The Reward is Great!

Zanesville, OH | December 22, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Matt. 5:11-12

**Intro**:

* The beatitudes form the introduction to Jesus’ ***“Sermon on the Mount.”*** These supreme blessings culminate with a powerful reminder of what all of God’s people are looking for. We labor and we seek to be steadfast because of the reward that God will give us in Heaven. But like most rewards, it does not come easy. Persecutions may come and pain will abound. Jesus states that we ought to rejoice and be glad (Acts 5:41; Phil 4:4; Jam. 1:2) in spite of the terrifying circumstances we will undergo. Why? Because the reward is great! Heaven is pictured as a place of overwhelming peace, joy and rest!
1. **Heaven: Why is it Great?**
	1. One of the reasons Heaven is so “great” is because it is the culmination of all God’s promises (cf. Gen. 12:1-3). Jesus’ description of the reward being “great” still does no justice to what awaits us in Heaven. Paul further develops this idea in Rom. 8:18-19.
	2. Paul, who suffered so much in his lifetime (Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 11:23-27), stated that his suffering and any kind of suffering and pain is nothing compared to what Heaven will be.
	3. If Paul who suffered a brutal fate in his lifetime and endured all that he did for this reward, then it can only mean that Heaven will always outweigh the worst possible thing we can think of in this life.
	4. No circumstance, no tragedy and no trial no matter how bad and overwhelming it may seem will ever be able to tip the scales in favor of being followers of this world instead of God.
	5. God will always be the answer to life’s toughest problems and He will always be there to help us out of life’s greatest pitfalls if we are willing to be honest with ourselves, confess our sins and reach out to Him for help and deliverance (2 Tim. 2:12).
	6. In addition to all this, Jesus gives us an important reminder that we may sometimes and a lot of times tend to overlook or not pay attention to. Those who would choose this lifestyle in following Jesus are encouraged to consider that their suffering situations are not unique.
	7. Many of God’s people in the past suffered fates (Neh. 9:26; Matt. 21:34-36; Heb. 11:35-38) that are similar to what many go through now and what many will experience in the future.
	8. We may be tempted to ask why me? Why is everybody else fine and I’m the only one in the world going through these persecutions, ill-treatment etc.? We need to be very careful of this.
	9. Chances are there are plenty of people in our circles that have experienced these things or are going through it as well. They may not be expressing it as openly and they may even have it worse than us.

**Conclusion:** The reward is indeed great and it far outweighs anything this world has to offer and anything we go through while we are in it. It’s not easy to do what Jesus is asking. But He does not ask us to do something He Himself didn’t do. He set the example and the bar for us (Heb. 12:1-3). He is passing the baton on to us and we must take it and run to end of the finish line. And when we get there, however long it takes to get there, we will be glorified, rewarded and blessed by God the likes we cannot even begin to imagine.