

What Will My Small Works Count For On Judgment Day?

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

Question: Ok. Here we go. This first one comes from Alexander. Here's what he says, "I've been reading Revelation, and while I'm saved, and I know what it is to be enraptured by God, I am fearful after reading Revelation 20:12..." (Now, I'll read that to you in just a second.) He says, "it states that all people, good and evil, will have their deeds judged. While I'm grateful and assured of my salvation, I'm fearful that any good deeds I've done are simple and personal and will not compare to great missionaries and so forth. I'm afraid that after giving my life to God, I will be embarrassed in front of all creation by the little good I've done in Jesus' name, when compared to the mistakes I've made. Am I right to be afraid?"

Discussion:

Tim: Here's the first thing I want to say to you guys: If you put this up, and anybody out there that comes across this and listens to it, or any of you folks, listen: I have tried to find this on a number of occasions and I can't find it. There is a Spurgeon sermon, and I think it might be one that has to do with heaven, but I'm not absolutely certain. And he says many envision the Second Coming of Christ and Judgment Day and the entry into heaven. And all the famous people: the Whitfield's and the Wesley's and the Luther's and the Calvin's. They're going to go all marching into heaven in great parade and pomp. While all the little seamstresses and the little people of the Kingdom are kind of off to the sides, and they just get to watch. And he says if that's the way you read heaven, you've read it all wrong. If anybody can find that, where Spurgeon says that, please tell me what sermon it's in. Please tell me where I can find it.

He goes on to describe this little seamstress in some back alley of London. Riddled through with some disease and bed-ridden half the time. But she has an aroma of Christ about her and she loves the Lord. And from time to time, somebody will come visit and she will be able to share the things of Christ with them. He says if you think that woman is not going to be at the head of the parade in heaven, you've read heaven all wrong. Now listen, that's what Spurgeon says. Of course, we're doing a Bible study. We're concerned about what the Bible says. But if you can come across that, please tell me where it is.

You know what I have right here? When I heard this question, I just started thinking through, who are the people and who are the churches that are made much of in the Bible? And I just let my mind go through... and guess what the first one is that came shooting into my mind. The widow and her two mites. Now this woman was not a great missionary. This woman was not the great Apostle Paul. This woman was not Martin Luther. This woman was not John Calvin. You know what? This woman was so obscure, and so out of the way, that we don't have any idea what her name is. You know, it's really been striking me lately, just from Sunday, just a leper. A thief. A widow. We don't even know their names. Just a widow. A woman who was a sinner.

Just no name people. This isn't a mighty Peter or a mighty Paul. Just a widow. And you know what, Jesus looked up, this comes out of Luke 21:1-4. He looked up. He saw the rich putting gifts in the offering box. He saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly, I tell you this poor widow has put in more than all of them." And do you know what He's saying? He's saying on Judgment Day, she is going to be commended more than those people that apparently did a whole lot.

I'm telling you, there are people who, it doesn't appear that they do much, but they serve Jesus Christ with all they have. You know what this woman had? Two copper coins. You know what she served the Lord with? Two copper coins. And He said she put in more than all the rest. You know what? We can look at people with great gifts; we can look at the Charles Spurgeons, and the John G. Patons, and the Hudson Taylors, Adoniram Judsons, and the William Careys. We look at them and we think, "Oh no!" And no doubt, they did a lot. And they expended their lives, and I don't take away from any of those guys. But you've got little no-name widows, little no-name single men and women in our church. Some of you, you're giving yourself, you're taking your two coins, you're taking what God has given you, and you're seeking to serve the Lord with them.

And you know what it says? Where does it say it? Hebrews 10? God does not forget. God is not slow to remember those deeds that you have done. You've got this little woman. Who else? The woman with the alabaster flask. Listen to this: Mark 14:3 "While Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, He was reclining at table when a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, she broke the flask and poured it over His head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, 'Why was the ointment wasted like that?'" Some - it was not just Judas. It's likely Peter was there. "The ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarius and given to the poor. They scolded her. But Jesus said, 'leave her alone. Why do you trouble her?'" And He says two things that are just amazing. "She has done a beautiful thing to Me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have Me. She has done what she could." Now you know what's really amazing? "She's anointed My body beforehand for burial, and truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

That is phenomenal! You know what Jesus is saying? He is specifically making this woman an example to you who feel like: I'll never be a great missionary. I'll never be a great pastor. I'll never be... you know what? Both these ladies - again, this woman, just called a woman with an alabaster flask. Some surmise that this was Mary Magdalene. Or Mary the sister of Lazarus. And it could be. I think maybe it's not. I think probably two separate situations.

But you know what? The fact is, what this is telling us, is on Judgment Day, you think this woman's going to be embarrassed? Look, I come back to this... do you know what Jesus Christ said? John 17. Concerning His disciples. Praying to His Father, He says, "They have kept Your Word." Do you know what this guy right here? This guy's afraid that compared to his mistakes

he feels that his good is pretty little. Well, you know what? I've been there too. I think we've all felt that. But isn't it amazing after the unbelief of these guys, after the pride of these guys, as Peter falling on his face, and "Get thee behind Me, Satan" and "you Sons of Boanerges," you "Sons of Thunder" - you don't even know what spirit you're of. Jesus Christ rebuking these guys; the pride; who's going to be greatest? They want to sit on His right hand and left hand. And after all this, Jesus can say, they've kept Your Word?

You've got people like Sarah in Hebrews 11 It says by faith. By faith? I go back in the Old Testament and I see her laughing with unbelief. But you know what it is? When you're in Christ, it's like we don't even remember it. Don't even mention their sins. That's what's going to happen. This guy, "am I right to be afraid?" Look, it's good to have a healthy fear of God. There's no question about it. But you know what? Matthew 25:23 - "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'" Who is going to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant?" "You've been faithful over a little." You know who's going to hear it? You just be faithful over a little. If God has given you a little, just be faithful.

Who else? Think about Philadelphia. Think about the two churches that are commended in Revelation 2-3. Which two? Smyrna and Philadelphia. Listen to Philadelphia. "To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write the words of the Holy One, the True One, the One that has the key of David Who opens and no one can shut, who shuts and no one opens. I know your works. Behold, I have sat before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power." This is a whole church, they're just little, they're nobodies. They have a little power. The world looks at these people and says, "What are they?" Kind of like a little bunch of people meeting at Fatty's. Who are they? Just a bunch of despised, off-scouring of this earth. "Yet, you have kept My Word." There it is again. "And have not denied My name."

Listen to this: "Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not and lie, behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you." Can you imagine that? Your enemies are going to come bow down at your feet. To who? Some mighty Melanchthon out of church history? No, to these Philadelphia Christians who we don't even know them. They have little power. How about 2 Corinthians 8? You've got the Macedonians. Listen to these guys. Severe test of affliction, extreme poverty, these are a bunch of nobodies too. They don't have any wealth. They don't have anything. Extreme poverty and extreme affliction. And you know what? They're commended for all time in 2 Corinthians 8, as the example of those who are givers. Right alongside the widow.

Folks, who are the ones that are blessed of the Father? In Matthew 25, I'll read it to you, "The King will say to those on His right, 'come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was hungry, you gave Me food. I was thirsty, you gave Me drink. I was a stranger, you welcomed Me. I was naked, and you clothed Me. I was sick and you visited Me. I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You or thirsty and

give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and welcome You or naked and clothe You? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to Me.'"

And I'll tell you what, there's another place in Scripture that says if you but give a cold cup of water; you give a glass of water to somebody you'll not lose your reward. And in fact, you give something to a prophet in the name of the prophet, you do something because they indeed are one of the Lord's, and it says you'll have a prophet's reward. But I tell you this, I read that one right there. This is the character of the works, whether your name is well known or not known. These are the characteristics of the works. You've been entrusted with a little and you're faithful with it. And you use it.

And this young man, Alexander. He says that his works are simple and personal. By personal, you don't want to get away from Matthew 25, where our works need to be expressions of love to other people. And I'm not sure exactly what he means by personal. But if he means that he's kind of cloistered himself, and all his good works are done there, that's not characteristic of the life of the child of God. We may be forgotten, we may be unknown, we may be no-names, but we definitely want to be pouring out our love for the sake of people. And though you quietly do it from a sickbed, though you quietly do it in the background.

Listen, I hope you guys are hearing this. Let me tell you something, I've said this on and off through the life of our church, and I can say it in the life of this Bible study too. People come and people go. Now some true Christians will come and they'll go away for whatever reasons. That's not to say that everybody that comes to our church and goes away isn't saved. But the truth is, people fall out of rank. People fall away. People come and try it; they come and taste it. They come and see it, they come and hear it. And there may be a little thrill in the beginning. There's a parable of the soils for a reason. Even if you're a no-name, be faithful. Be faithful to the end.

What I'm seeing lately is people falling out of ranks. You know why? Because they're not in this thing seeking to please the Lord and to love others. They're looking for what they can get. They're looking to be ministered to. They're looking for what they can receive. There should be an expectation in the church that there's a giving and a receiving, but if you come and you're just coming to get, and you're just coming to make friends, and you're coming to be socially accepted, and you're coming - and if people don't dish out to you what you think you deserve, you're going to be all offended, and you're going to walk away. That's so opposite to this. These people that were commended are the people in poverty, the people in extreme affliction, the people in extreme circumstances, that are seeking to do good. And you know what? They don't need all the limelight. They don't need all the applause. They don't need all the attention. They don't need to be the ones that are being catered to. They don't need to have everybody's arm around them, and have all the attention. That widow threw it in. And you know what? She didn't know anybody was looking. And I'm certain she had no agenda to tell anybody.

Brethren, be faithful. You may never have any fame, any attention in this world, but I guarantee you, if you will be faithful, you will one day hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And just like Spurgeon talks about this seamstress just buried away in her hovel down at the end of some poverty stricken alley in the inner city of London in his day. I'll tell you what, when that welcome is made into glory, people just forgotten by this world and oftentimes people forgotten in human history. Most of us in this room, all of us in this room, are not going to have biographies written about us. I can say most - one of you guys might rise up and go to the mission field and become a famous missionary. I don't rule that out. Remember these folks. Let the Macedonians, let the Philadelphians, the Smyrnans (if that's how you say that), the woman with the alabaster, the widow with her mite. Remember these people. Let them be examples to you. Brethren, be faithful. Like I say, people are falling out of the ranks. People are giving up the race. People are becoming offended. The love of many will grow cold. That's what it says. Where? Matthew 24? The love of many grow cold. They fall out of ranks. People want what they can get.