

# SALVATION

## OVERVIEW

Salvation is made up of 3 important phases. The initial phase of salvation is the new birth. In theology this re-birth is called justification because God uses the Son's accomplishments on the cross to justify us from our sins and make us innocent as newborn sons.

The second phase of salvation is our walk after being re-born. This walk is called the sanctification process. This process lasts to the end of our temporal lives. In it God commands obedience to His Word in order for us to be like His First-Born Son, Jesus. Sanctification is a process in which we are learning to make our behavior match our personhoods—our personhoods (ontology) are perfect, and our behavior should match it. In other words, we are in training to do just as Jesus did—eliminate sinful behavior and do ministry.

The third phase of salvation is glorification. This is the event that takes place at the end of life. In this event, we each stand before God and give an accounting for what we did in our sanctification phase. In this Judgment Seat of Christ, Jesus will give us rewards or take them away for what we did during our lives after the re-birth. Jesus has mansions and rewards already stored up in heaven for us if we walk and minister in obedience to our assigned ways. In this works judgment, when we fulfill our assigned tasks, the rewards will be granted. When we do not fulfill our assigned tasks, the rewards will be withheld and given to someone else (Matthew 25).

Salvation has a lot in it. It is not just one facet. It must have all three facets to be complete. Now we will turn to a more detailed study of each of the three phases of salvation.

## JUSTIFICATION

Jesus, Who was perfectly sinless in His Person and Works, was executed while innocent. This payment for a debt that He did not owe was counted as payment for all the debts of humanity. It is offered to everyone as a free gift. Acceptance of this gift will go to anyone who believes that Jesus is God's Son Who died to buy it and was raised from the dead to eternal life and lives to offer to us His forgiveness of our sins.

What does justification mean? It is a righteousness that is:

1. Relational: You are put in right relationship with God.
2. Legal: You are legally innocent.
3. Ontological: You are a new creature.
4. Functional: You have a new purpose in life.
5. Declarative: Your righteousness is based on God's declaration that you are righteous.
6. Accepted via faith: You receive it only if you believe it.
7. It is perfect via imputation: The Lord's righteousness is given to you, and this gift makes you a perfectly righteous person.
8. It is growing in your behavior via experience: Your behavioral righteousness results in growing and learning to avoid sin and do more and more works of righteousness and of ministry.
9. It is given via forgiveness: Your sin guilt is taken away by God's forgiveness.

10. It is achieved via redemption: You are lifted up and enabled to walk anew via God's power.
11. It is followed by sanctification: After justification, God will use you more and more for His Glory via true discipleship (The three essentials for true discipleship are self-denial, taking up the cross of personal sacrifice, and following Jesus in ministry).
12. It is completed by glorification: Once justified, you will reach Glory. All justified Christians will go to heaven in spite of their works. However, their rewards or lack of rewards in heaven will depend on their achievements in their sanctification phase of salvation.

Concerning #7, perfect via imputation means that your righteousness is absolutely perfect. You have a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Why? Because you have the Lord's righteousness imputed to you. It is not an earned righteousness. It is a given righteousness. It is imputed to you; God puts it into you. It resides in your personhood. Jesus did the only works involved in providing this righteousness, and that is why they are perfect and why our forgiveness is perfect and able to make us absolutely righteous—righteous in our personhoods. Now our works need to become righteous, and that is the training we get in our sanctification phase of salvation.

Concerning #2, there is a debate in theological circles about the legal concept. At one time, before I studied this further, I thought that justification was totally declarative which is one of the items on this list. Declarative is when you appear before the Lord in your sins, guilty as all get out, and He says, "I forgive you of your sins and declare you innocent and righteous." That is a declarative position.

The legal position is one in which God's Law is fulfilled by the Lord, and His taking your place on the cross pays your penalty. The legal responsibility then has been fulfilled. If you just go to the declarative, you can diminish the work of the Lord by seeing that the Lord declared you innocent without paying the sin penalty. But that does not really take into account all that the Lord did, and so the legal part needs to be retained in this list, you see.

Concerning #3, ontological righteousness is an actual righteousness in your being (in your personhood). Justification actually affects your being. Your personhood is not only declared righteous but also **made** righteous. Justification results not from your meritorious works. It is up to you, however, to be willing to move on down the line of sanctification to the works part that comes after the event of justification. But concerning your personhood, i.e. your being, regeneration through justification makes you a new creature. Hopefully there will be a growing into maturity with works to match your new birth (or new ontology in theological lingo). You, the new creature, are to work out your salvation.<sup>1</sup> Some of us work it out. Some of us sleep the rest of the way by playing or pandering to our own fleshly lusts. These two types will be sorted out in the Judgment Seat of Christ in the glorification phase of salvation.

Justification is not dependent on our works, but sanctification is heavily dependent on our works. We must exclude works from justification because justification is by grace through faith with nothing added. It is not by works. It is totally a gift of God, and it is imputed to our persons. Once your personhood is changed, then your works will hopefully issue out of that change. God even does these works through us if we are but willing to yield ourselves to Him.

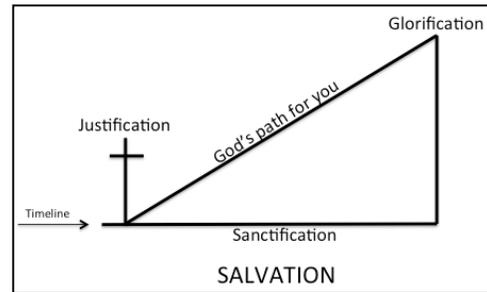
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<sup>1</sup> Philippians 2:12.

The works of sanctification are a gift from God too. We just provide the will. Then God does the work through us.

A new creature hopefully is going to behave like that new creature is supposed to. Some of us have developed very stiff necks, and our behavior does not follow right along with our new creaturehood. We have to tear down old habits and rebuild new ones, and some of us are too slow at that.

I said all that about justification in order to get started on this new model. Chart Salvation 1 is the model of salvation that has the past, the present, and the future emphasized. Justification is a vertical line (the cross on the left side that intersects the time line) in order to show that it is punctiliar and not a process. It is like walking through the door. You are lost on one side and saved on the other side. When the Spirit comes into you to make you a new creature, it is instantaneous, and then you are launched into a new life. Hopefully you are going to be launched upwards on God's path for you, as illustrated in Chart Salvation 1.<sup>2</sup>



**Chart Salvation 1**

## SANCTIFICATION

Salvation contains progression in its sanctification process which is in between the beginning event of justification and the ending phase of glorification. God does all the miracle part, and we provide our willingness. **Will** you hear, **will** you believe, **will** you receive, **will** you turn from sin, **will** you allow God to use you to bear fruit, **will** you deny yourself, **will** you take up your cross of self-sacrifice, **will** you follow Jesus and submit to His commands, **will** you cultivate your spiritual gifts and minister to the people? If you are willing, **God will** do it all through you.

Salvation is a gift by God through grace, not of works lest man should boast.<sup>3</sup> It is all by God, and you are the recipient, but you have to be **willing**. You can subvert God's plan just by being unwilling. You can skip any of the steps dealing with your will, stop too soon, or not even get the right start (see Chart Salvation 2).

Justification launches the newborn Christian on a pilgrimage, and the pilgrimage is the sanctification line (labeled God's Path for you). God lays this line out for you, and it is custom designed just for you. What God lays out for you takes into account what He has invested in you, where you were born, who your parents are, who your neighbors are, what country you were born in, what natural talents were born to you, and what spiritual gifts were given to you in your re-birth.

You are now supposed to maximize your impact for the kingdom of God. You stir your study of God's Word in with all that God has already given you, and then you can be a good steward, i.e. managing your life. You have only a little bit of life, so manage it to bring back the greatest return on God's investment in you. If you do not bring back that return, you are going to have some problems with God in the glorification phase of salvation.

<sup>2</sup> God's path for you is shown in this model as an upward climb. This upwardness is just to indicate difficulty. In the *kenosis*, this path is downward which indicates sacrifice. Sacrifice is very difficult.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 2:8-10.

The method of managing that return is to get on God's path and stay on it. But you have to die to self in order to get on His path because your natural self wants to get on your own path. Your path is a lot more fun. It has all the rewards during this lifetime instead of in heaven. Everyone who lives the *kenosis* will be celebrating in heaven. They will have their crowns and mansions. Those who live the upside-down *kenosis* will celebrate on earth, but will be naked in heaven. If you have any kind of fear like I have, you need to start figuring out how to at least get some clothes.

To get on God's path is very, very difficult, and Chart Salvation 1 really shows God's path as upward in order to convey the sense of difficulty. I think we can relate to that, but remember up is down for our flesh. The *kenosis* is a downward path.

But let us look at Mr. G's life on chart Salvation 4. He is wandering around below God's path for him while having a good time. His reward will be proportional to where he walked in relation to God's path for him.

Another guy may be called to sacrifice, like John the Baptist. John the Baptist did not have a home; he did not have any friends, did not have a family, did not have clothes, slept in the desert, ate locusts, bathed in the river, and then called people to repentance. When the day was over he went back into the desert. Where did he sleep? He did not have anything but animal skins, so he slept like an animal in the desert. The Lord said that not a greater man than John has ever been born of woman.<sup>4</sup> John the Baptist was a man that had died to himself.

We are also called to die to ourselves in the *kenosis*. The temptations drawing us away are all of the temporal joys of self-indulgence. When you yield to temporal desires, you drop down below the path that has been assigned to you. That lack of true discipleship will cost you in eternity. You had better enjoy the fruits of your endeavors here because you will not have those fruits for eternity. Are the pleasures for a

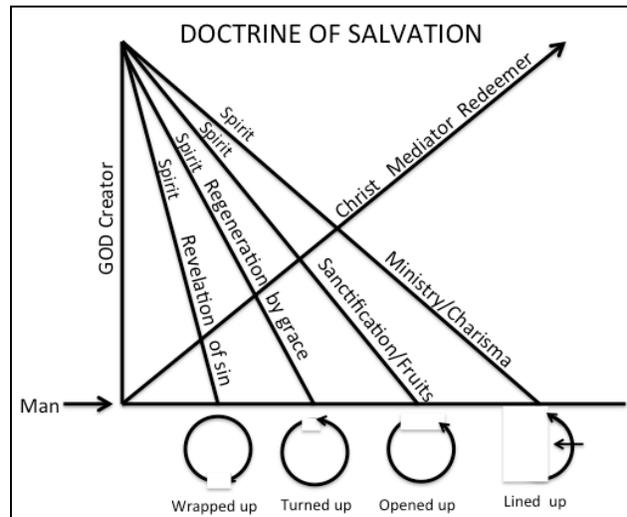


CHART SALVATION 2

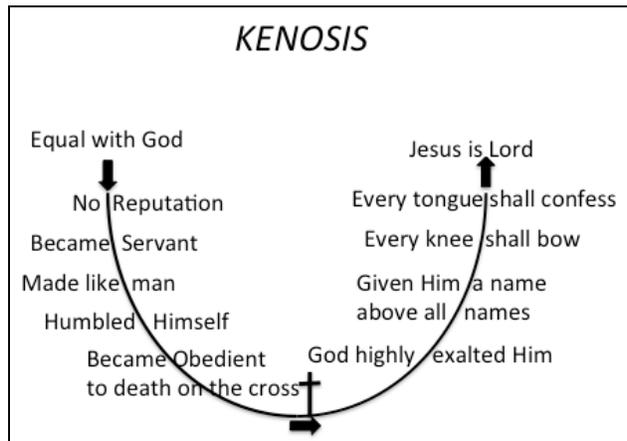


CHART SALVATION 3

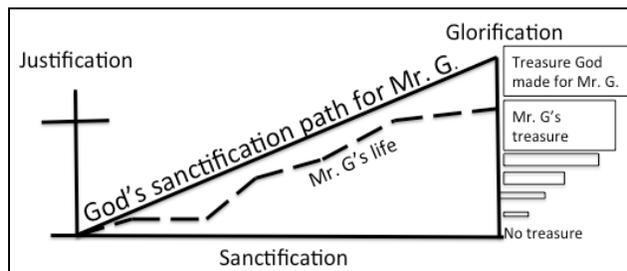


CHART SALVATION 4

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 11:11.

short window of time worth the price of an eternity of pleasure and rejoicing? Do not be fooled. Do not allow Satan to tempt you and deceive you into selling your eternity.

Many people in the church today are naive and all they think about or talk about is that God has made us some promises. They just see the divine side of this doctrine. They do not see what our responsibility is. They see, “In my Father’s house are many mansions, and I go prepare a place for you.”<sup>5</sup> He is talking about every Christian. The problem is that the Christians think that you can just do whatever you want, and you will get a mansion anyway. It does not work that way.

Most Christians live life for the now, and forget about eternity. They cannot see beyond the curtain of death. Every promise is considered as one of *temporal* blessing. Theirs is a temporal vision that is going to pervert their sanctification, and it is going to cost them for eternity. It is our job to warn them before it is too late. They are going to go to heaven, but when they get to heaven, they will get no rewards.

The mother of the sons of Zebedee went to the Suffering Servant Lord to ask Him to let her two sons sit on either side of Him in the Kingdom<sup>6</sup> is a good example of a temporal vision. The desire was for climbing up in the upside down *kenosis* to be enthroned in an earthly kingdom.

Your pilgrimage (God’s path) is designed to shape you into the image of Christ. Metamorphosis is the only way you can be shaped into the image of Christ, and it contains the necessity of walking the walk of Christ. You have to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Him.<sup>7</sup> He walks the *kenosis*, which is that downward sacrificial walk all the way to the death. You have to die to self, and you may end up dying physically like many of our forefathers had to do. You must follow the Lord in order to be changed into the image of the Lord.

What we tend to do is make a false deal in which we declare that we are being changed into the image of the Lord without the necessity of following Him. When we follow our own desires, the metamorphosis will not take place. You must do what He does, and it is always sacrificial. There can be no “me first” attitude.

The Lord declared that with the Gentiles, you have one who lords it over others, but it will not be like that for you. Instead, you are going to be the servant of all.<sup>8</sup> Your temporal realm is downward in serving others. You are to give your life in sacrificial service to the people of the world. If you do not do that, you are not going to be changed into the image of Christ. In other words, your sanctification will go off the rails.

The image of Christ is both ontological and behavioral. You are going to be changed into the image of Christ ontologically as a free gift. It is given to you by imputation in your new birth, and all this take place at the point of justification. Yes, justification is the *gift of absolutely perfect ontological righteousness*, but what you do with that gift is going to depend upon your will. You have to be willing to deny yourself and say, “Not my will, but thine, Lord.”<sup>9</sup> When you do that, you will be able to begin your sacrificial life by picking up your

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<sup>5</sup> John 14:2.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 20:20-21.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 16:24.

<sup>8</sup> Mark 9:35.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 22:42; John 5:30, 6:38.

cross, and following the Lord in ministering to others. Only then will you start changing into the image of Jesus Christ.

Not until you can weep with a broken heart because of seeing the hurting and deception of humanity, will your metamorphosis be in process. When you see your people in your church who do not know the truth and do not have ears to hear it, you will have agony. You are broken hearted when you go to bed at night. You get up in the morning and you struggle and weep, and you carry that weight with you, and when you have those kinds of tears, then you can reach up and touch those tears (and know that they are Jesus' tears). That is the only time you can know the suffering servant side of Jesus because you have to be able to touch His tears to know Him.

What we have done is cut off those agonies. All we want to do is rejoice, clap our hands with a hallelujah and say that, because of our liver quivers and goose bumps, we really know the Lord. We only know half. We have to know the whole Lord, the suffering Messiah, and we must walk in that pilgrimage. When we can do that, we can fully know the Lord, and when we know the Lord, we will begin to change and become just like Him. Our behavior will change.

Jesus Christ left heaven and descended. He went through the *kenosis* humbled, obedient, obedient unto death. He was despised and mocked. His earthly, temporal reign was a reign of dying. It was a reign of selflessness. It was a reign of not holding on to His kingly status. It was a reign in which He became sin when He knew no sin. That is the model for us, and the only way that we can get in that model is by following the Lord's will, not ours.

Sanctification will not work by trying to get on some other human's plan. You must get onto God's plan for you. Each of you has God's perfect will expressed in His path for you. You are not going to stroll through God's plan. It is going to wear you out. You are going to holler, "UNCLE," and you are going to say, "Nobody can do this!" And, you are right. Nobody but the Lord can do it, and you have to yield your will to Him in order to let it be done through you. God's path is extremely hard. When we get to heaven, there will not be any of us boasting in our accomplishments. You are going to be looking at the Lord saying, "My Lord did that!" Every success you had will be attributed to Him.

Here are some scriptures on being changed into the image of Jesus: Romans 8:28-30; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 14 and 15.

Let's look at John 15 for the requirement of obedience: "If a man loves me, he will keep my words. He who says that he loves me and keepeth not my sayings is lying."<sup>10</sup>

In this passage there is a progression from servanthood into friendship.

John

15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

You get saved, that is, you come through the gateway of justification. You are like a newborn babe. You do not know anything. You can go to church for twenty years and still be a baby in Christ. You need to know some things, but the problem is that you are going to be traditionally trained not to do the things that you know. You are going to be trained just to know

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<sup>10</sup> 1 John 2:4; John 14:21, 24.

things, and to know more and more things. But the job of the God-called teacher is to train our people to do what they know so that they may become servants. They are going to become servants out of simple obedience. The Lord is looking for that person who does not understand all of God's underlying reasons for the command, but who will still obey simply because the Lord said it.

Our first step in discipleship is a call to obedience in baptism, but if a person does not follow through with that obedience, the possibility to become a friend to Jesus is put in serious jeopardy.

Yes, there was true repentance if the person has been saved. However he is not going to progress into maturity unless he can do the simplest act of obedience, which is baptism, a passive obedience. A passive obedience means that you do not do the doing of it. You just allow it to be done to you. You do not go out and do the thing; you just fall back into the arms of the minister for him to do it, but it requires your will as does everything in Justification and sanctification.

The very next plateau in obedience is something like church attendance. Following that, perhaps, is reading the Bible, which may be followed by witnessing. Sanctification is a progressive kind of willing obedience. But a lot of this is going to be just plain old obedience until you get far enough along to hear the Lord say, "You are my friend. From this point on, I am going to show you My bigger plan." He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."<sup>11</sup> He reveals His plans to you, and now all of a sudden you can see all the way to the end. You can see the *kenosis*. You can see past the veil of death and that there is something great offered to you beyond all of this. Temporal rewards are nothing but lures to rob you of your eternity. But you cannot get the eternal rewards without obeying. Even when you do not understand why, you still obey simply because He commanded. Because of who He is, I am going to do it whether or not I understand why. When you prove that you are worthy of being called a friend, then He says, "Okay, I am going to tell you the plan because you are My friend."

It is extremely important for you to know that when you are on your path, you may not understand. There may be fog and all manner of obstructions and turmoil coming into your life. Just keep on putting one foot in front of the other because Jesus said so. That is all you have to do, and one of these days you will get to a point where He is going to say, "You are doing good. You are my friend. I am going to tell you where we are going." It is going to blow you away because you have been cut into the big plan. You have become a friend of the Lord.

## GLORIFICATION

Glorification is the end-time events that transition from temporal existence to eternal existence. We know the least about this term because it is beyond time. I am going to recite my own personal understanding here. It is only mine. You do not have to accept it as your own.

At glorification several things are going to happen. First our body will be resurrected and rejoined with our soul and spirit.<sup>12</sup> Second, we will be judged on the basis of our works.<sup>13</sup> Third, we will return with the Lord for the millennial reign followed by the Great White Throne

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<sup>11</sup> John 15:15.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:52-54.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 25:14-28.

Judgment in which the wicked dead will be resurrected to have their works judged.<sup>14</sup> Fourth, we will then enter eternity with our Lord.<sup>15</sup>

Now our status in heaven is going to depend upon our temporal works. Our getting into heaven is not based on our works in any way because heaven comes from our justification, which is by grace through faith, the gift of God. However, our temporal works, which occur in the period of sanctification, are very important. All heavenly rewards will be based on our works. God says that we are to lay up treasure in heaven.<sup>16</sup> We do so by our works.

Thus, I shall talk about the judgment seat of God where your works will be judged, and your rewards will be determined. This is a sermon to the saints about glorification. Many have tried to change this into a judgment of ontology or justification. Instead this sermon drives home the need for us to be “profitable” servants for Jesus.

Matthew

25:14 For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, [who] called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made [them] other five talents.

25:17 And likewise he that [had received] two, he also gained other two.

25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

Matthew

25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, [there] thou hast [that is] thine.

25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, [Thou] wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and [then] at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give [it] unto him which hath ten talents.

Ephesians 5:14-17 concerns redeeming the time, and that is what we are supposed to do in order to be profitable stewards.

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<sup>14</sup> Revelation 20:11-13.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 21.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 6:19-21.

Ephesians

5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord [is].

Note the progression in this Ephesians passage. Imagine a person lying down on a bed asleep. The first thing He says is, “Awake!” That person awakes, fully alert. This symbolizes the new birth. Then He says to this person, “Arise!” That person gets up out of the bed, and he is standing, ready to do something. He has obeyed the first two commands. He has awakened, and he has arisen. Then the Lord says, “Walk.” Now He is going to be working, moving out, and so awake, arise, and walk all the way to the end. You are now able to redeem the time.

However, you will not be redeeming the time if you walk the self-indulgent path during sanctification instead of God’s sacrificial path. Walk wisely. The wise kind of walk is that you walk circumspectly. That means looking at self. What are you doing? Are you doing the kind of ministry that your gifts are suited to, or are you trying to imitate some hero that you have seen somewhere else? Are you trying to do something that is not in God’s plan for you? Walk circumspectly.

Make your time count profitably for ministry. When they arrest you, use the occasion to preach. When a crisis breaks out in your setting, redeem it! Make some profit out of it. When you are driving and you get lost and you are asking a stranger for directions, redeem that encounter. When you are at a gas station buying gas, you ought to leave some Gospel tracts—redeem the time.

Then comes the wisdom and understanding of what the will of the Lord is. If you will simply obey, then the Lord will call you friends and reveal to you what His way is. That is the increased understanding part that comes last in the triangle of piety.<sup>17</sup>

Please understand that there could be a lack of understanding until you are well into your journey. He will say, “Now you have been faithful, let me show you what my plan is and how you fit into it.” But He is not going to do that unless you are actually proving that you are faithful and fitting into the little that He has commanded. If you do not fit into it because of faithless disobedience, do you know when you are going to discover it? Not until the glorification side of salvation!

Matthew 25 is also about using your gifts. These men were given their talents, and they used those talents to bring forth profit. 1 Timothy 4:14-16 refers to using your gifts.

1 Timothy

4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

God has given you at least one gift, and you need to know what it is and not neglect it. Do not just say, “Well, I do not understand all this stuff, so I am not going to fool with it.” That

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<sup>17</sup> The triangle of piety is a separate study.

is neglecting the gift. You need to “meditate on these things” as it says, and then throw yourself with reckless abandon into the use of that gift.

If you have been given the gift of evangelism, go out into the streets and share your gospel message with the lost and see what happens. You will be surprised. If you have been given the gift of mercy, reach out and minister and lift somebody up and help them. If you have been given the gift of teaching, get in there and start teaching Sunday school. You cannot use the excuse that you are scared or do not know how to do it. Do not do that. Throw yourself with reckless abandon into ministry (redeeming the time) and let God demonstrate His tremendous power through you.

So we have to redeem the time, and we have to use our gifts. If you can do that, you will bring forth profit. That is what the first two stewards did, the five-talent guy doubled his, and the two-talent guy doubled his. What did the one-talent guy do? He did not bring back any profit because he did not redeem the time nor did he use his gift. He buried his gift.

Verse 18 says, “He had received one and went and digged in the earth and hid his Lord’s money.” You need to notice that he did not lose his talent; he did not sully his Lord’s name. He did not do any of the “bad” things. This is supposedly a good man, and he saved and retained every bit that the Lord had given him. That original talent is what he brings back to his Lord. Profit is our only proof of servanthood to be judged.

Matthew

25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

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Please see the proportionality required of us. If you are told this is your path in life (see Chart Salvation 4 above), and you vary off of that, you are not going to be measured by the man on another line. You are going to be measured on how you did in regard to your own line because God does not want you to walk another man’s line. He wants you to walk your own line.

If you achieve your line, you will receive the same words as the man who achieved his much higher line. The principle of sanctification is proportionality because to whom much is given, much is required.<sup>18</sup> The first man was given much; he must turn in much at the end. If he does not, the second man will be his superior.

Let me tell you that there are some folks that are just like you who will be superior over all of us. They are not given much but they accomplish much. They are on their line. We had a nursery worker in a church in Georgia who touched the lives of hundreds of children including my own children. She did not know how to do much. She could not read or write and do all the fancy stuff. She was not a theologian, but she was there touching those children whenever it was

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 12:48.

time to be there. She ministered to those children, she helped them overcome their fears, she built character in them, and she built values in them. The people she touched still talk about her today even though she is dead and gone. When I was in that church, I watched that woman, and I watched the “high-rent” folks, and I began telling them, “You had better be nice to that lady. She is going to be your boss in heaven because she is on her line.” Proportionality means that you are measured by what the Lord has given you to do.

The person who produces no profit for Jesus during his sanctification does not earn praise from the Lord.

Matthew

25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:  
25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, [there] thou hast [that is] thine.

He brings back what he was given; he does not lose any of it. But he does not bring forth a profit.

Matthew

25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, [Thou] wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

His wickedness is the sin of omission. This passage is not talking about the sin of commission. The sin of commission means that he committed overt sins, and he would bring back less than was given to him. The sin of omission means that he did not commit overt sins. He just did not make his profit. He is clean. He did not go out and do all the bad things. He just failed to do those things he was commanded to do.

Slothful means he did not redeem the time. Redeeming the time is how you make your profit. He is wicked and slothful because he disobeyed through omission. The Lord said, “Thou knowest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strawed.”<sup>19</sup> Please understand that the Lord’s profits come from His servants’ work. The minimum profit should at least be some interest on investment.

Matthew

25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and [then] at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Usury is interest. If you are afraid or unwilling to go out and do the ministry the Lord has called you to do, the very least you can do is help another minister do what he is called to do. If you can do that, it will bring interest to your account. That is at least something to bring to the Lord, which is more than what you were given. Your profit may not be proportional to your gifts, and you may not get that “well done my good and faithful servant,” but you will not get this “wicked and slothful”<sup>20</sup> business either.

God is calling you, just like everybody else, to be right on your line. He is calling you to a *kenotic* pilgrimage that is costly to you but profitable to Him. Being unprofitable in your sanctification pilgrimage will cost you in heaven.

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew 25:24.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 25:26.

Matthew

25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give [it] unto him which hath ten talents.

25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Now watch this, the five-talent guy is standing there with ten talents. He started out with five, and he earned five more. He is standing there barely able to hold the ten he has, and he wants to give the ten talents back to the Lord. The Lord says, "You are a good servant." Then to the one-talent guy without any profit, the Lord says, "Take that one talent and give it to the ten-talent man." Now that ten-talent man is an eleven-talent man. The Lord may be taking talents from other bad stewards and giving them to the eleven-talent man, too. The good steward is going to have so many talents he will have to get wheelbarrows and pickup trucks just to carry them to his mansions. He is going to have talents all over the place. Every one of us will be judged on our stewardship.

Why did He give the misused talents to the one with ten talents? because much was risked on him. God took a risk and gave him five talents, and the steward came through for God. If He had only given him one talent, and he came through, there was little risk. But when He gives you a lot of talents, you had better come through. There is much risk here.

The Lord risked the universe on twelve men. One failed, but the others came through. Praise God! He is asking you to come through for Him, and if you will and you are given much, you are going to be loaded down with rewards, my friend. You will be staggered at the thought of receiving more when you are trying to give them all back to Him because you are swooning with your love and your praise of Him. You are saying, "I want to give them back to You to glorify You as an expression of my love and gratitude!" But He is saying, "You haven't seen anything yet. I am going to give you even more!"

But now here is this one-talent guy. . .

Matthew

25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give [it] unto him which hath ten talents.

25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

The one-talent guy is going to go through heaven with less than he had on earth! You had better start feeling some fear here because he ends up with zero. He had one all through his earthly pilgrimage, but now he has zero to go through eternity with. Not only that but. . .

Matthew

25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Most people want to make this verse into a salvation issue of heaven versus hell, but this is a judgment of a servant and his rewards in heaven. This expression is hyperbole, i.e. when you use an exaggeration in order to heighten the distinction. Hyperbole is like Luke 14:26 where the Lord says, "You have to hate your mother and your father if you are going to be worthy of me." That is hyperbole. That does not mean that you are really supposed to hate your mother and your father. But comparing your love for your parents with that for Jesus the former love would appear as hate. Hyperbole is a language device in order to heighten distinction.

Being in outer darkness and the gnashing of teeth and the weeping are all hyperbole. You are not going to be chatting with the Lord through eternity right at His right hand wherever He goes. There will be millions of people trying to get to Him. You are going to be on the outside just wishing you could get a glimpse of Him over all these tall people that you cannot see over. Hyperbole expresses your final condition as darkness compared to the brilliance of the light close to Jesus. You are going to gnash your teeth for the lost opportunities.

A time of anguish is coming. At the Great White Throne judgment, we are going to shed tears and gnash our teeth and feel the weakness in our knees. All of this is going to happen to you, my friend. Please know that what I am trying to do now is put enough fear into you that you are not going to be out there in the outer darkness trying to get up close. Instead I want you to have full rewards and be in the inner circle, and be able to talk to the Lord and the Apostle Paul and all the rest of the good stewards on a regular basis. That is what I want for you, and that is what I want you to want for your people.

There is another passage dealing with stewardship. It involves being saved through fire, 1 Corinthians 3:13 -15.

1 Corinthians

3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

This passage means that when you come out to glorification, your profits from your works are going to be tested. The Lord is going to strike a match (I am using analogical language here), put the fire to your profit, and it will go pffff. It will just flash like gunpowder. You will say, "Well, where did my profits go?" But you will be saved—singled, but saved and smelling like burnt hair. A lot of us will be like that.

Please see that your works may burn up, but you yourself will make it. You will be zero in heaven, but you will be there. If you go through the door of justification, you are going to get to heaven, but the trip there is in your hands, and what you end up with is in your control. It is under your will. Will you deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus? Will you launch out on the *kenotic* pilgrimage going downward and looking to rewards on the other side, not being diverted by rewards here?

Next we come to the law of the harvest: Galatians 6:7-9.

Galatians

6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

This passage means then that on the upward sanctification line (see Chart Salvation 4 above), you sow to the Spirit because it is the Spirit that is guiding your life. But if you walk below that line, you are sowing to the flesh. You are being diverted to the lust of the flesh. You are working for the temporal rewards, and you will receive corruption. The one doing nothing during sanctification comes out with zero; the one on God's path comes out with maximum rewards (See Chart Salvation 4 above). The Spirit enables you to reach the maximum. The flesh

holds you back. That is the law of the harvest. Do not force rewards into a temporal time frame. Always remember that laying up rewards in heaven means that the rewards come **after** this lifetime.

What Satan is going to try to do is get your eyes off of eternity and on to the now. He will try to get you to stop looking up at Jesus and start looking down at your circumstances like he did with Peter when Peter was walking on the water. If he can do that, he has you right where he wants you. Then you can be a normal Christian, have a nice career, a good job, all the status that you want, the luxuries of the flesh, and all the things that everybody thinks that a Christian is supposed to achieve. However, you will lose it all in eternity. What you have to do is sow to the Spirit and lose your life now. If you have life now, you will lose it. If you lose your life now, you will have it.

This lesson is difficult to learn but easy to forget. You will leave this foundation knowing its lesson down in your heart all the way to your toes, and tomorrow you will be right back in the old rat race. So preach it, teach it, and maybe you will become it. If you are willing to try, lift your hand up to Jesus right now and tell Him.