

So, what would you say to this deal if it was proposed to you?...*Your company gives you a \$50 million signing bonus and also promises additional extraordinary rewards for specifically building on the company's key priorities.* Let me repeat that. *Your company gives you a \$50 million signing bonus and also promises additional extraordinary rewards for specifically building on the company's key priorities.* What do you think...does that sound too good to be true? Yeah, you're surely thinking that there's gotta be a catch in this deal somewhere...is this a plan to steal all the gold in Ft. Knox? Or is this really legit, with someone like, say, a Jeff Bezos letting me in on the ground floor of a grand new tech enterprise?

Well, the truth is, that deal structure mirrors a very core dimension of the proposition God is offering to *every person in the world when they hear the Gospel of the Kingdom, then respond in belief and serious discipleship!* Yes, if you're a Christian committed to God's priorities, *you already have that kind of deal!* Skeptical? Well, let's start with two simply astonishing Bible verses, the first being Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV). "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." Did you get that? ...*Jesus, the Son of God, is appointed the heir of all things!*

And what is your standing with Jesus the heir...you who are a strong believer in Christ and Him crucified? Startlingly, in Romans 8:17, Paul calls out committed believers as *fellow heirs with Christ (ESV)*...the KJV renders that status as *joint-heirs*...the NIV as *co-heirs*. Think of that—Jesus is appointed the heir of all things...and committed believers are fellow heirs! Makes the \$50 million look very puny, doesn't it?

And 1 Peter 1:3-4 says this about the nature of the inheritance of the born-again believer: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." Yeah, after, say, 70 years on earth, we come into an imperishable, unfading inheritance, gracefully bestowed on a committed follower of Jesus!

So, when we are born again, we are given an *eternal life-span*...and along with that, the promise of an inheritance bestowed...again, an inheritance in the words of Peter "that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." Of course, many a scoffer thinks that's a fanciful fairy tale, but *you* have hope in Christ...*you* have read the Scriptures...*and in your heart, you believe it's the real deal!*

But that's not the entire story! Yes, an inheritance bestowed...but believers are still specifically judged for their actions as to their building on the foundation of Christ *in the meantime...in this life*. ...Or their lack of building well in this life. That's in 1 Corinthians 3:9-16—and it's known as the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers. And that's where the Lord tallies rewards for those who truly built on the foundation of Christ. So. Not just an inheritance bestowed for believers—rewards are tallied for the actively obedient! Does that startle you? Or...does it sound maybe just a little bit complex?

Hey, it really isn't hard to understand at all...the reality is straightforward: first and foremost, each believer appearing at the Judgment Seat of Christ is saved...yay! But here's the rub. Those very-much-saved persons who spent time and treasure on worldly priorities—yes, perhaps even cheerful "Christian-y" and "church-y" priorities—well, those deeds and actions that *don't truly build* on the foundation of Christ will *not* receive rewards from Christ! Mercifully, Paul says those works *not on the foundation of Christ* burn up! And the priorities that *did* build on the foundation of Christ will be rewarded!

So, let's look at an example: two persons each have the necessary, sincere faith in Christ unto salvation, by God's grace, by faith...right, a salvation based in no way on their works! That's a salvation "with inheritance bestowed!" But the person who did build well on the foundation of Christ will receive rewards for that building—the other who didn't, won't!

Now, we must be careful here—let's be Biblically astute, as unto the Lord. Much of what is perceived as "Christian good works" through two millennia apparently has little to nothing to do with building on the

foundation of Christ. Yes, just because the word “Christian” may be attached, the hearer or recipients of such works often receive no meaningful clue about the salvific message of the Gospel.

To be sure, in Bible-talk circles, we all know that there is lots of talk about what the word “gospel” means. But the reality is, feeding the spiritually unreached with calories without ever telling them about the salvific works of Christ on the Cross is hardly the scope of the good news expected of the believer! When Paul wrote the Corinthians, it’s no surprise that when he wrote “building on the foundation of Christ,” he meant to specifically convey *the actual reality of building on the foundation of Christ—the Messiah, the Savior. And Jesus means Yahweh (God) saves.* Yes, the works that build on the foundation of Christ *that’ll be rewarded by Jesus* are surely about being a vital part of the supply chain proclaiming the salvific Good News of Jesus Christ, including the discipling that’s vital to that news. And how about some sad-but-real journeys by Christians labeled *missions trips*...yet Jesus isn’t even mentioned once?

But as to those rewards that *are* tallied, our God in heaven is clearly not a socialist, Yeah, that’s right, God’s not a follower of Karl Marx and his communism any more than Marx was a follower of Christ and Him crucified...no, beyond salvation by grace, God will carefully differentiate about both the focus and the extent of *each individual person’s* lifetime of work as to truly building on the foundation of Christ.

For you and me, this reality changes everything! Yes...literally everything! Having embraced the stunning, personal hope of *inheritance bestowed*, believers are liberated to respond to God’s promised reward system, an approach that’s completely centered on impacting others by building on the foundation of the Risen Christ. This gives concrete purpose, drive, and focus...here-and-now...to every believer!

Now, fellow believer, that brings us to the current opportunities that are uniquely peculiar to you. And the first opportunity is your *time*. Every person—whether pauper or prince, bus driver or billionaire—is given 24 hours of time each day to invest in foundational priorities. Funny thing, each of us has no more hours in a day than others to give. But the question is, are you personally investing your time in the right priorities, clearly-communicated priorities that Christ will reward at His judgment? Yeah, are you rightly invested—in your time parenting *as unto the Lord*...your discipling...your mentoring...your neighboring?

Hey, the focus of your time *alone* is amazing to consider. But you have *treasure*, too, regardless of the level of your material wealth. And the structure is the same. Every person—whether pauper or prince, bus driver or billionaire—is blessed with a measure of material resources to fruitfully invest in Kingdom priorities. The signature event in Jesus’s public ministry as to this truth was the poor widow giving all she had while the wealthy persons there did not (Luke 21). Jesus Himself lauded that widow for beneficial instruction to billions of future Bible readers during the last two millennia. *How astounding is that?*

A final and very important word here. How about the reality for persons with no belief in Christ? The truth is, *if you personally are in unbelief*, your portfolio of the investing of your time and your treasure—both past and present—is worthless as to your future and eternity. That’s true for one simple reason: God will ignore it all at the time and place of your personal judgment—the event of your personal accountability to Him after you die. Yeah, it doesn’t even matter whether you attended church or if your mother was a Christian or if you were sprinkled as an infant. And it doesn’t matter how much you’ve given to orphans or dog rescues or environmental causes or your grandchildren or even your church.

Instead, there will be just one question: did you stand on your personal goodness and track record of deeds? Or did you stand on what Christ did at the Cross on behalf of every person who calls upon His name for salvation? The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). So. How about the best deal ever offered—the only one that includes an inheritance in heaven—does that interest you? Well then, friend, simply believe in Christ and Him crucified!

Hey, your life will be changed right now...and for eternity!

A&A: Application & Action

1. Are you steadily anchored in the promise of your unfading inheritance? Has that anchoring substantially freed you up in your everyday life for fruit-bearing ministries to others? Write down specific practical examples of how you made that shift. Discuss.
2. Are you investing your time and treasure in ways that yield rewards (1 Corinthians 3:9-16)? Discuss.
3. OK, you get this, and you live victoriously in Christ! But do you occasionally harbor a bit of a twinge that you may be a bit too focused on this-world priorities? Do you sometimes wish you could effectively shed those priorities in order to serve God's clear purposes more fully? Discuss.