

The Judgment Seat of Christ

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[0:00] The judgment seat of Christ. The judgment seat of Christ. Hebrews 9 tells us of judgment to come.

! And as it is appointed unto men, once to die, but after this the judgment.! The Bible says judgment faces us all. Every person on earth will be judged.

Of course there is two different kinds of judgment. There is the judgment of the lost at the great white throne. One judgment seat in Revelation chapter 20. This is the judgment of the lost. We're not talking about that tonight, but just to cover that in brief. The judgment seat of Christ is for the believers. The great white throne judgment of Revelation 20 is for the lost. And as we look at the subject of the judgment seat of Christ, I want to stress first up that nothing about our good works saves us.

[0:58] Or gives us any merits for heaven. Our only hope of heaven is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, our Saviour. And his finished work is the only way to save us.

None of us is more saved or justified than another. The one who works more is no more justified than the one who works less. There's no merit that's gained for heaven by our working.

We're all equally undeserving of his grace. And equally glad recipients of it. No one has a credit above another. Yes, thank God, there are some scriptural signs of a testing of our works.

And of a reaping of what we sow. So we're going to look at some of that kind of context of the judgment seat of Christ. There are reasons we can have for sowing well.

And for that prospect of our rejoicing in the coming of our Saviour. And that's in the context of this judgment seat of Christ. So let's consider tonight the judgment of believers.

[2:03] And so we see that talked of in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 10. Paul tells the church at Corinth, And alike verse Romans 14 10 through 12 says, 2 Corinthians 5 verse 10.

Romans 14 10 has the same reference to the judgment seat of Christ. Now the judgment seat or the beamer seat was a platform where the Roman ruler made decisions and passed sentences. Here is where they would judge their athletic contests, watch to ensure that the contestants obeyed the rules, and crown them with a wreath as a symbol of victory.

You might see those pictures of the laurel wreath, you know this wreath made out of leaves and such. That was given as a symbol of their victory. And so the judges would be seated at this judgment seat, this beamer seat as the Greek word is.

So the judgment seat of Christ happens when the Lord comes for his church. It is for believers only. And here the believer is being judged for his works. So I put to you three things about this judgment.

[3:44] Firstly, this judgment involves a revealing. Number one point, revealing. And 1 Corinthians 4 verse 5, it reads, So in this judgment there's a revealing, there's an uncovering.

Salvation is not the issue here. This is not a trial to decide the fate of the saved or the unsaved. John 3 verse 16 tells us that this is settled during our lifetime.

We are saved through faith in Christ. God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son.

Whosoever believeth in him shall have everlasting life.

We know that's decided before we die, we have everlasting life. So this judgment is not about eternal life. We've already got it as believers. Here our Lord sits as judge and examines and rewards the believer.

There's an examination that occurs here. That's talked about in 1 Corinthians 3. The works of a believer are examined. And there's a revealing process.

[4:56] As we read 1 Corinthians 3 verse 10, Paul writes, Verse 12 in particular, It talks about gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay,

stubble.

So there's two kinds of works talked about here. And then it says, verse 15, it talks about suffer loss. Now the loss in verse 15 is a loss of rewards, not a loss of salvation.

There is a prospect that we will suffer loss, not of salvation, but of reward. The quality of every believer's work is going to be tested. It's going to be revealed. It'll be examined.

Every man's work shall be made manifest. It tells us of the nature of it, of the work will be revealed. So our works will be unveiled.

And they'll show their true quality. So these are somber thoughts when we think the works that we do, this side of the grave, they'll be revealed of what sort they are. Now the fire will try these works.

[6:50] They shall be tried by fire. In the town of Pompeii in Italy, there was a huge fire that was started by a volcano and brought great destruction.

And we see the remains there in the town of Pompeii where all that survived the fire were metallic objects. The bowls, the vessels, the jewellery, the ornaments that survived were those that were made of gold, silver or precious stones.

But there's no remains of wood, hay or stubble from the town of Pompeii that was completely wiped out and destroyed in the heat, in the fire of that catastrophe. It's the same really in the sense of the judgment seat of that fire that shall try the works and we'll see that gold, silver, precious stones, we'll see the wood, hay, stubble.

And when you think of the picture here, there's really two types of works, two classes of works. There's the acceptable works that are worthy of rewards and we could think of those as pictured in the gold, silver, precious stones as righteousness, like living right about our faith in the Lord, our love manifested, our patience, our meekness, our humility in those fruits of the Spirit.

Those things that are acceptable things, aren't they, in his sight. And then on the other side of the coin, we have unacceptable works, those things that will be rejected, likened to wood, hay and stubble.

[8:27] So they could be works we've done with the wrong motive, with the wrong intent. It could be those things that we would be ashamed of, our self-will, our pride, our good works even done with wrong motives.

And everything is going to be revealed. We see that in the Scriptures. It talks about God revealing. For example, it says that our words will be revealed. The words that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof.

Maybe unwise words that we would utter. Our words are going to be revealed. It tells us how our thoughts will be revealed as well. The things that are inside of us will be revealed.

The things of the heart. People don't know what's going on inside your heart. It could be some of those things talked about here of evil thoughts, of murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

These are the things which defile a man. And so we should be cognizant of our thoughts. Are they worthy of our Lord? Also, our secrets. It talks about God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

[9:34] Even our motives. Again, are our works motivated by our love for the Lord or for our own benefit and for praise of men. So all of these things will be judged.

They'll be revealed. It tells us further about how we should be wise stewards of how we've used the things that we have. Our time. Are we redeeming the time because the days are evil?

Our use of money. Is it used wisely? Is it used for the glory of God? For the furtherance of his work? Our God-given abilities. Those things that we have that we can serve the Lord with.

Are we using them wisely? We could consider all of these aspects and how we live too. Our perseverance. Are we showing perseverance with others? With our life as it is?

Our relationships. Are they under God's domain? Are we exercising self-control in our living? Our witness.

[10:33] Is it rightful? Is it proper? Are we being a good witness? Our faithfulness to the word of God? All of these things we could consider that there'll be a revelation. There'll be a revealing of these things.

And we'll have to stand and be examined. There's a revealing process. An examining process. And not only will there be a revealing of our works, but it talks about a rewarding of our works.

For example, we see the Bible speaks about different crowns. Now, of course, the ultimate reward for every believer is the same. Salvation. To see his face.

That's the supreme blessing and reward for every one of us who knows the Saviour. Salvation is absolutely a gift. So, we want to make that very clear because some would confuse that.

Salvation is entirely a gift from God. And the Lord Jesus gives eternal life freely by his grace to undeserving men and women, which is all of us, as that great reward, the ultimate reward for all who believe.

[11:40] There is also a promise of rewards for faithfulness in our works, though. This is another aspect. It's kind of the cherry on top, if you like, I suppose.

That there's rewards given or lost depending on how a believer has lived their life. Our Lord will give rewards based on our motives, on our faithfulness.

It talks about heavenly treasures, a lodgment of treasures in heaven. Now, Matthew 6, verse 20.

So, there's a sense where we make use of our resources and our substance such that we've got heaven in view.

There's that heavenly intent behind how we spend our money, what we do with our substance.

heavenly treasures. It talks about how some will be amassing heavenly treasures.

So, that's something that we can be glad of as we look back on our earthly life when we're in heaven. In Matthew 25, 21, it talks about a recognition that we'll receive.

[12:45] Our Lord gives an example, a parable there, Matthew 25, verse 21. It talks about a recognition. well done, thou good and faithful servant. That sense where the son will be told well done as an acknowledgement, as a recognition.

And then Luke 19, 17 through 19 talks about special responsibilities that some who have been given some small measure of responsibility will be given further responsibility in heaven.

So, there will be some correlation between how we've lived and future rewards. And in particular, it talks about crowns. There's five crowns that in particular it speaks of.

And a crown is really a symbol of honour, of victory, a symbol of authority, of responsibility. When we think of a crown, we think of a queen, a king. And a crown is a symbol of honour and authority.

God's promised crowns for all believers who meet the conditions. So, I'm just going to take a moment to look at some of these crowns, this sense of rewarding of crowns. And these crowns are like awards or prizes, if you like.

[13:52] They'll be awards for our walk and stand for God and His word. So, it's a further incentive I put to you to make more effort in regard to this thought of this reward that is in prospect.

So, number one, the first crown we could consider here is in 1 Corinthians 9. verse 23. It talks about the incorruptible crown. The incorruptible crown.

It's given for faithfulness in the race. So, in other words, for exercising self-control and striving to be the best for our Lord. It tells us here in 1 Corinthians 9.25, it reads, And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.

The concept is of a running race, of an athlete. And it says that now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown. You know, one of these laurel wreaths, this leafy crown, but it says that we will have an incorruptible crown.

It's not just some leafy crown or laurel crown, but it's going to be a lasting crown, an incorruptible crown. It's a crown that will never be destroyed, is the sense of it.

[14:58] So, it will never turn to dust. So, this crown is something that will be a lasting crown. And this crown, it says, is given to those who strive for the mastery. So, it's being temperate, you know, keeping your body under control.

It's a prize to be obtained. And it says, for those who go into this strict training, that they enter into this mastery, this training, this striving, and as a champion, athlete would do.

An athlete, whether it be even the highest grade of athlete, an Olympic athlete, they really are running for something that is a perishable prize. But we are, in this gospel race, we've got that

lasting prize, an everlasting crown.

So, we can take heart and be, as it were, a Christian athlete in that running race to strive to excel, to strive for the mastery. Secondly, we see another crown, the crown of rejoicing.

It tells us of that in 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 19. The crown of rejoicing is the soul winner's crown. So, it's given for witness and such ministry as that.

[16:07] It says in 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 19 through 20, it says, For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, says Paul to the Thessalonians, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming, for ye are our glory and joy.

So, Paul talked about the Thessalonians as being this kind of crown that was such that he had witnessed to them and won them and he was ministering to them such that they were, as it were, a crown of rejoicing.

So, we could think of it as we might endeavour to witness in our own personal way in sharing the gospel, in helping the gospel get out in print, that we're reaching souls, that this is the soul winner's crown.

We could see how Solomon talks of such a blessing. It tells us of Proverbs 11, verse 30, Solomon writes, The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise.

And Daniel says of the soul winner, They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

[17:20] So, every soul that's saved through our prayers and sharing our effort as a servant of the Lord, they'll be part of that crown of rejoicing. They'll be something that will be a rejoicing for us around the judgment seat of Christ.

They'll be a reward for that witness, that sharing of the gospel or that giving so the gospel can be spread, that taking the gospel to others even when it might be risky or refused, that yet we've strived to present the word of God, we strived to share the gospel.

God knows this that you're doing to share the word with others, to win others to Christ and so we can look forward to that crown of rejoicing. A third crown is the crown of life.

We see that talked about in James 1 verse 12. James says, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he has tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

This crown of life is spoken of as given for enduring testings, for enduring under trial. It's the crown of steadfastness, for patiently enduring through the trials and testings of life.

[18:32] And the crown of life it tells us here is given to those believers who stay faithful through that time of test even unto death as the word of God tells us of such in Revelation 2 verse 10 of some faithful unto death I will give thee a crown of life.

And we think back through church history many have actually suffered great persecution torture imprisonment and much loss and grief and suffering and even death.

The Bible speaks about a crown of life. We think of the martyrs in the word of God Stephen, Paul, John, Peter it's been said the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

So we see the crown is given to all who will endure trial and temptation even unto death. It tells us again of some in Revelation 12 they love not their lives unto the death.

We look back at church history again men like Hus, Tyndale, Latimer, Cranmer many others martyrs for the sake of Christ and even today in communist lands some are suffering even very presently oppressed for their faith dying for their faith in Christ Christ.

[19:55] But we see this side of the world many Christians are quite weak really in comparison. But the Bible says that there is a joy to endure trial, tribulation,!

temptation and there is a crown of life in prospect. A fourth crown is the crown of righteousness. We see that where Paul talks to Timothy, 2 Timothy 4 again of the context of a fight, of a running race. He says I've finished my course, I've kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also that love is appearing.

Paul tells Timothy of this fourth crown, the crown of righteousness. It's given for all who look for and love the appearing of Christ. The second coming of Christ, it's really, it's not far away, I put to you. I'm sure that it is close. And it's telling us here of loyal and faithful believers looking for his appearing, loving his appearing, waiting for it, prepared.

[21:06] This crown is given to all who love the appearing of Christ. So we see that those of us who have that blessed hope, I trust it's all of us really, that we'll have that blessed hope, we'll fight the good fight, we'll have that love, that prospect of our soon coming Lord, that we'll see his face, he'll be appearing for us and that we'll receive that special crown, the crown of righteousness for all those who love his appearing.

So let's have that heart to long for his appearing, amen, to be prepared, to stand firm in the prospect of his coming, to be ready, ready for his coming. And there's a fifth crown talked about in 1 Peter 5, the crown of glory.

It's for faithfulness in shepherding the people of God, for those who would shepherd, tend, lead and nourish the flock. It says 1 Peter 5, 1 through 4, Peter writes how we should feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage but being in samples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. This is the crown for faithful shepherds who will willingly care for the flock of God, not lording it over but those eager to serve.

So we see friends five crowns, five crowns that are specifically told to us. So we've seen there's going to be a revealing, we've seen secondly there's going to be a rewarding, it tells us thirdly of a reaping.

[22:52] So we see that in Galatians, this principle of sowing and reaping. It tells us Galatians 6, 7 through 8, be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. So there's another important scriptural principle and it's repeated in the word of God, there's other references to it, of this principle of reaping.

The reality is that at the judgment seed of Christ, there will be something of consequence of the sowing that we have this side of the grave.

There'll be something that we're sowing that we'll see later a reaping. There'll be a harvest, there'll be a return, there'll be a result. It tells us sadly that some will be ashamed before him at his coming in 1 John 2, 28.

There's a telling thought here. 1 John 2, 28, And now little children abide in him that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

[24:06] So friends, it's urging us here of the prospect that some possibly could be ashamed before him at his coming. Maybe there'll be some Christians kind of caught on the hop, there'll be a sense where they perhaps were lacking in some part that they'll have a sense of they weren't ready.

They'll be ashamed before him at his coming. I'm not sure how that would look or what that would be but I suppose we should have that mind I put to you to have that notion that Christ could come and are we ready or are we going to be ashamed?

Is there something about the way I'm living that I'm ashamed of it? I'm not feeling like it's well pleasing to the Lord about something that's in me. Now again I want to reiterate there's no fear of loss of salvation here because we are eternally secure in Christ.

Yet there is that thought am I missing something? Am I not serving or living to the glory of God like I know that I ought to be?

that we would face that dread thought of being somehow ashamed, ashamed before him at his coming. I pray that not be so for everyone of us that we'll aspire to live by faith because we know our salvation is secure, our heaven is assured, we have salvation, we'll be face to face with our saviour and that'll be glory, that'll be enough.

[25:44] Yet in the prospect of his coming, are we missing something? Is there something lacking in our walk with him? Rather that we aspire to be

walking stronger and ever stronger with that eye to the glory of God, to please him in preparation for his coming.

So let me leave you with some thoughts to contemplate tonight. How can I prepare for the coming of my Lord? God? How can I live on earth now such as would please him with my life?

Is there something that I would be ashamed of that maybe I need to get it sorted, to deal with it? Is there something that's hindering my closeness to him? Is there something that's intruding on that victory that he wants for me to be living over sin?

How can I deepen my spiritual walk with God? How can my faith be stronger? How can my prayer, my meditation of him be sweeter? How can I keep my conscience void of offence before God and man?

As a Christian, there's a day coming. Really, as we know, we will pass from this earthly veil. I know I was at a funeral just on Friday of someone.

[27:04] It was one that we were talking to when they were witnessing Peter, someone in Elizabeth Downs. He knew the Lord. He already knew the Lord, but he was a bit housebound because of his health and such.

But I have the assurance from my talking with him that he was a definite believer. And really, his passing was his crowning day. His crowning day. It's a coronation day, isn't it?

And this is our day that we can look forward to when we meet our Saviour. And as the judgment seat of Christ will be, that next stage pretty much, it tells us that thankfully every man shall have praise of God.

1 Corinthians 4 verse 5, it says that then shall every man have praise of God. So even though some of our works may be burnt, yet our Lord will find something to praise. He'll find something to acknowledge.

And there'll be recognition which we can look forward to that day with gladness, with assurance, with confidence. confidence. And it tells us how our Lord says, Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.

[28:15] Of course, we don't need rewards to want to live right for God. I'm not giving this message such that there's a kind of bribery, that we have to be motivated to live right because we want to have a crown or we want to have some recognition.

It's not about that. Because really, in loving our Lord, in wanting his well done, in wanting to see his face and wanting to see his smile one day, that it'll be all to his praise anyway.

Any good that we can do, as we know the Bible says, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, but what small measure of good that we can do that is worthy of him will be all to his praise anyway.

It's virtually we'll cast our crowns at his feet anyway. And we want our faith not to be in our own works. That's very important to get very clear. But that our faith is squarely and surely in the finished work of our Lord for our saving.

And our motivation as a believer is our love for our Lord. Because we love him, we want him to be saying well done, don't we? Because we love him, we want to do that which is well pleasing in his sight.

[29:22] Because we love him, we want to give him glory with our life. And so I trust as we get ever closer, tomorrow we'll be one day closer to that judgment seat of Christ, won't we?

And one day there'll be that blessing of answering his presence, of hearing his voice and there's a blessing to know that there'll be a revealing, hopefully it'll be a revealing of the good things.

There'll be a rewarding of the good things we've done. And we see that recognition to come. And what a blessing it can be to know that ultimately we will see his face.

That's what really matters, isn't it? That we'll see him face to face. And for the meantime, how am I using my life for the Lord? It's a question to think about, to contemplate this question.

In the light of the coming of the judgment seat of Christ, how am I using my life for the Lord? Are there things that maybe I could lift my game a bit spiritually? Maybe there's things, well, there's some things I should let go of that are intruding on my walk with Christ.

[30:34] How can I better aim to please my God with my daily life that I may give him all the more glory? That's what matters, isn't it? That we will crown him King of Kings. That he will get the crown.

That our life will be to his glory and praise and that we'll be a trophy of his grace. That it's all to him. That will be the credit and merit that is due.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that we know our great reward is really a gift. It's really salvation. And all these other things that we've talked about are really just a recognition of some measure of faithfulness.

Lord, help us to be such a people. Lord, not of course that we're counting on any of our works to commend us to you because our only hope is that we trusted in you as our Lord and Saviour. Yet, Lord, as your faithful people, help us to be stewards and servants that are wise and doing what measure of good we can to live as it would please you so that when that unveiling, that revealing time comes, Lord, we won't have anything that's not been dealt with.

[31:46] Lord, we'll have things sorted with you and with our neighbours, Lord. Help us to have that thought of the rewarding of that recognition that will come and that each one can have that wonderful assurance of your saving grace today.

We pray each one might especially be assured of that, that they have salvation, that when we pass from this life, it'll shortly be our coronation day, as it were, as we enter your presence and as you welcome us and beckon us into that heavenly home that you've prepared for us that know you, Lord, we thank you that we know you who is the way, the truth and the life, that we have that assurance of salvation and Lord, that we can walk in the truth of it such that we'll grow in that and we'll be more and more unto your praise, a people ready, prepared, that we won't be ashamed before you at your coming but there'll be that confidence, that joy that we've had, that blessed hope and you've impacted our life such that we're walking as wisely as we can unto you, unto you be all the praise.

Pray for each one to have that joyful assurance today, that blessed hope as we are such a people that are looking for you, loving your appearing such that we'll be a ready people when you come and take us to yourself.

Lord, help us in that prospect we pray, in Jesus' precious name, Amen.