. They all understood what was expected from them. Two were obedient. One was not.

Every believer will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ where he will judge their works and reward them for their faithfulness. This judgment is not determining their salvation,

but rather is a judgment of their works. The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth to teach them about how their work for Christ would one day be judged:

Each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

By the grace God has given to me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames (1Cor 3:8-15).

These concepts of a believer working for an eternal reward are very important. Now someone may argue that Paul said, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:8-9). And indeed, we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. But we must also remember that our works will be judged.

The apostle James taught that true faith would produce good works. He wrote this:

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.'

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

James went on to give evidence that faith without works is useless. He concluded, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:14-19, 26).

Faith is not possible without works. True faith will express itself through love. Martin Luther explained that a person is justified—declared righteous before God—by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone. Genuine faith will produce good works, but only faith in Christ saves.

This story is **important** because it points to the truth that our obedience and faithfulness matters to God. Those who show their faith through their good works will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The **main truth** of this lesson is although we are saved by grace, through faith, God expects us to do his works while we live for him on this earth.

To **review** the points of this lesson, memorize the following questions:

1. Jesus taught that every believer's works would be judged. Does this judgment determine a believer's salvation? [Pause 5 seconds]

A. If you said no, a believer's deeds will be judged to determine their reward, but they will be saved, then you are correct.

2. What did the Apostle James teach about faith and works? [Pause 5 seconds]

A. If you said that faith without works is dead, you are correct.

3. In the parable of the master entrusting gold to his servants, what was the reward that the faithful servants received? [Pause 5 seconds]

A. If you said that they were given greater responsibility, then you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to this lesson three times until you can tell the story of the master and his servants. Then tell this story to someone and teach them the principle of Christ judging the works of believers and rewarding them for their good works.