



# RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

## Letters of Faith

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**Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB

Dear Beloved,

For several days before we sat down to write this *Letters of Faith*, I (Paul) had a word from God constantly running through my head. But my spirit didn't know what to do with it. As hard as I tried to hear and to make word studies with our computer, nothing came into focus about this word in my heart.

Then suddenly this afternoon, apparently out of thin air, Gretel said: "*Remember, Honey, Resurrection Sunday is the 8th of this month.*" Instantly the above passage sprung to my mind and all the wondering fell into place.

The word that was buzzing around in me? **REWARD**. Yes, we know that when most of you "get a word from the Lord" it is voluminous and pithy and awesome. But this one word was all there was! Do you have any idea how many times and in how many ways the word reward is used in the Bible? And some references were far from encouraging!

*Reward* in the New Testament Greek is a primary word meaning wages and hire and is translated pay or *wages* 9 times, and *reward* 19 times in the NASB.

Consider these scriptures using this same Greek word: "**For the wages of sin is death...**" (Rom. 6:23) and, "**...love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.**" (Luke 6:35)

Most interesting! This simple word, *reward*, is used to point both to death and to being sons of the Most High God; as being God's *wages* for doing evil or for doing good.

This word, *reward*, appears most often in the Gospel of Matthew. He emphasizes very clearly that we are to seek our *rewards* or *wages* from the Lord our God rather from man. "**Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they**

have their *reward* in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will *reward* you. When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their *reward* in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. ...Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their *reward* in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will *reward* you.” (Matt. 6:1-6 & 16-18)

Do you get it? God says to us, illustrated and emphasized through His faithful servant Matthew, that we must move in obedience to Him in all things and look to Him, and to Him alone, for the *reward/wages* for our actions. The Father, who sees the secret things, will *reward* you, and often times His *reward/wages* is in secret too.

That’s about as fun and exciting as it ever gets!

And what is our *reward* for doing what God asks us to do the way He asks us to do it? Again, Matthew gives us the answer in his account of Jesus’ parable of the servants and their productivity with the talents given to them. To the productive servants: “His master said to him, ‘**Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.**’” (Matt. 25:23) We don’t know about you, but to us the highest *wage* or the biggest *reward* we can imagine is to hear our Lord Jesus and our Father who is in Heaven say to us: “Well done my good and faithful servant!” Then on top of that these words of Jesus through Matthew say we are commissioned to: *enter into the joy of our master!* Our thinking doesn’t even wander to the “**many things**” because to hear Jesus say “**Well done**” is so huge, and the thought of entering into His joy is the pinnacle.

Which brings us full circle to the opening scripture.

Jesus demonstrates for us the single-mindedness on His Father’s ways that He wants to see in us by enduring the cross and despising the shame: “**...for the joy set before Him...**” The joy set before Him was the path of salvation for all mankind—whoever believes in Him. The joy set before Him was hearing His Father say: *Well done, My good and faithful Son! Enter into the joy of My Kingdom!*

And believe it or not, the joy set before Him is us!

Yes, we are Jesus’ inheritance! “**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He**

**brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.”** (Ephesians 1:18-21)

Beloved, WE are His *reward*!

Think about your being His *reward* when you are tempted to do something that would degrade you as His *reward* for what He bore for you on the cross—like taking on shame which He despised.

Think about your being His *reward* when you are about to give in to some secret sin for which He suffered on the cross so you could, through Him, be free from that sin even in secret.

Think about your being His *reward* when you behave in a way that is far too cheap for the price He paid for you—His blood.

Think about your being His *reward* when you meditate on Isaiah 53:3-6 which so clearly defines all that Jesus did for you on the cross: He became sin so you could be forgiven your sins and walk free from sin; He bore our griefs and sorrows as surely as He bore our sins; and He bore the physical chastisements for our sins and all of the sicknesses and diseases in the world through His scourgings.

Think about your being His *reward* by joining Him as a fellow royal son of the Father. Because He focused on the joy ahead as He endured the cross, you can keep your eyes on Him as the resurrected and gloriously ascended Christ Jesus with whom you are seated in heavenly places no matter what you are enduring here on this earth.

And when you think about your being His *reward*, think about Paul’s admonition to you in Col. 3:23-24: **“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”**

Your *reward* is more valuable than any possible *reward* here on earth: it will be eternal life with your Heavenly Father and with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Righteous and Holy Son of God. **“So consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”** (Heb. 12:3)

Love and Resurrection Hugs,

