

THE WORKER'S REWARD

There are many within the Lord's Vineyard who have been faithful to till the soil, cultivate the land and watch over the flourishing branches. Many workers have labored through many seasons; they have waited patiently for the fruit to come to maturity. Faithful stewards of the land raise the crop, gather the fruit, and drive away the little foxes that would spoil the vines. Many have gathered the produce of the field, and have enjoyed the fruits of their labors. Countless individuals have heard the call to come work in the Vineyard. Even now, those who stand around idle, are being recruited into the great work of His harvest; for the harvest is great and the laborers are few. When the call comes, even when the day is far advanced, the Landowner promises to compensate them with that which is fair. Even at the eleventh hour He goes out, and finds those whom no man has hired. But there will be those who grumble at the Landowner, because He is generous. Even as the shadows are starting to fall, new workers are being recruited, and have been promised a fair price for a full day's work. When the call comes, each worker should expect that his needs will be supplied. But responding to this call is not an entitlement package; neither is it a promise of wealth, comfort or ease. The matter of compensation is left up to the Owner of the Vineyard. The amount is not a determining factor for those who love the Landowner. And so, with grateful hearts, His workers must realize that the preaching of the Gospel is in itself, a great reward. The generous pay that He supplies, is the grace that He gives, and the blessing of participating in His harvest. And at this late hour, it shall be accomplished quickly. The Landowner is a Man of His word: payday is coming; and the reward shall be equal to the degree of faithfulness.

Those whom the Master calls to enter into His work do so, knowing that they shall receive a fair and just compensation. Not all realize that the "wages" that He pays are not realized immediately; they are often delayed or reserved for another time. Many seek to put their talents to work from the standpoint of a bargaining position with the Landowner. Some who wish to advance in the world, will seek to accumulate compensation and profit from other sources. Scores of workers eager to enter the Lord's work, can be drawn by their tendencies toward human commerce. Some, being ambitious and driven, have made a name for themselves in their need for recognition; and some, certainly with noble motives, have built a monument to their causes. Some workers have carefully calculated what they consider to be their legal rights, having entered into the bargaining tables with men to procure their wealth and prestige. Others who labor within the Vineyard, are already receiving the rewards of their endeavors, as men look upon them with admiration; those who sound a trumpet when they do their alms, have their reward. Highly visible workers may face the temptation to promote themselves or their agenda for financial purposes. High profile workers may be tempted to pander to the people to maintain their following or to please men, as they are always before men. Some have named their little patch of earth where they labor, after themselves, fashioning the works of their hands into their own image. Eternal life is a gift, but rewards are earned. And a heavenly reward can be forfeited when men pursue the rewards that spring from their own kingdom work. Those who pour out unto men, who broadcast their good deeds unto the multitudes, shall from the multitudes of men, receive their reward.

Every worker in the Lord's Vineyard will be judged and rewarded based upon the choices they have made. Will we succumb to the desire for ease and personal comfort, or will we seek an eternal Kingdom in the face of adversity? Will we seek to secure a personal advantage to achieve earthly success at the cost of ignoring a higher call of consecration? Will we accept another way of escape during hardship and trials? When the pressure is on, will we exchange our faith in the fire for a premature release from pain? Will we sacrifice a high calling for the sake of personal convenience? Will we evade our present responsibility and privilege in exchange for some immediate gratification? The Lord's workers have yet to see the results of their labors and obedience; none have yet fully reaped what they have sown. Sometimes workers are given a glimpse of their inheritance, yet to be gathered and enjoyed at a future time. For them, the sheer joy of being employed in Kingdom work, within the Master's Vineyard, carries the promise of a future reward, unseen by earthly eyes. Their "labor", is to enter into His rest.

For some of the Lord's workers, their devotion to Him in obscurity, surpasses their desire for public exposure and promising opportunities offered by others. They do not care to be known in the world, or even among the Lord's workers. For some, the love for their Master has enabled them to persevere apart from seeing the outward, visible blessings that others seem to enjoy. There are many unknown workers whose primary focus is ministering to Him. And there are hidden ones, in places of confinement, pressure and limitation, in which something eternal is being produced. Something of great value is extracted in the winepress, and for them, it contains a great reward. In the secret place, the weary worker finds relief and refreshment; his longings are satisfied. For the Lord's sake and for His brethren, there are those who cheerfully accept the spoiling of their own goods, the confiscation of their own property, for the enduring substance of that which is promised them. Some of the Lord's workers do not have an appetite for the foods, the gatherings and the festivities enjoyed by other co-workers. They have tasted something eternal, and now they long for that which is only found in an inner chamber. It is there, that they find true satisfaction and fellowship. There is a reward for workers who deny themselves, who reject the fleeting pleasures and gratifications of this present age. Those who diligently seek Him, and not just His work, will find Him at the winepress. And there they meet with Him, and drink from His cup. They know His sufferings, but they also experience the pleasure of His company; they have tasted the intoxicating joy of communion with Him. For the Lord Himself is their Inheritance. It is there, that they discover that He is their exceeding, great Reward.

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done"; Revelation 22:12

Terri Hill

