

"Coram Deo"

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Date: 10 March 2024

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[0 : 0 0] on page 1778 in the pew bible the title of today's sermon is coram deo which i expect you all to be fluent in latin and to understand what that means it means before the face of god and it is a statement of how we are to live our lives we are to live coram deo understanding that god is watching and we do everything we do before his face i want you to think back to your childhood i'm reasonably sure that you all were children at some point reasonably sure did you act differently when your mom or your dad wasn't there yeah i know you did i did too i have two brothers and uh because my mom was a single parent for much of my life growing up we were home alone for hours as teenagers three teenage boys home alone is a dangerous proposition but i will tell you we always did what we were supposed to do we never fought when mom came home the house was always clean and spotless okay of course that wasn't the case we got into a lot of trouble our biggest no-no was playing with fire kids do not play with fire it is dangerous that being said we would fling lit matches at each other we would douse our arms with some flammable liquid and light it and then put it out before we got burnt uh and that's that's just some of the things we did but we would never have imagined doing any of this if our mom was standing there not for a second would we have thought to get away with it but on the other hand were you ever encouraged to have your parents watch what you were doing i think of like the little girl who says mom mom look what i made or look what i did or the son at a baseball game who sees his parents in the stand and he's he wants to give it his all because they're watching of course he he cared about the game before he saw them but once he sees them there oh it's like a spark under him and he just wants to make them proud do you see your father do you see him watching from heaven do you realize that everything you do is before his face whether the bad that he is fully aware of or the good that he smiles at you for are you encouraged by knowing that he watches you today's text is about living life in light of the face of jesus in light of the fact that he sees us now and that one day we will stand before him face to face after the game is over what will you hear from god

read with me second corinthians chapter 5 verses 6 through 10 so we are always confident knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the lord for we walk by faith not by sight we are confident yes well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the lord therefore we make it our aim whether present or absent to be pleasing to him for we must all appear before the judgment seat of christ that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done whether good or bad this is the word of the lord thanks be to god so let's quickly look over this text verse 1 we are always confident this whole section verses 1 through 3 is paul explaining that we are confident and secure while we are currently in our bodies and away from god and the reason why we can be confident and secure is because we know that even if our bodies are destroyed we will be present with him death is the greatest threat of human life like a gun to our heads and yet all it means is that we will be with our lord the whole threat of death is evacuated by the promise and reality that as soon as you die you will be with your savior and so we have this confidence and this confidence comes not by faith not by sight but by faith that's what paul says in verse 7 then in verses 9 and 10 paul shows that since we will be before the lord when we die since that is our hope we should live lives that please him while we are here this is the key we will appear before jesus we who are believers will stand before his throne and we are to get our hope our confidence in this life from our expectation our hope of getting to see him and that hope should change how we live now seeing jesus is a huge theme of the new testament and it is the focus and the hope of the christian life it is our hope our motivation the wind in our sails the fire under us this idea of finally getting to see jesus and there's two important categories that the bible talks about seeing jesus the first is that if we die before he comes back our spirit will be with him in heaven if we remember when jesus was on the cross what he says to the other the thief who repents he says today today

you will be with me in paradise as soon as he dies he will be with jesus in heaven absent from the body is to be present with the lord be encouraged there is no purgatory there is no darkness or nothingness after you die when you die when your soul leaves this body you will be in glory before your savior instantly the second way the bible talks about seeing jesus is that he will come again to this world jesus will not remain in heaven forever he did not come just once dropped off the tools we needed and then went back home but he came the first time he atoned for sins and his second coming he will come again and there he will bring final judgment that includes the destruction of every last rebel and every last stronghold of sin he will annihilate all remaining opposition to him this is a terrifying and a wonderful reality this world is broken and god would not be as good as he is if he allowed sin to rule and kill forever so one day he will come back and he will hold everything to account before him that was what mary read for us earlier the great white throne judgment speaking of his second coming i love how peter talks about it he answers some doubts we might have about how it delays and he shows god's patient loving heart towards sinners second peter three verses three through nine knowing this first that scoffers will come in the last days saying where is the promise of his coming for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation this is the answer for this they willfully forget that by the word of god the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water by which the world that then existed perished being flooded with water but the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men but beloved do not forget this one thing that with the lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day the lord is not slow concerning his promise but is long suffering patient towards us not willing that any should perish but that all will come to repentance so first and foremost believers we must receive the good and true words of scripture

and be confident and hopefully expecting that we will appear before Jesus whether when we die or at the second coming if we should live till he comes we will all appear before him so we should live like children with their parents around not thinking to get away with actions done in secret and longing to live in a way that is pleasing so then from there I have five things you should consider when living your life expecting to see the lord number one faith verse seven says for we walk by faith and not by sight brothers and sisters you cannot see the lord sitting in the back pew and you cannot see him walking with you down the street we cannot tell that he is there and yet he is the lord is present he fills everything and nothing is hidden to him we cannot see that when we die we will go and be with the lord all we see is a body going still and eventually being laid into the ground yet

I tell you that when you die you will be there before the lord I'm not trying to convince you that this is true either you believe the bible or you don't but what I'm trying to do is to remind you of your future if you're like me you will find it easy at times to forget the reality of eternity you find yourself busy with life often times we let the calendar rule us more than we let the hope of seeing our father rule us but instead we are to be a people who walk by faith who are always seeing this unseen reality and shaping our lives in light of it I'd ask you to close your eyes for a minute in your head imagine what it will be like getting to see your savior in paradise seeing him face to face the god of creation fix that image in your focus and live in light of that may open your eyes part of walking by faith means to close your eyes and not use your sight to determine your path but to use the lord like the

[15 : 25] GPS that guides us everywhere we go I use it when I don't know the way myself when I can't see the path ahead and when it tells me to take a left I have no idea whether it's right or wrong I can't see how that left connects me all the way to where I need to go but I know who is guiding me so too when God makes our life take a sharp left turn don't look at what you can see look at who's guiding you and part of walking by faith means being with other believers because we need reminders we need to be reminded of our hope of glory and so that means when we're together we must remind each other that one day you will be before the

Lord you will see your Savior 1 Thessalonians 4 13 through 18 but I do not want you to be ignorant brethren concerning those who have fallen asleep lest you sorrow as others who have no hope for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus for this we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and thus we shall always be with the

Lord therefore comfort one another with these words notice that final instruction comfort one another with the hope of eternity and being before the face of God second consideration confidence verse six we are always confident we are confident even though right now we are far away from our God we do not currently see him we are not currently before his throne we are confident even though we live in a fallen world we are confident even when this fallen world is collapsing around us and our bodies are decaying we are confident even with all these things because we know that when all is said and done we will be done with this world and done with these bodies and will be present with our

God brothers and sisters if we are a people who believe in an afterlife then we should be a confident people we should be secure because we know after this is all over we know what happens like when you're exhausted and you're driving home and you draw strength from the fact that you know when you get there you can go to bed and rest and that gives you strength to keep going so too when you are tired in this world know that when it's all done you will be at rest with your father think of these truths until you can stand in the flood and swim against the stream people should look to us and wonder what we have that makes us so unfazed by all of the difficulties 1

Peter 3 verses 14 and 15 but even if you should suffer for righteousness sake you are blessed and do not be afraid of their threats nor be troubled but sanctify the Lord your God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear that implies that when people look at you they should see a hope that makes them ask questions third consideration longing verse eight we are confident yes well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord when we realize where we are going it should make us cry out come Lord Jesus take me home I was with our brother

[20 : 59] Steve yesterday and I tell you it makes me long for a day when these sorts of bodily infirmities will all be gone like Paul says in verse four of this chapter for we who are in this tent groan being burdened not because we want to be unclothed but further clothed that mortality may be swallowed up by life are you pleased to be with Christ if you look at your life do you see a longing to be with your spiritual husband the Lord of the church when we long to be with Christ we should fight to find any opportunity that we can to have a taste of what it will be like that means we gather on

Sundays and we sing praises and we hear the word and we fellowship and we pray because these are little tastes of what we will get to enjoy with our Savior this means that we read our Bibles and we pray in private it because we want tastes of what it will be like because we long for it like a couple that is engaged and eager to be married who spends whatever time they can together countless hours day in and day out let us watch ourselves and encourage each other to long for glory in a way that changes our lives Philippians 2 21 through 24 for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain but if

I live on in the flesh this will mean fruit from my labor yet which I shall choose I cannot tell for I am hard pressed between the two having a desire to depart and be with Christ for that is far better nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful on your behalf brothers and sisters by the grace of God I long to be in glory I can't wait but as long as the Lord has me here I want to serve so that when I can see him he will be pleased and I can be joyful at reunion with my father fourth consideration judgment verse 10 for we must all not most not some for we must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done whether good or bad we must not think that on the final day it will not matter how we lived our lives God do not be deceived the choices you make now matter and you will have to answer for them before the throne of God our God our Savior is the just judge he hates evil he will discern on that final day between good and evil making a clear distinction between them there will be no gray area and so knowing that we will appear before him and knowing that he will judge our sins judge our deeds should scare us should send a chill down your spine but it should also motivate us let me be clear this passage is not talking about being saved by works what this passage isn't teaching that you must be good enough to not go to hell what this passage is teaching is as

James says faith apart from works is dead Paul has already made this gospel of free grace clear over and over in this book he's not turning over what he said in the past we are saved only by the grace of God by faith in Christ Jesus on that final day the only way you will stand or fall is if you trust in him not because you're good enough but this passage is showing the reality that our actions matter even if we will not go to heaven or hell based on how good we did a good father doesn't disown his children no matter how bad they are he always stands with love for them but if anyone thinks because your father won't disown you that it doesn't matter how you live and how you treat him and how you obey him you are sorely mistaken the reality is that if we have the type of faith that saves we will have the type of faith that works good things and

[27 : 34] I want you to want to bring good deeds before your father on the final day and I warn you that if you do not know Christ this judgment will mean your death and execution fifth consideration approval therefore we make it our aim whether present or absent to be well pleasing to him who are we looking to who is the desire of our heart do we not want to see his joy when we appear before him what sin have you held on to that is worth grieving Christ what price what sacrifice is too much to pay to please the lover of your soul will you serve him will you make him glad he is watching

Paul writes whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and know that these sacrifices that you have made in this life the ways that you have served him that you have wrestled against sin the service you have made even though it is weak and flawed and poor brings tears of joy to the eyes of your God he loves when you do good we stand and lift up our hands for the joy of the Lord is our strength make him proud live in a way that is pleasing to your

Savior long to hear these sweet sweet words well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your Lord as you shape your life with these things as you walk with faith as you live with confidence longing to be with Christ remembering his judgment and laboring to please him remember that none of this would be worth anything without his gospel we belong in the grave we do not belong before his throne the final day of judgment should mean our destruction if you oh Lord were to mark iniquities who could stand we have lived before the face of

God and sinned over and over and over our secret sins even the ones we do not know stand naked before him psalm 90 says you have set our secret sins before you our iniquities in the light of your presence and they all deserve death and yet and but and the story doesn't end there we have access before the throne of grace we have a way made an opening because the one who did walk purely in all his ways when he was laid naked and bare was righteous on every account because all of his days were perfect because he was numbered with sinners because he was slain with criminals and punished like an evildoer with the wrath of

God poured out on him on that cross though he had lived perfectly before the face of God he was punished like a rebel like you should be and it is by that punishment that we are saved the Lord has placed on him the iniquity of us all by his stripes we are healed this happened for us so that we could be saved simply by believing all of our debt is paid by the one we are longing to see oh to see the wounds of the Savior the very cost by which our heaven is brought remember the price of your admittance to heaven and remember the all covering love which paid such a price for such a one as we are

[33 : 28] I want to close with the words of Adoniram Judson he wrote this letter to the father of the woman he loved asking for permission to marry her he wanted to be a missionary to God to please his father on that final day and this is what he writes is such a good example I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring to see her no more in this world whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land and her subjugation to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean the fatal influence of the southern climate of India to every kind of want and distress to degradation insult persecution and perhaps a violent death can you consent to all of this for the sake of him who left his heavenly home and died for her and for you for the sake of perishing immortal souls for the sake of

Zion and the glory of God can you consent to all of this in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall resound to her savior from heathens saved through her means from eternal woe and despair let's pray Lord God in heaven above we are not fit for your presence and yet your grace reigns make us into a people who live in light of your coming day might we long for it might we desire earnestly to please you and cover over all of our sins and transgressions in Jesus name we pray amen