

Mark 9:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Analysis

Jesus promised: 'whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward' (ὅς γὰρ ἂν ποτίσῃ ὑμᾶς ποτήριον ὕδατος ἐν ὀνόματί μου, ὅτι Χριστοῦ ἔστε, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ τὸν μισθὸν αὐτοῦ). A cup of water is minimal hospitality—least expensive kindness. Yet even this small act done 'in my name' (ἐν ὀνόματί μου, because of Christ) receives divine reward. The phrase 'because ye belong to Christ' (Christou este, Χριστοῦ ἔστε) shows the recipient's identity determines the gift's significance. Kindness to Christ's people is kindness to Christ (Matthew 25:40). The emphatic double negative 'shall not lose' (οὐ μὲν ἀπολέσει, οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ) guarantees reward. This teaches that God values motivation over magnitude—a cup of water given for Christ's sake matters eternally. No authentic service goes unrewarded.

Historical Context

Water in ancient Palestine's arid climate was valuable commodity requiring labor to obtain. Offering water was basic hospitality (Genesis 24:17-18; John 4:7). Jesus elevates this minimal courtesy to eternal significance when motivated by loyalty to Christ. This countered merit-theology emphasizing great deeds—Pharisees emphasized major offerings, conspicuous fasting, public prayer (Matthew 6:1-18; 23:23). Jesus teaches that small acts done for Christ surpass grand gestures done for human acclaim. The promise of reward doesn't contradict salvation by grace—

rewards crown grace-empowered service, not meritorious works earning salvation. Early church emphasized that faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26), and works done in Christ receive eternal reward (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Revelation 22:12).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' promise of reward for giving a cup of water challenge our focus on 'significant' ministry while neglecting small acts of service?
2. What does the phrase 'in my name' teach about how Christ-centered motivation transforms ordinary kindness into eternally significant ministry?

Interlinear Text

Ἄνθρωπος	γὰρ	ἀν	ποτίσῃ	ὑμᾶς	ποτήριον	ὕδατος	ἐν	τῷ
whosoever	For	G302	shall give	you	a cup	of water	in	G3588
G3739	G1063		G4222	G5209	G4221	G5204	G1722	
όνοματι	μου,	ὅτι	Χριστοῦ	ἐστε	άμην	λέγω	ὑμῖν	
name	my	because	to Christ	ye belong	verily	I say	unto you	
G3686	G3450	G3754	G5547	G2075	G281	G3004	G5213	
οὐ	μὴ	ἀπολέσῃ	τὸν	μισθὸν	αὐτοῦ			
G3756	G3361	he shall	G3588	reward	G846			
		G622		G3408				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:42 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Matthew 25:40 (Parallel theme): And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

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