

## **Introduction:**

As I was preparing this lesson I realized two things. First, that the previous two lessons I taught along with this one could have flying over them as a banner, “Mistakes Todd Mason has made in regards to being a Christian.” And secondly, that the first two messages were really leading up to this one. They have a common thread of describing what saving faith looks like. The first lesson titled “The Joy of the Lord. Our Worship and Our Strength” detailed how joy in God is not optional and how our joy in God even in the midst of trials is the highest form of worship. The second lesson I taught was titled “Justification empowers our Sanctification”. Here I explained how being Justified by the blood of Jesus is the main weapon we have in our fight for holiness. And how that getting justification and sanctification confused with each other are deadly. We are not accepted because we are good, we are good because we are accepted. Our walk in holiness is not the means of our salvation but the evidence. In this final lesson I want to talk about how saving faith must come to God for reward.

## **A quote to set the stage:**

All God’s gifts are loving only to the degree that they lead us to God himself. That is what God’s love is: his commitment to do everything necessary (most painfully the death of his only Son) to enthrall us with what is most deeply and durably satisfying—namely, himself. - **John Piper**

## **Key Text:**

### **Hebrews 11:6**

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he *rewards those who seek him*.

I want to talk about today what the **main** reward is and what it is not. Notice I say the “main reward” All the things I will list are wonderful rewards. I thank God for them all!

What the main reward is not.

It is not forgiveness of sins

It is not freedom from the power of sin

It is not escape from hell

It is not entrance into heaven

It is not freedom from sickness and disease

It is not about seeing our loved ones in Christ who have passed on before us

These are precious and wonderful, and there are 10,000 besides these that I have not listed.

Until the gospel events of Good Friday and Easter and the gospel promises of justification and eternal life lead you to behold and embrace God himself as your highest joy, you have not embraced the gospel of God – **John Piper**

## What does the Bible say about this?

### 1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might **bring us to God**

### John 17:3

And this *is eternal life*, that they *know you* the only true God, and *Jesus Christ* whom you have sent.

The clearest definition of what saving faith looks like.

### Psalm 27:4

One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
*to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD*  
and to inquire(meditate) in his temple.

### Psalm 42:1

As a deer pants for flowing streams,  
*so pants my soul for you, O God.*

Psalm 73:25-26

25 *Whom have I in heaven but you?*

And there is *nothing on earth that I desire besides you.*

26 My flesh and my heart may fail,

but God is the strength of my heart and *my portion forever.*

### Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he *rewards those who seek him.*

## **A illustration to make the point:**

The highest and best reward we should seek from God is God himself. Joy in Him, satisfaction in Him. To be passionately in love with Jesus Christ is what it means to have saving faith. Notice that faith has two parts. We must believe that he exists, but that is not enough. In James 2:19 it says the demons believe! We must do more than have a mental agreement with the facts of God's existence. We must have more than an theological grasp of the facts. Everything must lead as its final end to the love and delight in the person of Jesus. If any of God's gifts become the "main thing" we have become idolaters. We have used God as a means to an end. You don't have to be born again to want eternal life in Heaven, freedom from suffering and sickness and your own piece of "American dream". But you have to be born again to regard Christ as more valuable than anything else.

Picture this, you have just been given the most beautifully wrapped package you have ever seen. The wrapping is of the highest quality and color, the bow that ties everything together is perfect and made with the finest gold and encrusted with precious jewels. You are thinking, Wow! What a fabulous gift! You accept the gift and then go home and set it on a shelf and look at it. You invite friends and family over to view the beautifully wrapped gift. You thank God for the gift. The gift is your most valuable possession. But sadly, you never open the box. You confuse the wrapping for the gift itself.

Inside the box is the infinitely valuable Jesus.

Saving faith values everything God has to offer but not above God himself. Many would say "I would never do that!" But the question I would then ask is this. "Is what makes God seem most valuable to you what he does for you, eternal life in heaven, forgiveness of sins and freedom from sickness and pain, or who God is in the person of Jesus Christ?"

What will make heaven heavenly is God the Father, God the Spirit and God the Son. God has done everything that he has done or will ever do for us for this one thing. That we will marvel at his beauty and be ravished by His love. To be born again is to want this more than anything else.

### **Psalm 16:11**

You make known to me the *path of life*;  
in *your presence* there is fullness of joy;  
at *your right hand* are pleasures forevermore.

### **Psalm 43:4**

4Then I will go to the altar of God,  
to *God my exceeding joy*,  
and I will praise you with the lyre,  
O God, my God.

### **Matthew 10:37**

37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

## **Conclusion:**

I am not a perfectionist and I don't claim to have it all together, but this is my prayer for myself and everyone here today.

### **Philippians 3:13-15**

13 *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.* But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and *straining forward to what lies ahead*, 14 I press on toward the goal for the *prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.