

June 16, 2019

“Marriott or Hotel 6?”, I Corinthians 3:10-15

Although we know that Heaven (Paradise in the presence of God), the New Jerusalem, and the New Earth will be amazing, we might wonder if our individual experiences there will be different. Does what we now do on earth actually matter? According to the Apostle Paul in **I Corinthians 3:10-15**, the deeds done in the name of Jesus Christ on earth WILL produce rewards for the Christian in Heaven. This calls us to live here and now with eternity in mind!

I. There is going to be an evaluation of God’s people.

Believers are definitely headed for Heaven based on their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. However, once in Heaven, there is going to be an examination & evaluation of our works/deeds/the way we have chosen to live our lives (I Cor. 3:13). A time is coming when the Lord Jesus returns and all our works as Christians will be brought to light and evaluated. I Cor. 3:10-15 speaks of evaluation for the way we build the Church, but the New Testament clearly teaches that everything we have done on earth, as believers, is going to be assessed.

This fits in with forgiveness in the Gospel: [1] because our destination is already Heaven when we are saved (I Cor. 3:15); [2] because our judgement is for works (I Cor. 3:13), not sin, as our sins are covered by Jesus’ death and resurrection, and [3] because God is rewarding us for our works and not punishing us (I Cor. 3:14). In addition to our coming to Him for personal forgiveness for Eternity, Christ wants us to be ambassadors (II Cor. 5:20) to build His Kingdom and its values to those around us - spreading the Gospel (Good News) to those around us.

II. Meaningful reward is a possibility.

We will be rewarded in Eternity for the things of eternal value that we have done (I Cor. 3:14). It is worth working hard for the glorious eternal rewards because they will be meaningful and significant. Various descriptions of eternal rewards mentioned in Scripture include: [1] The role that we will play in Heaven - leadership positions of influence and authority on a perfect earth cooperating with resurrected people and with an earth that longs for our leadership. [2] Positive recognition from our Master & King - “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). [3] Riches are stored up for us in Heaven as taught by Jesus in Mtt. 19:21

III. While destruction is not a possibility...meaningful loss is.

The believer might be saved and in Heaven, but none of the temporal things he/she invested in this life will be saved (I Cor.3:15). Toys, money, approval/prestige, excuses, etc. will evaporate. Only things done in the will of Jesus to build His Kingdom will transfer to Heaven with the Master’s welcoming approval. God’s heart is that we should arrive at an amazing destination and received incredible rewards that are so great that the difficulty it took to obtain them is not worth mentioning. Is our heart full of Jesus? Do we serve Him faithfully, earnestly, joyfully here on earth, looking forward to the day of evaluation for meaningful rewards for His children?

Discussion Questions:

1. If Jesus promises God “will reward each person according to what they have done” (See Mtt.16:27 and Rev. 22:12), which kinds of deeds will be rewarded as you understand it?
2. Check out the following Scripture and consider what kinds of behavior/deeds will not be rewarded in Heaven: Rom.14:10-12, II Cor.5:9-10, Rev. 3:17-18). What does this mean for you?
3. Is there any kind of Kingdom work that is not meaningful to Jesus? (See I Cor. 3:8)
4. What are the two elements of the complete Gospel?
5. Author Dietrich Bonhoeffer pointed out that Grace is free but discipleship is very costly. How do you deal with this paradox as you work out the whole Gospel in your life? Are you willing to work/suffer for rewards in Heaven? It is worth it to you?
6. How are you now living to prepare for entering Heaven and for rewards?