

II Timothy, Sermon #33

II Timothy 4—near the end of this book

We have just a few messages left.

II Timothy 4:8—put in context

Paul is in Rome and is on death row—his execution is soon.

Vs. 6 – present

Vs. 7 – past

Vs. 8 – future

Paul has reached a milestone in his life.

Age—degree or diploma—death

Graduation marks the end of a process and the beginning of something new.

In Paul's case, the end of his earthly life and the beginning of his heavenly life

I've entitled this two-part series "Present Labor, Future Rewards"

II Timothy 4:8—regards the future

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

II Timothy 4:8

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Present Labor, Future Rewards

Six points from verse 8

#1 – vs. 8a – this phrase, “laid up” more familiar to us is the old idea of lay-away. Put something on lay-away. Lay-away is a way to purchase an item without paying the entire cost. We call that credit card today!
Put on reserve, placed somewhere, awaiting our arrival

Jesus taught us to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20)

Colossians 3:23-24, “*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*”

Rewards are part of our inheritance—received in future—treasures in Heaven

#2 – vs.8 – personal—for me—every individual believer—can make deposits in Heaven

#3 – vs. 8 – a crown/a reward—present labor—future rewards

This is a difficult concept for the 21st-century Christian living in America—we want it
NOW

In the Christian life, many of God’s rewards do not come until eternity.

Our benefits are literally out of this world.

Hence, it takes a mature disciple to constantly live for the eternal (by faith) rather than the temporal (by sight).

A crown is a reward, and Paul will receive his reward someday, just like you and I will.

This word **crown** is from the Greek word *stephanos*—(Stephen) Steve.

A crown was plaited wreaths or garlands that were placed on the heads of dignitaries, military victors, and winners of athletic contests.

It was a symbol of honor.

Today, medals are placed around the necks of Olympic champions, but back in that day, it was the laurel wreath.

A laurel wreath was branches and leaves interwoven into a circle to be placed on the head or into a horseshoe shape and put around the neck.

It was a crown of thorns that Pilate's soldiers placed on Jesus' head (Matthew 27:29).

So, the crown was the prize ancient athletes received, and was cherished as a great treasure (II Timothy 2:5).

★The world runs "to receive a perishable crown [*stephanos*]," Paul said, "but we run to obtain an incorruptible, imperishable" crown/reward (I Corinthians 9:25).

Incorruptible crown—something that lasts, not like earthly rewards.

There are several such crowns mentioned in the New Testament.

The crown of righteousness – vs. 8

The Crown of Life, the crown of rejoicing, of glory—we will look at these next Sunday.

Back to verse 8 . . .

#4 – According to verse, the Lord is the Giver of rewards

Many say—rewards—there are no rewards!

Hebrews 11:6, *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."*

Luke 6:22-23, *“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.”*

Luke 6:35, *“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great.”*

Jesus said:

Revelation 22:12, *“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”*

Jesus is coming and our reward is based on our work—our labor for Him.

I Corinthians 3:8, *“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.”*

Everyone's reward is determined by his own work.

Ephesians 6:8, *“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”*

God is an equal opportunity employer—whether black or white, rich or poor.

The opportunity to receive rewards is the same.

Matthew 16:27, *“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.”*

How should we do our works?

Matthew 6:1, *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.”*

When we do our good deeds to be seen by men (wrong motives), we have our reward and none will be from God.

Matthew 6:18, *“That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”*

Do our works without a banner—secret—God will reward us openly.
We are to give in secret. Motive

Psalm 62:12b, *“Thou renderest to every man according to his work.”*

Romans 14:12, *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

Believers will appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ/Bema Seat where the athletes were examined and then rewarded.

There is no escaping this judgment.

God says, “We must” all appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

This will take place in every believer’s experience.

II Corinthians 5:10, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*

Where shall we receive our judgment regarding our rewards? Judgment Seat of Christ

Who will be the judge?

The very expression “the Judgment Seat of Christ”

Our Lord, Himself, will be the Judge.

He’s a perfect Judge—there will be no argument when He makes the call—it is perfect.

This is serious—judgment is coming one day.

It would be wise for us to reflect on the fact that one day we will face Christ and our living/works will be judged.

For one thing, this realization would encourage us to do our work carefully and faithfully.

It should also deliver us from the fear of man; for, after all, our final Judge is Christ.

Why should there be such a judgment?

If there is now no more condemnation to those who are in Christ, then it is evident that the subject of one's entrance into heaven is not involved in this.

This is an evaluation of the deeds done in the body whether they were good or bad.

We were purchased with the redemptive blood of Christ and so we belong to Him
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

We are not our own anymore.

We are His and we are to do His will.

Because of this, some difference in rewards must be made between the man who has totally given himself to the Lord and one who may have accepted salvation as an escape from hell.

If this latter Christian did little or nothing to allow Christ to live in him and through him so that others might know what Christ has done for him, he will not be worthy of rewards.

We see from this why the Judgment Seat of Christ is necessary.

It will show how much each one has appropriated Christ's life and reflected that life here on the earth.

It's not just a matter of activity—it's the matter of the heart (1 Corinthians 3)

Christ sees all and knows all.

In the light of these things, we might ask ourselves how much Christ is living in us.

#5 – opportunity to receive is available to everyone (vs. 8e)

Certain rewards that believers will receive or not receive will be individual, based on their own faithfulness.

I Corinthians 3:13-15, *“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved . . .”*

#6 – when shall this be received? At that day—there is coming a day.

Vs. 8 - appearing

He is speaking, of course, of the **day** of Christ's return in particular, the **day** of resurrection and rapture, when “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven . . . (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). In that glorious **day** . . . (I Corinthians 15:51-54)

Present Labor, Future Rewards

Let us stand for closing invitation. Every eye closed.

Listen, the altar is open. Come and give your life to Christ. Rededicate your life. Come and confess. Come and repent.

Say to the Lord what He has spoken to you.

Is pride going to stop you? Is sin going to keep you?

Salvation

How many here this morning say, Pastor, I'm not sure I'm saved from my sin?