

The Correspondent



SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM

Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM

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(618) 667-6708

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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We Have Done What Was Our Duty to Do

-Renn Ferguson

In today's culture there is a problem with praise. We often desire it for the most minute and insignificant things. However, we do not need nor do we deserve praise for everything that we do. Christ actually addresses this in Luke 17:7-10, "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'" Encouragement is necessary and important. Yet, so many people do not want encouragement they want praise. They want to be placed on a pedal-stool for things that they ought to do anyways.

We are just servants, and as Christ said, even if we keep all of the commandments we have simply done what we were supposed to. We did not do something that is extraordinary. In fact we just met the bare minimum. Christ shows us in this verse that we need to maintain our humility. We may go out and teach someone the gospel and convert them and that certainly is a wonderful thing! In doing so, however, we are simply fulfilling what Christ told us to do in Matthew 28:18-20. James says that, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Some become arrogant because they have simply kept the commands of God.

This passage also reminds me of what Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Christ demands that we think of ourselves as unprofitable servants even if we have done all that is required of us. Our salvation is not something we can earn. Yes, we must work if we want salvation but no amount of work we can do will ever earn us a spot in heaven. Yet if we become puffed up in our work for God are we not saying that He owes us? By looking at ourselves the way Christ commands in Luke 17:10 we will avoid this arrogance that is so vehemently condemned in the scriptures.

Though we have been discussing the fact that we do not need praise for doing our duty there is much importance in encouragement. Without it we often become weak and many lose their faith. That is why we are so often commanded to exhort one another. It is said of Peter in Acts 2:40, "And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'" Peter was encouraging those around him to obey the gospel so that they may be saved. We certainly need to encourage each other when we have the opportunity because it can make an eternal difference.

We do not need to become arrogant in our service to God. Yes, we must work and we must keep all the commandments of God but we are not something special. All we are doing is keeping His law. In light of these facts we must still remember to encourage and help one another reach that ultimate goal of heaven.