

**Text: Matthew 18:21-19**

Section 1

21Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"  
22Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24"When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25"But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26"So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' 27"And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28"But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' 29"So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' 30"But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31"So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. 32"Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34"And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35"My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:21-35)

Jesus commanded His followers to be forgiving people, and used a very poignant illustration to make His point. He tells of a slave that owed ten thousand talents, presumably of gold, to his master. A footnote in my Bible indicates that *one* talent was equal to about fifteen years' wages for a common laborer. In other words, at a withholding rate of 100%, 150000 years would be required for this individual to repay his debt. This debt was obviously impossible for him to pay, so he requested and received mercy. How much more than this is our debt to our Creator, who in His holiness cannot allow even the smallest sin into His presence! Yet, in spite of the tremendous magnitude of our transgressions, He grants mercy through Jesus Christ to all that repent and believe.

**23For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)**

There was a problem with this slave, though. After being forgiven a debt of 150000 years' wages, he found another slave that owed him 100 *days*' wages, and gave neither mercy nor clemency. Upon hearing this, the slave's lord cast him unto the torturers.

What are we to make of this? Is lack of forgiveness such a tremendous sin that one can lose his salvation? That can't be true—we've already seen today that it is impossible for a true believer to lose his salvation. However, those that truly repent and believe receive a tremendous Gift, the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Book of Galatians tells us that the Spirit's presence produces certain "fruits," markers that are contrary to fallen human nature and are evidence of His presence within us:

**19Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:19-23)**

While the fleshly nature makes us angry and factious, the Spirit leads us to be patient, kind, and gentle. Only His work within us produces a nature that is inclined to forgive, and able to obey the following command:

**31Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)**

If our hearts are hardened and unable or unwilling to forgive, then the fruit of the Spirit is absent. If that is so, the Spirit Himself may well be absent. If *that* is so, salvation also is absent. We must each examine ourselves daily, repenting of actions, thoughts, and attitudes that dishonor Him, and making sure each day that Jesus Christ truly is Lord and Master of our lives. If He is not Lord He is not Savior; if He is not Savior, we remain in our sins and destined for Hell. If Jesus Christ is not your Lord and Savior, repent of sins, confess Him as Lord, and believe that He is indeed the risen and reigning Christ. He'll save you!

**9That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)**

If He is your Lord and Savior, but you find yourself laden with unconfessed sin, confess them and be cleansed and restored. He promised through the Apostle John to grant forgiveness when we confess our sins:

**9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)**

This letter was addressed to believers, so the “we” refers to Christians! Our remaining tendency to sin places all of us in constant need of confession and restoration.

What great promises we have from a God that is infinitely powerful, wise, just, merciful, and good: No matter how dirty and sinful we are, He will save us from the just penalty of that sin if we will only repent and believe. Let us be about the business of serving Him, striving to live lives that bring honor unto His Name, and sharing the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ to all that will listen!

## Section 2

*1When Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; 2and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there. 3Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 5and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? 6"So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" 8He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." 10The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." 11But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. 12"For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." (Matthew 19:1-12)*

“I hate divorce,” the Lord said. No, really, He said it in so many words!

**16"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (Malachi 2:16)**

The Lord God takes sexual immorality VERY seriously. Fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and even lust are identified as sins that make us worthy of a one-way ticket straight to the pit of Hell!

**9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)**

**27" You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; 28but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)**

I have read, and perhaps you have too, the comments of unbelievers, and even some ostensibly Christian denominations that say “Well, if God really did say that, then He is just a prude. He needs to get with the times. Society has changed, and maybe Christianity needs to as well.” Number one, God does not change.

**29"Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." (1 Samuel 15:29)**

And, I’m sure that I don’t need to remind you that God created everything. As such, He is the only One possessing both the power and the right to determine how this world should operate. This goes for natural laws *and* the customs, laws, and mores governing society. In other words, He is not obligated to change based on rebellious sinners’ “evolving” concepts of morality—He alone possesses the right to determine what is and what is not moral!

**1In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)**

**4You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God. 5'So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD. (Leviticus 18:4-5)**

In that last passage God gave commands, and then reinforced them by saying **I am the LORD**. God is the only Being in the universe for whom “Because I said so” is an unequivocally good reason!

So, Jesus said that divorce violates the created order—which He instituted and declared still unchanged and in effect—and constitutes adultery. There are only two cases in which divorce is permissible: One, which Jesus discusses here, is when one partner in the marriage has violated that covenant and committed adultery with another. This partner has therefore already sinned and the other partner is not bound to remain in the marriage. Paul brought up another instance in which divorce is allowed:

**12But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. 14For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. 15Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. 16For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)**

Paul here describes cases in which one partner in the marriage is a believer, and the other is an unbeliever. Let’s be clear, he is describing a situation in which both marriage partners were unbelievers when they married, and one was saved and the other unsaved. For a person already professing Christ to marry an unbeliever is sinful and not allowed according to the Scriptures.

**14Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)**

However, if one marriage partner becomes saved and the other does not, and the unbeliever wants to leave, the believer is no longer bound. Likewise, if one marriage partner commits adultery, violating the marriage covenant, the faithful, believing spouse is no longer bound. Take notice that in both of these cases, the righteous, believing spouse is not the instigator of the breaking of the marriage covenant. The entire concept of “irreconcilable differences” is an abomination before the Lord God, and should never be found among professing Christians. The prevalence of divorce in our Lord’s church is an embarrassing and damnable hypocrisy, bringing dishonor to Christ and ridicule to the church. (Remember, unbelievers can spot a hypocrite a mile away!) This problem should be dealt with through church discipline as prescribed in Matthew 18, and as we discussed previously. Otherwise, this and other unconfessed sin will remain a festering malignancy in Christ’s church: a hindrance to those that might come to Christ, and a barrier preventing His blessings upon us.

Finally, we have this discussion of “eunuchs.” In case you’re not familiar with the term, it does not refer simply to a court servant or chamberlain—the term refers to one that has been castrated in preparation for service. Now, I don’t think the Lord Jesus was commanding anyone to physically become a eunuch. If He was, this would represent a massive contradiction within the character of God, in Whom we know there is no contradiction.

**17Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)**

**1"No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 23:1)**

So, we are talking about those that, while retaining their physical wholeness, abstain from sexual intimacy because of lack of desire, being forced into service, or voluntarily foregoing these pleasures in order to devote themselves wholly unto God’s service. Jesus spoke highly of this, as did Paul:

**1Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. 3The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6But this I say by way of concession, not of command. 7Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. 8But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. 9But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Corinthians 7:1-9)**

Singleness, and therefore sexual abstention, should be regarded as an opportunity to focus one’s energies solely upon God’s service. However, both Christ and Paul warned that not everyone has this gift. If you desire “the pleasures of the flesh,” then you are to marry

so that the temptation to sin through physical or mental fornication is lessened. Married couples are not to deprive one another for the same reason. As God's people we are to pursue holiness. If you are able to do this while remaining single, great. If not, get married.

I will end this discussion with a sort of "appendix." I said that singleness should be regarded as an opportunity for a single-minded focus on God's service. However, this should not be taken so far as to accept the Roman Catholic concept of a celibate priesthood. First of all, we've seen how well *that* has worked. Secondly, the Bible commands that we are only to appoint those men that are married and have well-behaved children as pastors/elders and deacons in the church. The Bible declares demonstrated good management of home, wife, and children to be a prerequisite for service in such a leadership position in the church.

**1It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1Timothy 3:1-13)**

We are to obey God's commands, keeping in mind to regard the whole counsel of God. Scripture interprets Scripture, and we must take care to avoid studying and responding incorrectly to one passage while ignoring another that speaks to and clarifies the same issue. Many a church and denomination has made errors that could have been avoided by following the simple rule "Never read a Bible verse."

### Section 3

*13Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15After laying His hands on them, He departed from there. 16And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" 17And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; 19HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 20The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" 21Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. 23And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24"Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" 26And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:13-26)*

How much contrast there is between the little children and the rich man! The children came (or were brought) to Him without pretension, without expectation of reward, and were content simply to have His hands laid on them and to be prayed over by Him. Jesus said that such a humble, believing, childlike spirit was present in those that would enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

**1At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:1-4)**

The rich man, conversely, came to Jesus glorying in his own righteousness and obedience to the Law, evidently expecting to be acknowledged as an heir to the Kingdom of Heaven on the basis of his works. Well, the Bible teaches that we are not saved by works, but by faith, and that our attempts at works-righteousness are futile and even filthy before our holy and perfect God.

**8For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

**6For all of us have become like one who is unclean,  
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;  
And all of us wither like a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (Isaiah 64:6)**

Rather than simply telling him to cease trusting in works and follow Him by faith, Jesus told the young man to sell all of his possessions and follow Him. This was not to identify material wealth as a sin (otherwise righteous men like Abraham, Job, and David would have been in sin because they were blessed by God with wealth), but to identify the love of material wealth as a sin that kept him separated from God. This “root of all sorts of evil” caused this man to violate the Greatest Commandment. As such, he was unfit for the Kingdom of God.

**6But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:6-11)**

**35One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36”Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37And He said to him, “ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ 38”This is the great and foremost commandment. 39”The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ 40”On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:35-40)**

By loving his wealth more than God, this man was in violation of the Greatest Commandment. Even though he had allegedly kept the rest of the Law perfectly, even this one sin was sufficient to separate him from God. In fact, the Book of James teaches that to break even one Commandment makes us stand guilty of violating the Law in its entirety. Whether or not there are degrees of punishment in Hell I don't really know. What I do know is that perfect obedience marred by even one sin will send you to Hell, and even the least unpleasant part of Hell (if there is such a thing) is not a place you want to be!

**10For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (James 2:10-11)**

If we will be saved, there must be nothing placed before God in our priorities. We have to love Him completely, with all of our being. If we confess Jesus Christ as Lord, then He is Number One. He is Master. Neither family, nor wealth, nor job, nor hobbies, nor anything else—not even *church* (the formal institutions thereof)—can be placed above Him. If He is not first, He is not Lord. If He is not Lord, He is not Savior, and we remain in our sins.

**1Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. 2For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 5For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." 8But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 12For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:1-13)**

No matter who you are or what you do, you are not good enough for God's Kingdom, and neither am I. Only repentance of sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, appealing not to justice but to mercy, will save. Fortunately, we have the promise that all that cry out to Him for mercy will be saved. That, friends, is the Good News!

I would be remiss if I attempted to exegete this passage without mentioning the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The one, like this rich man, was proud of his external obedience to the Law, and arrogantly expected justification on this basis. The other humbled himself before God, begged for mercy, and went home justified.

**9**And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: **10**"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**"The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12**'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' **13**"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14**"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

Only God can and does save. We are not able to save ourselves through works or obedience, nor can we do anything to make ourselves worthy of His salvation. There is certainly no room in Heaven for a prideful attitude like that of the Pharisee in this parable. It is simply because of His magnificent grace that we have the promise that:

**13**for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:13)

**4**But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, **5**He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, **6**whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7**so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

#### Section 4

*27*Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" *28*And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. *29*"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. *30*"But many who are first will be last; and the last, first. (Matthew 19:27-30)

The Bible gives followers of the Lord Jesus Christ no promises of material abundance in this world. While isolated examples of wealthy, Godly men are found in the Scriptures (again, Abraham, Job, and David being representative examples), these are the exception, not the rule. As followers of Jesus Christ, the only promise we have regarding material wealth is that our basic needs will be met. If we receive this much, God has fulfilled His promises, and we are to expect no more. If He gives us more, we are to thank Him for His generosity, as He has granted us more than we could rightly be expected to receive.

**8**If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. (1 Timothy 6:8)

Moreover, if we do have more than enough to meet our needs, we are commanded to be generous, providing for those in need and giving liberally toward the doing of God's work.

**17**"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you. (Deuteronomy 16:17)

**1**Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. **2**On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

**15**If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, **16**and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **17**Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (James 2:15-17)

Jesus told His disciples that they can expect to abandon family and property in order to do His work. Furthermore, many were and are today being physically persecuted for naming the Name of Jesus Christ.

**12**Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12)

**9**"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. **10**"The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. **11**"When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. **12**"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. **13**"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Mark 13:9-13)

Jesus told His disciples to expect abandonment, to expect difficulty, to expect persecution. While we can hope to be spared the same predicament, if we must choose between Christ and home, or family, or freedom, or life, we must choose Christ. The reward received by those that endure is great indeed!

**1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new " And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6Then He said to me, "It is done I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:1-8)**

We must always look forward to the joy and reward that awaits those that follow Jesus Christ to the end...and the eternal punishment that awaits those that deny Him. The former should motivate us to press on, serving Him, worshipping Him, obeying Him, and seeking to glorify Him in everything we do. The latter should motivate us to continually **Test [ourselves] to see if [we] are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5)**, and to diligently bear witness to our unsaved friends and family. Repent of sin and confess Christ as Savior and Lord. Obey His commandments. Love and serve Him with all your being. Whatever difficulties happen in this life, the reward is worth it!