



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Disciples- Receiving determines Reward!

#### Matthew 10:40-42

**Matthew 10:40-42**, *“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>41</sup>He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. <sup>42</sup>And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”*

The Sermon to the Sent-Ones.

Jesus commissions His disciples to go out into the regions of Judea and preach about Him to the cities that He would then go and visit.

Before they go, He gives them specific warnings and instructions about their ministry.

As we have discovered along the way, the things He has said to His twelve disciples also have a broader application to us.

We too, are His "ambassadors".  
We too are His "sent-ones".

We are to go out into the world and proclaim His gospel message to others. But just as Jesus warned the twelve in this chapter, He would want us to know that He sends us out into a hostile environment to proclaim His gospel to many who will not receive it.

Our Saviour has given us many warnings in this chapter.

**Jesus told them not to fear men.**

**V 16**, He sends us out "as sheep in the midst of wolves"

**V 17-18**, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you before their synagogues. Be brought before governors and kings for Jesus' sake.

**V 21**, Some of us will be delivered up to death.

**V 22**, we will be hated by all for Jesus name's sake".

**V 23**, many of us will have to flee persecution.

**V 24-25**, we will be called names because of our association with Him.

**Jesus tells them that go public with your faith.**

**V 32-33**, when we confess here on earth Jesus will confess to the Father before the angels.

**Jesus told us that our supreme love should be for Him alone!**

**V 35-36**, Love Jesus more than your Peace.

**V 35-36**, Love Jesus more than the family.

**V 37-39**, Love Jesus more than self.

This is a very serious portion of Scripture. It lets us know that much will be demanded of us as His faithful ambassadors into this world. Because much of this world will reject His message.

Now we find some encouraging news.

Jesus lets us know that not everyone will reject our message. Some will respond to it and welcome it.

Words of encouragement concerning those who welcome and receive it.

What good and encouraging news to find at the end of such a serious commission!

There are two words that I would like to point out to you in this passage.

- "Receive" and
- "Reward".

They give us two key themes in this passage.

**Receive appears 8 Times.**

**Reward appears 3 Times.**

Receive conveys the idea of receiving someone in a kind way to welcome them or to support them.

In this context, it speaks of kindly receiving, or welcoming, or providing hospitality to those whom Jesus sends as His ambassadors into this world.

Think for a moment of what that would look like in practice. It would mean that if someone came as Jesus' representative, proclaiming His gospel as His ambassador we receive them as they truly are as ambassadors of Christ.

Paul gives us an example of this when he spoke of his first encounter with the believers in Galatia.

**Galatians 4:13-14**, *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. <sup>14</sup>And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

They received Paul as an ambassador of Christ.

So, in this sense, when we "receive" one of Jesus' "sent-ones", we as it were - "approve" of them as Christ's ambassadors.

Another way we "receive" them is by looking upon those ambassadors as God's 'messengers' to us personally.

By actively submitting ourselves to their ministry as if it were from Christ Himself.

Again, we have a wonderful example of this in the Bible through the experience of the apostle Paul.

He wrote to the believers in Thessalonica and told them about how thankful he and his co-workers were for them.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13**, *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the very word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

Thirdly, receive the one's that Jesus sends and that is by actively supporting them in their work.

If we recognize them to be Christ's ambassadors indeed, we then show it by becoming "partners" with them in their ministry.

We open our door to them and show them hospitality.

We send them on their way with what they need in order to do the work Christ has given them to do.

We have a wonderful example of this in the New Testament. John wrote, with great gratitude, to a pastor named Gaius who hosted some of the workers that John had sent out to help spread the gospel.

**3 John 1:5-8**, *Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, <sup>6</sup>who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, <sup>7</sup>because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup>We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.*

Gaius "received" those gospel workers by meeting their needs and sending them away well-provided in their work. That's another way we "receive" those who Jesus sends.

We "receive" Christ's "ambassadors" in three senses.

- Welcome them as Christ's ambassadors, as if coming in His name and under His authority.
- Submit ourselves to their ministry in such a way as to gain the blessing God intends us to gain from them.

- Show them hospitality and provide for their needs in such a way as to become "partners" with them in their work.

Jesus had all of this in mind when He spoke of those who would "receive" His "sent-ones".

The good news is that He promises some would indeed "receive" them. This is one of the key notes of this passage.

But there's another keynote represented in the word "reward". The Greek word translated "reward" appears three times in these three verses.

Jesus was sending out in His name that includes many warnings of the difficulties that will be encountered, and the severe rejection and persecution that will be suffered. At the end He makes the promise that some will receive their message.

To those who will receive them in all the different aspects of what it means to "receive" them Jesus promises great "reward".

These verses speak to people who don't think that they are worth anything in the kingdom of Jesus Christ because they are not great "preachers" or "evangelists" or "missionaries".

It speaks to those who don't have a sense of value because they are not in some kind of spotlight ministry.

Jesus lets us know that a great part of the work of the kingdom of Jesus Christ occurs on the "receiving" end. Jesus promises us that those who rightly "receive" those He sends out will be richly "rewarded".

The blessings of those who faithfully "receive" those who Jesus sends.

### **1. Receive those who sent.**

Jesus begins by telling us something quite remarkable something that many people who welcome and receive Christ's ambassadors may not at first realize.

**V 40**, *"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me"*.

Jesus is telling us something very important about Himself in this verse.

As He speaks to those He is about to send, He lets them know that He Himself was a "sent-One". He lets them know that He was sent to this earth by God the Father.

He did not come on His own initiative and authority but came in His Father's name and in accordance with His Father's will.

As Jesus walked upon this earth, He made it very clear that He came as One sent by the Father to do the Father's will.

**John 4:34**, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work"*

**John 5:30**, *I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

**John 5:36-37**, *But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. <sup>37</sup>And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.*

**John 6:38**, *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

**John 7:16**, *Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.*

**John 8:18**, *I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.*”

Jesus does nothing apart from the will of His Father.

He doesn't even send out workers except under His Father's authority.

When Jesus sends out workers in His name to proclaim His gospel to the world, they truly go out in the authority of the One who sent Jesus.

Just before He went to the cross for us, Jesus prayed to His Father.

**John 17:18**, *As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

And after He rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples.

**John 20:21**, *So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”*

Jesus lets His ambassadors know that whoever receives Him also receives the Father who sent Him.

If A equals B; and  
If B equals C;  
then A equals C.

- In a similar way, if to receive Jesus' "sent-ones" is the same as receiving Him.
- If receiving Jesus is the same as receiving the Father who sent Him.
- Then to receive Jesus' "sent-ones" is the same as receiving the Father.

Amazingly, this is a point that Jesus repeated elsewhere in His teaching.

Just before He went to the cross - when He enjoyed His last supper on earth with His disciples.

**John 13:20**, *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."*

No one can ever be in God's favour if they will not receive welcome the One whom He has sent that is, His Son Jesus Christ.

Many people have embraced a vague sort of pseudo-spirituality that looks at all religions as equal. They say that they believe in "God" in some undefined sense; but they don't believe that Jesus is God's Son, sent into this world.

Yet, it is impossible to have a relationship with God while, at the same time, rejecting His Son whom He has sent.

**1 John 2:23**, *Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

Similarly, it teaches us that no one can ever have a relationship with the Father if they at the same time reject those who the Son has sent that is, His apostles.

Many people are willing to say that they believe in Jesus, but they refuse to believe in Jesus as He is taught in the pages of the Scripture. The scriptures contain for us the apostolic witness of His "sent-ones".

They don't like Jesus as He is presented to us by the apostles (and they particularly dislike Jesus as He is presented by Paul the most prominent of the writing apostles).

Instead, they develop a belief in Jesus that is completely apart distinct from the witness of His apostles in the Bible.

Yet, it's impossible to do this and still have a relationship with Christ and thus with His Father.

**1 John 4:6**, *We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*

It is very sinful and false to claim to have a vital, growing relationship with Jesus Christ. At the same time, reject those He sends into the world as His ambassadors today!

I believe in Jesus.

I read the Bible.

I love God.

But I can't stand church.

I don't care much for those who call themselves 'Christians'.

I am not into 'organized religion'. I prefer to go it alone.

We should take Jesus' words at face value.

He speaks to His apostles and by implication, to all those who would receive their witness.

**V 40**, *"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me".*

I say this with the utmost love, but the utmost seriousness that anyone who will not "receive" God's redeemed people, and who proves it by habitually keeping themselves separated from them, may very well be fooling themselves in thinking

that they have any kind of relationship with God the Father or Jesus His Son at all!

At the very least, we would have to say that they are being very disobedient to the Lord they claim to love.

They are standing on very dangerous ground spiritually!

**1 John 5:1**, *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.*

So that's on the negative side of what this verse implies.

We can never really be in God's favour while, at the same time, rejecting the One whom He has sent or the ones that the One He has sent has Himself also sent!

The positive side:

Jesus also reminds us of tremendous value places on those He has sent!

He lets everyone know that they are so much His representatives in this world that to receive them is the same as to receive Him.

Jesus considers that what is done to His "sent-ones" whether for good or ill is done to Him.

He loves them and so claims them as His own that He tells them, *"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."*

What a blessing and honour it is to be one of His "sent-ones"!

## **2. Partake their Reward.**

**V 41,** *He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.*

The workers Jesus describes as being sent out by Him into the world as His representatives.

He speaks, first, of the twelve apostles themselves.

Secondly, He speaks of "a prophet" in verse 41.

This should be understood in the way that the Jewish people of His day would have understood Him to be speaking.

This is someone who is clearly sent by God, and who stands before God's people as God's spokesman to them and proclaiming a message from God.

Perhaps the most prominent person to come to the mind of His listeners would have been John the Baptist. John was the greatest and last of the prophets of the Old Testament era.

But less in honour than the apostles who came after him would prove to be.

**Matthew 11:11**, *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Thirdly, Jesus speaks of "a righteous man".

This should be understood as referring to someone who first had confessed that they were sinners and trusted in the grace of God for righteousness.

But then rose up, as a result of God's grace, to pursue a life of practical holiness in accordance with the revealed will of God. Jesus described this kind of righteousness in detail in the Sermon on The Mount.

**Matthew 5:20**, *unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Such a man would actively pursue the way of righteousness that was revealed by God.

Finally, in verse 42, He speaks a mere "disciple".

Our Lord describes such a person as "a little one".

- That is someone who is "small" in dignity and power.
- He or she is someone that is considered less in stature than an apostle.
- Less than a prophet.
- Even less than a "righteous man"

But still, nevertheless, someone greatly loved and valued by the Saviour because he or she is His "disciple".

### **How these are to be received?**

Jesus says of the apostles, "He who receives you receives Me."

Jesus uses a repeated phrase - "in the name of . . ." and "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet . . . he who receives a righteous in the name of a righteous man . . ." (**V 41**).

Finally, He even describes what it means to "receive" a mere disciple. "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple . . ." (**V 42**).

The phrase "in the name of . . ." is a phrase that basically means, "in the authority and stature of . . ."

To receive a prophet "in the name of a prophet" means to receive a prophet as truly a prophet sent from God with a message from God to His people with all the authority that comes with being a prophet.

To receive a righteous man "in the name of a righteous man" means to receive him as a man whom God accepts and who reverences God and truly puts God's word into practice into his life with all the dignity and esteem in which a truly righteous man ought to be held.

To receive a disciple "in the name of a disciple" - even a very humble and seemingly insignificant disciple - is to receive him or her as someone who is greatly loved by the Lord Jesus Christ and is destined to share in His eternal glory.

Please notice this remarkable truth.

A truth so grand that we wouldn't have believed it unless our Saviour had Himself told us.

**V41**, *"He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward"*

Jesus doesn't tell us that if we receive an apostle "in the name of an apostle" that we would receive an apostle's reward.

Because the reward He has in store for His apostles is very unique.

**Matthew 19:28**, *"Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"*

In the Book of Revelation's glorious description of the New Jerusalem.

**Revelation 21:14**, *Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Clearly, the reward that He has in store for His apostles is something very unique. No one but they will share in it.

If we receive a prophet "in the name of a prophet", we will receive "a prophet's reward".

If we receive a righteous man "in the name of a righteous man", we will receive "a righteous man's reward"

This is actually something that we will share if we genuinely receive them for what Christ sends them to us to be!

There's a story from the Old Testament that illustrates this. It's a story of the great prophet Elijah. He was prophesying against the evil northern kingdom of Israel, and against the ungodly king Ahab.

God led him to prophesy that there would be no rain on the land for three and a half years. And during this drought, God allowed Elijah's needs to be met through a poor widow.

**1 Kings 17:8-12**, *Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.” <sup>10</sup>So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” <sup>11</sup>And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”*

*<sup>12</sup>So she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”*

She had suffered under the drought, and now had next to nothing. In fact, she was gathering sticks to build a last fire then she and her son would cook and eat their last meal.

She fully expected to die afterward. But the prophet encouraged her to trust God and give him some of what she had.

**1 Kings 17:13-16**, *And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup>For thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.' "*

*<sup>15</sup>So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup>The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.*

God passed on to the poor woman the very same care that He was going to provide to His prophet.

Surely, this illustrates the promise of Jesus.

**Matthew 6:33**, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"*

What our Lord is saying in our passage this morning promises something even more eternal.

I believe that He is letting us know that when we stand to the aid of one of His sent ones when we faithfully receive them and welcome them as God's servants to us, and embrace their ministry as God's gift to us, and even stand along with them in support of their ministry we will also share in their reward.

What a marvellous promise this is!

You may not feel as if you are important in the work of the kingdom of Jesus.

You may not be in the spotlight, as it were.

Since you support the ministry of God's kingdom behind the scenes, you may feel as if you are of lesser importance.

But here, Jesus lets you know just how important you are!

If you genuinely receive those Jesus has sent and give yourself to the support of the work of the kingdom that they perform, you will share in their reward together with them!

You need never worry that your labours will ever be forgotten.

### **3. The smallest act will be remembered!**

**V 42,***"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.*

**Look at the person He promises will be remembered.**

He says, "whoever".

That means that it doesn't matter who you are!

If you show an act of kindness and support to even the least of one of His disciples, He greatly values it. He knows that you did it and it is kept in mind by Him.

**Look at the act.**

He speaks of an act that is very simple to be done.

Just the giving of a cup of cold water.

This means that it doesn't take much to be richly rewarded by our Saviour. Just a willingness to meet the simple needs of His sent ones.

Jesus notices the merest 'mite' of the poorest widow given in His name.

**Mark 12:41-44,** *Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. <sup>42</sup>Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. <sup>43</sup>So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you*

*that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;<sup>44</sup>for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."*

### **Look at the certainty of the reward.**

Jesus goes to great lengths to express it.

He says, "*assuredly, I say to you . . .*" which is the way He often stressed the deep truth and certainty of something He was about to say.

He says that the reward will not be lost. Not only would it be given but He promises that it will not be lost!

Jesus strengthens this by using the strongest negative He could possibly use.

*"In no way will that reward ever be lost to that person!"*

He or she might even forget about it, because at the time it seemed like such an insignificant thing. But the Son of God will never forget.

Jesus is making an argument from the lesser to the greater. He is letting us know that even so tiny and seemingly insignificant an act as a mere cup of cold water offered to the

seemingly most insignificant of His disciples will, by no means, ever be forgotten but will most certainly be rewarded by Him. If this is true of so minor a thing, it will surely be true of even greater acts of support.

Jesus told us this truth in this way in order to emphasize the seeming smaller acts of love and kindness to the seeming lessor of His followers.

Later on, He tells His disciples that there will come a day when His saints will stand before Him in glory and He will tell them;

**Matthew 25:34-40**, *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

<sup>37</sup> *"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup>When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup>Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup>And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

They couldn't even remember it.

It seemed so insignificant an act at the time. But Jesus remembers.

Our Lord is letting us know in all this that each of us has a valued part to play in His kingdom work.

Even if we are on the receiving end of that work, we have a part to play in it.

Jesus lets us know that, when we receive those He sends, we receive Him.

He lets us know that when we participate in the work of those He sends, we share in their reward.

He lets us know that when we do something for them in His name even something that seems very forgettable, He never forgets it.

Isn't it wonderful that our Saviour ends such a sober discourse with such good and encouraging news?