

# What Is Its Own Reward?

by Jack Hyles

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*The sermon emphasizes that while rewards in heaven differ based on our works, the act of giving itself is a profound reward in the Christian life.*

**Duration:** 55:34

**Scripture:** Psalm 126:6, Proverbs 11:25, Malachi 3:10, Matthew 6:33, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6, Galatians 6:9

**Topics:** "Rewards"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of giving and doing what is right. He encourages the congregation to selflessly give to others and live in a way that reflects the teachings of Jesus. The preacher shares a personal story about a softball game where he failed to provide food for his team, highlighting the consequences of not fulfilling one's responsibilities. He also mentions the need for discipline in today's society and how it is appreciated by some individuals. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the rewards of giving and doing what is right, both in this life and in the eyes of God.

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## Transcript

Last Sunday night, on what the Christian can lose, in that message I brought out the fact that the Christian can lose his reward. It is a Bible truth that God will someday reward his people for their faithfulness, for their service, for their suffering, for their soul winning, and for loving the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. People oftentimes ask me this question, I guess it's one of the most oft-questioned questions they ask me, Pastor, are there differences of rewards in heaven? Will some enjoy heaven more than others? Oh yes, yes, yes they will.

Some would enjoy heaven. The question comes then, Pastor, will some suffer more in hell than others? Oh yes, the answer to that is also yes. You've heard me say this, I'm sure.

It is erroneous, however, for one to say, well, God bless our dear brother, he's gone to his reward. No, nobody gets his reward yet. Reward will not be given until the judgment seat of Christ.

Now why is that? All right, let's take someone like Dwight Moody. Dwight Moody has gone to heaven, no doubt about that, but he's not yet gotten his reward. He's gotten the gift of eternal life.

He has a home in heaven, but he has not yet received his reward. Now you see, there's a grave danger about saying, here's a fellow who's saved, he's gone to his reward. No, reward implies works.

You get a reward for doing something yourself. You go to heaven because of the grace of God. A person dies and goes to heaven doesn't get heaven as reward.

He gets heaven as a gift of God. Now reward is something for which you work. It's something that you must earn.

Now when a person dies, he goes to heaven and receives God's gift given by grace. But out yonder someday, we're going to stand before Jesus Christ and the book shall be opened and we shall be given reward for what we've done for God. Now let's go back to Mr. Moody.

Mr. Moody died, anybody know when Mr. Moody died? 1899. All right, Mr. Moody died 1899. Well, is he still earning rewards? Oh yes, I read a sermon by Mr. Moody just the other day.

Mr. Moody is still winning souls. His sermons and those that he's won to Christ, that have won others to Christ, that have won others to Christ. And so Mr. Moody's work still is on.

There's no way in the world for yet to determine how many rewards Mr. Moody ought to get. Now when the rapture takes place and this age is over, then Mr. Moody's work will be finished and he'll know exactly what his reward will be. Consequently, there are no rewards passed out in heaven yet and they will not be passed out unto the judgment seat of Christ.

However, in spite of the fact that I do believe there will be rewards when we stand before God and some will receive more rewards than others and some will enjoy heaven more than others, there are some things that in themselves are their own reward. Now what am I saying? Let's take the matter, for example, of giving to God. The matter of giving.

Giving is a reward in itself. Somebody says, well, I've given a lot to God and God's going to reward me for it. Yes, but if God does not give you one dime more than you had before, you still have been rewarded by the joy of giving and sharing in God's program and in God's work.

Giving is, has in itself, its own reward. Now let's understand me. When you give to God, you will receive later on.

For example, Matthew 6, 33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things. What things? Food, clothing, raiment, shelter, protection.

They'll be provided. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added. That means one on top of the other shall be added unto you.

It is true that give and it shall be given you. Good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over shall men give unto your bosom. It is true that God will give that way.

Now what does that mean? Good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over. Well, anybody that's got a garbage can knows what that means. Exactly what that means.

Take the garbage out and the first, let's say the garbage man comes. When does the garbage man come where you live? John, when does he come? What night does Elaine take out the garbage? That's what I'm asking. On Wednesday night? Wednesday morning.

Put the garbage out Tuesday night. And what other day? Friday night, he comes on Saturday. All right, after Elaine puts out the garbage on Friday night, when it's gotten, now then, all day Saturday, they just take the garbage and throw it in.

Why? There's plenty of room in the can for the garbage on Saturday. But on Sunday, what do they do? They have to press it down a little bit. And so Brother John goes out and he sticks his hand and pushes the garbage down.

Then on Monday, what does he have to do? Has to shake it a little bit. On Tuesday, what does he do? He gets up inside the garbage can, jumps up and down. Anybody that's ever had a garbage can has done that.

And jumps up and down on the garbage. Now that's the way God does. If a person gives to God and gives to others, God will give it to him.

Press down, shake them together, running over. That's the way God gives. But let's suppose that were not true, it is still reward in itself, just to give to God.

I believe in Malachi 3.10, bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, says the Lord of hosts. And prove me now, herewith says the Lord of hosts, if I will not pour you out a blessing, open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there should not be room enough to receive it. I believe that.

But if God did not pour a blessing out, and if God did not give us, should men give to our bosom, pressed down and shaken together and running over. And if God did not supply more than we gave, it is still reward enough for you. You know, I was thinking, in fact the man sat in my office this week, and he said, Pastor, the biggest thing you taught me in these years, the thing that you've helped me the most with, and the thing you've given me the most joy from, is you've taught me how to give.

You've taught me how to give. Ladies and gentlemen, if you've never learned to give, I don't mean give a little bit, I don't mean give some of it. If you've never learned to give at all, you've missed the greatest blessing in the Christian life.

There's nothing like it in all the world. Nobody to say amen, you preach on this. But, not much, I hope many folks left, but you've never learned to live the Christian life until you've learned to give.

Now, again may I say, God will reward you. God will reward you materially. But if he doesn't, I think we stress sometimes too much, extravagantly, that it matters that God gives us things because we give to him.

You ought to tithe a few stars. You ought to give to God if you never have another dime. You ought to give to God if you're going to make it.

Some of you do during the week in the summertime. You ought to give to God if you have to eat grits. In fact, that's pretty good eating.

You ought to give, amen, here's a boy that knows grit. You hear about the southern fellow who moved up north and looked out in the first snow and said, praise the Lord, grits are everywhere. And so, but anyway, you ought to give to God.

Why should you give to God? Because God says to give. I get a little weary of people saying, you think God will do something for me if I give? Yes, he will. But if God doesn't do it, you're still supposed to give to God.

Now, I know as much as anybody what God will do. Many of you have heard me say this. I haven't bought myself a stitch of clothes in the last 13 years.

I gave last Easter, last Easter, a fellow in our church, great big guy, great big fellow. He's a little, I never had seen him with a new suit on. And I called my clothing store and I said, look, I'm sending a fellow down, give him an Easter outfit, buy him some shoes, buy him a coat and trousers and a shirt and a tie and just charge it to me and I'll pay for it.

And that's not, I'm not saying I give more than you do, but that's not the only time last year or it's not the only time that month I gave somebody a new suit of clothes, but that particular time. Well, I was in a certain town in the South, preaching a little while later, and I was out jogging one day. And one afternoon I ran and ran and it was hot.

It was almost 100 degrees. And boy, I got a little weary. And oh, I've jogged, oh, 25 feet or so.

And, but I got a little weary. And so I, I came to a shopping center, didn't know it was there, came to a shopping center. And I thought, well, it's one of these mall kind and air-conditioned.

And so I thought, well, I'll go in and just cool off. And so I went in and I walked around the mall and I saw a department store. I walked down to the department store and did a little window shopping.

I bought, oh, three or four windows, I think. And, and, and so I came to the men's department and a fellow said, may I help you please? No, they didn't have a customer one, not a single customer. And I said, yes, just wanted to browse around a bit.

Just, just let me browse around. He said, what size did you wear? I said, 42 long. Did you get that? 42 long.

And, but anyway, he said, well, he said, hey, I like this one. And it was a beautiful sport coat. I liked it.

And he said, may I wrap it up? I said, no, you wrap it up. But I don't want it. I said, I didn't buy a coat.

Well, do you like it? Yeah, I like it. But don't want it. I don't, I don't want it.

Carry it home. I got more luggage than I can carry now. I don't want to check my luggage, and I don't have the money, and I just don't need a sport coat.

He said, well, looks good on you. And he hung it back up. I was away.

That's all happened. That night I went to church. Now, bear in mind, I just bought a fella just a few days before a complete new Easter outfit.

That night I went to church. Lady walked up and said, this is for you. I said, what is it? It was that sport coat.

I said, well, I didn't want it. Couldn't afford it. She said, some fella saw you tried on, and you've been a blessing to him, and he asked the salesman if you liked it.

And he said, yes, he bought it for you, and he sent it by me tonight. That's that black and white sport coat. I look so handsome in it.

Maybe you've noticed that. Now, I know, I know what God will do. God will take care of you if you'll take care of Him.

A few weeks ago, I was in Greensboro, North Carolina. I just bought somebody in this church an overcoat. Just had, just had.

And I was in Greensboro, North Carolina. One, on Tuesday night, no, on Monday night, a lady came up to me, and she said, I want to give you something to read. She gave me an envelope about that long.

And I opened it up, little note about that big inside the envelope. And it said to Dr. Himes, you don't know this perhaps, but thirteen years ago, you absolutely saved my life. You spent most of one night with me trying to help me.

And you really saved my life. You did more for me than anybody's ever done. I'd forgotten and still don't remember it.

And the fellow said, I'm out of town on a trip, but I'm leaving this note with my wife, and you must go down to Bell's Department Store and buy you a new suit of clothes. I wore that suit last Sunday. I bought a fellow overcoat.

God gave me a suit with him, just in a matter of a few days. Not long ago, I saw a fellow, and he had a sport coat on. It didn't fit him.

It sort of, well, it looked like fist looks all the time, you know. And so it didn't fit him. And I said, man, a sport coat, where'd you get a sport coat? He said, I, he handed me down.

He said, I never own one of my own. And I said, you're going to. I went down and bought him a sport coat.

Now, listen to me. I bought him a sport coat within seven days. Last week now, I was in Greenville, South Carolina.

A fellow walked out of the service, and I said, you look sharp. That's a pretty sport coat. An orange sport coat.

Orange. Solid orange. I said, that's a pretty sport coat.

And he said, thank you. He walked away. Five minutes later, he came back, and he said, you have changed my life with your preaching.

And he said, I've wanted to do something for you all of my life. He said, tonight, I surrender my life to quit my business and go in the ministry full time. He said, would you take this coat? And I said, man, I feel bad about that.

And I, I feel bad about that. And he said, now, come on. He said, I want you to have it.

I said, now, look, I've got more sport coats than you've got. I've probably got twice as many sport coats as you've got. And that looks good on you.

He had a shirt to match it. He had a tie, a whole outfit. And I said, no, I said, I don't want it.

He said, I want you to have it. He began to cry. Well, I said, don't cry.

I said, I'll take it. And he started to walk off. I said, hey, I like your trousers, too.

But he didn't feel led to go that far. And anyway, now, what am I saying? I'm saying, you will never be able to outgive God. Now, you just won't.

Listen, if you give a little, you'll get a little. If you give up much, you'll get much. Give it all.

He'll give it all to you. The Bible is still true. He that seek, lose of his life, shall lose it.

But he that lose of his life, for my sake, shall find it. Now, I purposely did what I did about the offering, about the loan, before the sermon tonight, because I don't want you to think I'm trying to use the sermon to do it. But I'm simply saying, giving is its own reward.

The greatest blessing about giving. Listen, Hiles-Anderson College, a young lady came from New Jersey to Hiles-Anderson College. She thought she could work off-campus.

We don't allow the girls to work off-campus because we want to keep them safe. And they can work either in First Baptist Church or have to work on-campus. And she came all the way from New Jersey, thought she could find a job off-campus, and we would rule for that.

And so, she thought she had to go back home. The students of Hiles-Anderson College found out about it. And they're working their way through school.

Many of them, many of them don't have hardly enough to take care of their own bills. But they got together, and they took an offering, and they paid that girl's tuition. And it wasn't long until somebody else had to drop out of school.

And the students found out about it. A girl from Canada, all the way from Canada, down in college, the students found out about it. And they took an offering and kept her in college.

Now, ask you a question. You think they're going to have to wait until they get to heaven to get the reward? Huh? Not at all. They've begun to learn something about what it is when a person learns that giving is its own reward.

You know what? Listen to me. God is looking for people with whom He can trust His money. Suppose, Dr. Gooding, that I wanted to use, I was going to take care of all these people.

I'd say, OK, folks, all of you, I'll take care of you. Let's suppose I were Lamar Hunt, or H. L. Hunt, or Clint Murchison, or what's the fellow in Chicago? Simmons Stone, or somebody. And like that.

And I said, OK, folks, I'm going to take care of all of you, but I've got to travel a lot. Now, I want to find somebody who will disperse all this for me. And so I said, Mr. Billings, would you disperse it all? And Mr. Billings said, yeah, boy, I sure will.

And so I give him... Hey, hey, hello. Anybody home up there? Won't work? OK. I'll have to use somebody else besides Billings.

Mr. Billings, I want you to be in charge while I'm out of town to take care of all these people. And here's the money. And so I come back next Wednesday.

I've been out of town a couple of days. And I say, hey, Paul, did you get fed? Paul said, no, I haven't eaten since Sunday. I say, hey, young folks over here talking, did you get your money? And they said, no, I haven't gotten my money since Sunday.

Hey, young girl, listen to me while I'm preaching. I just gave a good, solid, good, hard hint. Sit up, sit up, young lady.

Look at me. Don't you dare smirk like that when I... Look at me. And you keep on looking at me.

The very idea of acting like heathen. Somebody calls you down, then you act like you've been insulted. Sometimes some of you young folks learn that when you go to church, you ought to behave yourself.

Somebody told me last week they found candy bar wrappers of eaten candy bars over here in this section. If I find who does it, I'm going to give you a candy bar right in the puss, melted. I say again, by the way, you adults don't like that kind of preacher.

You can lump it too, by the way. You just take it the best way you can. This is one place where kids are going to sit up and listen or they're going to get... They're going to be disciplined.

In this age where nobody disciplined... I got a letter last week. A family said, we're going to join your church. And for one reason, that is because there's old-fashioned discipline left in your church.

And so, by the way, if any of you members of the First Baptist don't like that, any of you deacons don't like that, tell you what to do. Sit down and write yourself a long letter and complain about it. But now I'm simply saying that the reward... You know, the privilege of saying, Doc, take the money.

I come back and I say, did you get yours? No. Did you get yours? No. Did you get yours? No.

Did you get yours? No. Hey, where'd you do that money, Doc? I gave it to you to give them. And Doc says, well, I'll tell you what, I had some bills and I hope you paid some of the college bills with them.

But I had some bills and also I got to stay a little for a rainy day for myself. And I said, Doc, that wasn't your money. How many of you think that Dr. Billings has a right to keep the money I gave him to take care of my people with? How many think he has a right to keep it? You know what I'd do? I'd say, buddy, you'll not get my money anymore and I won't use you to be a blessing to these people that I'm going to feed and you'll not be a co-laborer with me anymore.

Mr. Perky, you come here, man. Mr. Perky, my job is to feed all these people. My name is Clint Murchison, H. L. Hunt, Lamar Hunt.

What's the other guy's name? Clement Stone. And I feed all these people. And I want you to take the money and I want you to feed all these people.

Got it? Okay, fine. All right. I'm going to go out of town.

I'll be gone a couple of days. I'll come back in Wednesday. Did you get your food? No, you didn't get your food.

Did you get your food? Did you get your food? Did you get yours? Hey, where's did that money? I need it for some things. You need it for your mission. Did I? I did what? You're going to be eating up there regularly if you don't.

Did you get, did you, I told you to take care of all these people. Did you take care of them? Well, that wasn't your money. That was my money.

I gave it to you to use to be a blessing to other people. Now, now, you kept it for yourself, you wicked and slothful servant. Come here.

This, come here. I feed these people out here. I feed these people and I'm going to be gone a couple of days.

I want to give you some money to feed these people with. Okay. And I come back.

Did you get yours? Didn't get yours. Did you get yours? You didn't get yours. Did you get yours? What'd you do with the money? Well, I was afraid you might come back and ask me for it and I wouldn't have it.

That's not your money. That's my money. I told you to feed the people with it.

It's not yours. How many think you have the right to spend my money? All right. Thank you.

Let me ask you a question. Where'd you get your money? Well, sir, I worked hard for it. Oh, I see.

Where did you get the energy? Well, I ate good. I see. Who gave you the food? Well, I worked for it.

Who gave you the air you breathe? You listen to me and you hear me well. Every dime you've got in your pocket is God's money. Every dollar you've got in the bank is God's money.

You have no more right to take God's money and hoard God's money than he has a right to take my money and hoard my money. So I say, I'm sorry I can't use you fellas. Mr. Hilton, come here.

Now, this is one of the good guys. He's so big I'm scared of him. Mr. Hilton, I want to feed all these people.

Feed them all. It's my job to feed them all. And while I'm gone a couple of days, I want you to feed them.

Okay. All right. Now, I'm going to go and go start feeding here.

I'm gone. Okay, I'll come back. Did you get yours? Oh, you did.

Did you get yours? Did you get yours? Okay. Now, guess what I'm going to do? Huh? I'm going to give him a raise and pay wherever he works. I'm going to give him some more.

Come back here. Now, let me ask you a question. Who do you think I want to give the most money? Hilton or Billings or Fisk or Perky? You tell me.

Hilton. Sure. So, Hilton, I want to give you some more, buddy.

You think? What are you going to do with it? Good. Amen. I'll just keep giving to you.

Boy, I mean, pressed down and shaken together and running over. I'm going to keep giving you because that's what it's all about. I'm supposed to feed my people.

Thank you. And that's what God does. God comes down.

Did you know, did you know, honestly, I have made myself, the other day I sat down and figured, I have made myself in the 27 years I've been preaching, I mean, money that is mine, I could have kept, I could have had, and it was legally mine, I earned it, I made it. I could have made myself over \$2 million in the last 27 years. I mean, I made that.

I, I mean, that's, I don't mean that my churches took that much offering. I mean, that's money that was made out to Jack, Hiles, and legally I could have gotten it and I wouldn't have stolen a penny. It was my money.

How much of it do you have now? I don't have any of it now. You know why? Because it wasn't given for me to hoard. It was given for me to pass out.

You see, when I think about how much I had and gave away, I want to pass out too sometime. But, it was gift, God gift. So what about it? God said, I'm looking for somebody I can trust, and if God can trust you, He'll give it to you.

Somebody said, I wish I had a million dollars, I'd sure pay all the college debts. You know, if God thought you'd do that, He'd give you a million? Huh? God knows you're a skinflint, that's why He keeps you poor. You know why? Because you won't give your ten dollars.

You think God's going to trust you with a million if He can't trust you with ten? I like what the little boy said, his dad went out bear hunting. His dad came back and his boy said, where you been dad? He said, been out bear hunting. Got a big bear.

Little boy said, I'll be glad when I grow up so I can go bear hunting. His dad said, there's some little bears out there too. Did you know you folks don't have a million, and give what you have? All of it? Give it? You say, what's going to happen? God is looking for people who will share with others what He gives.

Well, you say, who's going to take care of you when you get old? Well, I'm old now. My heavenly Father's going to take care of me when I get old. Heard Dr. John Rice, somebody said to Dr. Rice one day, we were sitting around a table.

Somebody said, Dr. Rice, how much money do you have? He said, I don't think I have any. Somebody said, Dr. Rice, your book on prayer could have made you over a quarter of a million dollars. That's right, one book he's got over a quarter of a million dollars.

How much of that do you have? He said, I don't have any of that either. Somebody said, well, Dr. Rice, how much insurance do you have on your family? He said, I don't have any insurance on my family at all. And somebody said, well, who's going to take care of you? He said, the heavenly Father's going to take care of me.

And somebody said, well, okay, that's okay for you, but how about your wife? She's supposed to live on your faith. He said, if I passed away, he said, before my funeral she'd marry some rich banker. He said, that's the kind of God I serve.

That's the kind of God I serve too. That's the kind of God you'd serve if you'd find out about it. That's the kind of God you'd serve if you'd realize that everything God... I don't care.

Look, have you got a right arm? God gave it to you to use for Him. Have you got a tongue? God gave it to you to use for Him. Have you got a leg? God gave it to you to use for Him.

Have you got a dollar? God gave it to you to use for Him. Everything I have is His. I have no right to use it for myself.

It belongs to Him. So you say, what's the reward? I tell you what the reward is. The reward is when I give to Him all I have, I become a fellow laborer, a co-laborer with Him.

He and I are in business together. I recall when Becky was just a little bit of tight. She'd say, I'd go down to the church.

I'd move some chairs from one building to another in a little church in Texas, and Becky would say, Dad, Dad, can I help her move chairs? And I'd say, sure. And she'd reach up and she'd get a chair and it should do okay, but the chair pulled her over and the chair would fall on top of her. She'd cry, well, I'm not going to, sweetheart, you go out in the car, or you sit down, now let Daddy... I won't move chairs, I want to help Daddy.

And so finally I'd get... I'd put my hand around hers and I'd lift the chair, and she'd lift it. And she'd brag the rest of the day, that I've been carrying chairs all day today. I know, I know, it's rewarding enough to stop.

I don't have much money, but I tell you what, all I've got belongs to Him. I drive down the street of Baptist City at night. You know what, you know what commercial I like, huh? I like that one, A Piece of the Rock.

That one, A Piece of the Rock. You know, this guy that's got a thousand dollar policy with Prudential, he walks in the building and says, clean it up here, fellas. Get to working a little harder there, sweetheart.

Let's pack that tire for a little better there. And who are you? I'm part owner of this place. I've got A Piece of the Rock.

You've got a lot of rocks right up here, but I like that. I like that. You see, if I only have a dollar ninety-eight and give it all to God, I've got A Piece of the Rock of Ages.

A Piece of the Rock, I'm a co-laborer with God. I can drive down the street at Baptist City and I can say, my money helped put that there, and those boys and girls, my money is helping clean those boys and girls. That's what I've given, what little I've done.

I want to be a partner with God, and because I've given, because I give, that is its own reward. You know, one of the most amazing things in all the Bible to me, and I've said it so often in this book, is the part of Scripture that says that Calvary was the glory of Jesus. Calvary was His glory.

Oh, how many times have you heard me say that if I had been our Lord, I'd have said my glory was that day when I was transfigured into my glorified body and my own followers saw me in my glorified glory. If I'd been Jesus, I'd have said my glory would be that day when I come in the clouds and call the dead in Christ to meet me in the air, and the living call up to meet me in the air. I'd have said that's my glory.

Or somebody would ask me if I'd been Jesus, what is your glory? I'd have said my glory is going to be that day when I come on a white horse dressed with a robe down to my feet, and the nations of this world shall see Him whom they've pierced, and I shall be crowned as King of kings and Lord of lords and shall ascend the royal stairway to Mount Zion and rule and reign the whole earth for a thousand years. I'd have said

that'll be my glory. Our Lord, when somebody asked Him what His glory was, He bypassed the transfiguration beauty.

He bypassed the glory of His coming in the clouds for His own. He bypassed the glory of His coronation day when Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does His successive journeys run. He bypassed the glory of the day when He shall be the darling of heaven and shall be the light of the heavenly city of the new Jerusalem.

And He said that Calvary was His glory. I wonder why. Because He gave it all.

He gave it all. You've never known what real reward is until you learn to give. There's something else I hasten to talk to you about, and that is something else that it's its own reward.

Giving has its reward all built in, but something else does too, and that is the doing of right. The doing of right. I've got this in my book, Blue Denim and Lace.

Right is its own reward. When I was a kid, as our folks have heard time and time again, I played softball. I was a semi-professional softball pitcher.

When I was in the paratroopers, I always pitched for the post team where I was. Though I wasn't the best pitcher in the world, I just never had met the other one that was better. But I love softball.

I love sports. I'm a sports fanatic. But one year, we were playing for the championship, I mean Texas championship, and the game was going to be on Sunday night.

I say this because I want young folks to hear it. The game was going to be on Sunday night, and I was the only pitcher we had. And so I wrestled.

I wrestled. The man who was manager of our team was a deacon in our church, and he said, now Jack, only one Sunday night will we ever have this championship game. You're the only pitcher we have.

I'm a deacon in the church. I know it, but I still think we ought to have the ball game. We can go to church 51 Sunday nights a year, but we can go to the ball game that one Sunday night.

It's the big championship game. And I felt I shouldn't go. I talked to mother about it.

She wouldn't tell me. She said, the decision's up to you, son. And so that night, I decided not to pitch in the ball game.

It meant more to me than anything in the whole world at that time. I mean it. I mean it.

I was only 18 years of age, and I was pitching with the big boys. I mean the big boys. Our team had no other pitcher that could pitch.

That night when I went to church instead of the ball game, the entire ball team was lined up out in front of the church with uniforms on, making fun of me and heckling me as I walked in. They cursed me as I walked up the steps to my church. Yeah, you traitor! You blankety-blank son of a blankety-blank traitor! Pitch for us all year and betray us in the championship game! And I walked in the church.

Years passed. Years passed. I was preaching at a church in a distant state.

When I finished preaching, a fellow walked up to me and took my hand and said, you don't know me, do you? And I said, no, I don't. He said, my name is Joe Young. I said, Joe, I think I know who you are.

He said, I was the second baseman on that ball team that cursed you that night. And he began to cry. And he said, Jack, he said, I cursed you as you walked in that door.

But he said, you walked in, I said, I wish I had what that man has. And he said, I went along, and somebody told me how to be saved. And I got what you had, and I got saved because of that night.

And he said, I'm chairman of the board of deacons in this church right here, right now. Oh, he said, that's a wonderful story! I'm glad you finally got your award! Now, you know, I got my reward. I got my reward, and I walked in church that night.

They began to sing. Jesus is the sweetest name I know. And I knew that I'd been pleasing to God, and I'd done right.

That's the reward. Far better than Joe Young being converted. Right is its own reward.

Fellas, at the naval base, everybody else drinks liquor, and you say, well, I'll just say no to liquor, and I'll say no to sin, and it'll turn out okay. If it doesn't turn out okay, you ought to say no to it. If you say no to liquor and somebody kills you.

You know, this thing about God protecting us in the fire furnace is highly exaggerated. You ever hear anybody say, you'll stand for God, God will take care of you? Look at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They stood for God, were put in a fire furnace.

They did not get their hair singed, even. God will do it! I'll tell you what you do. Talk to John the Baptist about that.

Get his testimony. John said, I stood for right and got my head chopped off. They served me at the king's table, my head in a platter.

John the Baptist stood up and stood for what was right, and they came off with his head and put his head in a platter and brought it before the wicked queen. I'm simply saying, this thing is far too exaggerated. But if you'll just serve God, he'll see you through college.

If he doesn't see you through college, you ought to serve God. But if you'll just give to God, God will take care of your needs and you'll get a raise. If you may not get a raise, you may lose your job.

But you ought to give to God if you lose your job. You ought to give to God because it's right to give to God. You ought to do right and stand for God because it's right to do right.

Thirteen years ago, we fought some awfully bloody battles in this church. Thirteen years ago, 406 people left this church. Thirteen years ago, they laughed at me and said, you'd have to mortgage the building and sell the building.

You won't get enough money to pay your debts. Thirteen years ago. Well, I believe we're going to make it.

I believe we're going to make it. We have ten times as many people as we had then. We have ten times as much offering as we had then.

And young people, you must say, people oftentimes say, I bet you feel good now that you've gotten your reward, don't you? I felt good and I went to sleep at night during the battle. Right is its own reward. Others say, you sleep as good as you used to sleep? Don't sleep any better? You see, if you do right, if you do right, the peace and the satisfaction of knowing you've done right is all the reward you really have to have.

You folks that cheat on test at school, you kids that copy somebody else's paper or write the questions on the palm of your hand, if you sweated like I did during test, it wouldn't stay on there very long, but you're on the palm of your hand or on the inside of your coat and you cheat. Why? To get a reward. The reward of not cheating is far greater than the reward of cheating.

I never did make, I didn't make bad grades or good grades. I made medium-sized grades, you know, F's and D's and average grades. No, I made pretty good grades, but they're all mine.

I could have made straight A's, but they're, my trouble was the fellow I copied off of was not as smart as I thought he was, but I could have made good grades, but I've got my grade cards at home in a drawer, still got my grade cards, and I can go open that drawer and look at them and I can say, well, some folks made better, but they're mine. They're mine. They belong to me.

Not a thousand times would I have a C that's mine and an A that belongs to somebody else. Right has its own reward. Right is right.

It turns out wrong. I'm simply saying, if you do right and you lose your job and go hungry and get beat up, it's still right to do right. Right is its own reward.

Have you ever done right when it cost you something and you knew that you were right and nobody else knew it? That's one reason why I sleep so well at night. Dr. Rice and I are always kidding each other. Wake up in the morning, I'll say, good morning, Dr. Rice.

I'll walk out and see him. I'll say, did you confess all your sins before your bed last night or did you toss and tumble all night? And he'll say, I confess most of them, enough to get a little sleep. And then he'll say to me, Dr. Howard, you're just as ornery as you were last night when you went to bed.

And we joke about it a great deal. But you know one reason I can go to sleep most anywhere? When I go to bed on Sunday night, I can say, dear Lord, I was faithful to what I think was right. I was faithful to what I think was right.

I've been, I walked into this study over here 13 years ago, night after night, and just took the line of people that came to eat me out on our together. Go home and answer the phone. Somebody would say, we'll kill you before morning.

I mean that. I mean that. Nobody that was in the church here.

I mean, it's people that heard about it and so forth. But we'll kill you before morning. And I can go off to sleep.

I go off to sleep. The other night, it's been quite a while, several months ago now, we had a little problem here at the church. One of our men got beat up.

And so the deacons got worried about me and I got worried about me. And anyway, we thought about it a while. And I went home that night and I said, now I better stay up and be sure everything is, you know,

okay.

And I said, I'm going to just lie down here for a while and I'm just going to think of what I can do now to be sure and protect myself through the night. And I went off to sleep. Went off to sleep.

You know why? Because there's a certain peace about doing right that nobody, nothing else in the world can ever give you. Popularity doesn't compare to the peace of doing right, kids. Just do right.

Just do right. I was down in Greenville, South Carolina. Guess who met me at the airport? Mike Green.

Who's Mike Green? Assistant pastor of the big church down there. What's so hot? He's one of my preacher boys. I was his pastor in Texas.

Mike Green was a handsome fella. Played end on the high school football team. Tremendous foot athlete.

And a good looking guy. I mean, he's the kind of guy that looks like I always wish I'd look. And, uh, he's the kind of guy that everybody always wishes I'd look like.

But, uh, I, uh, handsome guy. One day he called me from the school and said, pastor, I've got the lead part in the senior play this year. Well, I said, that's fine.

He called me the next day and he said, pastor, I found out they're going to use the profits for the senior play to pay for the, for the senior prom, junior senior prom, the dance. He said, uh, and so finally they said they wouldn't do it. And they got two days before the senior play.

And finally the teacher said, we're going to put all the profits for the senior, junior, senior prom. And Mike said, then I don't perform in the senior play. Well, the teacher said, you will.

He said, I won't. No, man, I won't. Why? I'm not going to perform to finance the dance.

Well, the teacher said, you won't perform. He said, well, it all depends on what my pastor says about that. She said, what do you mean? He said, my pastor told me to call him if I needed him.

He called me on the phone. I went up to the school, broke a few vases and threw some rocks through a few windows and, and so forth. And, uh, and, uh, I saw that teacher, I saw that teacher get some, that should have killed him.

He should have had a weapon, I believe. Well, she said tomorrow night is the senior play. And you're in the lead part.

You're out traded all. It's good. Mike, what do you think, preacher? I said, Mike, just do right.

She said, keep out of this. I said, I didn't. So she'd get over there to Mike and she'd say, Mike, what are you, what are you, what are you? I'd be behind her.

I'd say, she'd turn around and look and I'd go. He didn't play in the senior play, but he slept okay. You know why? Because they did what's right.

They did what's right. Common Hearts Field. One of our boys.

Catcher on the baseball team. Center on the football team. Tremendous fella.

Handsome guy. He was elected president of the senior class at Garland High School. Time came to plan the juniors, the, uh, sweet, the sweetheart dance.

The senior class sweetheart dance. And he had to preside. And they had one hour to plan it and that's all.

So he testified the entire hour of what Jesus meant to him. Used up all the time. They didn't have time to plan the dance and called it off.

And we cried about that at our church so long. You say, what's wrong with dancing? Oh, come off that kind of garbage. You know better than that.

And, uh, so, uh, oh, well, when Carmen graduated, uh, at the commencement exercises, he was, bear in mind, most popular boy in the class. Got elected president of the senior class. He was elected most popular boy in the school, except no longer was he popular.

High school football star, baseball star. So they, they called Bobby Boyd, who played the Baltimore, uh, uh, Colts for years as a, as a defensive halfback was on the football team. And they called Bobby Boyd.

He came and got his diploma. Everybody went. They called off all the folks.

Everybody clapped. They called off Carmen Hartsfield. Had been the most popular boy.

Now the whole school hates him. And nobody clapped. And just out of impulse, I just jumped up.

They went, yay! And Carmen came after us over, said, preachers rather have that than all the rest of the crowd clap and put together. Why? Right is its own reward. Kids, do right.

Do what's the right thing to do? Well, you're still in the house. I did right and flunk. Okay.

But you'll have something on the inside. Be a lot better than a passing grade. You did wrong.

Do right. Do what's right. Giving is its own reward.

Right is its own reward. And let me say quickly, service is its own reward. Now God does give you rewards for service.

Psalms 126, six, he did go forth with it. Very precious seed will doubtless come again or shall doubtless come again with the jostling bringing his sheaves with him. But even if you don't get rewards for service, it's still its own reward.

Time and time again, I preach something hard and mean and nobody really quite understood. And I've gone to my study alone, gotten on my knees and had the sweetest peace of life because being faithful to God in service is its own reward. People sometimes say to the house, you act like you want to save America.

I'm trying to save America. Well, you can't save America by yourself. I may not can save America by myself, but I can try by myself.

Like the lady in the civil war, when the, when the Yankees came down to her Southern farm in Kentucky, her name was Merida. First name was Faye, something like that. And, uh, and, uh, Yankees came across her farm and she took off and here came all those blue, uh, uniform Yankees.

And she got her broom out of the kitchen. She took it out in the backyard, went on the farm and began to play that broom. Somebody said, where in the world are you going Faye? She said, I want to fight in my Yankees.

Somebody said, you can't win a war with a broom. She said, I may not can win a war, but I can show them who's side I'm on. And I can show them who's side I'm on.

And by the way, maybe we can save America. But if we can't, if we can't, it'll be its own reward. Faithfulness in service for God is its own reward.

I don't know what the future holds for this church. I hope, I think the future holds. Let's see, let me look in the future.

I see buses. I see switchblade knives. I see red books financially.

I see vineyard being run over by bus. I don't know what the future holds for this church. I believe God's going to bless us numerically and financially.

I believe that. But listen to me, if he doesn't, we'll just keep on preaching what we've always preached. I mean, if they come and say, close the doors.

They pass a resolution in Hammond, we can't go sewing anymore. You know what we're going to do? We're going to go sewing. We're going to go sewing.

If they say, okay, we'll lock you up in jail. I'll just send smoke signals out of the jail and say, don't forget the spring program. The people that bring the most get a free tour through my cell.

You know, I've been thinking today a little bit. I want to close now. I've been thinking a little bit today about life.

You know what it's all wrapped up in? It's all wrapped up in what emphasis you place on the two lives. That's all. Little Mrs. McCord, as Ewing sat down there beside you time and time again, bless her heart, she was a sweet lady.

She bothered the fire out of me. I'd be down, I'd be down there conducting the invitation and she'd pull me. I'd make a mistake and get close to her.

And she'd pull me over and start telling me all her troubles. Right there in the invitation. One day I asked her how she felt.

I'll never ask her that again. But she was a precious little lady. Really she was a very sweet little lady.

Now, you know, Mrs. Miller, Anna Miller was buried this last week. Our folks are passing off. We're not here for long.

Why can't we place the emphasis on the next world instead of on this world? This world's not my home. I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.

The angels beckoned me from heaven's golden shore and I can't feel at home in this world anymore. What does it matter? What does it matter? The lady said to me one time, she said, you could make a million dollars if you were in the business world. Well, what's that? I don't want a million dollars.

I just want to serve God. What else matters? But I mean, Mrs. McCord, does it matter how much she left? No, it doesn't matter. Does it matter, Mrs. Miller, how much she left? It doesn't matter.

And I got the numbering doc today. All the people in our church that have passed off the scene. Name is on this pulpit.

The other day, Mrs. Fields, I put on the watch Burleigh gave me. I put it on every time I get a little discouraged. And I'm not discouraged often, but if I'm getting a little battle, I put it on.

On the back side, it says keep on keeping on. Keep on keeping on. I thought about Burleigh.

I thought about him last night at Deacon's meeting when we announced the telephone bill for next year. If having hired telephone bills, and he always complained about the telephone bill. Always did.

Every time I had a Deacon's meeting, brought up the budget, he said, too much for the telephone bill. If turning over in his grave, if he turns over in his grave, every time the telephone bill goes up, they call him Whirlin' Burleigh. Whirlin' Burleigh.

I miss him. Mr. Dunsworth. I'll never forget him.

Never forget him. There are others, but all of us are going to go pretty soon. Little 15-year-old girl, Greg Dixon's daughter, cancer of the bone, cancer of the lung.

Not much chance to live at all. We're all going to go pretty soon. Aren't we just pretty well dumb to spend too much emphasis on this life? What else matters? What else matters but Jesus and his work.

I'm 46 years old. I'm past what are considered the best years of service. I don't mean for God, I mean in the world.

If I didn't have a job, and when I tried to find one, I probably couldn't get one at a steel mill or anywhere because I'm too old to get a job. Boy, that's a truth. I don't keep anything.

Honestly, that's true. Everything I have, folks give me, and I thank them for it, and I praise God for it. But I've gotten a place in my life where I just wonder what else really matters.

What else really matters? Which world are you serving tonight? Huh? Which world are you serving tonight? Well, you sit in the house, I got to take care of number one. No, who's number one? Huh? Well, I'm going to look out for number one. I am too.

I am too. We just have a different number one. He's number one.

He's number one. Well, I'm going to save for a rainy day. No, you don't mean that.

You mean you're going to save when you have a rainy day. If somebody else has a rainy day, they can just drown. You know what I save for a rainy day? If I see anybody has a rainy day, I'm going to see if I can't give them an umbrella or some boots or raincoat.

What else matters? What else matters except to serve Him. How long ago? I'll close again now. Not long ago, a boy in this church needed something, and I found out about it, and I didn't do much, but I took care of holding the kid.

He came to church the next Sunday. You never saw such a transformation in your life. Remember when you were a kid? Huh? And he said, I got new shoes.

Remember that? Little boy came back, and he all dressed up, and I'd given it to him. I looked at the little kid, and he hugged me and kissed me, and I said, boy, I'd rather have that than anything else I know. That's its own reward.

Giving, doing right, and serving. Let us pray. Every eye is closed.

Every head is bowed. Every eye is closed, and every head is bowed. Our Heavenly Father, teach our people to give everything.

Teach our people to do right. Teach our people to serve. Even if rewards do not come, help us to serve and give and do right.

Our heads are bowed, and our eyes are closed. May I ask you a question? Which world are you living for? I want to say tonight, Brother Hiles, as I look at my life, I'm afraid I'm living too much for this one. And God has spoken to my heart tonight.

I'm afraid I'm too this-worldly and not enough other-worldly. I'm afraid in many respects I'm living for this world. Would you lift your hand, please, for prayer? Would you, Vepi? Are there others who'd like to join us? God bless you.

Our Heavenly Father, teach our people to give. Teach our people to live right. Teach our people to serve.

Even if there are no seeming visible rewards, that we find in serving thee, in giving to others, and in doing right, its own reward. Now, our heads are bowed. Just a few moments, we're going to stand and sing.

If you need to come to the altar and talk to God, do a little business with God, you do it. I've told you some things tonight that could change your life completely, if you just learn to give. Just learn to give.

Just learn to give. Lord, let me live from day to day in such a self-forgetful way that even when I kneel to pray, my prayer shall be for others. Others, Lord, yes, others.

Let this my motto be, God, let me live for others, that I may live like thee. You need to come and take care of some business, you do it. For those tonight who need to trust Jesus as Savior, you come down the aisle and trust the Savior.

I'll meet you at the front. You need to get baptized, you come and I'll meet you at the front. If you want to join the church by transfer, I'll be glad to welcome you.

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