

The Remuneration—Matthew 20:16

#0610

Study given by W. D. Frazee—November 11, 1975

You will remember in an earlier study we were looking at the Savior's parable in the Matthew 20. We were noting the various classes of workers regarding remuneration. In the parable of the householder there were some who knew they were going to get a definite wage, and knew how much it was. Is that wrong? No. There were others who didn't know what they were going to get. They trusted the householder. Anything wrong about that? No.

Obviously no person can be in both situations at the same time. There is no way to know what you are going to get and still not know what you are going to get. There is no way to have your cake and eat it too.

You ask, Which one would I like?

The question is which one is the Master's choice? He knows, He loves, He cares. Nothing His truth condemns. He always gives His very best to those who leave the choice to Him. You can never get anything better than God's best.

In 2 Corinthians we read, "But they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." There are few things in life that people use to make these comparisons more than the matter of remuneration. That spirit seeps into the Lord's work. Whether it is the matter of a wage we know we can expect, or merely an allowance we don't know how much, unless we understand the principle our human nature will manifest itself in making comparisons. This has been true in the work of God down through the ages.

Solomon was going to build the temple. Instead of trusting God, he sent off to a foreign country and got a man who was considered an expert. He was paid a special wage beyond what the ordinary worker was getting because he was an expert. Some of the supervisors and the foreman decided that if he could get such a fabulous wage, they ought to get more than they were getting. So they did. Before the story was over, Israel was ruined for time and eternity.

Read the story in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. This was one of the great causes of apostasy, and the prophet to the remnant applies this to our church and our work today in publishing work, in medical work, and in other phases of institutional work. So this evening we want to study the great privilege we have of being volunteers for Jesus.

Let me make plain that we believe in a tithe supported ministry and a church supported core of workers who may, under certain circumstances such as we have in America today, have an assured income and security. But God has also called through the years, and is calling today, for volunteers who step out without that

assurance. These volunteers are self-supporting workers. This doesn't mean they are better than others or holier than others. It simply means that to them a particular call has come.

As I told you in an earlier lesson, unless God has called you to that work, it is only a matter of time until you will be out of it. You will either go into something where you can work for God on an assured wage and security, or else you will be out trying to make money and feather your own nest. In either case, you won't be in this kind of program anymore.

You will agree with me that this is not exactly the place to come to get rich. Why does anybody come here then? You know why you came. Thank God there are others who come because they heard the call of God.

“When Christ called His disciples to follow Him, He offered them no flattering prospects in this life. He gave them no promise of gain or worldly honor, nor did they make any stipulation as to what they should receive. To Matthew as he sat at the receipt of custom, the Saviour said, ‘Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.’ Matthew did not, before rendering service, wait to demand a certain salary, equal to the amount received in his former occupation. Without question or hesitation he followed Jesus. It was enough for him that he was to be with the Saviour, that he might hear His words and unite with Him in His work. “Today the Saviour calls us, as He called Matthew” *Ministry of Healing*, pages 479,480.

What is stipulation? A condition of acceptance. Think of a man in government service being invited to leave without any promise of remuneration. There are those who think it unwise, if not criminal, to involve workers in a program that does not give them a guaranteed wage, and offers them no security. Obviously they should not be in it if they think that way. And they won't be in it long.

But this says that today God is still calling some people as He called Matthew, and He called Matthew without any guarantee of wage, or security. Nothing of that kind. There are those who think it foolish to offer a thing like that, and twice foolish to accept it.

Well, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. But remember, we are not saying this is for everybody. We are saying it is for some. This is the land of the free. People are free to go on welfare and live off the government to the tune of billions of dollars. Thank God there is still freedom for a few people to be self-supporting, and give their lives in service for God without thought of remuneration.

Aren't you thankful? One of the purposes of God in giving medical missionary training is to develop workers who want to do this and want to keep on doing this. I read concerning Loma Linda:

“I have been instructed that we should have a school conducted on the principles of the ancient schools of the

prophets. It may not be carried on in every respect as are the schools of the world, but it is to be especially adapted for those who desire to devote their lives not to commercial pursuits but to unselfish service for the Master" *Medical Ministry*, page 75.

What are pursuits? Running after something. What are commercial pursuits? Running after money. Anybody in it today? Yes. Millions of people. Not everybody gets what they run after, but most people who are working are working for money. The proof of that lies in the fact that if oil were discovered on the property of those who are workers, or some other means of income fell into their hands, they would quit doing what they are doing.

Would you quit doing what you are doing if your rich uncle were to die and leave you a million dollars? If you would quit doing what you are doing under those circumstances, you are missing your destiny. It is a wonderful thing to recognize that your life is too precious to be sold on the auction block.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price" 1 Corinthians 6:19.

If there is somebody here tonight who doesn't need this lesson, I wish you would put it in the deep freeze, because you are going to need it someday. Take notes on it and have it where you can get at it. You might need it sooner than you think.

Are you bought? What is the price? The blood of Jesus. You belong to Jesus. I read these marvelous words:

"Christ has paid us our wages, even His own blood and suffering, to secure our willing service" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 330.

Oh, what wages. And paid in advance. He didn't wait until we work for Him a year. Before we ever enlisted He said, I want your service. I want your life. I want you. And I am going to pay your wages.

If our wages are already paid, why should we expect anything more? If a man hired you to work for him and said he would pay you \$25 a day, and he paid you in advance for a month, what would you do? You would work right on. Why? Because you have already been paid your wages.

You say, Yes, but what can I do for a living?

Listen, besides already paying our wages, Jesus guarantees us an expense account.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:19.

How much is an expense account? That all depends on what the expense is. Some people out in the world take advantage of that. They go to some place and get a discount and get the bill on the original price, and turn that in and get more money back from the expense account than they expended. But you and I are not interested in that, are we?

I heard an “s” on the word need. Look at your Bible and see if it is there. Is it? No. It would be all right if it were, but this is all inclusive. My God shall supply all your need. Anything you need. Everything you need. Who will supply it? God will supply it. Do you believe it?

Somebody says, Yes, but I don't know how to put that into the cash register.

That is what you are learning. Concerning the students at Madison over sixty years ago Ellen White wrote, “They have been learning to become self-supporting, and a training more important than this they could not receive.” And it will be still more important in the days to come.

It is wonderful what is taking place right now in the expansion of this program. Brother Wilson was telling us a bit about it the other night. From time to time we read about it and hear about it. It is spreading like yeast. It is growing like the little mustard plant from the little seed. And what I am studying with you tonight is the essence of this program. Take this out of it and you had just as well forget it. If what we are after is assured income, high wages, or at least assured wages and security, there are plenty of places we can get that. But here is something different. Thank God for the challenge.

“Christ has paid us our wages, even His own blood and suffering, to secure our willing service. He came to our world to give us an example of how we should work, and what spirit we should bring into our labor” *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 330.

What were Christ's wages as He labored? How much of a legacy did He leave when He died? All He left were those few clothes his murderers gambled over. Yes, there was some other legacy He left. He left His mother to be cared for by John. John didn't say, Master, where is the money going to come from to look after her. No. He accepted the legacy. He believed the promise of Jesus, “Go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.” “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” This is the way the third angel's message began.

“In the future our work is to be carried forward in self-denial and self-sacrifice even beyond that which we have seen in past years. Let us walk in meekness and lowliness of mind, and put before our associates an example of self-sacrifice. If we do our part in faith, God will open ways before us now undreamed of” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 206.

Has He done it? Why, it is amazing what God is doing. Five or six years ago we had never heard of Zambia in Africa. And there are several places here in the United States and Canada we hadn't heard of. There are some more we haven't heard about that we will be hearing about, provided we thoroughly understand and accept and embrace and rejoice in this principle, not merely of sacrifice, but of venturing out on the promise of God, going beyond visible resources, undertaking things in the name of Jesus.

There are two ways to do this. One is by faith and the other is by presumption. Faith succeeds and presumption fails. Israel went through the Red Sea by faith. The Egyptians tried to do the same thing, and they got drowned. The person who ventures out in self-supporting work of the kind we are talking about may get drown if God has not called him, or if he forgets to pray, or if he forgets to sacrifice, or if he forgets to work.

It takes all three. It takes earnest prayer, real sacrifice, and hard work.

That triangle is unbreakable. God has to work miracles for every one of His children that he has called who ventures out on His command and His promise, and combines prayer, sacrifice, and hard work.

“Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief” *Ministry of Healing*, page 481.

If you want to find the way that God has prepared to bring relief, you will find it in the difficulty. That is what this says. I have often said that I don't care how big a bill comes in the mail tomorrow morning if in the same mail a check arrives big enough to pay the bill. What do you say? And it happens again and again.

“Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet” *Ibid*.

What is the one principle that we are to accept as supreme? Making the service of God first. Making it supreme. Listen. What happens to the work is more important than what happens to me. I am not first. God's work is first. Is that the principle Jesus used? Yes. He died, like the corn of wheat falling into the ground, to spring up and bear an abundant harvest. And of His twelve apostles, all but one died a martyr. They tried to kill him, but God preserved His life when they put him into the boiling oil. To all intents and purposes, he was a martyr. So all twelve of those men laid down their lives, first in service and then in sacrifice.

Was it worth it to get the work going? Will it be worth it to get it closed? Do you want a part in it? Do you know what happens to a sacrifice? Does it get bigger or smaller? It gets smaller, and finally is consumed. That is what will happen to you if you stick with this program.

Well, why would anybody, knowing that, get into it?

For love's sake. Jesus has paid us our wages, and anything He wants us to do He has guaranteed us this expense account.

I mentioned earlier this matter of comparing with one another. I have been on this campus in the early days of this work when month after month after month nobody got a nickel. They got something to eat, they got a place to sleep, but they knew not a nickel. That's what it took to get the work started. So we didn't have any problem of making comparisons. The only way you could get less than anybody else would be to eat less, and that was your choice. But it is surprising what a little bit of remuneration it takes to get people making comparisons.

I came here to work for Jesus. I am glad to take that ten percent of what I used to get and with God's help spread it over my need. I am. Understand that I could get ten times as much where I came from. I voluntarily came here at that greatly reduced remuneration. And even that I am not sure of.

Did you know you were not sure of getting anything here? In case you didn't, I am letting you know right now. That's right. If there is anybody here who has guaranteed it, let me know so I can persuade the administration to change that. No, let those who have an assured remuneration and security go elsewhere because there are a thousand places that are bidding for and offering that. We are here getting an experimental experience in living without that kind of security. If some people feel sorry for us, I feel sorry for them.

Remember, God has not called everybody to this, but everybody He has called has the opportunity of having a fellowship with Jesus in solving problems, in meeting difficulties, in praying earnestly and not knowing where the answer is coming from, and then seeing God work. That is worth all the money in this world. But remember, you must do it by faith. If you do it by presumption, you will get drowned just as sure as the Egyptians did.

You must know God has called you, and you must be prepared to take the consequences. You must be prepared week after week and month after month to live a hand to mouth existence, if that is what God arranges.

That is what George Muller of Bristol did. In his lifetime five million dollars passed through his hands for the care of orphans that by faith he took the burden for.

Somebody said, Muller, it looks like your experience is a hand to mouth existence.

He said, Yes it is. From God's hand to my mouth.

I have left a good job and accepted a ninety percent cut in remuneration, and everything is fine. I am happy. I discover a fellow work is getting ten dollars more than I am. What happens? I feel bad. Or do I? That all depends upon what my philosophy is. Let me read something interesting from the prophet:

“It is through harmonious action that our own work is to be carried forward, and some will have a very hard time. Some will have an easier time. But all these things will have to be taken just as they come, and the workers must remember what Jesus gave in coming to our world.”

Selected Messages, Book 2, page 204.

Notice she doesn't say a hard time. She says a very hard time. Oh, that is the remedy for all those problems. When I find out that someone is getting ten dollars more than I do, there are several things I could do.

I could go to the administration and say, I hear that Brother Brown's stipend is more than mine. I think mine ought to be raised, or his ought to be brought down.

There is something worse I can do. I can let it eat away at my vitals like an ulcer. Say nothing to anybody. Drop some little word of doubt or criticism here and there. Maybe I don't even do that. I just let it eat away. It can happen.

As I have thought about this meeting tonight, God has impressed me to share with you the joy of a different way entirely. It is to say, Lord, if he is getting ten dollars more he probably needs it. You know more about it than I do. If he has a bigger expense account than I, he must have more expense.

And you don't have to audit his books to find out either. Leave that to God and the angels. There is nothing for you to worry about. Not in the least. It doesn't need to cast any shadow over your heart. You can go singing along the way.

“The Lord can bring matters around so that a blessing will attach to our laborers far exceeding any compensation we may or may not receive; and He will give to His servants words to speak that are of the highest consequence to perishing souls” *Ibid*, page 205.

Oh friends. I care not how big a man's stipend or wage or salary or dividend may be. If most of his salary is coming from money, he is a poor man. I am a rich man. I used to tell my little girl that. “Did you know your daddy is the richest man in all the world?”

She would look up to me and say, “But not in money daddy.”

And we both enjoyed that. But listen. Wouldn't it be a shame to miss the blessing that God has within your reach in the endeavor for you to grasp something you don't have?

I often think of the little dog that was trotting along the path with a bone in his mouth. You know how a dog likes to carry a bone. As he was walking along, the trail led over a little bridge. As he passed over he happened to see in the water another dog with a bone in his mouth. As he jumped to get the bone in the other

dog's mouth, he dropped the bone he had in his mouth. He went home without supper.

Oh, wouldn't it be a shame to miss the benefits, the compensation, the remuneration that God has put into this program of cooperation and partnership with Him in the endeavor to grab a little more money? This is what Judas did. What job, among others, did Judas have in the institution? He was the treasurer. The prophet tells us that he sometimes paid himself for little errands he did for Jesus. Got a little extra on the side. He thought he was smart. But he didn't realize what he was missing. What an expensive way of missing things.

I brought along something as a sample of what I am talking about. I want you to take a look at it. If you want, you can put a money value on it. There are some people who would be glad to give me a dollar for it. It is spring flowers, blooming already in November. Helen and I picked them on the cliff on Wildwood property less than two hours ago. Take a look and pass them along. I say those are benefits far beyond getting an expensive bouquet in a florist shop. And think of the benefits one gets in the sunshine and fresh air and exercise looking for them, and the joy of discovery. It only takes a few minutes. I thank God for these messengers of His love.

I will tell you something interesting about that. I was weary when I went over into the dell. As we walked I wondered how many we would find. We had been over there some days ago and found one.

My wife said, "I think we might find two today."

I said, "I am going to guess three."

To myself I had a little prayer with the Lord. I said, "Lord, I am not going to make this a test of whether you love me or not, but I wish I could find a blue one."

The first one my wife laid eyes on was a beautiful light blue. You will find it in there. In fact, there were three of them. That's right. You don't find those every day. If you are getting ten dollars stipend more than I am, that's ok. I got these. Do you see what I mean? And wouldn't it be a shame for me to miss the blessing and joy and thanksgiving of something like this because my mind was on financial matters?

Somebody says, It is all right under certain circumstances, but you can't pay bill with hepaticas.

I recognize that. At least not the kind of bill you are talking about. But I come back to the promise. "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." To some people that is mystic. Thank God, it works.

Something just comes to my mind that belongs right here. Just a few days ago up in Washington D. C. one of the leading officers of the General Conference was talking to a group, and he said, "A few days ago I was visiting a place called Beautiful Valley. I became acquainted with some very interesting things. In the work we are in, if we want something we go to the budget and see if it is there. If it isn't

we know we can't have it. But those folks down there don't have any budget. So when they need something they go to God, and they get it."

Oh, isn't it a privilege to have a part in a demonstration like that? It would be hard for everybody on this place to have an experience quite as sacrificial as most of our faculty at Beautiful Valley have. But if you want it bad enough, I will tell you how to get it.

I learned how before I ever got into self-supporting work. When I was in conference on a conference salary I took on, under the leadership of God and the blessing of God, more obligations than I had assets. I surrounded myself with self-supporting workers, and evolved them in soul winning service, and took on the responsibility for keeping them at work, and praying with them that God would supply their need as well as mine. So I got these experiences even though I had an assured salary, because the obligations I had taken were greater than my visible assets.

Anyone can have these experiences in faith and prayer even if you are a millionaire. You don't have to be cheated out of something like this. Let God lead you in taking on problems. And if you don't know where to find them, some of us can help you. There are plenty around. And remember, the Lord can bring matters around so that a blessing can attach to our labors far exceeding any compensation we may or may not receive.

Let me give you another example. This is a description of a medical missionary rural center near a large city with a sanitarium and a training school. It mentions several times the word benefits:

"It is well to consider the advantages of locations among the hills. There should be some land where fruit and vegetables might be raised for the benefit of the workers. The exercise called for in climbing hills is often a great benefit to our ministers, physicians, or other workers who are in danger of failing to take sufficient exercise" *Medical Ministry*, page 308.

What two things did you notice the Master speaks of as benefits for medical missionary workers? Fresh fruits and vegetables grown on the land where they live. What is the other? Exercise called for in climbing hills. Has it called you? Did you answer?

Doctor and Sister Dunn are with us tonight. He could tell us one thing after the other that medical science is telling people today is included in the benefits of exercise. Any opportunity to get it here? Six hundred acres. Is it all level? No. And the exercise called for in climbing hills is often of great benefit.

Did you know there are people who are paying money to go to a gym or the YMCA to sit on something and do this or go through some other exercise? And the One who knows tells me that exercise performed in the open air is ten times more beneficial than indoor exercise. Don't miss this. Think of it. Ten times.

So when I walk from home to the chapel, or from the chapel back home, I am getting ten times the benefit I would in an hour and a half of exercise indoors in some gym. Isn't that right? And I don't have to pay any money to get it. It is part of the remuneration. It is part of the benefits. And what a shame it would be for me to wish I were rich enough that I didn't have to walk. No. I am rich because I can walk. I am rich because I have the muscles to walk. I am rich because I have a place to walk. I am rich because I have time to walk. And I am richest of all because I have the will to walk.

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