

The Judgment Seat of Christ

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[0:00] Romans 14, I want to talk on the subject of the judgment seat of Christ.

! The judgment seat of Christ. And there's numbers of scriptures that refer to that. Romans 14, verse 10, it speaks of that. Paul writes, But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set it nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, Every knee shall bow to me, And every tongue shall confess to God.

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Then turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5. A couple of books forward there.

2 Corinthians 5, another verse that talks along this thing. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 10, it says, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, That everyone may receive the things done in his body, According to that he hath done, Whether it be good or bad.

[1:27] Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, We persuade men. We persuade men. But we are made manifest unto God. And I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Paul writes of the judgment seat of Christ again. We must all appear before that judgment seat of Christ. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, We persuade men.

The terror, the fear, The terror of the Lord. We persuade, he says. We endeavour to win, Is the sense of it. We appeal. We persuade men.

We must be challenged at the prospect of it. The terror of the Lord. The fear of the Lord. Because it's a fact that there is a judgment. A judgment coming and everyone is going to face a judgment. There is a judgment for every believer's sin. For every believer's sin. Thank God it happened nearly 2,000 years ago. Every believer's sin was judged.

[2:33] On that rugged cross. On that jagged piece of wood. Where our Saviour was nailed. And bore our sin in his own body. On the tree.

It's nearly 2,000 years ago. Your judgment happened. As a believer in Christ. It was vented against our Saviour. Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who came down from heaven's glory. And took the full brunt of it. He paid the full price of it. He took the full weight of it. When he carried and was nailed to that cross for you.

When he was whipped and scarred. Bruised and torn. For you. For me. Our suffering. For our sin. He paid.

He who knew no sin. 2 Corinthians 5.21. Was made sin for us. Isn't that wonderful? To think of that. The sinless one.

[3:32] Was made sin for us. And. Yet there is still a judgment. Coming for believers. It's called the judgment seat. Of Christ. And all of us. It says. Every single one of you.

Here today. That are a Christian. Will be before that judgment seat. Of Christ. The bema seat. Is the.

The word. Underlying the judgment seat. Is a bema seat. In the Greek. And this was the seat.

Where the judges. Of the ancient Olympics. Would sit. Near the. Finishing line.

Or certainly in. Full view. Of the. Contest. They would sit there. And they would. Determine. What position. The runners came. First.

Second. And so on. And give out the appropriate rewards. To the runners. The competitors. And every man. Faces judgment. If you're a believer today.

[4:26] It will be the judgment seat. Of Christ. Men and women. Who love the Savior. You will be there. Before that judgment seat. This is where God will judge. And reward the saints.

Of course. There's another judgment. There is another judgment. And that's one that. Christians will not be there. It's called the great white throne judgment. Now.

If you're lining up. In front of the great white throne judgment. You know you're in big trouble. Because. There's only one sentence for you. At that throne. The great white throne judgment. That's the judgment.

For unbelievers. That's the judgment. For those who haven't put their trust in Christ. If you stand before the great white throne judgment. There's only one sentence for you. Guilty.

Depart. To the everlasting fire. That is where. Those who do not trust the Lord Jesus. For their judgment. For their payment. For their sin. That is where they will go.

[5:23] But we're not talking about that judgment today. But friends. If I. If you're not sure you're a Christian today. Make sure. Because. The great white throne judgment. There's no rewards there. There's just punishment.

And. People today. We're talking about the judgment seat of Christ. That's our. Topic today. Are we living in the light of it. For everyone. Young and old. Christians. Believers.

Fellow believers today. Are we living in the light of that judgment seat of Christ. Where one day we will appear. Every one of us. We're going to stand before him. Now. I've stood in a courtroom. I've stood in a courtroom.

And. I've stood before the judge. Thankfully I was in the jury at the time. But. You know. I. I saw the man there. And as part of the jury. We found him guilty.

The evidence was insurmountable. That this man had committed an abominable act. And it was. It was scary enough being in the jury. But to have been in the. In the box.

[6:20] Where the. The accused. The accused. Was standing. Whoa. That would have been scary. And. Friends today. The judgment seat of Christ is. We're going to stand in that courtroom.

In that. In that place. Before the judge. Of the whole universe. And at that judgment seat. We'll see him. In his awesome majesty. And power. And purity. And justice.

1 John 3. 2. It says. Beloved. Now. We are the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear. What we shall be. But we know that. When he shall appear.

We shall be like him. For we shall see him. As he is. It's going to be wonderful. That we shall see him. And we're going to be like him. We're going to be even more. Like him than.

Ever before. Because we know. As believers. We're. We're saved. We're sanctified. And one day. We're going to be glorified. We're going to have. An even better body. Than we've got now. You know. It's going to be glorified.

[7:16] It's going to be perfected. All of those. Little faults. That are going to be rectified. And we're going to see him. And we're going to be like him. And yet. Think of it. Of that.

Coming day. Are you ready? Are you ready? Are you living in the light of it? That one day you'll face him. And each one of us. Every one of you here today. Every one of us.

Is accountable to God. For how we live. For how we spend our lives. How we waste our lives. He will judge you for that. He will judge you. For what you have done. For what.

Why you have done it. For your motives. For example. What motivated your giving? Why? Wasn't so much what you gave. Or how often you go.

How regularly you go. How faithfully you go. What was the motive behind your giving? Was it to be seen? Was it to be recognised? Was it to be patted on the back? Was it to earn some credit? In glory?

[8:11] What is your motive? If that's what matters more than the act of what you do. Of how you serve. Are you serving to get some praise from men? To get some applause?

To get some favour? Some credit? Some acknowledgement? Or are you serving because it doesn't matter what others think. It's who you're doing it for. It's why you're doing it. Out of your love for the Saviour.

And our lives. Our thoughts. Our actions. Our motives. Our intentions. They're all going to be under scrutiny. At that day. At that time. As we know that it talks of, as we'll come to, wood, hay and stubble.

Some of those things that we've done. Some of those things that we've given. Some of those ways that we've served. God is going to shine the spotlight on. And the real motive. The real intention. The real thinking and intention behind those words.

Those thoughts. Those actions. They're going to be brought under that searching spotlight. Of his gaze. Mark 4.22. The Lord Jesus says that there is nothing here which shall not be manifested.

[9:10] There's nothing here that's going to be, not going to be uncovered. Everything is going to be revealed. Anything that we consider secret. And for some of us, the secrets we have.

That things we haven't repented of. There's things that God will lay wide open. Every detail is going to be examined. Our very lives, our thoughts, our attitudes are going to be laid bare.

The real you is going to be shown for what it is. For the first time. There's no hiding there from any of these things. And the condition you die in is the condition you meet him in.

That should make us stand up and think, shouldn't it? Are you ready? Are you ready? We know there's many verses that talk about watch and wait. And be found faithful. Be found watching when he comes.

Are you going to be found in that condition that is not pleasing to him? Other things not right with you, with your spiritual walk that you need to repent of. And let it be now.

[10:11] Confess your sins to him now. 1 Corinthians 4, Paul writes, He that judgeth me is the Lord. Verse 4. He goes on.

Part of verse 5. Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.

And then shall every man have praise of God. It is an encouraging thought that he's going to find some things that are praiseworthy. He's going to find some things. Every man shall have praise of God.

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. Paul writes in Romans 2.16. He says that there's a day coming and no secret is safe then.

The secrets of your heart will be judged. And so let me urge you this morning, please, to think of this. Think of these things. Those things that you might be ashamed of.

[11:10] Ashamed before him at his coming. For example, the words that you speak. Matthew 12.36. The Lord Jesus says that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Have you ever uttered an idle word? You could translate that as a thoughtless word, a careless word. Words that you've not thought carefully about. They've just spilled out of your mouth. Once they're out, they're out, aren't they? Like they say, you can't put them back in. Those idle words, those careless, thoughtless words. Those things said in haste, in anger. Thoughtless words. Hurtful words that you've said to others that I have said. Friends, these are things we should think of. And ask the Lord to take that away. To forgive us of those things that we've said thoughtlessly. Because we shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. And of course, as we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us, to cleanse us. He blots out the handwriting against us.

[12:14] He takes it away. Colossians 3.23. Every deed shall be examined in that day of the judgment seat. And so Paul writes, He says, Do it heartily.

Or work from the soul. There's a sense of it there. Work heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. And so when you do something for the Saviour, when you do something in service, in spiritual work, whatever it may be, it might be something quite practical and seemingly not so important.

Yet everything that you do, do it heartily as to the Lord. He sees that work. He sees those letters that you write. He watches you when you make those phone calls to people in need.

He sees that act of kindness. He sees that smile that you give. Those things that you do, that others may not think anything of and you may get no credit for from other people.

Yet he sees those good things. Every deed. Do it as unto the Lord, not unto men. Every good thing will receive its reward. And attitudes, our motives, our omissions too.

[13:36] There will be loss. There will be loss at that place of the judgment seat of Christ. If you turn to 1 Corinthians 3, the reward depends upon our obedience. This is a verse that you might have referred to before.

Paul's writing about the foundation that is Christ and he's saying that we build on that. He talks about the lives that we live, what we put into our lives, how we build.

1 Corinthians 3, 12, he says, 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 burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

[14:49] Some Christians are just going to sneak into heaven. They're just going to sneak in by the blood of Christ. There's nothing that they can merit. Of course, there's nothing anyway that we can merit, as it were.

But the sun, they're just going to get in by fire. The word hay and the stubble is going to turn to ashes. That's all they're going to bring. A little pile of ashes for their life's work, for what they've given and what they've done, for who they've been, for how they've lived.

And yet for some, there will be gold, silver and precious stones that they can take beyond, take into the forever. And will we be ashamed, brother and sister today, of the wasted hours, the wasted opportunities, the neglected responsibilities that we've lived our life in useless things?

It could be this word of, another word that I used there, sorry, back in 2 Corinthians 5.10.

We're going to receive, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. The word bad there is worthless. Some things are going to be worthless. They're going to be without value. Is what we put into our lives of lasting value?

[16:04] Or is it worthless? In the context, in the environment of eternity, will it be counted as worthless, as wasted?

Wasted time, wasted opportunities. Will it be wood, hay and stubble? What is it that we're investing our lives in? Are we laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven? Or are we just wasting our life in trivial pursuits, so to speak?

Are we running the race? Or have we stopped in our tracks? Are we getting hindered? I was challenged to think of Galatians 5.7, where Paul writes, he says, you did run well.

Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? He's saying you're doing so well. You're running so well. You're making such progress. Who has hindered you?

And Christians, we can be hindered. I can be hindered. We can be hindered. It might be seemingly trivial things or insignificant ways, but we can get detoured.

[17:07] Like Pilgrim in his Pilgrim's Progress, he got off track, didn't he? He went off on tangents now and again. He got off the straight road and made a few detours.

And sometimes we can be hindered in our Christian life. And yet Paul wants us, like Philippians 3.14, he says, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

He says, I press towards the mark. So that goal, I aspire to that, that high calling, that call from above, that gospel race. He says, I'm going to race it and I'm going to keep on running, keep on racing.

Are you going to have that kind of endurance in that gospel race or are you going to be hindered like the Galatians were? Maybe it will seem like everything is against you to live the Christian life. Sometimes I know in the workplace, myself in a workplace, yourselves in a workplace where you might have ungodly influences and ungodly peer pressure all around you and for you to be a Christian it can be a challenge and yet we must, we must stand up and be faithful and even if it be as 1 Peter 1 says, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

[18:29] Your faith is going to shine as gold. There might be ashes about, there might be fire and testing and flame but your faith will be as pure gold, it will be refined and purified.

Are you ready for the judgment seat of Christ? Philippians 2, 12, Paul writes, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

There's a sense where there's a fear and trembling. We should take our Christianity seriously. This is not some game that we play, not some hobby or friendly group of people we meet every Sunday. This is life eternal. This is a heaven to gain, a hell to shun. This is salvation. God's saving grace that His precious blood was poured out for me, for you, and for those who are yet to hear.

And so, how much should we love to pass out the message, whether it be tracked or personal witness or our own lives lived, that we can be out and out Christians.

[19:43] Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. There's a serious, solemn aspect to that, isn't there?

He's saying, carry out your own salvation, put it into effect. And he goes on, it's God is working in you. God's operating in you. God's energising you, constantly putting forth His energy in you is the sense of it there.

God is working in you as you work out your own salvation. Real Christians tremble. They take it seriously. They think about, there's an eternity awaiting.

There's a judgement seat. I've got to be prepared for, have I got myself right with God? Have I fully surrendered? Or is the compartments of my life I haven't fully yielded to Him?

Don't leave any empty space in your life. Fill it with Christ. Let Him fill your life. Could it be the sins of omission? Omission. They're the things we haven't done.

[20:42] We could brag about the things we have done. But what of the things we haven't done? Especially if it be God's will. Though we've neglected to hear His voice, to respond to His call, to the work He's called us to do, for the gifts He's gifted us with, to employ them, to put our lives in His service.

An account. Time is coming. An account time. Now, we see that every month when the bank account comes, you know, Julie tries to hide what she spends, but I can see it's all laid out for me. Well, certainly what she used the Visa card for anyway. Don't know what she spends the cash on. But, you know, when you get the account, there's an account keeping time, isn't there?

It's all spelled out there. What you've spent your money on. What about the account for your life? When the account keeping time comes, He says that every man shall give account of himself to God.

When the account comes and he's reading it, what's it going to say for your life? How you've spent it? How you've invested it? People today, there's an account keeping time. An account giving time.

[21:52] And we'll remember then our prayerlessness. We'll tremble then when we'll think, oh, those neglected things I should have done, those witnessing opportunities I neglected to take up, that prayer time, that Bible study, that fellowship that I missed, that neglecting of the spiritual things that I should have had.

There'll be no excuses then. There'll be no excuses then. It'll really just be, Lord, I'm sorry. I did neglect some things.

Wouldn't it be better now to decide? Decide now to invest your life for Him. So obey the Lord's commission. Go ye. Go ye.

There's no having to feel like it about that. He didn't say, go ye when you feel like it. He didn't say, if you want to.

He says, go ye. It's a command. We should be His witnesses. It's something that there's no choice there. It's a command. It's a command. Have we been genuine in our serving of the Lord?

[23:01] Or have we been slack? I know I have been slack. We all have times of slackness where we've been neglectful of spiritual things. Have we lived in victory over sin?

Or has sin got the victory over us? Have we controlled our tongue? Or have we uttered hurtful and careless words? Have we manifested the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

Are we living that love, that joy, that peace, etc.? Have we loved our enemies? You know, of those that are least deserving of our consideration and of our thoughtfulness, our kindness, they're the very ones that our Lord says we should love.

That's challenging, isn't it? Have we allowed God to work His will in us? He says, we are His workmanship. We're created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2, 10. We have His workmanship, we have His design, His handiwork, His workmanship created for good works. How is your heart today?

[24:08] Let us ask Him to search our hearts. The Lord searches the reins, the heart. He searches. 2 Thessalonians 3, 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Ask the Lord to direct your heart. Let the Lord direct that love. If we let the love of God direct our service to God and to man, we can be assured of rewards in heaven.

Someone illustrated like this, what is it that never fails? Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13, 8 Charity never faileth.

Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13, 8 If you do it in love, then it's never going to fail. It's not going to be a pile of ashes then. If what's prompting you is your love for the Saviour, if what's prompting you is the love that He puts in your heart for others, then love never fails.

There'll be something to show in a sense that love is the gold, the silver, the precious stones. It's that pure motive. It's that motive of your love for the Saviour.

[25:17] The love of Christ constrains us. It urges us. It prompts us. It projects us out to do something, to be active.

The worthless things will not endure, but the precious things, those things of value and worth, those things out of your love for the Saviour, they will ever remain. They will never fail.

And will we lose rewards or will there be a reward? Think of it. Brother, sister today. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not preaching a works-based salvation that somehow you merit heaven.

At this judgment seat of Christ, you're there because the judgments already happened for you.

When you trusted Christ, the blood of Christ washed all your sins away. He took it all, lock, stock and barrel, every bit of your sin.

There's no merit of heaven that you can make by doing, by being, of any act of your own or keeping of your own. It's all of His keeping. It's all of His doing. And the glory is all His.

[26:19] It's our faith, His grace. And so, yet, there is still a time when you'll be examined. Have you been faithful with that gift of salvation that you've been given? Have you lived that life that He's called you to live?

Or will it be said of you that there's a pride and an emptiness, a vanity about what you've done? It could be for any one of us, for me, for any one of us, that what we're doing is just out of our being puffed up and our wanting to be recognised or gain some credit or applause from people.

God forbid that that should be so. You know, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. I'm not here to tickle your ears and make you feel good, give you a warm and fuzzy feeling and pat you on the back and say go and sin some more.

No, saying go and sin no more. Don't sin. Walk with Christ. Get saved today if you're not already because who knows how close hell is for you.

But if you are saved, the judgment seat is coming for you. I want you to be ready. It talks of how the shepherd doesn't want to give an account with tears and I want to give it with joy.

[27:42] I want to think, yes, Marcus can have a beautiful crown one day as she has that. It could be the crown of righteousness as she awaits his coming. Brother Jim, I have the crown of life.

A martyr's crown. God forbid that he's a martyr but maybe he is a martyr sometimes. But the crown of life could be on Jim's head. Brother Kirk, the crown of rejoicing, the soul winner's crown could be on Kirk's head as he goes out and gives out gospel tracts and witnesses in his workplace.

Sister Elena could have the incorruptible crown, the victor's crown as she conquers those besetting sins, those things that will hinder her walk with Christ. She's got the victory.

She's got the incorruptible crown. There's so many crowns, so many blessed crowns, brothers and sisters and we just want to cast it at his feet anyway. But there'll be a time when there'll be a recognition for that service and not for any of our own motive or our own vain glory, not through strife or vain glory as Paul writes.

He says, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory. Let nothing be motivated by that kind of thing, by pride or selfishness or vanity. But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

[29:00] That's what we must have, that lowliness of Christ, that humility that marks us as his, as his servants, not to have us some, their worship was in vain.

Mark 7, 7, the Lord says of the Pharisees, how bear in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. There's some well-meaning believers and non-believers who are in vain worshipping, teaching doctrines of men.

It's mindful for us to think. It's what we're doing scriptural. That should lead us and guide us. For some, it's said of them that they're like the Pharisees, they fast, they disfigure their faces so that they appear unto men to fast.

He says, verily I say unto you, they have their reward. And he talks of those who pray, pray ostentatiously and long and fancy prayers that are really not real prayers.

They're just to be seen of men. And yet he commends those who pray in secret. He says, the Father sees those who pray in that closet place, in that secret place. He will reward you openly.

[30:12] And those who give to be seen with showy giving and just to gain some credit. God sees those who secretly give.

He sees those secret ways that you give, those secret ways that you serve. That's what matters when it's all said and done. It's the motive, isn't it? Is it the love of Christ that drives us? Are we obeying the Holy Spirit?

Are we listening to the Word of God? Will it be that when that crowning time comes, it won't be that corruptible crown like the ivy and laurel wreath that the athletes of the Olympics of old had.

It'll be an incorruptible crown. It'll be gold, silver, precious stones. It won't be wood, hay, stubble, ashes. It'll be gold, silver, precious stones.

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

[31:14] Incorruptible, it will never die. It will never wither. Love never fails. Charity never faileth. There's eternal consequences to what we do. That's the consideration for you, for me.

This life ahead, this day, the day ahead, the week ahead, the year ahead. If God be willing to grant you that time, redeem the time because the days are evil.

use up every opportunity you can to be investing your life in eternity. And then there'll be a reward for your faithfulness.

When God calls you name, you'll be there. You cannot hide, you cannot go and hide from him.

When that appointment time comes, you can't be late.

He'll drag you there or the angels will and you'll stand before that judgment seat of Christ. Every man shall stand there every woman shall stand there. Every believer will stand there.

[32:17] You cannot excuse yourselves for the things you haven't done, but there will be credit for what you have done. There will be loss for the worthless things you have done, but there will be praise of God from those things that count it.

And he'll say, well done, a good and faithful servant.