

*The reward of the kingdom of heaven is a matter of God having mercy to comfort those who receive it through faith according to His promise in Christ Jesus. Lazarus receives the aid, deliverance, and protection in heaven that the rich man failed to provide out of the abundance of earthly riches entrusted to him.*

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF CONCORD  
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY  
APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION  
ARTICLE V: LOVE & FULFILLING the LAW

241] We are not agitating an idle logomachy concerning the term reward [but this great, exalted, most important matter, namely, where Christian hearts are to find true and certain consolation; again, whether our works can give consciences rest and peace; again, whether we are to believe that our works are worthy of eternal life, or whether that is given us for Christ's sake. These are the real questions regarding these matters; if consciences are not rightly instructed concerning these, they can have no certain comfort. However, we have stated clearly enough that good works do not fulfil the Law, that we need the mercy of God, that by faith we are accepted with God, that good works, be they ever so precious, even if they were the works of St. Paul himself, cannot bring rest to the conscience. From all this it follows that we are to believe that we obtain eternal life through Christ by faith, not on account of our works, or of the Law. But what do we say of the reward which Scripture mentions?] If the adversaries will concede that we are accounted righteous by faith because of Christ, and that good works please God because of faith, we will not afterwards contend much concerning the term reward. We confess that eternal life is a reward, because it is something due on account of the promise, not on account of our merits. For the justification has been promised, which we have above shown to be properly a gift of God; and to this gift has been added the promise of eternal life, according to Rom. 8:30: Whom He justified, them 242] He also glorified. Here belongs what Paul says, 2 Tim. 4:8: There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me. For the crown is due the justified 243] because of the promise. And this promise saints should know, not that they may labor for their own profit, for they ought to labor for the glory of God; but in order that they may not despair in afflictions, they should know God's will, that He desires to aid, to deliver, to protect them.

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