

WHAT DOES GOD WANT BACK FROM CHRISTIANS?

Luke 12:42-48

Introduction: *"...to whom much has been given, of him shall much be required..."* That same principle runs through all of life and surely we expect more from some than from others.

- It is true of a nation if great, then great things are expected. If weak, then not so much is expected. Our nation is one of the youngest, but has also been one of the strongest. Other nations have the right to expect more from our country than others.

- It is also true of families. The famous named ones like Rockefellers, Fords and others we are familiar with who have made billions of dollars are expected to help more than others who have made very little. They have responded by setting up big foundations and giving away millions of dollars.

- This is also true of individuals. More is expected from a person who has knowledge and training than from one who does not. If one has great talents, more is expected from him/her. If a good family background of Christian training, then more is expected of him/her than from one who did not have that background. We don't expect a bull-dozer to do a child's work, nor do we expect an organ to give out a tin whistle sound. If one is more fully endowed than another, then it is only right that more is expected of him/her.

- In like manner more is expected of a Christian than one who doesn't know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Since Salvation is given to us freely upon our belief in God's Son, Jesus, what does God want back from the Christian?

I. WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE CHRISTIAN?

1. The Christian has been given a Savior.

- Suppose you were drowning and a man jumped in and saved you. That is a wonderful thing.
- Suppose you were trapped in a burning building and someone rescued you, again a wonderful thing.
- Well, God has done more than just jump in or pull anyone out. God gave His only Son to save us.
- Jesus sent out 70 to work and witness and they had a great experience. They returned and told Jesus that even the devils had been subject to them. Jesus told them, *"Don't rejoice because you have been able to do these things, rejoice because your names are written in heaven ..."*
- The believer's name is written in heaven because of belief in Jesus Christ. Truly much has been given to the believer/Christian.

2. The Christian has been given the Bible.

- We like to get letters or calls from loved ones and are disappointed when we don't hear from them.
- God never disappoints. He has written the Bible and given it to us. His love letter is better than any we can write, and sweeter than honey and His letter tells us of His love for us and it guides us along the pathway of life.

3. The Christian has been given answers to his/her prayers.
 - Any Christian who prays can count the many times when God miraculously answered his/her prayers.
 - His is a problem with many Christians however. When God does answer the Christian's prayer, he/she usually forgets to thank God for what He did.
 - Prayer is not simply asking God for something, it is submitting one's self to God, it is leaving things in God's hands.

4. The Christian has been given the forgiveness of sins.
 - Forgiveness is needed every day as sin is committed many times every day.
 - Every little sin stands between the believer and God like a dark cloud and there is only one way to remove that cloud. ***"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."***

5. The Christian has been given the promise of Heaven.
 - The child of God can be sure of Heaven and nothing can separate him/her from Jesus Christ. Nothing can rob him/her of his/her salvation. One can be just as sure of Heaven as if he/she were already inside the gates.
 - Life gives many hardships, difficulties and duties causing us to wonder if we will have the strength to face one more and we long, yearn for rest, release from all these hardships. Heaven is going to give us that release and rest plus countless more wonderful things.
 - Often we look back through the years and say, "those were the good old years," but the best is yet to come for the Christian. Some day we will leave this world of trouble either by death or by Jesus coming for us, but either way what wonderful times await the Christian.
 - ***"Every good gift and ever perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father."***

II. WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF THE CHRISTIAN?

1. God requires an undivided heart.
 - One of the biggest problems for the Christian today is exactly this. No question the Christian loves the Lord God but there are so many other things pulling, drawing, demanding our love and attention.
 - In every person's heart and soul there are two voices, the voice of God and the voice of the world. Which voice we listen to determines the degree of love for God.

2. God requires a Holy life.
 - God does not expect a perfect life, but every day the Christian is to try to live a consecrated, separated, dedicated Christian life. One fact stands out and we all know it is true, we influence people by how we live, not by what we say.
 - There are "bridges" that the Christian must burn behind him/her in order to live the life God requires and God has the right to require His Children to live a Holy life.

3. God requires active service.
 - It isn't enough to BE good, the Christian must DO good. The Christian cannot REST from serving God, but he/she can RUST.
 - The Christian must put feet to his/her beliefs. Regardless of what others think, the Christian must serve the Lord God in whatever way and wherever God wants.

4. God requires a faithful stewardship.
 - The Christian has been entrusted with all we have and must use it rightly. We usually instantly think of money when the word "stewardship" is used. Giving is a vital part of the Gospel.
 - The Christian is indeed to give financially, bring tithe into God's storehouse and God will bless so much that the giver won't have room to receive all God gives back.
 - Everything the Christian has belongs to God anyhow, so he/she is in reality just taking care of the things of God anyhow.

5. God requires the Christian to witness for Him.
 - The Christian had a dread disease called Sin but God cured him/her of that disease. Others around are dying of that same disease, so God expects the Christian to tell others how he/she was cured.
 - When the Christian gets to Heaven, hopefully there will be some there who are there because of that Christian's witness to them.
 - If God has done so much for the believer/Christian, surely the Christian will be eager to tell others about how they, too, can have what he/she has, eternal life.

CONCLUSION:

1. Much has been given the Christian and much is required back. God has given the Christian great resources and great responsibilities.
2. Jesus Christ did so much for us, what could God possibly require of us that we would think would be too much?
3. Christians owe God their total existence, total selves, total service, all that they are and have.
4. So, Christian, what have you given for your Lord?