

Training Time for Reigning Time

1 Corinthians 3:4-4:5

Northwest Community Church, Todd Havekost, 4/21/2024

Introduction

I come from a family where the men are very gifted at building and fixing things. I can't remember a time growing up when my father wasn't working a second job as an electrician or handyman. He was always in demand from friends and neighbors for all kinds of "fix up" projects. After he retired, he worked into his 80s on crews building homes with Habitat for Humanity.

But when the day came to hand out the DNA for the aptitude to build and fix things, apparently I was AWOL, because I got nothin'.¹ I am one of those people who shrinks back in fear from any purchase that includes the dreaded words "some assembly required."

Ironically, when Brenda & I got married, I gained a father-in-law who was also very gifted at building. He personally built the home that Brenda grew up in

I will always remember an interaction he and I had shortly after Brenda and I were married. He was trying to show me how to fix something and was frustrated that I wasn't getting it. I sensed his underlying concern that a man unable to fix things would not be able to provide adequately for his daughter. I responded that I knew I was not good at fixing things, but I had some other skills that were employable so I could afford to pay others to fix things. He wasn't thrilled with that answer, but over the years I think he came to accept it.

The fortunate aspect of all this for me is that though I missed out on the "fix it" genes from my father, Brenda did not miss out, so we do have one "fix it" person in our house.

Whether you are a gifted builder like the men on both sides of my family or are all thumbs like me, today's passage 1 Corinthians 3:4-4:5 teaches that each of us as Christians is capable of building a glorious structure that will result in eternal reward.

Context

This passage falls within the opening section of 1 Corinthians that deals with divisions that existed within the church in Corinth.² As we saw last month in John 17, the church living out our unity in Jesus is a very big deal to God. That was not happening in Corinth.

In the first 3 verses of chapter 3 Paul mourns that instead of lives reflecting the presence of the Spirit of God the Corinthians were living in a "**fleshly**" manner experiencing "**jealousy and strife**." They were "**walking like mere men**" with lifestyles indistinguishable from people who don't know God.

¹ Both of my brothers also got the DNA. One brother has purchased more than a dozen dilapidated, unlivable homes over the years, completely renovated them, and now rents them out.

² The section begins: **Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment (1:10).**

1 Corinthians 3:4-8a

Beginning in verse 4 Paul addresses the wrong thinking that contributed to their lack of unity.

For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? (3:4)

As he had previewed back in chapter 1, they had divided into factions with allegiances divided between leaders. Paul goes on to show why these divisions make no sense. That is always the case sin, in the light of truth sin is always entirely irrational.

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one (3:5).

Apollos and Paul are servants, they have a supporting role, not the primary one.

I planted, Apollos watered ... (3:6a)

Acts 18 tells the story of Paul planting the church when he arrived in Corinth. Later in that chapter we read that Apollos "watered", he "**greatly helped those who had believed by grace**" (18:27).

But God was causing the growth (3:6b).

Harkening back to chapter 2 (verses 1-5), the formation of the church did not rely on Paul's natural speaking ability, and the growth of the church was not explained by Apollos' teaching gifts. They were both relying on the power of God working through them as they fulfilled their assigned roles.

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth (3:7).

This is the third reference in three verses to God being responsible for the results. God accomplishes His purposes by His power through His people. We appreciate human leaders but will not become inordinately attached to them. God alone is worthy of our allegiance.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one (3:8a)

There is an underlying unity among leaders, they serve the same Master, who alone is responsible for the outcomes.

1 Corinthians 3:8b-11

So far, the focus of the passage has been on God's power. Paul and Apollos are **mere men**, only **servants** who are not **anything**. So we might think that it doesn't make any difference what Paul or Apollos (or we) do. But that would be a wrong conclusion, as Paul now proceeds to explain.

But each will receive his own reward according to his own labor (3:8b).

What each servant does is of great significance because it will result in corresponding reward.

For we are God's fellow workers (3:9a).

God has chosen a mode of operation where He rarely acts unilaterally. Instead, He involves us in almost everything He does, through our actions or our prayers or (most often) both.

When you lovingly teach God's Word to a child or youth or adult

- When you perform your daily job as if you were working directly for Jesus
- When you show the love of Jesus to a hurting friend or someone who is not being loving to you
- When you walk by faith through major adversity continuing to testify to the goodness of God

You are God's co-worker, what an honor, how incredibly significant.³

You are God's field, God's building (3:9b).

Paul now transitions the metaphor from a field to a building to help us recognize the eternal reward God promises for faithful service to Him.

According to the grace of God which was given to me (3:10a)

All ministry flows out of God's commission, out of His stewardship to us (more to come on that later).

Like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it (3:10b).

The Greek word here for master builder is "architekton." In the analogy Paul compares his ministry to the work of a skilled architect.

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (3:11).

As he said in chapter 2, when Paul planted the church in Corinth, He preached "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (2:2). Jesus is the only possible foundation for a church, He is her Savior. As we just celebrated last month, Jesus purchased His church with His blood on Good Friday. He became her risen Lord on Easter Sunday

And what is true of the church as a whole is also true for us as individuals. Every one of us who becomes a member of His church does so by believing in Jesus for eternal life. At that moment we passed from spiritual death to eternal life, we were born again into the family of God, and we were profoundly blessed by countless other changes that occurred for us.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

In verse 12 Paul continues the building analogy to examine the nature of our service in Jesus' church.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw (3:12)⁴

The image here is the activities of our lives represent building with one of two sets of building materials, either gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and straw. The contrast here is not primarily between good and evil works but between pursuits that have eternal impact vs. those which do not have enduring value.

³ Decades ago, while I was a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, I had the opportunity to go into the home of one of the professors, Charles Ryrie, and fix something on his computer. He had recently published the Ryrie Study Bible and was a prominent evangelical theologian in those days. I don't remember what I fixed, but I still remember 40 years later how honored I felt to have had the privilege of helping Charles Ryrie.

⁴ The "any man" of verse 12 is addressed to everyone who serves as part of Jesus' church in carrying out Jesus' mission. And since Eph. 4:16 tells us the body of Christ is "fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part", that includes all of us.

When we do what God wants us to do, depending on His power, with the motive of making Him look good, we are building with gold, silver, and precious stones.

Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work (3:13).

"**The day**" refers to the judgment seat of Christ, the term used in 2 Cor. 5:10,⁵ where Jesus will evaluate the life of each believer, or as it is described here "**the quality of each man's work.**"

If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (3:14-15).

We readily understand the idea of "**burned up**" from its role in the smelting process, where intense heat is used to purify metals and burn off elements of little value.⁶

"**He himself will be saved**" – Jesus' evaluation of our lives has nothing to do with whether we have eternal life. We received that as a free gift entirely apart from works the moment we believed in Jesus.⁷

If eternal life is not at stake, then what is? "**He will receive a reward**" – this evaluation is for the purpose of reward.

To the extent a life has been governed by serving self, impressing others, things that don't matter for eternity, those activities will be burned up, they will not be rewarded. **He will suffer loss**; it will be a tragic missed opportunity of epic proportions. But serving Jesus faithfully, doing what He puts on our hearts to do, in His power, to please and honor Him, this will **receive a reward**.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

The previous paragraph has been about those who build up the church. Verses 16 and 17 contain a warning about being on the other side of that.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (3:16)

Both "you"s in this verse are plural, making it clear Paul is still talking about the church. God's church is not a building, but a community of His people indwelt by His Spirit. But continuing the building metaphor he describes the church as "a temple of God" here.

If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are (3:17).

⁵ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

⁶ In some circles any reference to fire in Scripture is interpreted to refer to hell, but as Dave explained last month in John 15:6 that is frequently not the case.

⁷ Despite their multitude of issues with bad conduct, never throughout the two letters to the Corinthians does Paul ever question that the Corinthians were believers ("**saints**" and "**brethren**" in Paul's terms). Some understand 2 Cor. 13 in that manner, but see Dave's Aug. 2022 sermon for a far better interpretation of that passage. Just as for them, so also for us. There are far-reaching, eternal implications associated with the extent to which we live faithfully as God's children in this life. But those are entirely separate from all the irrevocable blessings we received the moment we believed in Jesus for eternal life. The extent to which we live faithfully as God's children is of immense importance, but it has nothing to do with earning, keeping, or proving that we possess eternal life.

The word translated "destroy" here can also mean "ruin" or "spoil."⁸ Picture someone walking onto the clean white carpet of the church and trashing the place with the "muddy" shoes of a divisive spirit (which we have seen was a huge problem in Corinth). Anyone who seeks to damage the local church, who sows seeds of division, who tears down the reputation of the church before the world, is "picking a fight" with God. This will incur "ruin" from God, which could take a myriad of forms, even leading to premature death (which comes into view later in 1 Cor. 11). This is a sober warning for all of us to ensure we guard and protect and cherish the local church.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

To help us have God's perspective on how He wants us to live, Paul has used metaphors of raising crops in a field and builders of a building. Now as we skip ahead to the beginning of chapter 4, he introduces a third image, that of a steward.

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (4:1).

Assume you (a resident of San Antonio) just purchased a house on a 40-acre property in the Kerrville area about 60 miles away. And assume you were living 2000 years ago when all transportation took place on foot, with no remote communication, no email, and no Zoom calls. How would you manage that property that you own?

I imagine you would select someone in that area to live on and manage the property with the expectation they do so in accordance with your wishes until the next time you returned, which might be in 12 months or 12 years. That is the concept of a steward,⁹ which appears frequently in Jesus' teaching.¹⁰

Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful (4:2, NKJV).

We each receive an individual stewardship from God that extends to every facet of our lives, including time, ministries, abilities, resources, family, sphere of influence, and more. For each of us, the requirement is to faithfully fulfill that unique stewardship He has assigned to us.

But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself (4:3).

Only the master is qualified to evaluate the steward. Others do not know how the master has commissioned the steward.

One of the many messed-up aspects at Corinth is that they were very critical of the apostle Paul. This is one hint in the first letter. By the latter stages of 2 Corinthians, it had erupted into all-out warfare. But Paul wasn't fazed by their opposition. He was crystal clear on his stewardship from Jesus, that was all that mattered.

For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord (4:4).

Even the steward himself does not have full knowledge of how faithfully he has carried out his stewardship, until he hears from the master.

⁸ "Destroy, ruin, corrupt, spoil" (BAG, p. 865).

⁹ On expressed in a more direct manner, a steward was put in charge by the master for an indefinite period of time, with the assignment to manage the master's assets in the best interests of the master, operating without supervision with all the authority of the master until he returns, at which time the master will evaluate how well the steward fulfilled his assignment.

¹⁰ Sometimes Jesus used the same word (Gk. oikonomos) found here (Luke 12:42; 16:1ff), while in other cases He referred to the same concept using different terms (e.g., parables of talents Matt 25:14ff and minas Luke 19:11ff).

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time (4:5a)

A primary application of this truth that we answer to Jesus for our individual stewardship is we should not judge others, because we don't know the scope of what He has given them to do.¹¹ One of my great regrets in life was judging my wife for many years, imposing my perception of what God wanted her to do as if I knew what that was, rather than cheering her on as she lives out her stewardship.

One meaningful aspect of genuine community can be sharing specifics of our stewardships with one another. With that knowledge we can cheer each other on and pray for one another to faithfully carry out that mission.

But wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God (4:5b).

The Lord's evaluation is all that matters.

- He alone knows what He expected of us.
- He alone knows everything we've done.
- He alone knows our motives.
- We live for an audience of One.

There is nothing more important for each of us than seeking to faithfully fulfill Jesus' stewardship as we determine the orientation and activities of our lives. That includes being sensitized to how that can change with life transitions such as parenting young children, retiring from full-time employment, or facing major health adversity.

Whatever our situation, what is the requirement for a steward? To be found faithful.

Eyes of Faith

This passage's teachings on living faithfully to fulfill our stewardship and receive future reward highlight the importance of walking by faith and living with a Biblical perspective on the purpose and "whys" of the events of our lives. To help reinforce that, let's use an illustration of seeing with two eyes.

1. One eye represents the things experienced through our 5 senses, the earth-bound perspective that comes naturally to us and to every person. The Bible (2 Cor. 4:18) refers to this as "**the things which are seen.**"
2. The other eye represents the eye of faith, that operates with the informed awareness of the bigger picture of God's unseen purposes. The Bible calls this "**the things which are not seen.**"¹²

I will wear this eyepatch briefly to symbolize living with only that "natural" eye and being "blind" to the influence of the eye of faith. We might live this way out of ignorance of what the Bible teaches about walking by faith, or because it is our familiar and natural response to what happens to us, or because it is easier to "go with the flow" of how most everyone else lives. There are lots of reasons we might drift into life with an eyepatch.

What are some symptoms of life wearing an eyepatch?

- Anxiety when things don't go the way we think they should
- Opposition leads to shrinking back and seeking the path of least resistance
- Adversity leads to complaining and even to despair.

¹¹ When we are passionate about something God has put on our hearts, it can be tempting to place an expectation on others to have at least some of that same passion. But that flies in the face of Paul's clear teaching here.

¹² Heb. 11:1 describes the eye of faith as "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (NIV).

When the apostles were preaching in Acts 5¹³ they were arrested, threatened with death, whipped, ordered to stop speaking about Jesus, and finally released from custody. If they were living with an eyepatch, without the eye of faith, how might they have responded?

- Why is this happening to us?
- I thought God loved me and had a wonderful plan for my life.
- We are doing what Jesus told us to do but it's resulting in all this opposition.
- This is too hard; we need to stop telling people about Jesus.

Acts 5:41-42 tells us how they did respond. **"So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."**

Fortunately, they were not living with an eyepatch. They rejoiced, they interpreted what happened as confirmation that God was working through them in their current situation to develop faithfulness and character. They recognized God was preparing them for increasing impact in fulfilling His purposes going forward, both in this age and the age to come. They kept right on preaching.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 speaks directly to living with both eyes. **Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

Outcome: Reigning

The Bible presents several ways in which faithful living in this life will impact our experience in the life to come, when God's original purposes in creation will be redeemed and His "enterprise" will advance without opposition across all creation. We already talked today about building with precious stones. Let's briefly explore 3 more themes: reigning, intimacy, and crowns.¹⁴

One outcome of faithful living is that we will be granted expanded authority and scope of impact as God's co-workers carrying out His purposes in the age to come.

This is sometimes expressed in terms of reigning with Jesus. In 2 Tim. 2:12 we read **"If we endure, we will also reign with Him."** In Rev. 3:21 Jesus says **"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."**¹⁵

Jesus also highlighted this concept in His parables, as in the parable of the talents. **His master said to him,¹⁶ 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'** (Matt 25:21)¹⁷

¹³ Acts 5:17-40

¹⁴ Several NT word pictures supplement the many direct NT references to "reward" (Gk. misthos). In addition to those covered explicitly in this sermon, others include "treasures in heaven" (Matt 6:20) and the capacity to "glorify" God (i.e. make God look good), seen in the image of the church as the bride adorned in the fine linen of righteous acts at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-8)).

¹⁵ As **"those who have stood by Me in My trials"** Jesus promised the disciples they would **"sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"** in Luke 22:28-30, also Matt 19:28.

¹⁶ The 5-talent servant.

¹⁷ The same concept is found in His parable about the minas, **"because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities"** (Luke 19:17).

Being faithful in the "little things" of this life puts us in a position to hear "**well done**" from Jesus in the age to come. But notice how Jesus finished that sentence, **well done** ... so as a result ... **I will put you in charge of many things.** Faithfulness in smaller things leads to opportunities for greater contributions toward the fulfillment of God's purposes in this life and in the age to come.

Dr Earl Radmacher had a catchy way of expressing this principle, he described this life as "training time for reigning time." As we cooperate, God works through our experiences in this life to train us for reigning with Jesus in the age to come.

You parents of young children experience this all the time. You could accomplish tasks at home much faster yourselves. But you often involve your children to help them grow in skill and responsibility, preparing them to contribute in expanded ways as they grow up and even into adulthood.¹⁸

What was God's original purpose when he created man in His image? **God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth"** (Gen 1:28). **Subdue it**, exercise dominion, be My agents in carrying out My purposes on earth. Be My faithful stewards.

How well did Adam carry out that assigned mission? He failed miserably. Instead of depending on God he decided he needed his own knowledge of good and evil so he could operate independently from God, plunging the human race and all of creation into chaos and destruction, and handing over dominion of God's creation to Satan and his agents for a time.

When Jesus returns and inaugurates His kingdom over which He will reign in righteousness, He will restore and redeem and even elevate God's original purposes for creation. And He will then again be enlisting faithful agents who will "rule with Him" to carry out His purposes.

This life indeed is God's "training time for reigning time." As we cooperate, God works through our experiences in this life to train us for reigning with Jesus in the age to come. Awareness of that overriding purpose can transform how we perceive everything we experience.

Outcome: Intimacy

A second outcome of faithful living will be closer intimacy with God in this life and in the age to come. Jesus said, "**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him**" (John 14:23).¹⁹

Sometimes we refer to those who have believed in Jesus for eternal life as "sons and daughters" of God. It is certainly true that we believers are all children of God. He permanently adopted us the moment we believed.

But "son" references for believers are less common in the NT than you might think. Consider John's extensive writings, a gospel, three letters, and the book of Revelation. There about 70 uses of "son" in the gospel of John, and they almost all refer to Jesus.²⁰ The Son is always entirely aligned with the Father. The Son enjoys a special intimacy with the Father.

¹⁸ A related example could involve some group you are a part of. A workplace is one example, but it could be school or neighborhood or church. Imagine a promotion or role with expanded scope of influence that you aspire to. You would be honored to be selected for a promotion to that expanded responsibility based on your good work in your current position.

¹⁹ Another example from the Upper Room Discourse is John 15:14, "**You are My friends if you do what I command you.**"

²⁰ It is occasionally used of a human son, e.g., by the parents of the son born blind, John 9:20.

But in his gospel John refers to believers as "children", never as sons.²¹ It is the same story in John's three epistles, a couple dozen uses of "Son" all refer to Jesus. Believers are referred to as children, not sons.

Finally, when we come to the book of Revelation, we find that John doesn't use "son" to refer to a believer until we reach Rev. 21, where we read **"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son"** (Rev. 21:7). The one who overcomes, the one who remains faithful even in the face of opposition, will enjoy a special intimacy with God. God will refer to him as "Son", the rich term of endearment He regularly used of Jesus.

We are familiar with having special names for loved ones that convey intimacy. Many of us have special names for our wives or husbands or children that only we use. In one of the letters to the churches earlier in Revelation, Jesus speaks of a special name that will be given to faithful ones. **"To him who overcomes ... I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it"** (Rev. 2:17).

This past summer Taylor Swift had dozens of massive stadium concerts. Each night tens of thousands of people gained access to the stadiums by having tickets. Many sat in nosebleed seats. Others had backstage passes, and they went out to eat with Taylor after the concert to celebrate and interact with her.

Scripture speaks of a special intimacy with God to be enjoyed in the life to come by those who live faithfully in this life.

Outcome: Crowns

A final outcome of faithful living we will mention today is receiving a crown from Jesus. With the Paris Olympics coming up, winning a "gold medal" is a very familiar concept to us.

Later in 1 Cor. Paul explains that he has oriented his entire life around "winning" this recognition. **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable** (1 Cor 9:24-25). "Wreath" here is same word that is translated "crown" in many other passages.

The Bible mentions five types of crowns or "gold medals" that Jesus will award to honor those who serve Him faithfully, with particular emphasis on faithfulness in the face of trials, opposition, and adversity.

The difference here from the Olympics is that there is absolutely zero element of competition. As we saw earlier in our passage, we each have a completely individual stewardship. This "race" is about being faithful (or not) to that unique stewardship Jesus has given each one of us. There is absolutely no place for comparison with anyone else.

At the end of his life in 2 Tim. 4, as he is on the verge of being martyred, Paul rejoiced that his mid-life aspiration to "run the race faithfully" had been realized, and he looked forward with anticipation to the resulting crown he would receive from Jesus on **"that day."**

"The time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (4:6b-8).

²¹ E.g., **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name** (John 1:12).

Conclusion

In the midst of cadets at the Air Force Academy who were studying to become future military leaders, a man about my age named Bill was working as a janitor. He was barely noticed as he did his job cleaning up after the students.

One day a cadet was studying about Medal of Honor recipients, including an account of an Army soldier who served heroically in Italy during WW II, facing almost certain death to save the lives of fellow soldiers. After the battle, this soldier was captured by the Nazis and became a POW. The Army thought he had been killed and was not aware that he had been set free a year later and returned home.

This cadet noticed that the soldier's name was William Crawford, and some other factors led him to ask their janitor Bill if he was this heroic soldier. Bill confirmed that he was.

It is customary that when a living recipient is awarded the Medal of Honor, the President of the U.S. makes the presentation in person. Because William Crawford was in a POW camp and thought to be dead, that did not happen in 1944. Instead, the Medal of Honor was presented to his father back in the U.S..

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan came to the Air Force Academy to address the graduating class at their ceremony. Thousands of people gathered in the stadium that night, including many famous people who joined the President on the stage.

But when President Reagan stepped to the microphone to announce his intention to honor someone, he called a man nobody expected, William Crawford, to join him at the podium. Crawford's heroic actions were read, and then President Reagan placed the Medal of Honor around his neck.

On a day when graduates were honored for their accomplishments and many well-known guests were in attendance, the man receiving the greatest honor was an unknown janitor. Only William Crawford stood side by side with the President.

On "**the day**" (as 1 Cor. 3:13 calls it), on "**that day**" (as 2 Tim. 4:8 describes it), Jesus will evaluate our lives, and He will award "medals" to each believer who lived faithfully to the stewardship He gave them. Jesus will not only be commending single acts of heroism (although there will be a multitude of martyred saints so honored), but primarily lives of faithfulness. We may be as unknown to men as Bill the janitor, but Jesus knows everything, and His evaluation will be true.

Living with eyes of faith enables us to recognize every aspect of our lives as part of God's "training time for reigning time". As we sang earlier, "the Lord is calling faithful men [and women]". May each one of us heed that call.²²

²² Scripture describes the profound benefits of living faithfully for Jesus in this life that result in lasting blessings in the life to come in a multitude of ways: gaining God's approval, His favor, His reward, crowns; pleasing Him; reigning with Him; fellow heirs with Him; experiencing intimacy with Him; bringing more glory to Him. Individually and cumulatively, these teachings are designed to profoundly impact us, to grip our hearts, to spur us on, to shape the values that direct our daily lives, and to empower us to endure particularly in the face of hardship and opposition.