

The Envelope Please

It was a moment of utter shock. It was unexpected

The Oscar for Best Picture of 2017 envelope was opened. Millions of viewers experienced the shock, embarrassment and confusion of the presenter as the wrong winner was called out. The social media world exploded. It sent the accountants, actors, winners and losers scurrying.

In short, it was a circus complete with the high drama on the tightrope of fame, ego and ambiguity. And everybody knew. All because of what was inside the envelope.

So I have a question for you. What's in *your* envelope?

Everything we do is an indication of our trust in God and our holy discontent with a dying world. How we serve the people we love and even the people who don't love us, as Jesus commanded all Christians to do is an indication of our devotion to Jesus. The questions we must ask ourselves are so important.

- How do we connect and serve others?
- How do we share our faith?
- How do we minister to the least of these?

The answers are all in the envelope.

And there's an envelope *inside* the envelope.

It's really a test of our faith.

It's a trust that says, *God I believe that you are going to take care of me. And this act of giving is my message to you that I am all in.* That's what we do when we tithe. We are placing our faith in the envelope. We are announcing to the world, that Jesus is our greatest, indeed, our only true eternal hope...

One day there'll be another awards ceremony, far more important than the Oscars, the Emmys, the Nobel Prize or the Miss America Pageant.

This ceremony will be a time for us to celebrate our journey of faith. The envelopes will be opened.

All of them.

Jesus promised the Church: *"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done."* (Revelation 22:12)

Paul challenges us to avoid the dispassionate, passive, selfish life and to be eager to do good.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:11-14)

Our eagerness to do good should flood every day of our lives because we are reminded of the day when the envelopes will all be opened and the truth, our generosity, our faithfulness to provide for the poor, our willingness to share Christ— all of it will be revealed.

Wouldn't it be a let down if our gifts to God never really reflected the majesty of His gifts to us?

So what's in your envelope?

