

# Reward Awaits

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] so there's a famous scene in acts chapter 17 when paul is in athens and paul is doing what he had been called to do going about and primarily interacting with gentiles but also with jews seeking to persuade people of the truth that they need a savior and that that savior is jesus now in athens he had taken a measure of the city he had gone about and seen that there was multitudinous idols scattered around through athens and it provoked him and how he responded to that provocation was that he went into the synagogue with the jews and devout persons and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there and reasoned with them tried to persuade them that they need a savior and that jesus is that savior and while doing that he was observed by a couple of schools adherence to a couple of schools of greek philosophy the epicureans and the stoics and so they asked him to come to their gathering because he was talking about something that was new and as luke records all the athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new and so when we read the account in acts chapter 17 we see paul in a kind of model of contextualization of the gospel explains to them how it is that we got here and how it is that they need a savior and he concludes this address this way the times of ignorance god overlooked but now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed the day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead that man is jesus so with these words paul for the athenians and for all of us listening now points to an inescapable reality an inescapable reality that applies to all people past present and future there is a fixed day known to god when all the world will be judged in righteousness and that will be with a righteous judgment that is there will be no mistakes in the judgment no misunderstanding no lacking of evidence to accuse or to acquit the god of all justice and righteousness will call to account every human being for all that he or she has done or left undone and the standard of that judgment will be his revealed will and the one who will exercise that judgment is indeed jesus the one who is declared to be righteous by his having been raised from the dead that's an inescapable reality and the only way that a person can survive that day is to acknowledge now their guilt and repent of their idolatrous folly and humble themselves before that same one who will come to judge them you see he will come as judge but he has come as savior and out of grace the same righteous and just god has provided a righteousness sufficient to withstand his own righteous judgment on the day that's the remarkable thing of the gospel that god will judge all sin and yet god has made provision for the fact that we will be judged we need righteousness and he supplies righteousness through his son a righteousness accomplished by the righteous jesus of nazareth who though he was in the form of god did not count equality with god a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross

see in that dying on the cross jesus absorbed the wrath of god's righteous judgment and he died the death that we deserve to die that gracious glorious exchange his righteousness for our unrighteousness his obedience for our disobedience his death for our life is yours it's mine as we learned earlier it is by faith so as paul called those listening in athens some 2 000 years ago so i say even now god commands all people everywhere to repent that includes you on zoom and youtube and us in the room and all in the world he calls upon all people to repent because the gospel of john says whoever believes in the son has eternal life whoever does not obey the son shall not see life but the wrath of god remains on him and therefore i like paul as an ambassador for christ god making his appeal through me i implore you on behalf of christ be reconciled to god for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness

of god young old any age in between repent and believe on the lord jesus christ and you shall be saved and having done that having done that you will be able to confess with the apostle paul one of the most remarkable statements if not the most remarkable statement in all of scripture indeed in all of human philosophizing and writings and musings about the cosmos and all the transpires within it there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in christ jesus think about that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in christ jesus all stand under the wrath of god faith in jesus and the finished work there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in christ jesus so for the christian that day is a completely different inescapable reality rather than a day to dread it is a hope to hold on to jesus said i am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet he shall live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die that alone should be sufficient to engender faithful heartfelt loving obedience and devotion to our gracious god should it not but there is more there is more there is much more not only will we be able to stand on that day without fear it will also be a day of reward it will be a day when god acknowledges our faith in his faithfulness a day when god acknowledges our faith in his faithfulness a day of reward now sometimes that makes christians feel a little uncomfortable the idea that we're supposed to be pursuing a reward as though somehow that kind of is a little crass just seems a little sort of self-serving but the reality is pursuing rewards is all over the face of the new testament douglas mu new testament scholar some christians have a difficulty with rewards objecting that our obedience to christ should be pure and disinterested unmotivated by any such consideration as future reward this objection is understandable and it's certainly the case that far too many christians bring a selfish and calculating bottom line mentality into their service of the lord asking what's in it for me but the contemplation of heaven's rewards is found throughout the new testament as a spur to our faithfulness

and difficult circumstances here on earth see rewards show up in the new testament both positive and negative it's a prevalent motif a few examples on the positive side jesus speaking blessed are you when others revile and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven so they persecuted the prophets who excuse me who were before you but love your enemies do good and lend expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great you will be sons of the most high for he is kind the ungrateful and evil he said to another truly i say to you there was no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of god who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life paul speaking in first corinthians if the work that anyone has built and the foundation survives the foundation that he has laid of the gospel he will receive a reward it's also negative in the sermon on the mount jesus talks about those who posture before others that they might receive their praise they have their reward luke describes judas's uh... thirty pieces of silver as the reward of his wickedness and the thief on the cross says you shouldn't say such things as he speaks to the other thief about this one in between us who's hanging on the cross we are receiving our just rewards he's done nothing to deserve them reward a thing given in recognition of one service effort or achievement a thing given in recognition of one service effort or achievement a perfectly wonderful description of a reward you see with that description there's an intrinsic relationship between the reward and the task or achievement that prompted it right listen again a thing given in recognition of one service effort or achievement that's an intrinsic relationship then the reward follows the task or the achieving of the task that prompted the reward and we'll consider that a bit more in a little while so the question we want to ask should christians pursue a reward and the answer is yes yes because that is how god has set up the relationship that we have with him see reward is a fundamental aspect of our relationship with god and our neglecting or eschewing reward is dishonoring to our generous god he delights in rewarding our faith in his faithfulness we'll spend a little time with it later but consider that parable of the talents that we read the servants are entrusted with a sum of money by their master if they understand their role and take the responsibility seriously reward awaits them two of them understood that and one did not we're going to spend some time with paul's letter to timothy in the passage that we read that'll be our primary text because it speaks of just this faithful faith in god's faithfulness leads to reward this is the last letter of paul's that we have within the canon of scripture could very well be the last letter that he ever writes given how he speaks in it he's in prison anticipating his imminent martyrdom and he's writing to timothy his protegee urging him to carry on the work that both paul and timothy have been called to in particular timothy is to be steadfast and courageous in the face of false teaching that has reared its head and is leading people astray a few words at the beginning of the letter

serves as a kind of theme for this letter when paul tells timothy by the holy spirit who dwells within us guard the good deposit entrusted to you

guard the good deposit entrusted to you see in paul's effort to guard that deposit he has suffered many things persecution rejection ill health beatings imprisonments including this his very last imprisonment just before he's led to his execution and he's now urging timothy to carry on in his calling so as such his letters are kind of passing on the baton to the next one to take the next leg of the race now what will timothy's guarding the deposit involve but we look at the beginning of this passage that we read he says I charge you in the presence of god of christ jesus who is to judge the living and the dead and by his appearing and his kingdom preach the word be ready in season out of season reprove rebuke exhort with complete patience and teaching for the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but have itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into mist as for you timothy always be sober minded endure suffering do the work of an evangelist fulfill your ministry there's a kind of urgency isn't there behind paul's language how he is encouraging timothy timothy must guard the deposit he must guard the deposit because that would be true at any time but at this particular time there's an urgency to the moment because what does paul say i am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come it's just like he's saying i have little time left timothy god is already offering me as a sacrifice to his purposes and his plan and the time of my departure my death is upon me you must carry on without me so what has paul been sustained by in the midst of all of this trial and suffering all of this fighting the good fight what has sustained him throughout his ministry which has been fraught with peril even up to the moment when death is upon him due to his disobedience to the charge that jesus gave him on the road to damascus what has sustained him it is the promise of reward i have fought the good fight i finished the race i have kept the faith henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the lord the righteous judge will award me on that day he has been sustained knowing that god will reward him for his faithfulness he's done it he's remained faithful to his calling he's fought for the truth about jesus and he's approaching the finish line of the race and the image he uses is that of receiving the victor's crown the stephanos excuse me stephanos and that's a fitting reward for spiritual athletes spiritual athletes who fight the good fight who run the race who hold fast faithful who exercise faith in god's faithfulness to the very end and it's not just for paul it's for each of us in this room each of us watching on zoom and on youtube what does he say the righteous judge will award me on that day and not only me but also to all who have loved his appearing a reward awaits that last image is a good place to consider three things about pursuing reward in regard to the christian life first pursuing reward is not mercenary and i'll explain what i mean by that pursuing reward is motivating and pursuing reward is mandatory free m's i never do alliteration but i have just been corrupted by colin who alliterates like mad pursuing reward is not mercenary

it is motivating and it is mandatory what do i mean by not mercenary when we think of a mercenary we might think of soldiers who fight not for fatherland or family or freedom but for money the wagner group right lately fighting for russia in various parts of the world they're mercenaries they don't fight for the glory of russia they fight for money or some of them because they get to get out of prison guns for hire criminals who have made their sentences shortened you might be aware of a woman named rosie ruiz back in 1980 she participated in the boston marathon one of the major marathons of the world and she came in first for the women but it turned out she had jumped into the race a half a mile before the end and yet no one knew that at the time and so she was given the stefanos the crown literally the kind of woven flowers like you would expect for a greek greek triumph for victory and there's a picture of you can find it google ruzi ruiz and you'll see a picture of her going with this thing on her head the reality is she didn't deserve it she's a mercenary she achieved the reward without putting the labor remember there's intrinsic relationship between the effort and the reward but she did not do it but that is not the case with the rewards that god offers i'm going to quote c.s lewis as i usually do at different times because he's just so quotable there are different kinds of reward he says there is a reward which has no natural connection with the things you do to earn it and is quite foreign to the desires that ought to accompany those things money is not the natural reward of love that is why we call a man mercenary if he marries a woman for the sake of her money but marriage is the proper reward for a real lover and he is not mercenary for desiring it a general who fights well in order to get a peerage is mercenary a general who fights for victory is not victory being the proper reward of battle as marriage is the proper reward of love now listen to

this the proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given but are the activity itself in consummation let me read that again the rewards the proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given but are the activity itself in consummation [ 18 : 43 ] That is that the activity leads up to the reward, and the reward is the affirmation, the exclamation point, the underline, the bold type, that all that you were involved in was right, was associative with the reward that went with it.

So if Jesus calls us to have faith in his faithfulness and says that doing so will result in reward, then there is no separation between walking in faith and receiving the reward for doing so.

In fact, our remaining faithful to the end and receiving the reward means that remaining faithful was not vain or meaningless. The reward is the consummation of a faithful life.

Listen again to what Paul says in verses 7 and 8. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will reward me on that day.

Listen to the, quickly, the language of Jesus to the seven churches in Revelation. The one who conquers, I will grant to eat the tree of life.

[ 19 : 51 ] The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death. The one who conquers, I will give some of the hidden manna. The one who conquers, who keeps my word until the end, him I will give authority over the nations. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments.

The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of God. The one who conquers, I will grant him to seek with me on my throne. You see, the pursuit of God's will is tied directly into the reward.

And the reward is meant to provoke faithfulness. It's not mercenary to pursue the rewards that God offers. Because the rewards are an intrinsic part of the life that he calls the churches to and that he calls us to.

Pursuing rewards is not a mercenary enterprise. Reward is the fitting consummation of our faith in his faithfulness. Rewards are also motivating.

How does Paul describe his walk of faith? I fought the good fight. I finished the race. I have kept the faith. Why does Paul use this kind of language?

[ 20 : 55 ] In fact, the word that's translated fight in the Greek, it's the term from which we get agonize. Well, it's because Jesus taught that there's a cost to follow him.

There's a cost. Listen to how he speaks in Luke 14. For which of you, desiring to build the tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, the man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able, with 10,000, to meet who comes at him, with 20,000? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

Jesus says to follow him demands that we lay down our lives. We pick up our cross. There's a cost involved. But there's also a reward to be won.

And Paul understood this, and he lived accordingly. And it manifested itself in at least four ways.

First, he endured hardships. Listen to this litany. It's probably you've heard it before.

[ 22 : 06 ] But this litany from 2 Corinthians chapter 11 of the kinds of things that he had to suffer. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. The Jews hit the... I received at the hands of the Jews 40 lashes less one.

Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was adrift at sea. On frequent journeys. In dangers of rivers. Dangers from robbers. Danger of my own people. Danger from the Gentiles. Danger in the city. Danger in the wilderness.

Danger in the sea. Danger from false brothers. In toil and hardship. Through many a sleepless night. In hunger and in thirst. Often without food. And cold and exposure. And apart from other things, there is a daily pressure on me.

Of my anxiety for all the churches. Virtually all of the hardships mentioned here are due to his being obedient to the call placed upon his life. But he also suffered hardships that come with the fallenness of this world.

We learn of his physical maladies such as his poor eyesight. And we have every reason to believe that all other kinds of maladies would have afflicted him. But he endured the hardship. Why?

[ 23 : 07 ] Because there was a reward. Secondly, he put aside worldly fame for the reward. When he's having to defend himself.

He says, If anyone thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee.

As to zeal, a persecutor of the church. As to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

See, Paul was famous within his circle. He was studying on one of the leading rabbis. And the projection is always that he would have become himself a man of great importance within his circle. But worldly fame does not mean, you know, your face needs to be on the telly or they're going to have a parade for you down High Street or some town. For Paul, it was pretty limited in scope. It was just a parochial little fame that he would have had through other Jews and other people who appreciated the faithfulness of the rabbinic teaching.

[ 24 : 15 ] But it's not the breadth. The issue is not the breadth of fame, but the allure of fame. An allure that tempts us to seek the praise of men over the praise of God.

But Paul put that aside because of his faith in the faithfulness of God, that God would reward him for not pursuing fame. He didn't demand the rights his status of an apostle afforded him.

Listen to how he speaks in 2 Thessalonians. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it. But with toil and labor, we worked night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you.

It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

See, his status as an apostle could have and probably should have afforded him that kind of support, but he didn't do it.

See, Paul's apostleship was questioned more than once, but he knew who had called him, and his apostleship was confirmed by the fruit of his preaching and the working of miracles, and even the foremost leaders within the church in Jerusalem acknowledged his calling.

[ 25 : 26 ] And such status could have and should have afforded him his deference and support. But he was willing to constrain his own liberties for the sake of those among whom he ministered.

Why? Because he knew that there was a reward. And lastly, he deferred gratification. He deferred gratification.

What does he write to Timothy in his first letter? But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

But if we have food and clothing with these, we will be content. You know, elsewhere, he spoke of the appropriateness of his having a wife to travel with him as some of the apostles did, but he chose to remain unmarried.

Paul deferred such gratification. This is an important dynamic of the Christian walk that we don't pay enough attention to, but it's directly tied into this idea of accepting and believing that God has a reward for our faithfulness in him.

[ 26 : 33 ] See, it runs contrary to so much of our existence in the West. We are conditioned to think that we have the right to get what we want when we want it, even if we don't have the means to pay for it.

You know, I discovered one of the slogans for an early UK credit card, the access card, I think it was called. It takes the waiting out of wanting. It takes the waiting out of wanting.

You can get it now. Well, what if I can't pay it at the end of the month? Don't worry about that. We'll charge you fees. Your credit's good with us. See, for those who have faith in the faithfulness of God, they trust that the lack of having or an experiencing now does not mean that that itch will not be scratched when we stand before our gracious Savior.

That's not to say that my desire, my desire to own a Jaguar will be satisfied by owning a vintage XKE to drive around the golden streets of Jerusalem.

But whatever that desire, that want represents to me, whatever itch I think that car would scratch, that will be satisfied and faith in God's faithfulness tells me to be content.

[ 27 : 45 ] Paul deferred gratification. See, so greater than all of these trials and temptations, what motivated Paul was the anticipation of experiencing God's pleasure in Paul's faith and God's faithfulness.

And that knowledge allowed him to endure great hardships, to put aside worldly fame, to not demand his rights, to defer gratifications. What does he say?

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing for the glory that is to be revealed to us. No comparison to the reward.

Now the last, is pursuing rewards, is mandatory. And that might seem a little strange, a little contradictory to the way we state something that we're supposed to look forward to.

But our pursuit of reward is expected. And therefore, to not pursue reward out of piety is to actually be impious. Let's look back at our passage from Paul's letter to Timothy.

[ 28 : 48 ] How does it begin? What does he say? He's writing to Timothy, I charge you in the presence of God in Christ Jesus, who is judge of the living and the dead by his appearing in his kingdom. Preach the word, be ready in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and with complete patience and teaching.

Always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. And it's after that that Paul goes on to say, in effect, I'm not going to be around much longer, Timothy.

I'm off to collect my crown, having fulfilled my ministry. You must pursue the same course. See, this expectation, again, we go back now to the parable of the talents.

It's dramatically illustrated in that parable. You know, you remember what it is, right? He comes, the master's going to leave. He entrusts five talents to one, two to another, one to another. And the two jump right on it.

Five and two, they jump right on it. And when he comes back, he brings it to them. And the one, out of fear, out of a mischaracterization of the nature of his master, doesn't do anything with what he's done, been entrusted.

[ 29 : 56 ] But what happens when the five and the two come forward to the master to present what they have done? How does the master respond? Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful over little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. But what does he say to the one who did nothing? Your wicked and slothful servant. You see, there's an expectation that we will take what he has entrusted to us and do something with it so that he will receive a return and that we might receive a reward.

Now, the mandatory nature of pursuing rewards indicates something. And this is another important theme in the Bible is the fact that we're stewards.

We're stewards. See, if we received our breath, our life, our very existence from our Creator, then nothing that we possess we can truly say is ours. Everything, our life, our breath, our material possessions, our relationships, the gospel, it's all been entrusted to us and we're stewards over it and a steward like these in the parable are to come back with a good return.

That's the kind of relationship that we have with Jesus. we're told that we have been purchased at a great price, his shed blood, it follows then that he lays claim to everything.

[ 31 : 17 ] We own nothing. We're stewards and that means that we are to take what he's entrusted to us but bring a return that pleases him knowing, knowing that he's generous and will reward us accordingly.

See, the parable teaches us if we have ears to hear that our master is generous, ready to reward and he is saying you can trust me to be who I have always been, the rewarder of those who have faith in my faithfulness.

So when Paul charges Timothy to fulfill his ministry, he knows that that is what is required of Timothy but he also knows that reward, reward will be the consummation of Timothy's faith in God's faithfulness.

Paul knows, he knows he's urging Timothy to trust that Jesus' pronouncement well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master, will be spoken over him, something that will be the most pleasing sound he will have heard up to that moment.

Well done, good and faithful servant. You know, if I might borrow again from C.S. Lewis for just a minute, he talks about our relationship with God is that of the inferior.

[ 32 : 32 ] That is that we're more like a dog with his master than we are. That is, what we mean by that is not that we're dogs but that when we have a dog who loves his master, what does that dog do?

Oh, come on, rub me some more. Come on, come on. The tail's going like that. I'm so happy to see him. And that's really our relationship to God. We're like that. That's that kind of devotion, that kind

of undivided attention, that response that this is the guy who I love and who loves me.

So, for those who have faith in the faithfulness of God while enduring suffering, either through persecution for the confession of Jesus, suffering caused by the brokenness of the world, causes many to doubt, doesn't it, in God's goodness.

For those whose faith drives them to God in such circumstances and not away from God, reward awaits. For those who have faith in the faithfulness of God that has caused them for the sake of Christ to put aside earthly fame, who have made the choice in the face of temptations to not seek the praise of men and the ego-gratifying accolades of this world, reward awaits.

For those who have faith in the faithfulness of God and have been willing to give up out of love for others their rights, who have allowed someone else to jump the queue of life, who have put the needs of others before their own, even if it has meant constraining their own liberty, reward awaits.

[ 34 : 03 ] For those who have faith in the faithfulness of God, who have learned contentment, who have been willing to trust that unfulfilled dreams and desires and all that they promised will be satisfied, fulfilled, will be met when they stand before Jesus hearing his well-done, good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your master.

See, rewards are not mercenary but motivating because they reflect the faithfulness of God to us. Now, I wouldn't expect that someone who's not a Christian to understand why this is worth the suffering, why this is worth putting aside worldly fame, why it's worth to be, you know, to defer gratification, why it's worth to give up your rights.

I wouldn't expect a non-Christian to understand that but we understand it. We understand it as believers in Jesus because it's a mirror of what Jesus himself did. You know, he didn't consider his position, his right, something to hold on to but he empties himself.

What does he do? He comes and he gives up his life. He puts others before him. He bends at the feet of even one who would betray him and washes his feet. This is a mirror of Jesus' life.

Paul imitating Christ. We imitating Paul. Pursuing the reward. And what was Jesus' reward? Being obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. God has highly exalted him.

[ 35 : 33 ] That's the pattern. That's the pattern that he lived out. That's the pattern that we are to live out. To pursue rewards. Knowing that indeed God will be faithful to reward our faithfulness in him.

We believe in him. He believes in us. He helps us to pursue the very rewards that he has promised. An amazing relationship. I'll close with this hymn, The Words of a Hymn by Philip Doddridge.

Awake, my soul. Stretch every nerve and press with vigor on. A heavenly race demands your zeal and an immortal crown. A cloud of witnesses around hold you in full survey.

Forget the steps already trod and onward, urge your way. 'Tis God's all animating voice that calls you from on high to his own hand presents the prize to your aspiring eye.

That prize with peerless glory is bright which shall new luster boast when victors' wreaths and monarchs' gems shall blend in common dust.

[ 36 : 42 ] Blessed Savior, introduced by you have I my race begun and crowned with victory at your feet I lay my honors down. Let's pray.

Lord God, we thank you that you've called us to pursue reward because you are generous and you are good and you get it. Lord Jesus, it's how you lived and we want to live like you.

We're called to be like you, to imitate you and we see the apostle imitating Jesus. We need to imitate the apostle and all the other saints that have gone before us who in themselves thought that the crown was worth pursuing, who run the race with endurance, seeking that prize.

So we pray, God, you would help us to have a vision, perhaps a fresh vision of what it means to be faithful to you. It's not something from which we are robbed of anything.

but it's something we anticipate the greatest benefit, the greatest joy we could ever anticipate that you would welcome us and say, well done, good and faithful servant.

[ 37 : 51 ] Come, come into the joy of your master. So Lord, as we go through suffering, as we make a decision that says, you know what, I know that's a good opportunity but I'm not going to do it.

Or when we say, you know what, I'm just not going to get worked up over that. I'm going to let that person have what he wants. It doesn't mean that much to me. So much so that I'd be willing to cast aside my pursuit of your crown for what it is that that offers.

And Lord, if we're thinking that we just need something and it's causing discontent within us, remind us, remind us, Lord, that whatever it is that that is working in us, you'll, you know, you'll satisfy it when we stand before you.

We will be satisfied because God, that's the nature of what you've done for us, isn't it? You said, I'm your master, you're my servant, serve me well and I'll prove what kind of master I am.

So to that end, Lord God, we ask your help. We need your strength, we need your power, we need your grace, we need your wisdom, we need your courage to pursue the reward and to do so diligently with your help.

[ 39 : 06 ] In Jesus' name, Amen.