

Lesson Thirteen — Works and Reward

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Last week we learned about the full scope of salvation. We realized the importance of identifying the three-part nature of man and how redemption must deal with all three parts. We saw that the free gift of eternal life is based upon faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Period. We saw that this salvation is related to one's spirit; it is his spiritual birth, which cannot be gained through one's own works. Nothing can be added to or taken away from this salvation. It is fully secure, for it is fully based upon Christ's finished work, not upon man's work. And this is a salvation which *takes place in a moment of time (the moment the person exercises faith) and has to do with life for eternity.*

We also learned that the salvation of the soul has to do with the reward of the inheritance, which will be realized during the Millennial Era — the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ. Reward is given as a result of faithful works on the part of the individual who had previously put faith in Jesus Christ. This salvation is based upon one's continual walk of faith — faithful obedience to the commands of Christ. *Thus, this salvation is a process, which takes place during one's Christian life, as one strives to obediently complete the work that God had foreordained for him and has to do with the inheritance being realized in the coming age.*

The salvation of the body is yet future and will take place at the moment God calls the Body of Christ upward. At the resurrection/rapture of the Church, all Christians will receive their indestructible bodies (I Cor. 15:52-54). *This salvation has to do with the individual members of the Body of Christ receiving indestructible and eternal bodies, and will take place the moment of the resurrection/rapture of the Church and has to do with both the coming age and the eternal ages.*

With these distinctions in mind, this week we are going to continue examining the relationship between the salvation of the soul with works and reward, as these relate to the coming age. Please pray for a clearer understanding.

Day One — Justification by Faith

Remember last week we learned that once a person is *spiritually* alive, then and only then, is he in a position wherein he can operate *in the spiritual realm*. A person who is dead spiritually cannot operate in the spiritual realm, just as a person who is dead physically cannot operate in the physical realm.

This week we will see more clearly how both faith and works come into the picture subsequent to the initial moment of faith and the spiritual birth. Anything done in the spiritual realm (by one who is spiritually alive) falls into either of two categories — on the one hand, a saved individual can perform *works according to faith*, and in the end be rewarded for those works; or on the other hand, he can perform *works according to the flesh*, and in the end suffer loss for those works. Judgments and distinctions are made at the judgment seat of Christ at which time a believer's works will be tested by fire (I Cor. 3:11-15). The goal is to accomplish works according to faith!

But how does a *saved individual* perform works *according to faith*? Paul gives us insight into the answer to this questions in two of his letters, revealing something of interest concerning a life of faith. He quotes the prophet Habakkuk when he writes —

Romans 1:17 For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Notice the phrase "from faith to faith." A person is initially justified by faith! But that is just a beginning point! The person who has been *justified by faith* should continue to *live by faith*. It is "from faith to faith."

Then Paul uses the quote again in his letter to the Church in Galatia.

Galatians 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

In Galatians Paul writes somewhat extensively about the Old Testament Law. The purpose of this extensive writing about the Law is obviously not to command Christians to keep the Law (not at all!), but rather to show Christians the comparative purpose of the Old Testament Law to the New Testament commands of Christ. The Law was given to Israel with a view to receiving one's inheritance (Deut. 4:21). It is the same for the commands of Christ. The commands given in the New Testament are given with a view to receiving one's inheritance. Neither had/has anything to do with one's eternal salvation. Keeping the Law was *never* given as a means of salvation. In fact, the Law was given *after* the people had been redeemed, and it was given with a view to entering the land (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). Abraham's descendants were redeemed in Exodus chapter twelve; the Law was given in Exodus chapter nineteen forward. Knowing this, Paul expresses that this fact should not be overlooked!

That there are points of justification in an individual's life after salvation is made clear as Paul writes to the believers in Galatia. Paul tells them that the Law never justified *anyone at any time*. Justification only comes through faith — both initially and thereafter.

So when Paul uses the Law in his letters to the Churches, he uses it for comparative purposes to show the need of faithful obedience for entrance into the kingdom. Just as the Law was to be faithfully kept in the Old Testament in order for one to enter the land of promise (an earthly land), so the commands of Christ are to be faithfully kept in the New Testament in order to enter our land of promise (a heavenly land).

In the Books of Romans and Galatians, Paul explains the fact that the Old Testament Law had its place prior to the coming of Christ. Though no one has been justified through works of the Law, yet, through the Law came the knowledge of sin (Ro. 3:20). Paul writes that the Law was given as a tutor for *right living* (cf. Gal. 3:24, 25). But when Jesus came, He fulfilled the Law (He did not nullify the Law) and now, rather than a written Law, God gives His Spirit as the means for *right living*. Through walking in the Spirit, Christians are now to keep the commandments of Christ with a view to the inheritance in the kingdom. Obedience comes subsequent to the initial act of faith and obedience is a matter of the heart. In order to please God, the commandments of Christ must be kept through faith, rather than through a legalistic attitude. *Faithful obedience to what God said* is what pleases Him (Heb. 11:6). It is through an individual's actions based upon what *an individual's belief concerning what God said about the inheritance and the kingdom* that will please God and allow one to be granted his inheritance.

Actually the Bible reveals that there are two ways in which an individual can receive justification *after he is saved*. On the one hand, when a person *believes* what God says about something, he receives justification from God. On the other hand, when a person *acts upon that belief*, he also receives justification from God. Thus, there should be many points of justification in a person's life, which are *subsequent* to his initial justification through faith in Christ's work on Calvary. *Subsequent to one's initial justification* (one's spiritual birth), justification can come in two ways: 1) through faith alone, and 2) through works that emanate out of faith. And those subsequent points of justification are illustrated in Scripture in several ways.

Since Paul and James both used Abraham as an example of both types of justification *subsequent* to Abraham's initial justification, we will study what they both have written about him. Today we will see how Paul explains justification *by faith alone* in Abraham's life; then tomorrow we will see how James takes exactly the same picture in Abraham's life and shows how he was justified by works that emanated out of his faith. Thus we will see how both faith and works fit together into the whole picture *after a person is saved*.

Neither in Romans chapter four, nor in James chapter two, does the author deal with Abraham's *initial justification*. Both Paul and James deal with a point of justification *subsequent* to his reception of the free gift. Study carefully, and you will see.

In Romans chapter four, Paul is deals with the fact that the Law cannot justify anyone.

Romans 4

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? **2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. **3** For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." **4** Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. **5** But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness...

...13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Again, no part of the passage is dealing with Abraham's initial justification! In Romans 4:3 Paul is dealing with an event which took place in Genesis chapter fifteen. Abraham was initially justified by faith unto eternal life at some point **prior** to Genesis chapter twelve. His initial justification would have had to have happened in Ur **prior** to His leaving Mesopotamia, for in Hebrews chapter eleven God commends his faith for leaving Ur, connecting this *act of obedience* to his looking forward to the inheritance (Heb. 11:8, 9)! Any action (work) on the part of an individual would not be (could not be) commended by God, *prior to* God initially justifying that individual through his faith in God's provision of death and shed blood.

Therefore, Abraham's justification unto eternal life had to have taken place in Ur, and we are simply not privy to the details of the event because God did not see fit to record it in Scripture. God cannot/will not commend works *prior to* salvation. Therefore, when Paul deals with an event having taken place — a work on the part of Abraham — subsequent to his leaving Ur, he would have to be dealing with a post-salvation experience.

So what is Paul dealing with in showing that “Abraham believed God” and it being “counted to him as righteousness”? Notice in Romans 4:13, Paul connects Abraham's belief with the inheritance. Paul recognized that it was the inheritance that was being dealt with in Genesis chapter fifteen. Abraham believed what God said about his heir and the inheritance. (You may want to check the context in Gen. 15 and Rom. 4 to see if what is being said here is factual!)

In Romans chapter four, Paul is dealing with an event (subsequent to Abraham displaying previous faith when he left Ur, and was commended by God [Heb. 11:8]) wherein God reckoned (or accounted) righteousness to Abraham due *to his belief in what God had just revealed*. This refers to events in Genesis chapter fifteen (which immediately follow events in chapter fourteen), wherein God reveals to Abraham that his *reward would be very great!* In the text of Genesis 15:1-5, Abraham immediately related the reward with an inheritance (an inheritance which would be very great!) asking who would be his heir since he was childless. God told him his heir would come from his own body, and in fact, he would have as many descendants as the stars of the heavens. *And Abraham believed what God said!* And God counted it to him as righteousness. Simple, isn't it?

Nothing in the entire scene in Genesis chapter fifteen has anything to do with death and shed blood. In no way does this have anything to do with Abraham's initial salvation. It has all to do with his being blessed for simply believing what God was revealing to him at that moment — about the reward (Gen. 15:1) and the inheritance (15:4). Abraham's faith (believing what God had just said) became a point of justification for Abraham (*subsequent to* his initial justification), apart from any action taken on the part of Abraham (15:6). Herein he was justified apart from works. He *simply believed* what God said concerning his reward (v. 1) and what God said concerning his descendants (vv. 4, 5), and God counted his faith as righteousness (v.6). (Doesn't the text say just that?)

It was later that Abraham was called to act upon this faith! And that is what we will deal with tomorrow in the Book of James. Before we close for today, go back to the passage printed from Romans, and reread the passage with these thoughts in mind. You will need a good grasp on this in order for our continuing study tomorrow.

Day Two — Justification by Works

Yesterday we saw that the one who has been justified through faith must continue to live by faith. We also learned that a person can be justified through faith even subsequent to his initial salvation. And if one continues to live by faith, he should have many points of justification credited to him throughout his walk of faith.

Yesterday we studied an event in Abraham's life wherein he believed exactly what God told him, and God counted that to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6; *cf.* Rom. 4:1-5, 13). Today we are going to study this same event in Abraham's life, and with further study, we will see how Abraham later *acted upon that faith* and was additionally *justified through that action*. In fact, the faith displayed in Genesis chapter fifteen was later *perfected or brought to its end* (its goal) through his action in Genesis chapter twenty-two. While Paul deals with Abraham's faith, James goes further and deals with Abraham's *work as a result of his faith*.

James shows how *works bring faith to its end — its goal* (Jas. 2:22; cf. I Pe. 1:9). In demonstrating this, James writes —

James 2

14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

Immediately you should ask yourself — “What salvation is James dealing with in this text?” If the text itself doesn’t give any clues, check the context surrounding it. In this case, James has specifically stated in previous text which salvation his epistle is dealing with. Read it in chapter one.

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls (James 1:21).

Just because there is a chapter break between this statement in chapter one and what James is dealing with in chapter two is no reason to think that James has changed his focus. He deals with the *salvation of the soul* throughout his entire epistle. If this is understood, the Book of James is a very easy epistle to grasp. *Works done in faith have to do with the saving of the soul.*

Now let’s pick it up again in chapter two, and see what we can learn from the example James gives us.

James 2

14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead <3498>, being by itself...

dead <3498> (Especially note the definition 2b.)

He points out that faith, if it has no works, is dead in the sense that *it is useless toward accomplishing its goal*. Remember the goal of faith is the salvation of the soul (I Pe. 1:9). This is key to understand. And the salvation of the soul (Jas. 1:21) has to do with works, which emanate out of faithfulness. (As we continue, notice James uses the <3498> word again in vv. 20 and 26.)

Continuing

...20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless <3498>? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected <5048>; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone...

...26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead <3498>, so also faith without works is dead <3498>.

According to v. 21, was Abraham justified by works?

How could he be justified by works? Verse 22 explains how. How is it?

Write out the first five words of v. 23:

What is the result of faith being brought to its end (v. 23b)?

Here, James uses Abraham as an example to show how works will justify an individual, *if the work is done according to faith*. James deals with God allowing Abraham to bring that which he believed in Genesis chapter fifteen to its end (or its goal), depicted through his action in Genesis chapter twenty-two, wherein he offered up the son who had been promised to him in Genesis chapter fifteen. And in doing this, the Holy Spirit uses the pen of James to show Abraham as an example of an individual's *faith reaching its goal through a work that emanated out of his faith*. Thus, Abraham was *justified by an action* — an action that emanated out of the faith which had been expressed prior.

James is dealing with things beyond the simple faith message. He is dealing with works. Therefore, it is easy to see that the whole book of James is dealing with the salvation we are to work out!

Thus, the faith Abraham had in Genesis chapter fifteen concerning a descendant coming from his own body was brought to its goal through his action in Genesis chapter twenty-two, when he was called on by God to offer his son (the son of the promise) on an altar. He could act in this way (preparing to obediently offer his son, Isaac, on the altar) because he believed that which God had previously and specifically told him concerning this son. Abraham could act, believing that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19)! So both the faith (Gen. 15), as well as the action borne out of faith (Gen. 22) were counted to him as righteousness. Through Abraham's example, James is simply showing the importance of works bringing faith to its intended goal. And he uses very strong words in showing this. (Excuse my straightforwardness here, but this is not just some "pie-in-the-sky" theology that can be accepted or denied by someone's personal preference. In the long run, it is very important to understand these things!)

Think through the statement James makes in 2:26. Write that statement in your own words:

James compares the physical body and the spirit (*lit.*, breath), to faith and works. Just as the body without breath would be useless (dead) in the physical realm, so would faith without works be useless (dead) in the spiritual realm. Without works, faith does not come to its goal! Therefore, faith becomes useless (dead) with respect to the salvation of the soul — the salvation with which James is dealing.

So you see — there is a place for works *subsequent* to the gift of eternal life. And both *faith alone, or works that emanate out of faith* are counted as righteousness.

We'll end with the following passage today. Underline the phrase "work of faith" in v. 3 and notice its context —

I Thessalonians 1

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you...

Think on these things. See you tomorrow.

Day Three — The Rich Young Ruler

Whew! We have covered a lot of material in the past two days! Are you hanging in there? I trust that you are.

Today we want to continue making distinctions between faith and works, as this relates to salvation of the soul. We will look at a dialogue that Jesus had with a young rich man. As you study through this passage, keep in mind all that you have learned in the past weeks. Remember too, that a passage dealing with the salvation of the soul may not specifically use the phrase “the salvation of the soul.” It may only use the word “salvation” or “save.” The context will make it clear as to which salvation it is dealing with.

Mark 10

17 And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and began asking Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal <166> life?”

Before we go any further in the passage, let me ask you a question. What is the man asking about — the free gift or the inheritance? And what makes you think so?

At first glance, it may be a little confusing because of the use of the English work *eternal*. The confusion comes as a result of the English translation of the Greek word *aionios*. Look up the definition and then spend a few minutes reading over the page in the Appendix entitled ETERNITY — Is It Eternal or is it Age-Lasting? (pg. 305).

<166>

(See also the root word <165>)

With what you just learned, write in your own words the question the rich man asked of Jesus in Mark 10:17.

Having grasped the intent of the question, the remainder of the passage will make more sense to you than perhaps it ever has before. Remember, during Jesus’ public ministry, He was offering the kingdom of the heavens to the Jews. Here in Mark chapter ten, both the question and the answer had to do with this offer. Prior to Jesus fulfilling the Law through the sacrifice of His death, obedience to the Law was required in order to receive the inheritance, but as we have seen, it had to be more than just outward obedience. Notice how Jesus addressed the heart issue with this rich man.

Mark 10

17 ... “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments, ‘DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.’”

According to what you have learned in the previous two days, why would Jesus answer his question like this?

As we have seen, keeping the Law (or the commands of Christ) is a heart issue. It always has been, always will be! So Jesus addresses the heart issue for this particular man —

20 And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.” 21 And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. 23 And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” 26 And they were even more astonished and said to Him, “Then who can be saved?” 27 Looking upon them, Jesus said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

28 Peter began to say to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You.” 29 Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, 30 but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age <2540>, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age <165> to come, eternal <166> life. 31 But many who are first, will be last; and the last, first.”

NOTES:

What was the heart problem with this young man?

What would have allowed this man to receive reward?

Think for a moment. Why would it be difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom? (To develop your answer, a hint can be found in v. 21.)

Notice the connection Jesus makes between “inheriting eternal <aionios> life” (v. 17) and “entering into the kingdom” (vv. 23, 24, 25). They are one in the same! The disciples understood the connection between the question concerning the inheritance to Jesus’ answer concerning entering into the kingdom, by connecting both issues to the idea of “being saved” (v. 26). All three phrases are speaking of the same thing — the salvation of the soul — and Jesus connects it all to life in the age <165> to come (v. 30).

According to v. 30, for a person who leaves his home, brothers, sisters, mother or father or children or farms for the sake of Christ, what will be theirs in this present time <2540>? (List all the things mentioned in v. 30.)

What about the use of the word “age” (singular) — *aion* <165>? In this text the word is singular in the Greek, not plural. By Jesus’ own explanation, the rich man’s question had to do with life in the coming age (singular) as it is connected with the inheritance in the coming age (v. 30) rather than eternal life in the ages (plural) to come. Relate the question that the man asked Jesus in v. 17 to the statement Jesus’ made in v. 30. What relationship do you see?

What will that person receive in the coming age?

Now reread v. 31. As it is used in this passage, what does that statement mean?

OPTIONAL STUDY—

As you have time today, read the article in the Appendix entitled THE RICH YOUNG RULER by Arlen Chitwood. It should prove to be extremely helpful.

Day Four — Works and Rewards in the Gospels

In today’s lesson you will have to draw heavily from what you have previously learned in Lessons Eight through Eleven. Remember the message Christ brought to Israel — “Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” In the scope of that message, He spoke to them much about works and reward, but in the end they rejected the message, wanting nothing to do with it or the Messenger. Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom shortly before they crucified Him.

In the Book of Acts, the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens was made to Israel by the newly instituted Church, simultaneous with the gospel of grace being given to the Gentiles, followed by the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. Ultimately, the nation of Israel rejected the re-offer and the nation was completely set aside. With that being the case, the question must be considered: How does one now read the Gospels? How does one read the portions of Scripture wherein the message of the kingdom of the heavens had to do with God’s chosen people, Israel?

With the offer of the kingdom having been withdrawn from Israel and their having been set aside, the things about which Christ had spoken to the Jews concerning the kingdom of the heavens, now no longer apply to Israel. The heavenly realm of the kingdom was now being offered to the new nation — the Church. Though Israel as a nation will yet be reestablished, the nation will reside on the earth during the coming age (emphasis on the coming age) rather than in the heavenly city.

We must understand these things in order to properly read and understand the gospels. Now the words of Christ concerning the heavenly portion of the kingdom can *only be applied* to the Church, not to Israel. With that in mind, let's work through several large portions of Scripture from the gospels. *Keep in mind that the issues of works and reward have to do with the inheritance in the kingdom, not the free gift.* We'll study a few of the parables.

Luke 19

11 And while they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. **12** He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. **13** And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' **14** But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' **15** And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done. **16** And the first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' **17** And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.' **18** And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' **19** And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' **20** And another came, saying, 'Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; **21** for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.' **22** He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? **23** Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' **24** And he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' **25** And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.'

26 "I tell you, that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. **27** But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."

What was the nobleman going to do? And whom would the nobleman represent in the parable?

What did the noblemen give to his servants? And what did he tell them to do?

Are there any distinctions made in v. 13 among the nobleman's slaves?

What did the nobleman's citizens say? Who do the citizens represent?

When does the nobleman return? And what does he do upon his return?

Upon the nobleman's return, when he calls them into account, are there any distinctions made among the nobleman's slaves? What are the distinctions?

Who do these three slaves represent?

Were all slaves servants of the same master? Did they all receive the same thing, and were they all told to do the same thing?

How was the outcome of the slaves different from each other?

Now we'll work through another parable.

Matthew 25

14 “For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. **15** And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. **16** Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. **17** In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. **18** But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. **19** Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. **20** And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’ **21** His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’ **22** The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.’ **23** His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ **24** And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. **25** And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.’ **26** But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. **27** Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. **28** Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ **29** For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. **30** And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth...”

Before the man left, whom did he call and what did he do?

How did he divide up his possessions and why did he do it this way?

What accountability was he going to require of his slaves?

What/how did the first two do with what they had been given to do?

What was the response of the master to these two slaves?

What did the man who was only given one talent do with what he was given?

What did the slave say to his master that was similar to what the unfaithful slave said to his master in the previous parable?

What was the response of the master with this slave?

How was the master's response to this slave similar to the response of the master to the slave in the previous parable?

How was the master's response different than that in the previous parable?

We'll work through a third parable today.

Luke 13

23 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"

(Your initial question should be, "OK. Which salvation is being dealt with in this passage?" Remember, check the context and see if faith and faith alone is the crux of the issue, or if works are involved. The answer Jesus gives will tell you, even in His first statement [v. 24].)

And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'

26 Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’; 27 and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART <868> FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.’ 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. 29 And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.”

Be sure to look up the word “depart <868>” and write out what you find.

When asked if there are just a few who will be saved, what does Jesus say in v. 23?

Jesus said, “Strive to enter...” This is a clue to what is being dealt with. *Striving to enter* does not have anything to do with the gospel of grace, nothing to do with the free gift of eternal life. It cannot, because more than faith is involved. But *striving to enter* would be striving to enter the kingdom. There is a work that must be done on the part of a saved individual to enter the kingdom. (In fact the word for *strive* in the Greek is *agonizomai*, from which we get our English word *agonize*.) Do you see that in the text of this parable?

Finally notice v. 30 again. Do you see how this thought fits into the whole picture of the kingdom?

As we close today, do you have any thoughts?

Day Five — Works and Rewards in the Epistles

Yesterday we looked at a few of the parables in the gospels. (We will cover more material from the gospels in the lecture.) It has already been noted that during the time the parables were given, Jesus was offering the kingdom of the heavens to the Jews. But they rejected the offer of the kingdom. Due to that fact, the nation of Israel, as a whole, no longer has the ability to receive *the kingdom of the heavens*. Presently the kingdom is being offered to the Church. The epistles are letters written to Christians, each one revealing some aspect about the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the Church, with the total combination of the epistles giving a complete picture. In order to understand the epistles correctly, one has to understand these things.

Today we will spend time perusing a compilation of passages that will give us insight into *why* Christians should do good works. As you read through these passages, write out what you learn in the margins. You might note the *reason* or *result* of the good work. You might see the *incentive* spelled out. Think through these passages. Look to see what *God is saying* through them. *Learn* what He wants you to learn. *See* what He wants you to see. (I am having you do this because all too many times people don’t *see* or *hear* what is in these passages. It seems that Satan has blinded our eyes or stopped up our ears. Don’t let that happen this time! Learn what is within these passages and hold onto what you learn.) I will not be asking questions at the end of each passage. I trust you to critically study through the passages on your own. Begin your study time today in prayer, asking God to open your eyes and ears.

Hebrews 10

34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an

abiding one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Hebrews 11

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

...26 [Moses] considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

1 Corinthians 3

8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Ephesians 6

7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

Colossians 1

10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

1 Corinthians 3

13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

2 Corinthians 9

6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. 7 Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed...

2 Timothy 3

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Titus 3

5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

...14 And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

I Corinthians 15:58

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

II John 1

8 Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

Colossians 3

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Having studied through these passages, write out what you have learned.

From a Scriptural perspective, how should we view works in the life of a believer?

We have seen what works do for the individual performing the work; now we will glimpse a couple of passages that reveal what good works do within the Body of Christ. Make notes in the margins as to what you learn.

1 Corinthians 12

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the

Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

Ephesians 4

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

What do works do within the Body of Christ?

Jesus' last recorded words in the entire Bible are printed below.

Revelation 22

12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Evidently, what does it appear that Jesus thinks of works and reward?

Write out your overall impression of this week's lesson.