

The Judgment Seat of Christ

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[0 : 00] The judgment seat of Christ is a very sombre subject. And he now had to meet the Lord empty-handed.

His life was wood, hay and straw. Judgment is coming. 1 Corinthians 3 verses 11 through 15 it says, For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

Let's consider the themes of judgment. I know I've talked on this theme of recent times too, but this is a separate message. I'm talking about judgment again, but around the theme of the judgment seat of Christ.

[1 : 32] And firstly the judgment of sin. God will judge sin. Yet for the Christian your sin has already been judged. When? AD 30.

Where? At the cross. At that hill called Calvary. Your judgment for your sin is done. It's a finished work that we trust in.

The believer trusts in the finished work of the cross. Every believer had sin judged way back at the cross in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's happened already.

Christian, your sins have been judged. Past tense. You are declared, present tense, pardoned. Just before God. He will never judge you again.

The songwriter says, My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more.

[2 : 27] Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. O my song. For the Christian, the judgment of your sin, your salvation, has already occurred.

However, there will be a judgment of your service. All your works will be tested. We see number two here, judgment of works. Revelation 22 verse 12, our Lord says, And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

1 John 2 verse 28, it says, 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.

Some believers will be ashamed to meet the Lord at his coming, because of so little that they did for him while they were here. They will be saved, yes, but will have no reward.

Friends, we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. It says in Romans 14 verse 10, All of our works will be tested. As our text tells us, they will be judged by fire.

[3 : 37] The judgment fire is spoken of in 1 Corinthians 3 verses 11 through 15. The judgment fire will bring either reward or loss of reward.

Certainly our salvation is in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Not in our works. We cannot earn. Absolutely not. We cannot earn or deserve. We cannot merit salvation.

We cannot lose. Likewise, what we cannot earn. It is a gift. Salvation is given. Given to us by his grace. Not grace plus our own works.

Given by grace. One day we will all give an account to God for our lives, for our service unto God. And as believers, our lives foundation is Jesus Christ.

Paul talks of works as being different building materials. What are your works made of? Are they indestructible materials? Gold, silver, precious stones?

[4 : 35] High quality materials? Faithfulness and giving of our best? Or will they be destructible materials? Wood, hay, stubble. Just our own human efforts.

Attempts to please God. Low quality materials. Shoddy efforts. Unfaithfulness. Maybe leftovers. Half-heartedness.

Verse 13 says, Of all of our works, they will be put to the test, to the fire test. And the Lord will apply the fire of his judgment to the things we did in this life. And they will be made manifest, it says. In other words, made known, revealed for what they truly are. Will we be just left with a pile of ashes? Be careful how you build.

Will he say to you, Well done, thou good and faithful servant. 2 John 1 verse 8, it says, Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. [5 : 35] As God's people, we're promised rewards, even for small acts. In Mark 9 verse 41 it says, For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, Verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward.

Just something quite insignificant can be counted. Some will be rewarded. Some will suffer loss. You will be judged for your faithfulness, it says.

Your treatment of others, Your use of the gifts that God has given to you, Your use of time, Your giving, Your readiness to suffer for Him, Your witnessing, Your endurance in the race.

What a day it will be. Every one of us will give an account of himself to God, the judgment seat of Christ. In the ancient Olympics, athletes competed in various events, runners competed for prizes. Some came first, second, third. The official was seated on a large platform. He decided the winners. Who got the gold, silver or bronze? Or who got nothing?

[6 : 40] The winners received laurel wreaths placed upon their heads for first, second and third prize. Our Christian life is like a race. Our Lord at the judgment seat decides who receives rewards.

And the Christian is like an athlete, we see pictured through the scriptures, who gives his energy and zeal, everything that he has. He gives his all to the race, like an athlete who seeks to run to win a prize.

And at the end of the race, he will face the judgment. The faithful believer will receive a crown if they compete fairly. Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 verse 8, He says, We see pictured the incorruptible crown, which is awarded for faithfulness to the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 9 verse 25, it says, And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we are incorruptible.

It is for those who have victory, who resist temptation. Another crown is the crown of life, for the person who endures and overcomes temptation. In James 1 verse 12, it 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.

[8 : 27] There's the crown of rejoicing as well. This is the soul winner's crown. 1 Thessalonians 2 verse 19, It says, For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Another crown is the crown of righteousness. It's given to those who are seeking the Saviour's return. Paul says to Timothy 4 verse 7 through 8, I have fought a good fight.

I have finished my course. I have 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 his appearing.

There's a crown of glory for faithful ministry, for those who lead and guide and feed the flock of God. In 1 Peter 5 verse 4, When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Believer, you can receive a crown. Like a king or a queen, a symbol of authority. One day you who overcome will rule and reign with him.

[9 : 37] The Lord Jesus says to those who have been faithful in the little, that they shall be made ruler over much. Crowns are rewards. Now a believer can lose his crown.

It says, Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. Revelation 3 verse 11. So let us be careful how we build. The judgment seat of Christ is a reality.

It's an appointment we all will make. We'll all have our time before the judgment seat of Christ. So let's get ready and trust the Lord. Be saved and be faithful.

Let's go.