

Light Brings Salt

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Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God



Living in the Light of Eternity

Pastor John Griffith

One of the great motivations God gives us for endurance and ministry is the hope of the Savior's return, being in the presence of His glory, and rewards given at the JSC.

One of the most difficult challenges we have as we face the disappointments and trials of life is maintaining our focus. [motivation]

Our natural tendency is to look at life from a purely temporal perspective. This is the mentality of the world or the worldly whom the Bible often describes as an "earth dweller."

However, the Christian life is a life of faith. The author of Hebrews describes faith as "the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

And to endure and carry on in God's calling on our lives, we must live by faith and not by sight while staying focused on the Savior and eternal realities as He Himself did (**Heb. 12:1-3 and 2 Cor. 4:16-18**).

This is one of the reasons living in the Word is so essential because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Assemble for the right reasons.

Only through the lens of Scripture, dvpt, are we able to keep our eyes riveted on the fact of God's presence, His love and care for us, and His promises for our eternal future.

In 1 Ths. 2:17-18, Paul expressed his desire to be with these believers, but Satan had hindered that from taking place.

Further, he had been accused of not caring for these believers, because he had not returned but rather than looking back and giving in to regret, remorse, and depression, he looked ahead and rejoiced because, for believers in Christ, [old cliché] the best is yet to come. For UB today, now, is the best they will ever have.

So the Apostle looked ahead by faith and saw himself, his associates, and the Thessalonian believers in glory in the presence of Jesus Christ at His coming.

In times of trial and disappointment when our tendency is to allow the situation to overwhelm our perspective and defeat our commitment or create doubt and discouragement and complaints, we need to learn to take the long view of life.

We must learn to live in the present in the light of the future and allow that to govern our attitudes and actions.

Not only did the Apostle know that God was still on the throne and in charge (3:11), but he lived in light of eschatology, the doctrine of Christ's return, the rapture, our glorification, and the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ and rewards.

These were not just theological ideas he believed intellectually, but biblical truths that affected his life dynamically, they became a part of his convictions, his norms and standards.

He **knew** the Lord would return and reward him and all believers for their faithful service.

It is tremendously significant that among the final words of the last book of the Bible,

Revelation, we find these words of the Lord: *“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done”* (Rev. 22:12).

While salvation is a gift, there will be rewards for faithfulness in the Christian life and for unfaithfulness there will be no rewards.

Rewards become one of the great motivations of the Christian’s life but not the main one.

But we need to understand the nature of these rewards to understand the nature of the motivation.

Some people are troubled by the doctrine of rewards because this seems to suggest “merit” instead of “grace,” and because, as it is pointed out, we should serve the Lord out of love and for God’s glory.

Of course we should serve the Lord out of love and for God’s glory. Understanding the nature of rewards will help us to do just that. But the fact still remains that the Bible promises us rewards.

God gives us salvation. It is a gift through faith. But He rewards us for good works when done in the power of the Spirit.

God graciously supplies the means and power by which we may serve Him, but the decision to serve, and the diligence employed in doing so, are **our** responsibility and our contribution and God sees this as rewardable (cf. **Col. 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:10**).

What about the Faith of Obama?

A recent New York Times article about the faith walk of Illinois Democratic Senator and Presidential frontrunner Barack Hussein Obama lends keen insight into how Obama and the Democratic Party intend to twist godless issues into issues of faith in order to co-opt Christian votes in the 2008 election. Throughout the article, the Times discusses Obama’s faith in broad-brush terms, using God and the word “baptized” generally, but never specifically mentioning whether Obama ever accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior.

In fact, the article points out that “While he (Obama) has said he shares core Christian beliefs in God and in Jesus as his resurrected son, he sometimes mentions doubts. In his second book, he admitted uncertainty about the afterlife, and “what existed before the Big Bang.” Generally, Mr. Obama emphasizes the communal aspects of religion over the supernatural ones.” The church Obama attends teaches the Bible from the worldview of “Black Liberation Theology,” which many believe as reverse racism. And Obama’s pastor has traveled with radicals such as Louis Farrakhan and in 1984 he visited Libyan terrorist leader Muammar Gaddafi and went to Cuba to teach Christians how to embrace nonviolent protests.

Obama began attending the black liberation “Trinity United Church of Christ” in Chicago as part of a social movement when he was a so-called “community organizer” in churches for the Developing Communities Project. In 1995, the Chicago Reader wrote of Obama’s return to community organizing as a candidate for Illinois State Senate, saying, “his proposal calls for organizing ordinary citizens into bottom-up democracies that create their own strategies, programs, and campaigns and that forge alliances with other disaffected Americans.” This is distinctly a Communitarian Network philosophy, which is a transnational communistic/socialistic movement that seeks finding common ground for the common good.

The communitarian movement stresses that faith values are good things, so long as they do not supplant the state as the supreme authority. Obama embraces faith values, not necessarily the faith itself, as a way to get Christians to support the radical leftist agenda of mainstreaming homosexuality, radical environmentalism, abortion, ending poverty, etc., as these issues are redefined in terms of love and equality, good stewardship, reproductive health rights, welfare, etc. This is a strategy designed to deceive Christians into voting for people who have the agenda of the anti-Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 24:4, “Take heed that no man deceive you.”