

God Is His People's Great Reward

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson emphasizes that God Himself is the ultimate and exceeding great reward for His people, surpassing all earthly and heavenly treasures.

Scripture: Psalm 16:5

Topics: "Gods Reward", "Eternal Joy"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the incomparable reward of having God Himself as the ultimate prize for His people. He emphasizes that nothing on earth or in heaven can compare to God as the saints' reward, and explains how God bestows Himself upon His people through Jesus Christ's sacrifice. The exceeding greatness of this reward lies in God being a satisfying, suitable, pleasant, transcendent, infinite, honorable, and everlasting reward, bringing eternal joy and contentment to those who have Him as their portion.

Transcript

God is His Peoples Great Reward

by Thomas Watson

"I am your exceeding great reward." Genesis 15:1

God Himself is His people's reward!

Abraham is called "the friend of God," James 2:23. The Lord spoke with him familiarly, Genesis 17:22; he was made of God's privy council, Genesis 18:17. And in the text, "the Word of the Lord came unto him in a vision." And what was the word that came to this holy patriarch in a vision? "I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward"--words too great for any man or angel fully to expound. In the Hebrew it is, "I am your superabundant, very exceeding much reward." In the text is a climax; it rises like the waters of the sanctuary, higher and higher--"I am your reward; your great reward; and your exceeding great reward." There are four things here to be spoken of:

1. Nothing besides God can be the saints' reward.
2. How God is their reward.

3. How God comes to be their reward.
4. Wherein the exceeding greatness of this reward consists.

1. Nothing besides God can be the saints' reward.

Nothing on earth can be their reward. The glittering of the world dazzles men's eyes; but, like the apples of Sodom, it does not so much delight as delude. The world is gilded emptiness. The world is made circular; but the heart is a triangle. A circle cannot fill a triangle. The world is enough to busy us, not to fill us. Job 20:22, "In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits." It seems a riddle to have sufficiency--yet not have enough. The meaning is, when he enjoys most of the creature--yet there is something lacking. When King Solomon had put all the creatures into a cup, and went to extract and distill out the spirits, they turned to froth. "Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." Ecclesiastes 1:2. God never intended that we should dig happiness, out of the earth which He has cursed.

Heaven itself is not a saint's reward. Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but You?" There are angels and archangels--yes, but though these are for a saint's comfort--yet not properly for his reward. Communion with seraphim is excellent--yet can no more make a saint's reward than the light of the stars can make day.

2. How is God His people's reward?

In bestowing Himself upon them. The great blessing of the covenant is, "I am your God." The Lord told Abraham that kings should come out of his loins, and He would give the land of Canaan to him and his seed, Genesis 17:6. But all this did not amount to blessedness. That which made up the portion was, "I will be their God," verse 8. God will not only see that the saints shall be rewarded--but He Himself will be their reward. A king may reward his subjects with gratuities--but he bestows himself upon his queen. God said to every believer, as He did to Aaron, "I am your part and your inheritance," Numbers 18:20, and as the king of Israel said to Benhadad, "I am yours, and all that I have," 1 Kings 20:4.

Abraham sent away the sons of the concubines with a few gifts--but he settled the inheritance upon Isaac, Genesis 25:5-6. God sends away the wicked with riches and honor--but made Himself over to His people. They have not only the gift but the Giver. And what more can be said? As Micah said, "What have I more?" Judges 18:24. Just so, what has God more to give than Himself? What greater dowry is there than the Deity? God is not only the saints' rewarder--but He is their reward. Job 22:25, "The Almighty shall be your gold," for so does the Hebrew word import. The sum of all is this, The saints' portion lies in God. Psalm 16:5, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup."

Question. But how does God give Himself to His people? Is not His essence incommunicable?

Answer. True, the saints cannot partake of God's very essence; the riches of the Deity are too great to be received in essence. But the saints shall have all in God, which may be for their comfort. They shall partake so much of God's likeness, His love, His influence, and the irradiations of His glory (1 John 3:2; John 17:26) as astonishes and fills the vessels of mercy, that they run over with joy.

3. How does God come to be His people's reward.

Through Jesus Christ--His blood, being the blood of God, has merited this glorious reward for them, Acts 20:28. Though in respect of free grace, this reward is a donation--yet in respect of Christ's blood it is a

purchase, Ephesians 1:14. How precious should Christ be to us! Had not He died, the exceeding great portion would never have come into our hands!

4. Wherein the exceeding greatness of this reward consists.

God is a satisfying reward. Genesis 17:1, "I am God Almighty." The word for Almighty signifies "Him who has sufficiency." God is a whole ocean of blessedness, so that the soul, while it is bathing in it, cries out in a divine ecstasy, "I have enough!" Here is fullness--but no excess. Psalm 17:15, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness." When I awake out of the sleep of death, having my soul embellished with the illustrious beams of Your glory, I shall be satisfied. In God there is not only sufficiency but redundancy; not only the fullness of the vessel--but the fullness of the fountain! When the whole world was defaced, Noah had the copy and emblem of it in the ark. In God, this Ark of blessedness, are all good things virtually to be found. Therefore Jacob, having God for his reward, could say, "I have enough!" or, as it is in the original, "I have all!" Genesis 33:11. God is all marrow and fatness. He is such an exuberant reward as exceeds our very faith. If the Queen of Sheba's heart fainted within her to see all King Solomon's glory--what would it have done to have beheld the astonishing and magnificent reward which God bestows upon His favorites!

God is a suitable reward. The soul, being spiritual, must have something comparable and suitable to make it happy--and that is God. Light is no more suitable to the eye, nor melody to the ear--than God is to the soul. He pours spiritual blessings into the soul, Ephesians 1:3. He enriches it with grace, feasts it with His love, and crowns it with heavenly dignity!

God is a pleasant reward. He is the quintessence of delight! He is all beauty and love! To be feeding upon the thoughts of God is delicious. Psalm 104:34, "My meditation of Him shall be sweet." It is delightful to the bee to suck the flower; so, by holy musing, to suck out some of the sweetness in God, carries a secret delight in it. To have a prospect of God only by faith is pleasant. 1 Peter 1:8, "In whom believing you rejoice." Then what will the joy of vision be--when we shall have a clear, personal sight of Him--and be laid in the bosom of divine love! Is God so sweet a reward in affliction? 2 Corinthians 7:4, "I am exceedingly joyful in all our trouble." Philip, Count of Hesse, said that in his confinement, he had the divine consolation of the martyrs. Then what a delicious reward will God be in heaven! This may be better felt--than expressed. The godly, entering upon their celestial reward, are said to enter into the joy of their Lord, Matthew 25:21. Oh, amazing! The saints enter into God's own joy. They have not only the joy which God bestows--but the joy which God enjoys!

God is a transcendent reward. The painter, going to paint the picture of Helena, not being able to draw her beauty as in life, drew her face covered with a veil. So, when we speak of God's excellencies--we must draw a veil. He is so super-eminent a reward that we cannot set Him forth in all His luster and magnificence. Put the whole world in scale with Him--and it is as if you should weigh a feather with a mountain of gold. God is far better than all other things put together! He is better than the world, and better than heaven! He is the original cause of all good things. Nothing is sweet without Him. He perfumes and sanctifies our comforts! He turns the venison into a blessing.

God is an infinite reward. And, being infinite, these two things follow:

This reward cannot come to us by way of merit. Can we merit God? Can finite creatures merit an infinite reward?

God being an infinite reward, there can be no defect or scantiness in it. There is no lack in that which is infinite. Some may ask, "Is God sufficient for every individual saint?" Yes! If the sun, which is but a finite creature, disperses its light to the universe, then much more God, who is infinite, distributes glory to the whole number of the elect. Every individual Christian has a membership in God. As every person enjoys the whole sun to himself, so every believer possesses the whole God to himself. The Lord has land enough to give all His heirs. Throw a thousand buckets into the sea and there is water enough in the sea to fill them. Though there are millions of saints and angels, there is enough in God to fill them. God is an infinite reward, and though He is continually giving out of His fullness to others--yet He has not the less. His glory is imparted, not impaired. It is a distribution without a diminution.

God is an honorable reward. Honor is the height of men's ambition. Aristotle calls it the greatest of blessings. Alas! Worldly honor is but a pleasing fancy--it often has a speedy burial. But to enjoy God is the head of honor. What greater dignity than to be taken up into communion with the God of glory, and to possess a kingdom with Him, bespangled with light, and seated above all the visible orbs!

A great heir, while in a foreign land, may be despised; but in his own country he is held in veneration. Here on earth, the people of God are as princes in a disguise, 1 John 3:1. But they shall have honor enough in heaven when they shall be clothed with white robes and sit with Christ upon His throne, Revelation 3:21.

God is an everlasting reward. Mortality is the flaw of all earthly things. They are in their fruition surfeiting, and in their duration dying. They are like that metal which glass is made of, which, when it shines brightest, is nearest melting. But God is an eternal reward. Eternity cannot be measured by years nor ages. Eternity makes glory weighty. Psalm 48:14, "This God is our God forever and ever!" Oh, you saints of God, your praying and repenting are but for a while--but your reward is forever! As long as God is God, He will be rewarding you! Hosea 2:19, "I will betroth you unto me forever." God marries Himself to His people, and this admits of no divorce. God's love for His elect is as unchangeable as His love for Christ. Psalm 73:26, "My portion forever." This portion cannot be spent--because it is infinite; nor can it be lost--because it is eternal.

We read of a river of pleasures at God's right hand, Psalm 36:8.

But, you may ask, may not this river be dried up?

No! For there is a fountain at the bottom. Psalm 36:9, "With You is the fountain of life."

Question. But if this reward is so exceedingly great, will it not overwhelm us?

Answer. In the eternal world, our faculties shall be extended, and through the Mediator, Christ--we shall be made capable of receiving this reward. Put a plate of steel behind a glass and you may see your face in it. So, Christ's human nature being put as steel to the divine, God's glory will be seen and enjoyed by us. As there is no seeing the sun in the circle but in the beams, so, whatever of God is made visible to us will be through the golden beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Question. Where does the certainty of this reward appear?

Answer. God, who is the oracle of truth, has asserted it. God's oath is laid as pledge, Psalm 58:11. Nay, God has not only pawned His truth, the most orient pearl of His crown--but He has given the anticipation and first fruits of this reward to His saints in joy and consolation, Galatians 5:22, which assures them of a harvest afterwards.

Question. But when shall we be possessed of this reward?

Answer. The time is not long. Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I come quickly--and My reward is with Me." Sense and reason think it a long interval--but faith looks at the rewards as near. Through a telescope, an object which is at some distance seems near to the eye. So, when faith looks through the telescope of a promise, the reward seems near. As faith substantiates, so it anticipates things not seen; it makes them present, Ephesians 2:6.

Question. But why is this reward at all deferred?

Answer 1. God does not see fit that we should yet receive it. Our work is not done. A day laborer does not receive his pay until his work is done. Even Christ's reward was deferred until He had completed His mediatorial work and said upon the cross, "It is finished."

Answer 2. God defers the reward that we may live by faith. We are taken with the reward--but God is more taken with our faith. No grace honors God like faith, Romans 4:20. God has given Himself to us by promise. Faith trusts God's bond, and patience waits for the payment.

Answer 3. God adjourns the reward a while to sweeten it and make it more welcome to us when it comes. After all our labors, watchings, and conflicts--how comfortable will the reward be! Nay, the longer the reward is deferred--the greater it is appreciated. The longest labors, have the largest returns.

If still it is asked, "When shall the time of this reward be?" I say, the righteous shall receive part of their reward at death. No sooner is the soul out of the body--than it is present with the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5:8. And the full coronation is at the resurrection when the soul and body shall be united and perfected in glory. Christians, do not faint in your voyage, though it may be troublesome. You are within a few steps of heaven! Your salvation is now nearer, than when you first believed, Romans 13:11.

Several applications follow.

Use 1. Of INFORMATION.

BRANCH 1. Hence it is evident that it is lawful to look to the future reward. God is our reward; is it not lawful to look to Him? Moses had an eye to the recompense of reward, Hebrews 11:26. What was this reward, but God Himself! Verse 27, "As seeing Him who is invisible." Looking to the reward, quickens us in piety. It is like the rod of myrtle in the traveler's hand which, it is said, revives his spirits and makes him walk without being weary. Who that is subject to fainting fits, will not carry the remedy with him?

BRANCH 2. If God is such an exceedingly great reward, then it is not in vain, to engage in His service. It was a slanderous speech, "It is vain to serve God!" Malachi 3:14. The infinite Jehovah gives a reward that is as far beyond our thoughts--as it is above our deserts. How apt are people, through ignorance or mistake, to misjudge the ways of God! They think it will not be worth the cost to be pious. They speak evil of true religion before they have tried it; as if one should condemn a food before he has tasted it. Beside the gratuities which God gives in this life--provision, protection, and peace--there is a glorious reward shortly coming, Psalm 19:11. God Himself is the saints' dowry! God has a true monopoly--He has those riches which are nowhere else to be had--the riches of salvation. He is such a gold-mine as no angel can find the bottom--the unsearchable riches of Christ! Ephesians 3:8. Is it vain, then, to serve God? A Christian's work is soon over--but not his reward. He has such a harvest coming, as cannot be fully taken in. It will always be reaping time in heaven. How great is that reward--which thoughts cannot measure, nor

time finish!

BRANCH 3. See the detestable folly of such as refuse God. Psalm 81:11, "Israel would have none of Me." Is it usual to refuse rewards? If a man should have a vast sum of money offered to him and he should refuse it, his sanity would be called into question. God offers an incomprehensible reward to men--yet they refuse! They are like a magnet which refuses gold and diamond--and draws rusty iron to it instead! Man, by his fall, lost his headpiece; he does not see where his best interest lies. He flies from God as if he were afraid of salvation; and what does he refuse God for? The fleeting and unsatisfying pleasures of the world! We may write upon them "temporary." And to lose God for these perishables is an example of folly worse than that of Lysimachus, who, for a draft of water, lost his kingdom. We read in Scripture of two cups. Psalm 16:5, "The Lord is the portion of my cup." Those who refuse this cup shall have another cup to drink of--Psalm 11:6, "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone--this shall be the portion of their cup."

BRANCH 4. If God is such an immense reward, then see how little cause the saints have to fear death. Are men afraid to receive rewards? There is no way to really live, but by dying. Christians would be clothed with glory--but are loath to be unclothed. They pray, "may Your kingdom come," and when God is leading them to this kingdom, they are afraid to go. What makes us desirous of staying here on earth? There is more in the world to wean us--than to entice us. Is it not a valley of tears? And do we weep to leave it? Are we not in a wilderness among fiery serpents? And are we loath to leave their company? Is there a better friend we can go to--than God! Are there any sweeter smiles or softer embraces--than His! Surely, those who know that when they die they go to receive their reward, should neither be fond of life--nor fearful of death! The pangs of death to believers are but the pangs of travail by which they are born into glory.

Use 2. Of EXHORTATION.

BRANCH 1. Believe this reward. Sensualists question this reward, because they do not see it. They may as well question the verity of their souls because, being spirits, they cannot be seen. Where should our faith rest but upon a divine testimony? We believe there are such places such as Africa and China (though we have never seen them) because travelers who have been there affirm it. And shall we not believe the eternal recompenses, when God Himself affirms them? The whole earth hangs upon the Word of God's power, and shall not our faith hang upon the Word of His truth? Let us not be skeptics, in matters of such importance.

The disbelief of this grand truth is the cause of the flagitiousness of the age. Immorality begins at infidelity, Hebrews 3:12. To mistrust a future reward is to question the Bible and to destroy a main article of our Creed, "Life everlasting." Such atheists as look upon God's promise but as a forged deed, put God to swear against them, that they shall never enter into His rest, verse 18.

BRANCH 2. If God is such an exceeding great reward, let us endeavor that He may be our reward. In other things we love an ownership, "This house is mine; these lands are mine." And why not, "This God is mine"? Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron, "Go and sacrifice to your God." It was not "to my God." Leaving out one word in a will may spoil the will. Leaving out this word "my" is the loss of heaven. Psalm 67:6, "God, even our own God, shall bless us." He who can pronounce this shibboleth, "my God!" is the happiest man alive!

Question. How shall we know that God is our reward? There are four ways:

1. If God has given us the pledge of this reward. This pledge is His Spirit. Ephesians 1:13-14, "You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance." Where God gives His Spirit for a pledge--there He gives Himself for a portion. Christ gave the purse to Judas, not His Spirit.

How shall we know we have God's Spirit?

The Spirit carries influence along with Himself. He consecrates the heart--making it a holy of holies. He sanctifies the mind--causing it to mint holy thoughts. He sanctifies the will, strongly biasing it to godliness. As musk, lying among linen, perfumes it--so the Spirit of God in the soul perfumes it with holiness.

But are not the unregenerate said to partake of the Holy Spirit?

They may have the common gifts of the Spirit--but not the special grace. They may have the enlightening of the Spirit--but not the anointing of the Spirit. They may have the Spirit move in them--but not live in them. But to partake of the Holy Spirit aright, is when the Spirit leaves lively impressions upon the heart. He softens, purifies, and transforms it--writing a law of grace there! Hebrews 8:10. By this pledge, we have a title to the reward.

2. If God is our reward, He has given us a hand to lay hold on Him. This hand is faith. Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe." A weak faith justifies. As a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage; just so--a weak faith can lay hold on a strong Christ! The nature of faith is assent joined with affiance, Acts 8:37 and 16:31. Faith makes God ours! Other graces make us like Christ--faith makes us one with Him. And this faith is known by its virtue. Precious faith has virtue in it; it quickens and ennobles; it puts worth into our services, Romans 16:26.

3. We may know God is our reward by our choosing Him. True religion is not a matter of chance--but of choice, Psalm 119:30. Have we weighed things in the balance, and, upon mature deliberation, made this choice--"We will have God upon any terms"? Have we sat down and reckoned the cost? What true religion must cost us--parting with our lusts; and what it may cost us--parting with our lives? Have we resolved, through the assistance of grace, to own Christ when the world is against us. And to sail with Him not only in a pleasure-boat, but in a battle-ship? This choosing God speaks Him to be ours. Hypocrites profess God out of worldly design, not pious choice.

4. God is known to be our reward, by the delight we take in Him, Psalm 37:4-8. How men please themselves with rich portions! What delight a bride takes in her jewels! Do we delight in God as our eternal portion? Indeed, He is a whole paradise of delight! All excellencies meet in God! Is ours a genuine delight? Do we not only delight in God's blessings--but in God Himself? Is it a superior delight? Do we delight in God above other things? David had His crown-revenues to delight in--but his delight in God took place over all other delights. Psalm 43:4, "God, my exceeding glory," or, as it is in the original, "the cream of my joy." Can we delight in God when other delights are gone? "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!" Habakkuk 3:17-18

When the flowers in a man's garden die--yet he can delight in his land and money. Thus a gracious soul, when the creature fades, can rejoice in the pearl of great price. Paulinus, when they told him the Goths had sacked his city and plundered him of all, lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Lord, You know where I have laid up my treasure." By this delighting in God, we may undoubtedly know He is our reward.

Question. What shall we do, to get God to be our reward?

Answer. First, let us see our need of God. We are undone without Him. Do not lift up the crest of pride. Beware of the Laodicean temper, Revelation 3:17, "You say, I am rich and have need of nothing." God will never bestow Himself on those who see no need of Him.

Second, let us beg God to be our reward. It was Augustine's prayer, "Lord, give me Yourself!" Psalm 17:14, "O do not put me off with common mercies; give me not my portion in this life." Be earnest suitors--and God cannot find it in His heart to deny you. Prayer is the key of heaven which, being turned by the hand of faith, opens all God's treasures!

BRANCH 3. Live every day in the contemplation of this reward. Be in the altitudes. Think what God has prepared for those who love Him! Oh, that our thoughts could ascend! The higher the bird flies the sweeter it sings. Let us think how blessed they are, who are possessed of their eternal heritage! If one could but look a while through the chinks of heaven's door--and see the beauty and bliss of Paradise; if he could but lay his ear to heaven--and hear the ravishing music of those seraphic spirits and the anthems of praise which they sing--how would his soul be exhilarated and transported with joy!

Oh, Christians, meditate on this reward! Slight, transient thoughts do no good. They are like breath upon steel which is immediately off again. But let your thoughts dwell upon glory--until your hearts are deeply affected! "What, Lord! Is there such an incomprehensible reward to be bestowed upon me! Shall these eyes of mine be blessed with transforming thoughts of You? Oh, the astonishing love of God to sinners!" Stand at this fire of meditation until your hearts begin to be warm. How would the reflection on this immense reward, conquer temptation and behead those unruly lusts which have formerly conspired against us! "What! Is there a reward so sure, so sweet, so rich! And shall I forfeit this by sin? Shall I, to please my appetite, lose my crown? Oh, all you pleasures of sin, begone! Let me no more be deceived by your sugared lies! Wound me no more with your silver darts! Though stolen waters are sweet--yet the water of life is sweeter!"

There is no stronger antidote to expel sin than the serious meditations on heavenly remunerations. It was when Moses was long out of sight--that Israel made an idol to worship, Exodus 32:1. So, when the future reward is long out of our mind--then we set up some idol lust in our hearts, and we begin to worship it!

BRANCH 4. This may CONTENT God's people. Though they have but little oil in the cruse, and their estates are almost boiled away to nothing--their reward is yet to come! Though your earthly pension is small, your eternal portion is large! If God is yours--this may rock your hearts quiet. God lets the wicked have their pay beforehand. Luke 6:24, "You have already received your comfort." A wicked man will make his acquittance and write, "Received in full payment." But the saints' reward is in reversion--the robe and the ring are yet to come! May not this tune their hearts into contentment? Christian! What if God denies you a trifle which you may desire? If He says, "Son, all that I have is yours!" Luke 15:31. Is not this sufficient? Why do you complain of the world's emptiness--when you have God's fullness! Is not God reward enough? Has a son any cause to complain that his father denies him a flower in the garden--when he makes him heir to his wealthy estate?

The philosopher comforted himself with this--that though he had no music or vine trees--yet he had the household gods with him. So, Christian, though you do not have much of the world--yet you have God--and He is an inexhaustible treasure! It was strange, after God had told Abraham, "I am your exceeding great reward," that Abraham should yet say, "Lord God, what will You give me seeing I go

childless?" Genesis 15:2. Shall Abraham ask, "Lord, what will You give me?" when He had given Himself! Was Abraham troubled at the lack of a child--when he had a God! Was not God "better than ten sons"? Who should be content--if not he who has God for his portion and heaven for his eternal haven!

Let this exceedingly great reward stir up in us a spirit of activity for God. Our head should study for Him; our hands should work for Him; our feet should run in the way of His commandments. Alas! How little--is all that we can do! Our work bears no proportion with our reward. The thoughts of this reward should make us rise off the bed of sloth and live for God with all our might. It should add wings to our prayers, and weight to our alms. A slothful person stands in the world for a cipher, and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life! Let us abound in the work of the Lord, 1 Corinthians 15:58. As aromatic trees sweat out their precious oils--so should we sweat out our strength and spirits for Christ.

Paul, knowing what a splendid reward was ahead, brought all the more glory he could to God. 1 Corinthians 15:10, "I labored more abundantly than they all." He outworked all the other apostles. Did Plato and Demosthenes undergo such herculean labors and studies, who had but the dim candlelight of nature to see by? And shall not Christians much more put forth all their vigor of spirit for God--when they are sure to be crowned, nay--God Himself will be their crown!

BRANCH 5. If God is so great a reward, let such as have a saving interest in Him be CHEERFUL. God loves a gladsome Christian; cheerfulness credits true religion. The goodness of the conscience--is seen in the gladness of the countenance. Let the birds of Paradise sing for joy. Shall a carnal man rejoice, whose happiness leans on earthly crutches--and shall not he rejoice whose treasure is laid up in heaven? Be serious--yet cheerful. As a dejected, melancholy temper makes one unfit for duty, especially that of praising God, so it disparages heaven. Will others think God is such a great reward--when they see Christians go drooping about? It is a sin as well not to rejoice--as not to repent.

OBJECTION. But how can I be cheerful? I am reduced to great straits.

Answer. Let God take away whatever He will from you--He will at last give you that which is far better. Be not too much troubled, at the diminution of these earthly things--for all the eternal blessings of heaven are yours. In the fields of Sicily there is a continual spring, and flowers are there all year long. This is an emblem of heaven--where flowers of joy are always flourishing. There you shall tread upon stars, be companions with angels, and have communion with the blessed Trinity. Let the saints, then, be glad in the Lord. In God are treasures which can never be emptied--and pleasures which can never be ended!

BRANCH 6. If God is an exceedingly great reward, let such as have hope in Him, long for the full possession of Him. Though it should not be irksome to us to stay here to do service--yet we should have a holy longing until our eternal portion comes into our hand. This is a temper befitting a Christian--content to live, and desirous to die! Philippians 1:23-25. Does not the bride desire her wedding day? Revelation 22:17. If we seriously considered our condition here on earth--that we are compassed with a body of sin; that we cannot pray without wandering; that we cannot believe without doubting--would not this make us desire to depart, to be gone to heaven? Let us think how happy those saints above are, who are solacing themselves in God. While we live far from court--they are always beholding the smiling face of God! While we drink wormwood--they swim in honey! While we are perplexed and troubled--they know their names are enrolled in the book of life. While we are tossed upon the unquiet waves--they have gotten to the eternal haven. If we but knew what a reward God is, and what the joy of our Lord means--we would need patience to be content to stay here on earth any longer!

BRANCH 7. Let such as have God for their exceedingly great reward, be living organs of God's praise. Psalm 118:28, "You are my God--and I will praise You!" Themistocles thought he was well requited by the Grecians for his valor--when they took such notice of him in the Olympics, saying, "This is Themistocles." God counts it requital enough for all His love--when we are grateful and present Him with our thank offering! And well may we stand upon Mount Gerizim, blessing and praising, if we consider the greatness of this reward. That we should be made heirs of God; and that this surpassing reward is not a debt but a legacy; and that, when most others are passed by, the lot of free grace should fall upon us!--let this make us ascribe praise to the Lord. It is called "the garment of praise" in Isaiah 61:3. The saints never look so lovely as in this garment. Praise is the work of heaven; such as shall have angels' reward, should do angels' work. The word "praise" comes from a Hebrew word that signifies to shoot up. The godly should shoot up their praises toward heaven! Shall you live forever with God and partake of His fullness in glory? Break forth into doxologies and triumphs! Long for that time when you shall join in concert with the angels, those choristers of heaven, in sounding forth hallelujahs to the King of glory! Such as are monuments of mercy should be patterns of praise!

Use 3. Of CONSOLATION to the godly.

Will God Himself be His people's reward? This may be as an antidote to revive and comfort them:

1. In case of LOSSES. They have lost their livings and promotions for conscience's sake--but as long as God lives their eternal reward is not lost, Hebrews 10:34. Bernard said, "I cannot be poor--so long as God is rich; for His riches are mine!" Whatever we lose for God, we shall find again in Him. In Mark 10:28 the disciples said, "We have left all and have followed You." Alas! What had they left? A few sorry boats and nets! What were these, compared to their reward? They parted with fleeting goods--for the unchangeable God! All losses are made up in Him! We may be losers for God--but we shall never be losers by Him.

2. In case of PERSECUTION. The saints' reward will abundantly compensate for all their sufferings. Agrippa was laid in chains for Caius. When Caius came later to the empire, he released Agrippa out of prison and gave him a chain of gold bigger than his iron chain. Just so, God will infinitely remunerate those who suffer for Him. For their "waters of Marah" they shall have the wine of Paradise! The saints' sufferings are but for a short time--but their reward is forever! They are but a short while in the winepress--but forever in the banqueting house! The Hebrew word for "glory" signifies a weight. The weight of glory--should make affliction light. The enjoying of God eternally will cause Christians to forget all their sorrows. One beam of the Sun of Righteousness will dry up all their tears! After trouble--eternal peace! After labor--eternal rest. Then God will be all in all to His people--light to their eye, manna to their taste, music to their ear, and joy to their heart! Oh, then, let the saints be comforted in the midst of their trials! Romans 8:18, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!"

Use 4. Of TERROR to the Wicked.

Here is dread to frighten them. They shall have a reward--but one vastly different from the godly. The one shall be rewarded in the king's palace--the other in hell's prison. All the plagues in Scripture are their reward. Proverbs 10:29, "Destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." God is their rewarder--but not their reward. Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death." They who did the devil's work--will tremble to receive their wages!

Zophar notably sets forth a wicked man's reward in Job 20. Verse 7, "He shall perish forever, thrown away like his own dung." That is, he shall leave a stinking savor behind. Verse 16, "He will spit out the riches he swallowed; God will make his stomach vomit them up. He will suck the poison of serpents." That is, the sin which was sweet as honey in his mouth--shall be as bitter as the poison of serpents. Verse 26, "Terrors will come over him; total darkness is reserved for his treasures. A fire unfanned [by human hands] will consume him." That is, the fire of hell shall torture his soul. He shall be ever consuming, never consumed. Verse 29, "This is the portion of a wicked man!" How dreadful is this! For every golden sand of mercy which runs out to a sinner, God puts a drop of wrath into His vial! "But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." Romans 2:5.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-watson/god-is-his-peoples-great-reward/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net