

Matthew 10:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Jesus concludes with stunning assurance: '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.' The diminishment from prophet to 'little ones' (μικρῶν/mikrōn) and from substantial hospitality to 'cup of cold water' emphasizes that no act of service, however small, goes unnoticed when done for Christ's sake. The phrase 'in the name of a disciple' is crucial—it's not random kindness but service rendered specifically because someone belongs to Christ. The double negative 'in no wise lose' (οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ/ou mē apolesē) is emphatic: absolute certainty of reward. This verse demonstrates God's grace—He rewards even minimal service done in faith. It also democratizes ministry: not everyone can support prophets substantially, but anyone can offer basic kindness to Christ's followers.

Historical Context

In Palestine's arid climate, cold water was precious and refreshing—wells and springs were valued resources. Offering cold water to travelers was basic hospitality but required effort: drawing from wells, maintaining supplies. The 'little ones' likely refers to Jesus's disciples, not children—they were insignificant in worldly terms, possessing no wealth, power, or status. Early Christianity appealed largely to lower classes (1 Corinthians 1:26-29), so believers' acts of service often involved simple gifts like food, water, clothing. The promise of reward echoes Old

Testament teaching that God notices every act of kindness (Proverbs 19:17, 11:24-25). This verse grounded countless acts of charity: monastics serving the poor, believers hosting persecuted Christians, believers sharing scarce resources.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'cups of cold water' opportunities do you encounter daily that you might dismiss as too small to matter?
2. How does knowing God rewards even minimal service done in faith change your approach to everyday interactions?
3. What's the difference between general kindness and service specifically 'in the name of a disciple'?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὃς	ἐὰν	ποτίσῃ	ἓνα	τῶν	μικρῶν	τούτων
And	G3739	whosoever	shall give to drink	unto one	G3588	little ones	of these
G2532		G1437	G4222	G1520		G3398	G5130
ποτήριον	ψυχροῦ	μόνον	εἰς	ὄνομα	μαθητοῦ	ἀμὲν	
a cup	of cold	water only	in	the name	of a disciple	verily	
G4221	G5593	G3440	G1519	G3686	G3101	G281	
λέγω	ὕμῖν	οὐ	μὴ	ἀπολέσῃ	τὸν	μισθὸν	αὐτοῦ
I say	unto you	G3756	G3361	lose	G3588	reward	G846
G3004	G5213			G622		G3408	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 6:10 (Parallel theme): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

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.

Matthew 18:10 (Parallel theme): Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

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