

# Harvesting Eternal Rewards - Part 1

by Josef Tson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of accumulating treasures in heaven and being rich towards God, as it is a metaphor for our eternal reward.*

**Duration:** 51:42

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:35

**Topics:** "Following Jesus", "Eternal Rewards"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of becoming like God, as we were created in His image and likeness. The speaker expresses gratitude to the supporters of their mission and shares their experience of preaching the Gospel through radio in Romania. The sermon then delves into the theme of harvest, using Matthew 9:35-38 as the basis. Jesus is portrayed as having compassion for the distressed and lost, comparing them to sheep without a shepherd. The speaker encourages the audience to consider the treasure found in Jesus and the sacrifices that may be required to follow Him. The sermon concludes with a story about a farmer who forgives a portion of his debt, illustrating the concept of grace and the need to respond to God's call.

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## Transcript

Isn't this place conducive to worship? There is so much beauty around. Now, I want you to use this environment to really let you go into adoring the Creator. Here is an exercise you have to do.

You see the Creator in His creation. As you see an artist in his masterpiece, everything that God creates is sheer beauty. That means He is beautiful.

If His creation is so beautiful, how is He? Everything in Him is beauty because His creation is just an emanation from Him. If you think for a moment who God is and who Satan is, then here is the picture. God is the creator of beauty.

Whatever Satan touches becomes ugly. God is the creator of symmetry and harmony. Satan is the creator of chaos and cacophony.

God is the creator of peace. Satan is the creator of strife and war. God is the creator of love because He is love.

Satan is hate. God is light. Satan is darkness.

And as you spend these beautiful days in this sort of Garden of Eden, think all the time of the Creator and whisper as you admire the beauty, My Creator, You are beautiful. I adore You and I want to belong to You. And whatever You are, I want to be printed in my own being because I want to bear in me and to have imprinted in me Your image.

So make me a creator of beauty. Make me a creator of harmony and symmetry and a bringer of peace and love and light. And think of Jesus, the living image of God.

And whatever you see in Jesus, that is how God is like. And whisper as you admire the beauties here, Oh God, make me like Jesus. I choose in this corner of beauty to become what my Creator is.

Now this is the final purpose of our convention. This is what I like to achieve, to take you more and more into a realization that our business of living is to become like God. Because God said, let us create man in our image and likeness.

When God created you, He created you that you become in His image and likeness. Think how God is and His purpose is that you become like that. We are going to explore this theme in depth, Lord willing, but let me just share my and Elizabeth's joy to be back with you.

We've been here three years ago and it's so good to come back to meet old friends. In the meantime, quite a few of you became supporters of our mission. Some of you quite substantial supporters. And I come to you to thank you for helping us to fulfill the job for which we came to America.

You know, we accepted that exile. We cannot go back to Romania these days. And that's a terrible frustration.

But we broadcast the gospel through radio to Romania. They reckon that we have about 8 million, at least in the audience on a Sunday afternoon in Romania. And we create all this body of literature in Romanian language, translating, printing and smuggling Christian books into Romania.

We have now a thousand people who study to become Christian ministers in Romania through the books we prepare for them. And it is with your support that we do that. So now as you go out, on the left there, there is a table where I arrange some brochures with our Romanian Missionary Society.

There is a brochure with the prayer concerns. There is also our latest newsletter. There is a new prayer card with our family.

So please feel free and take whatever you want from the table. And maybe you want to become supporters of our ministry. You just heard a little bit of a glimpse of what was our life as Christian activists in Romania in the 70s.

I was a teacher, I was a preacher, I was an evangelist, I was a pastor. But I also was a writer. I was studying the phenomenon of communism and issues of persecution under communism.

And in a time when very few people dared speak openly on those issues, I started to write papers against persecution. I wrote a paper on the failure of communism to produce the new man and the new society they promised. For that I had the police at my door one Friday morning.

They searched the house, they confiscated all my library. Generally the pattern was this. I would write that paper.

I would send a few copies abroad. My friends abroad would give me big publicity. In the meantime they would be arrested.

They would prepare for a trial. But because of pressure from big, big personalities like people in Washington and in London, the Romanian authorities would say, well, if this man is too well known, it would be too detrimental to our image. We better solve those problems that he described in those papers and let him free.

And quite a few times, because I had those friends who came and picked up my papers and took them here and gave them publicity, or they came there to find out my troubles and my problems, it was because of their backing that I had that chance of victory. Now after that house search on the 4th of October, it was a devastating experience. And of course I needed help.

But you see, I could never call somebody from abroad and say, come here, I am in trouble. I depended on the Lord to send me the messengers, the angels. That Friday I had the house search and the confiscation of my library.

Saturday morning, two angels arrived. One of them just sang to you a glorious song about Moses. Ron Fogle came that morning with Bill Batman.

And it was so important because they were able to take messages out and start immediately to build my defense and give me another victory. A few years later, Joe and Barbara Ivey came, again like God's angels, to give us support. So you see, I come to friends here.

We have a deep, deep involvement and quite a long involvement. Now, in Romania, the church is open for worship. But that's about all the freedom you have.

You are free to go to that open church and worship there. But everybody works for the government. There is no private enterprise.

So the government will tell you, in effect, if you go to church, we consider you mentally retarded. Will not give you a good job. If you hold a good job when you become a Christian, you will lose that job in no time.

And if you continue to go to church, we'll see that your life is always harassed. We'll give you a job, but the most menial one. And even there, we'll create misery for you always.

We'll never give you promotion. We'll never give you any fringe benefits. And we'll always tell you, if you stop going to church, we'll promote you, we'll give you that and that glorious things.

Now I was an evangelist. And you know what's an evangelist? An evangelist wants to convince people to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. You explain to people the way of salvation.

You explain to them what is their situation without God and what they can find in Christ. And as an evangelist, you bring them to that point where you say, now, will you accept to follow Christ? Now, at that point, you cannot say, come to Jesus and he will make you rich. Or come to Jesus and he will solve all your problems and you will be successful and prosperous.

Listen, there are quite a few preachers in this land who say that. Now, if a gospel doesn't fit anywhere else but in America, that's not a true gospel. The true gospel is a different one.

You see, what I had to preach was what is actually written in the gospel. And that is, you enter a narrow gate. You walk on a narrow path, very little company there.

And when a man comes to Jesus and says, Master, I want to follow you wherever you go. He looks to him and he says, Are you aware that I am poorer than a fox? A fox has a hole in the ground. I don't have a stone to say this is mine and I have the right to lay my head on it.

You will be hated by everybody on my account. Even your family will stand against you. They will even kill you for my sake.

These are the terms. And when he invites you to follow, he says, If you want to follow me, you have to deny yourself and pick up a cross, which means you die, and follow me as a dead person. That's the terms of the invitation.

The real invitation. So, here is what I was doing. I was saying now, this Christ, which is God embodied, God incarnate, comes to you and he wants to make you a child of God.

But you have to know that you lose your job, you lose your career, you will lose friends, you will lose your status in society, you lose everything if you follow him. Now, here is an exercise I want you to make. Look at Jesus.

What treasure do you find in Jesus? Then turn around and look and see what you lose when you get Jesus. Then turn again and look at Jesus. What treasure do you find in Jesus? Then turn around and look what you lose for Jesus.

And then look again at the treasure. And look again what you lose. Now, when you see that big treasure and then you turn around and you say, oh, what I lose is garbage compared with the treasure.

Then come and follow Jesus. If you find in Jesus a treasure big enough to make you able to lose everything in this world, then follow Jesus. Don't follow Jesus without that.

Now, that was the gospel I preached in Romania. I didn't change my message when I came to America. And I will not change it.

So what I will preach here will be very much like what I preached there. A very demanding and a very disturbing message. And I just want to add another little introduction.

We accepted to come to America and we pledged to our nation that we belong to them. We are here temporarily. We believe that the Lord will open the door somehow.

And the first crack in that door back there, we committed to go back. Now, I have a new pin. And you may look and say, what is that man's pin? It's a piece of barbed wire.

The pin was developed by Brother Andrew's people, but I have stolen it from them. I said, you don't have the right to wear it. I have the right, because here is what meaning I give to it.

My country is surrounded by barbed wire. And as long as my country is surrounded by barbed wire, a piece of that barbed wire has to be on my heart. Why? Because there is a danger all the time that this heart may be conquered by the affluence of America and stay here.

But as long as my heart is under barbed wire, my heart is safe. So, here I stand under barbed wire. And I preach to you from under barbed wire.

I was so happy when we were given the subject of this retreat. And the subject is harvest. I want to do justice to this subject.

I want to take it very seriously. And I want to plunge straight into the subject right now. It's a thrilling subject.

It's a rich subject. And you will see it will take us to places you never dreamed of. And I believe that your life will be enriched as the final harvest is rich.

You will see the riches of God's harvest through the scriptures. We are going into an extraordinary adventure to see what is God's harvest. Now, there are two basic scriptures that speak about this harvest.

And the first one is in Matthew chapter 9, verse 36 and 38. Matthew 9, 36, 37, 38. Jesus, seeing the multitudes, felt compassion for them because they were distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd.

He then said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. This is the first introduction to the subject.

The harvest here stands for lost souls that have to be won for the king of kings. There is a huge multitude of people who are going to hell because there is nobody there to harvest them for the kingdom of heaven. Actually, the calculation is that there are 2,800,000,000 people in the world today who have never heard in their life about Jesus Christ.

Others have heard, at least incidentally, but about 2,800,000,000 people have never heard anything about Jesus Christ in their life. That is the harvest. The harvest is huge.

But who cares? Who are the ones who get the passion to bring them in into the kingdom of the king of kings? It is God's harvest, and he is waiting for harvesters, for laborers who bring in the sheep. There is a second important passage about the harvest three chapters later in Matthew 13. We have the parable of the tares, and then we have the parable of the tares explained, and everybody knows the parable, so I don't go to read it.

I will just go to see the explanation of it in verse 37. And he answered and said, The one who sows the good seed is the son of man, and the field is the world. And as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, and the tares are the son of the evil one.

And the enemy who sows them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age. And the reapers are the angels. Therefore, just as the tares are gathered up and burned with the fire, so shall be at the end of the age.

The son of man will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. In that place shall be weeping and gnashing the teeth, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears, let him hear.

This is another harvest. This is the final harvest, at the end of history, when God will take all his redeemed, and they will shine in his kingdom. We'll talk about that shining quite a lot, about that glorious final purpose of God with us.

That is the final harvest. The angels will be the harvesters, the reapers. It is again God's harvest.

God has a harvest now, and he invites us to be his workers in the field. There will be a final harvest when we shall be harvested, when we shall be gathered in as God's glorious harvest. It's a tremendous picture, isn't it? Now, I am going to explore it from different angles, and what I want to do this morning is just to set the stage.

So I want to go through a few more scriptures in order to, again, set the stage. There is another harvest, yet another harvest in another gospel, and that is in Luke chapter 12. That will add another dimension to our study.

Luke chapter 12, starting with verse 13. This is a story that Jesus tells about a very rich farmer, and he had an enormous harvest. I mean such a harvest that all his barns proved to be too small, and he had to knock them down and build new ones because now he got rich.

And he said, now I can just sit down and enjoy my harvest. And that night, that disturbing voice of God is there saying to him, verse 20, you fool, this very night your soul is required of you, and now who will own what you have prepared? So is the man who lays up treasures for himself and is not rich toward God. This scripture will interest me a lot all these days.

So is the man who lays up treasures for himself and is not rich towards God. Jesus teaches us a lot about accumulating treasures in heaven and becoming rich up there. Actually, at the end of these sayings, in verse 31, let's read that.

But seek for his kingdom, and this thing shall be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to charity.

Make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also. I'll ask you a question. How many TV preachers did you hear preach from this scripture of late? How many teachers in this land teach that if you give your fortune to the poor, you will have a treasure in heaven? How many people in the evangelical fold really believe this and take it seriously? It's so confusing, isn't it? Because we are told all the time that it's just grace and we have to believe in Jesus, and because we believe in Jesus, we'll go and have all the bliss and happiness of heaven.

What can we make out of this teaching of Jesus? Now, some people say, well, somehow, in some areas, this teaching of Jesus, which was before his crucifixion, somehow it's out of place. Or maybe Jesus got it wrong. But later on, Paul came and explained to us the issue of grace, that it's all by faith and no need of works.

So we just have to look at what Jesus did for us. Don't get too over-concerned with what Jesus taught us. Just look at what he did for us.

Didn't you hear such preachers? Now, wait a minute. Jesus is God, or nothing. If you can prove Jesus wrong in one place, Jesus is not God.

If Jesus is God in every word he said, I have to take it in the most serious way and say this is what God tells me. However I reconcile it with my theology, however I reconcile it with what these preachers say, what Jesus says is what God says, because Jesus is God. So my challenge to you is that we should look anew and very seriously on what Jesus says.

We'll explore a lot of Jesus' sayings in this area. But just because I mentioned that some people say, well, Paul put it straight, and just because I want to show to you that there is no disagreement between Paul and Jesus, not one piece of letter, iota, of difference. I want to read to you two basic scriptures in Paul now that would show you exactly the same teaching.

1 Corinthians 3, starting with verse 11. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work, watch out, Paul is speaking about work, 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.

If any man's work which he has built upon that foundation remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burnt up, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as through fire. Now, burnt up Christians, Christians who are accepted in God's kingdom, saved, that's being saved, accepted up in his kingdom, but discovering that there they have absolutely nothing.

Isn't that the same as Jesus saying, see that you are rich towards God, see that you accumulate treasures, so that when you go up there, you are met by your treasures, and I would say that that is another harvest. When we go up there to harvest the fruit of our work done here, salvation, oh yes, salvation is because Christ died for us on the cross, salvation is the gift of God, that's not by works, that's a gift of God, that's what Christ achieved for us, but the issue is not salvation, salvation is what we get after we go to heaven. Now, in order to see that Paul doesn't conflict with Christ, even in the teaching about these rich people, let's open at 1 Timothy chapter 6, 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 17 to 19.

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves a treasure of a good foundation for the future. Isn't it the same emphasis that is in Jesus? That with what you do with your fortune here, you store up a treasure for yourself in the future up there? Yes, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

This is not life indeed. That is life indeed. Teach them to take hold of that, not get stuck with this and jeopardize that.

Now, I'm not a man of many illustrations, but recently I heard a great preacher in this country tell a story, and I want to repeat that story as I heard it just a few weeks ago, somewhere in Alabama. The story is about that great preacher in Dallas, Dr. Truett. He was that great preacher at the First Baptist in Dallas before Criswell took over.

And the story is that Truett went to visit one of his parishioners out there in Texas Prairie, or whatever it is, and there he was. And as they went, it was a great, great ranch, and the proud Texas man took his pastor to show him everything. And he just showed him a huge area of fields with wheat ready to be harvested.

And very proud, that man, he said, Preacher, you see all those fields of wheat? They are all mine. And they turned on the other side, and there it was huge pasture and thousands of cattle. And he said, Preacher, do you see that? That's all mine.

And they went to the back of the house, and there were some hills there, and they were all covered with oil derricks. And he said, Preacher, they are all mine. And Dr. Truett, very quietly, said, Brother, I see you have many riches here, but up there, what do you possess there? A man who was rich down here, but who was not rich towards God.

These are the words of Jesus, that you should become rich towards God. What does that mean? First of all, let me tell you now the law of the harvest. You see, the Bible gives us a law of the harvest.

And the law of the harvest is formulated by Brother Paul in Galatians chapter 6, verse 7 and 8. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

This is the law of the harvest. You will not harvest what you have not sown. And Paul goes on and says, For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

There are two fields in which you can sow. You can sow in the field of the flesh to have riches and enjoy them, and enjoy this affluent living, and don't bother with anything else, or to invest everything in the field of the Spirit. Don't be deceived.

Where is your field? Where do you invest? It is there that you will reap. And it is what you sow that is what you reap. Don't you believe that if you sow corn, you reap wheat.

It's just nonsense to expect to harvest something that you have not sown. That's the law of the harvest. Now, let me quickly, again, just to give you a taste of what's going to come.

There we go back to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I'll just quickly give you one or two glimpses in Luke 16 and Luke 19. Luke 16 starts with the story of a very crooked steward.

You know the story. There was a big estate there, many farmers on that estate, and there was this administrator. He wasn't long in that job, and he heard that he was going to be fired.

So he immediately makes his mind, what can I do? I don't have a place of my own. Tomorrow my master will kick me out. How can I see that I have a future? I have to arrange the future of my family.

And he quickly makes the plan, and he quickly implements it. He sends a word to every farmer on that big estate, and he says, come quickly here. Each one of you bring in his accounting book.

And he has an interview with each one of them, and he says to one, how much do you owe to my master? \$100,000. \$100,000. Delete that.

Put there \$50,000. I will doctor the big book. You are free.

He dismisses him. Next one, next one, and next one, and he does with everyone the same thing. Now you imagine when \$50,000 out of your debt is completely erased, just like that.

You don't immediately leave. You just stay around to see why this miracle. So all these farmers stop there, stay there, compare notes.

They all got this surprise. And as the end of the operation, the administrator comes out. They say, sir, come here, please.

Sir, we are here. You are being fired. I am? Well, sir, you don't have a house of your own.

No, I don't. Well, sir, where do you move tomorrow? I don't know. Sir, says one, do you know what big my farm is? My house there.

Sir, half of it is not used by anybody. Would you please move with your family in my place? And stay there three months, six months. And then the next one says, sir, go there, and when you get bored there, you move to my place.

And then the next one says, sir, when you get bored with him, come to my place. And like that, all his future is arranged. Now, Jesus says, do you see how wise the people of the world are in arranging their future? Why the children of my kingdom are not that wise? Why don't you invest in your future like that? So that when you go up there, you have a mansion, and then others in those mansions will invite you in their mansions.

Use your fortune here, give it to the poor, so this poor will receive you in their mansions when you go up there. Jesus opens a window to heaven. He tells us that there will be many mansions there.

We are going to socialize there. And you see, if you took some of your money and gave it to one of these young poor boys who is gifted to do preaching but he has no money to go to a seminary, and you invest in him, and you make him a great preacher with that, he will have a great mansion in heaven for his work, for the harvest. But you see, he will look for you there and say, I want that man to be my guest here because I owe everything to him.

How many people will invite you in their mansions up there? Now that's what Jesus tells us about heaven. Do you believe Jesus? Then he goes on, he establishes some rules to which we'll come back, and one of them is, if you are not faithful down here in the things that were entrusted to you but were not your own, who will entrust you with what is your own? And then in chapter 19 of Luke, he develops that in the story of the minas, from verse 12 to 19. It's a king that goes to his kingdom to prepare his kingdom.

He gives all his possessions down here to his stewards, and he says, administer my things. And when I come back, I'll take you to task. I want to see what you did with my things, and then I will affix your position in my kingdom according to what you did.

And I will say to one, well done, good servant, you take authority over ten cities, whatever those cities may mean. And to another one he says, you take authority over five cities because you are faithful this much, you take this much authority in my kingdom. Do we believe Christ? The Son of God tells us that there will be positions, degrees of authority in his kingdom, not equality.

And those positions will be determined by our faithfulness over the things entrusted to us down here. Now, my time is almost gone, but I just want actually to give you in a nutshell everything this morning, and then we'll go on and develop all these things in a more detailed way. But here is how I understand it.

Let me start with my dear wife. God entrusted her to my care, and I am like an artist who can make her or break her. You see, I can use and abuse her and keep her in her place, there in the kitchen, or I can take her and help her to flourish in her own right, help her to fulfill her gifts for the king.

See, when I go up there, the Lord will put Elizabeth near me, and he will say, let me see what you produced out of her. When God will judge Elizabeth, he will put me near her and say, let me see what you produced out of him, because she makes or breaks me. She has an extraordinary power of influencing me.

I'll develop this later, I'll just give you an insight in this teaching at the beginning. Then the Lord entrusted to me a child. My job is to put a heavenly character in that child.

One day at the judgment seat of Christ, Dorothy will be placed near me, and the Lord will say, Joseph, I want to see your reliability. Let me see what you produced out of Dorothy. Then the Lord gave me some gifts, talents.

Did I use them just to become rich and enjoy it, and to attract all the attention to myself, and to make you all say, what a great gifted man this is. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6, where he gives us further teaching on this having treasures in heaven. If you did it to get the praise of man, you got all your reward.

You have nothing, nothing in my kingdom. You see? If I attract your praises to myself, I lose everything up there, because my reward is your praises. But it's my guilt, because I did it so that I requested your praises.

Or I could say, look, my purpose is here as I began my speech, to show to you the beauty of my God, and to help you to see that beauty, and to help you worship God. And so that at the end of every talk I give to you, you will say, what a great and good God we have. And the Lord gave me some money.

It's true, he didn't give me as much as he gave to the American Christians, but he still gave me a little bit. The way I administer God's money, that will make God assess where I stand. Do I take this money and use it for the kingdom? Seek first the kingdom of God.

Everything else has to be added to you by God. You invest everything for God. Or you say, oh, now I cannot do that.

Like the rich young ruler, you want it all for yourself. God assesses your reliability for his kingdom. Through that.

That will be the harvest. The harvest will be that day when the Master will say, well done, good servant. You are faithful over little things.

Now enter the kingdom which I prepared for you from all eternity. Take charge over all my possessions here, because you are faithful over my possessions down there. That's the harvest.

The ultimate harvest. Now let's bow our hands and conclude. Heavenly Father, in the beauty of this place, we see your beauty.

If what you create is so beautiful, how beautiful is your glory. Oh Lord, you created us to share with you in the beauties of all the universe. Make us, Lord, understand your ambitious plans with our lives.

And as we admire your beauty in the beauty of creation, may we gasp and say, all these were created by my daddy so that one day I'll be a ruler with him. But may we understand that we have to qualify by obedience, by submission, by subordination to your commands, by servanthood, by suffering and sacrifice. May we qualify for that day when you will say, well done, good servant.

And there, we'll continue to give you all the glory and praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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