

BLESSINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Lk 12:37-48 (context begins at v.22)

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In verse 41 Peter asks a question which Jesus did not answer directly; rather in such a way as to show that those who have heard the Lord's teachings are in a sense like a servant who has received his master's instructions. Such a servant has obligation to carry out his master's instructions. If he doesn't properly respond, the master, upon his return for an accounting will deal with him accordingly
- B. Verses 47,48 are sometimes used to prove that there will be degrees of punishment after judgment. However, it seems the beating with many or few stripes refer to the nature of judgment itself- some are accountable for more because they have been the recipients of more
- C. Purpose is not to get bogged down in discussion regarding degrees of punishment (2Tim 2:23); rather to stress the principle set forth in verse 48 - "to whom much is given much is required" (Matt 25:14-30)
- D. By way of application, we are affirming local membership makes us the beneficiaries of great blessings; thus, it also makes us liable for great responsibilities.

DISCUSSION:

I. LOCAL FOLLOWS UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP.

- A. "Church" Used in two senses:
 - 1. Universal Matt 16;18
 - a. Concerned with fellowship with God 1Jhn 1:1-4
 - b. Enter when forgiven Acts 2:38, 47
 - c. Composed of individuals 1Cor 12:13,14
 - 2. Local church 1Cor 1:2; 1Thess 1:1; involves fellowship with other Christians Phil 1:1,5
- B. Lord wants His followers to be members of local churches, local units of fellowship
 - 1. Saints at Jerusalem constituted church Acts 8:1; 9:26
 - 2. Elders of the church local Acts 14:23; 20:17,28
 - 3. Must be part of local church Acts 9:26-28
- C. Blessings are derived from membership in universal and local church
 - 1. Universal Church Eph 1:3; Heb 12:23
 - 2. Local church: **III**: orphan & child with parents. Both members of human race, but only one belongs to a specific family
 - 3. In this study we are concerned primarily with the blessings and responsibilities in local congregation

II. BLESSINGS OF LOCAL MEMBERSHIP.

- A. Members of local church are part of a spiritual family 1Tim 3:15 (house of God)
- B. Worshipping with others Heb 10:25.
 - 1. The Lord's supper Acts 20:7; 1Cor 11:20,33
 - 2. Teaching & admonishing one another Col 3:16
 - 3. Being edified 1Cor 14:26
- C. The blessing of being loved Col 2:2; 1Pet 1:22
- D. The Blessing of knowing people want to help me
 - 1. If I falter Gal 6:1,2; If I err from the truth Jas 5:19,20
 - 2. If I get hungry 1Jhn 3:17,18
- E. The Blessing of sounding out the word
 - 1. I as a Christian should teach others 1Thess 1:8
 - 2. Through treasury I can be a part of sounding out the word. Fruit abounds to my account Phil 4:16,17
- F. Genuine Friendship Jhn 15:13 who weep as I weep, rejoice as I rejoice Rom 12:15

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL MEMBERSHIP.

- A. People being conditioned not to accept responsibility for actions, or lack thereof. Some reasons are:
 - 1. Calvinism original sin predestination & foreordination
 - 2. Atheism eliminates human accountability
 - 3. Humanism denies existence of any moral standard
 - 4. Government makes "system" responsible for failure
 - 5. Legal system allows accident victims to sue for accidents caused by their own carelessness!
- B. Accountability = Responsibility Rom 14:12
- C. Examples of some specific Responsibilities
 - 1. Worship God Jhn 4:24; Matt 4:10
 - a. With gladness Ps 122:1; Reverence Hab 2:20
 - b. Humility Lk 18:13; Submission Matt 26:39
 - 2. Attend services of Local church Heb 10:25
 - 3. Maintain harmonious relationships Eph 4:1-3; 1Thes 5:14;
 - 4. Give of Our Means 1Cor 16:1,2
 - 5. Proper Conduct Tit 2:12; 1Tim 4:12
 - 6. Support scriptural discipline 1Cor 5:4-6; 2Cor 2:6
 - 7. Pray for the Saints Jas 5:16
 - 8. Personally, seek Lost Mk 16:15

CONCLUSION:

- A. Responsibilities, as members of a local church, are many and varied
- B. Must take them seriously and honor our obligations
- C. But our blessings, both as members of the universal and the local church, are so many and so great that no person should hesitate to obey the Gospel!