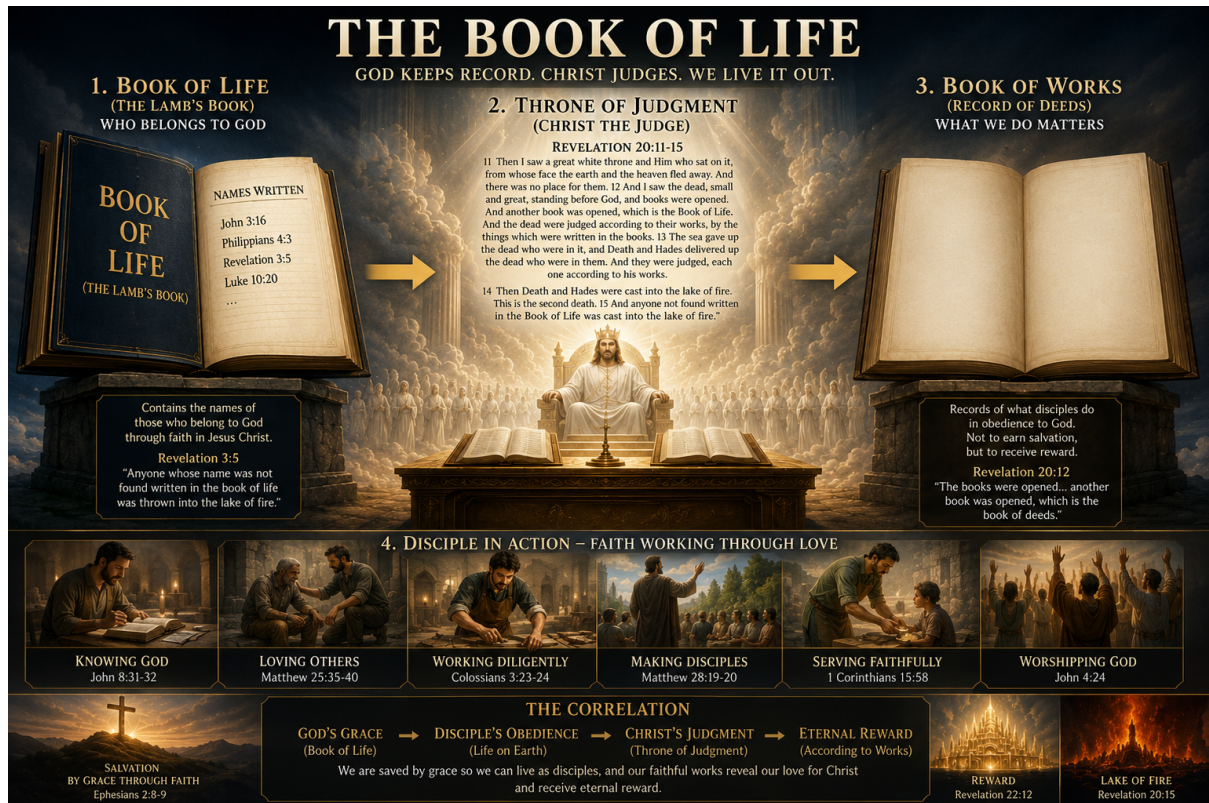


Book of Life



At the end of the age, the books in heaven will be opened, and judgment will begin. Only those whose names are written in the Book of Life will enter the Kingdom of God. It will be a time of great separation, when the righteous are distinguished from the unrighteous. As we read the following passage, we will gain a clearer picture of this solemn and glorious event.

Revelation 20.11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, **which is the Book of Life**. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the **Book of Life** was cast into the lake of fire.]

So What Do We Need to Do?

Last week's message was about the talents and working for God according to the abilities He has given us. When Christ entrusted His disciples with their calling, they immediately began working for Him on the earth, each according to the role God had appointed. Their lives show us what faithful stewardship looks like in action. We see the fuller picture of how they used what had been entrusted to them and the fruit that their labour produced.

Jesus did not call His followers to remain **spectators**. He sent them out with a purpose, giving them responsibility and expecting them to faithfully carry out His work. In the same way, every believer has been given something by God to use for His Kingdom. Let us now read how Jesus sent out the seventy disciples:

Luke 10.1 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2Then He said to them, “The **harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few**; therefore **pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest**. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.

5But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘**Peace to this house**.’ 6And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the **laborer is worthy of his wages**.

Do not go from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter, and **they receive you**, eat such things as are set before you. 9**And heal the sick there**, and say to them, ‘**The kingdom of God has come near to you**.’ 10 But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’]

And little further down in verse 17 it reads, [Then the **seventy returned with joy**, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” 18 And He said to them, “**I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven**. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because **your names are written in heaven**.”]

We See a Picture Starting to Emerge.

Jesus sends the disciples out on their second recorded mission (see Luke 9:1). This time He appoints seventy others also, saying, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few."

What began as a mission would become a lifelong calling. Following Christ's death, resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, these disciples continued to labour in God's harvest. Many faithfully served for 30 to 50 years, and some even longer, until their death.

Over those years they grew in faith, matured in character, and developed the gifts and responsibilities God had entrusted to them. Their service became more fruitful as they walked with the Lord, relying on the Holy Spirit and remaining faithful through trials and persecution.

This gives us a clearer understanding of the working out of the talents. God expects us to use what He has entrusted to us, not for a few days or months, but throughout our lives. As

we faithfully serve Him, our gifts are refined, our character is shaped, and our fruit increases for the glory of God.

Making the Connection.

We can make a reasonable connection that those who faithfully labour with the Holy Spirit through the Gospel over many years demonstrate a life surrendered to God. Their faithfulness, service, and perseverance reveal the fruit of a believer who belongs to Christ.

Paul is expressing the same truth that Christ taught, but he gives us a deeper insight. He speaks directly about fellow workers whose names are written in the Book of Life.

Philippians 4:1–3 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Paul makes a remarkable statement. He confidently identifies these believers, including his fellow workers in the Gospel, as those whose names are written in the Book of Life.

The Book of Life

If I can summarise the message from the Scriptures today, we can say with some certainty that at the end of the age, as described in the Book of Revelation, two books are opened:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life."

For our names to be written in the Book of Life, Jesus tells His disciples, and Paul says the same, that we are to labour in the Gospel. This is where we hope our names are written. It means we should faithfully work with the talents God has given us throughout the coming years, putting them to use for His glory.

To Finish - You Were Saved For a Reason.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8–10

Let us pray.