

Rewards – Part I

INTRODUCTION

We are coming at this topic of “rewards” from a slightly different perspective. So much of what we do and think about has at its core this idea of “rewards”. From our schooling, to our jobs, to our driving record – it seems that practically every aspect of life has an inbuilt reward system attached to it. As students we are told that we should learn for the sheer joy of gaining knowledge, yet there is always this idea of “making the grade” lurking somewhere around the edges. Even in our faith experience, Jesus talked about “Our Father in heaven rewarding us openly,” depending of course on your translation. As mentioned we are looking at this whole issue of “rewards” from a different perspective.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Revelation 21.1-4. First Century Jews didn't think of heaven as “place” as much as they thought of it as a “realm,” a “reality,” a “way of living,” a “way of seeing and experiencing life.” What is your view of heaven; is a geographical place?
2. If heaven were to come crashing into earth today, would that be a good thing for you; (be careful before you answer), or would you need to undergo some changes? What might those changes look like?
3. If we are cynical or bitter, if we are unforgiving, if we are stingy and tight-fisted, if we are bigoted and biased – what it be like for us to be in a place filled with light, infused with unconditional love and forgiveness, in a place of lavish extravagance, in a place where we are surrounded by people no doubt very different from ourselves; what would that be like? If we have never really liked worship, are we going to all of sudden love it?
4. When you think of heaven, do you think of judgment? If so, what does that “judgment” look like to you? Is it possible to experience divine judgment in the everyday, when God shows up in some unexpected place, in some unexpected person? (Yes, I know that God is always present,) but I mean when God shows up and we've not been conscious of that “presence.”
5. Read Isaiah 6.1-5; read Luke 5.1-8. When Isaiah caught just a “glimpse” of God, what was his reaction? When Simon (Peter) recognizes that it is Jesus on the shore, what does he do? What do you suppose your reaction might be in the presence of God or in the presence of Jesus?

WHAT WILL I DO?

Think of that image of heaven “crashing” into earth; why not begin to center in on those specific places in life when you know that you are not living the way you want or need to live – the places where maybe you are bitter, unforgiving, stingy, biased or bigoted. Where might you help bring heaven to earth in some situation, or for some person.

MAKING A CHANGE

See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them...

Revelation 22.3