



The Sending of the Twelve in Matthew Pt 7: The Prophet's Reward

February 17, 2019

TEXT: MATTHEW 10:40-42

Matthew 10:40-42 (KJV) He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Matthew 10:41-42 (NLT) If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God, you will be given the same reward as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, you will be given a reward like theirs. 42 And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded."

QUICK CONTEXT REVIEW:

1. As we have said previously, our LORD sent the Twelve on a difficult and certainly a prophetic mission to Israel. (v6)
2. He gave them very specific instructions on where to go, who to go to, what to preach and do, what to take and not to take, etc. (vv8-13)
3. He also commanded them to expect persecution. He admonished them to stand strong, preach boldly without the fear of man, and depend upon the Holy Spirit who would help them during times of intense trial. (vv14-33)
4. From the LORD's instructions, it was clear that not everyone would "receive" the disciple's message of "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (v7) In fact, Jesus said:

Matthew 10:11-15 (KJV) And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

5. He also exhorted them in the love of God, and reminded them how precious they were. Indeed, "the very hairs" of their heads were all numbered. (v30)
6. He went on to encourage them to love God in a similar manner, even more than family, and even unto the "loss" of their earthly lives. (vv37-39)
7. Sadly, sometimes those closest to a disciple of Jesus will not receive the Gospel message, and conflict results. (vv34-36)

AN OBSERVATION ABOUT TODAY'S TEXT:

There seems to be a successive order in Jesus' exhortation:

- First, "The Twelve"
- Then, "A Prophet"

- Then, “A Righteous Man”
- Finally, “Little ones”

WHY IS THIS WORTH MENTIONING?

1. Because the list might be considered, as my friend Scott Brown said, “successive levels of authority,” from greatest to least.
2. For example, to reject the Disciples’ teaching is to reject most of the New Testament. As we will read below, our LORD said to reject Him is to reject the Father who sent Him. Prophets, or those who declare God’s word, come next. Then those, who by their righteous example, inspire us all unto righteousness and holiness, without which none can see the LORD. (Heb 12:14)
3. Since God is a God of order, by implication, He has called for order in the church, in both authority and practice. Scripture says:
 - *1 Corinthians 11:34 (KJV) And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*
 - *1 Corinthians 14:33 (KJV) For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*
 - *1 Corinthians 14:40 (KJV) Let all things be done decently and in order.*
 - *Colossians 2:4-5 (KJV) And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.*
4. Our sin however, pushes us towards disorder:
 - *1 Corinthians 3:1-6 (KJV) And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*
 - *1 Corinthians 11:18-19 (KJV) For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*
5. Order and propriety were big deals in the early church. Paul wrote:
 - *1 Timothy 3:15 (KJV) But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*
 - *2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 (KJV) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;*

6. Another observation is that our LORD promises REWARDS to those who embrace this! The word for “rewards” in Greek means “pay for service” (literally or figuratively) or “wages.”

THE PROPHET’S REWARD

As we approach today’s text, let us strive to answer a few questions that immediately jump out upon reading it, and use those questions as our outline:

1. What does it mean to “receive” in this context?
2. What does “in the name” mean?
3. What is “a prophet’s reward?”
4. What is “a righteous man’s reward?”
5. Who are the “little ones”?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “RECEIVE” IN THIS CONTEXT? (VV40-42)

1. There are two words used for receive here:
 - The word used to receive the person or the person’s ministry means “to accept” or “take upon one’s self;” “to embrace.”
 - The word used to receive the reward means “to take with the hand, lay hold of, any person or thing in order to use it,” or “to carry away without violence.”
2. It’s like Jesus is saying, *“If you truly embraced my disciples you embrace me and my Father who sent me. If you truly accept the prophets and the righteous men I send to you, the reward for such obedience is yours without undue effort.”*
3. *Receiving* in Matthew 10 is more than physical hospitality. Again from verse 14 we see that perhaps hospitality would be offered, but an embracing of the message would not.
4. Verse 40 is also very encouraging. When men reject the Gospel, the prophetic word, or the righteousness you preach (if you have done so in accordance with Scripture), it’s not personal. They are actually rejecting God...

Luke 10:16 (ESV) “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

WHAT DOES “IN THE NAME” MEAN? (V41)

1. Jesus qualifies “receiving” the prophet and the righteous man (and even the disciple v42) with the phrase “in the name.”
2. This whole issue of “in the name” is important to understand. Kingdom citizens are exhorted to:
 - Receive children in His Name (Matt 18:5)
 - Gather in His Name (Matt 18:20)
 - Call upon His Name (1 Cor 1:2)
 - Teach in His Name (Acts 5:28)
 - Engage in spiritual warfare in His Name (Mark 16:17; Acts 16:18)
 - Ask and believe in His Name (John 14:13, 15:16, 16:23)
 - Baptize in His Name (Acts 2:38)
 - Pray for healing in His Name (Acts 3:6, 3:16; Jam 5:14)

3. Thayer's Lexicon defines the phrase "in the name" thusly: *"The name is used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is aroused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering, the name, i.e. for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellences, deeds etc."*
4. In other words, to do or ask in someone's name is to do or ask consistent with who they are, who or what they represent, and in their personal authority.
5. This is why we've said in the past that to ask "in Jesus' Name" is not to insert one's own agenda into the prayer, but rather it is to ask for those things that align with His will. To say "in Jesus' name" is to invoke the King's authority. Care must be used!
6. In our text therefore, to receive a prophet "in the name" of a prophet is to recognize and submit to the authority of the words given him by God. To receive a righteous man properly is to do so in the same manner...to recognize that he is God-sent and lives in a God-centered way. (As we'll see, it's ultimately NOT about the man himself.)
7. This is all reasonably clear, but returns us to an age-old problem, one we've mentioned often: sinful man doesn't like authority or to submit to authority.
8. Again, the good news is rewards await the submitted! Blessings tend to follow the humble! Jesus promises rewards to those who would listen to, obey, and help His messengers.

WHAT IS "A PROPHET'S REWARD?" (V41)

1. I believe the rewards truest to biblical intent of prophetic ministry are the **fruits of a repentant and submitted heart**.
2. This isn't to be taken dogmatically, but it is inferred from the mission of the prophet throughout biblical history whose message was primarily one of repentance.
3. John the Baptist told the pharisees, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:" Matthew 3:8 (KJV)...or "Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God." Matthew 3:8 (NLT)
4. Scripture says,
 - *Psalms 51:17 (KJV) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
 - *Psalms 34:18 (KJV) The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*
 - *Isaiah 66:1-2 (KJV) Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? 2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*
5. When God sends "a prophetic word" and His people's hearts break and they repent and turn back to Him, many rewards may come! From humility and repentance spring forth healing and restoration!

2 Chronicles 7:13-15 (KJV) If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 15 Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

6. Sadly, the normal reaction to “the prophet” looks more like this:

Ezekiel 33:30-33 (KJV) Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. 31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. 32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. 33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

WHAT IS “A RIGHTEOUS MAN’S REWARD?” (V41)

1. I believe the consistent, biblical testimony concerning righteousness (the rewards) are things like ***perseverance, gladness, and nearness to God.***
2. Again, this assertion isn’t meant to be taken as the only way to view this reward, but is inferred from the many statements of Scripture based on God’s desire that His children be practically holy, and His promises concerning such.
3. The Bible declares:
 - *Psalms 34:15 (KJV) The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*
 - *Psalms 34:17 (KJV) The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*
 - *Psalms 37:17 (KJV) For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.*
 - *Psalms 37:39 (KJV) But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.*
 - *Psalms 24:3-5 (KJV) Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*
 - *Psalms 64:10 (KJV) The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*
 - *Psalms 92:12 (KJV) The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*
 - *Psalms 112:6 (KJV) Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*
 - *Psalms 140:13 (KJV) Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*
 - *Psalms 146:8 (KJV) The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:*
 - *Proverbs 10:25 (KJV) As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.*
 - *Proverbs 10:30 (KJV) The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.*
 - *1 Peter 3:12 (KJV) For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

WHO ARE THE “LITTLE ONES”? (v42)

1. In context, Jesus is having a private conversation with the Twelve (v1).
2. The *little ones* seem to be the actual messengers the LORD is talking about: the disciples, the prophet, and the righteous man. *These seem to be those.*
3. Certainly, a greater meaning might exist; little ones might refer to any who carry the LORD’s message faithfully, or even children (Matthew 18).
4. But exegetically, the LORD seems to be calling these “great” people “little ones.”
5. If so, this is wonderful. It is very healthy for the servants of Christ to realize they must remain as “little children” in humility and service.
 - *Matthew 18:4 (KJV) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*
 - *Matthew 20:28 (KJV) Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*
 - *Luke 22:25-26 (ESV) And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.*
 - *1 Peter 5:1-4 (ESV) So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

APPLICATIONS:

1. God is a God of loving order. Does your life reflect such? Are you a person who strives to be “in order?”
2. Have you truly “received” the Gospel message? What about the message of humility and contriteness? Or day to day holiness?
3. When you pray “in Jesus’ name” are you praying in a manner commensurate with His authority and will?
4. Does your life reflect the Prophet’s Reward (brokenness), and the Reward of the Righteous Man (perseverance and gladness in God’s Presence)?
5. To man, a passionate preacher (prophet) or righteous believer might be considered great. To Jesus, such a person is one of His *little ones*. Regardless of your achievements, learn to see yourself as God sees you. Walk in humility!

Amen!