

The Judgment Seat Of Christ

April 30, 2006

2 John 1:8 (NLT)

Watch out, so that you do not lose the prize for which we have been working so hard. Be diligent so that you will receive your **full reward.**

Isaiah 40:9-10 (NLT)

Messenger of good news, shout to Zion from the mountaintops! Shout louder to Jerusalem—do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah, "Your God is coming!" [10] Yes, the Sovereign Lord is coming in all his glorious power. He will rule with awesome strength. See, **he brings his reward with him as he comes.**

Isaiah 62:11 (NLT)

The Lord has sent this message to every land: "Tell the people of Israel, 'Look, your Savior is coming. See, **he brings his reward with him** as he comes.' "

Matthew 5:11-12 (NLT)

"God blesses you when you are mocked and persecuted and lied about because you are my followers. [12] Be happy about it! Be very glad! **For a great reward awaits you in heaven.**

2 Cor. 5:10 (NKJV)

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.

I want to speak to you today on a subject that is very seldom talked about today but it is a subject that is very, very important. The subject that I am referring to is "**The Judgment Seat of Christ**".

The Bible says.....

Romans 14:10 (NKJV)

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? **For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**

The Bible talks about two very different judgments.

1. One is called "**The Great White Throne Judgment**".

This judgment is reserved for those who have not received God's forgiveness of their sins.

We read about it in the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation.

Rev. 20:11-15 (NKJV)

Then I saw **a great white throne** and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. [12] And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [13] The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. [14] Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [15] And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

The **Great White Throne Judgment** is for those whose names have **not** been written in the **Book of Life**. No born-again believer in Jesus Christ will appear before the Great White Throne.

But there is another judgment where every born-again believer will have to appear. It is called "**The Judgment Seat Of Christ**". When He returns every Christ will stand before Him and He will evaluate your life. He will then reward you according to the work you have done for Him. Some people will receive great rewards and others will be reprimanded for not doing what God called them and gifted them to do.

You need to understand that not everyone who goes to hell will receive the same degree of **punishment** and not everyone who goes to heaven will receive the same degree of **rewards**.

The Bible makes it clear that the judgment handed out at the **Great White Throne** will be in proportion to the evil that has been committed. Everyone will not receive the same degree of punishment in hell.

Isaiah 59:18 (NKJV)

According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;....

Jesus said.....

Matthew 11:23-24 (NKJV)

And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. [24] But I say to you that it shall be **more tolerable** for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you."

Luke 20:46-47 (NKJV)

"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes [47] who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive **greater condemnation.**"

Those scriptures and many others reveal that there will be degrees of **punishment** for those who are lost.

The Bible also makes it clear that there will be degrees of rewards for those who are saved.

God gave Daniel a glimpse of the resurrection of the dead. Here's what he He said.....

Daniel 12:2-3 (NKJV)

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.
[3] Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.

According to that verse there will be people who will take part in the first resurrection who will spend eternity in shame and contempt.

There will be others who will receive wonderful rewards. They will shine like the stars forever and ever. They will rule and reign with Christ.

The difference between those two groups of resurrected Christians is huge!

Some will be ashamed when Jesus returns. They will not hear Him say, "Well done" because they have not done anything. They will receive no rewards. They will live throughout eternity thinking of what might have been! They will spend their eternity wishing they had lived their lives differently.

Others will receive fantastic rewards for the work they did for Christ while they lived on the earth.

I am telling you that it does make a tremendous difference how you live your Christian life.

For some strange reason, Christians think that the only thing that matters is whether or not they get to heaven. They think that once they get there everything will be great. They think that it doesn't matter how they live their lives here on earth.

They think that once they give their lives to Christ, there is nothing else that they need to do to be ready for the Second Coming of Christ.

It is true that there is absolutely nothing you can do to earn your salvation. It is a free gift. But the Bible says that you will not be ready for the Second Coming of Christ until you have **made yourself ready**.

Rev. 19:7-8 (NKJV)

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.**" [8] And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Philip. 2:12-13 (NKJV)

Therefore, my beloved, as you 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; [13] for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Every Christian wants to hear Christ say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” But every Christian will not hear those words. You will only hear those words if you have been a faithful servant and have done things that will stand the test of the fire that Christ is going to use to test your works and determine your rewards.

Listen to these words written by the Apostle Paul.....

1 Cor. 3:9-15 (NKJV)

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. [10] According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. [11] For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12] Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

[13] each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. [14] If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

There is only one foundation and that foundation is Jesus Christ.

The only way for anyone to be saved is by believing in Jesus Christ.

But after you have done that, how you build upon that foundation determines the rewards that you will receive when Christ returns.

Every one of us will stand before Christ. Our works will be tested by fire. It is important how you live your life. It is going to make a huge difference throughout eternity!

Imagine standing before Christ when He returns and your works are piled up in front of you. They are represented by “**gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw.**”

Every person will have some wood hay and straw in their pile but some will also have gold, silver and precious stones in with the wood, hay and straw.

Christ will have a torch in His hand and use it to set you pile of works on fire. The wood, hay and straw will burn up. The gold, silver and precious stones will remain. Those who have gold, silver and precious stones remaining will be rejoicing. Those who have nothing left after the fire is applied will be weeping.

What an incredible contrast. There will be uncontrollable weeping and unrestrained praise going on at the same time. Those who have gold, silver and precious stones to place at the feet of Jesus will be singing the Hallelujah chorus. Those who do not will be weeping with uncontrollable sorrow.

Do you remember the parables that Jesus told in the 25th chapter of Matthew? The chapter begins with the parable of the ten virgins.

Then Jesus tells the parable of the talents.

It's the story of a very rich man and three of his key employees. Think of the rich man as the CEO of a huge conglomerate of companies. Someone like Donald Trump. (The Apprentice)

He calls three of his key employees into his big, plush office and gives each of them a lavish opportunity to run his businesses while he is away.

He gives the first man five talents, the second man two talents, and the third man one talent. A talent represents a sum of money worth in the neighborhood of fifteen years' wages. It was a huge sum of money, especially back in those days when people lived from day to day. For any one to accumulate a years' worth of wages was enormous wealth.

So the figures Jesus is throwing around are enormous! Five talents represent seventy-five years of wages. Two talents represent thirty years of wages. One talent represents fifteen years of wages.

It means that the boss in this story had to be very, very wealthy. He certainly had more employees than just these three. Therefore, these three were in a remarkable position.

It was a chance of a lifetime for each of them! It was their chance to use their abilities and bring honor to their boss knowing that he was going to return someday to evaluate their work.

It was a chance of a lifetime for these three men. What would they do? It was their defining moment!

Up until then, these men had simply been hired hands, carrying out someone else's orders. Their lives had been routine, predictable and safe. Now, they have the chance to be the boss and to decide what they will do with the resources the master has given to them.

Matthew 25:16 (NRSV)

The one who had received the five talents went off **at once** and traded with them, and made five more talents.

Jesus said that the first man responded "**at once**". He didn't waste any time. He knew a good deal when he saw one. He seized the opportunity.

Let me make an application. Jesus has entrusted His business to you and me. He gives each one of us at least **one talent** and He expects us to use it for His glory. From God's perspective, the talent He has given us is enormous. It is not something to be taken lightly.

This is not a story where some are gifted and some are not. God has given each of us abilities that He expects us to use for Him.

In place of the word talent think about your life; Your mind; Your abilities; Your spiritual gifts; Your body; Your money; Your will; All of the things that God has given to you to use for Him.

The opportunity to use whatever gifts you have been given in the service of the Lord is the chance of a lifetime. The time to respond is at once!

The first two servants in this story do this but the third one doesn't. He takes the greatest opportunity he will ever be given and buries it.

He forgot a very important fact of the Christian life. He forgot that the Lord who saved him and gave him the gift was coming back to evaluate what he had done with his opportunity to serve his master while he was away.

The day finally came when his Master returned. The three men stood before him to give an account of what they did while He was away.

Matthew 25:19-21 (NKJV)

After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. [20] So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' [21] His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

The Lord said the same thing to the servant who had received two talents because he had also doubled what the Lord had given to him.

What about the third man?

The third man buried his talent. It doesn't say that he was a bad person. He didn't steal anything or defraud anybody. He just didn't use what the Master had given him.

And the Lord said to him, "You wicked and lazy servant...." And it says, "There was weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What should have been a wonderful, glorious event turned into the saddest day of the man's life.

Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul.....

1 Cor. 9:24-27 (NKJV)

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. [25] And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. [26] Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air

. [27] But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Imagine having an Olympic games where it didn't matter if the athletes were in shape or not. Everyone who showed up made the team. There were no distinctions in medals. Everyone got the same prize regardless of how well they performed. How motivated do you think the athletes would be?

That is what has happened to the church. We don't talk about working to receive rewards and therefore there is little motivation to do your best for Christ.

How many Christians do you know who are seeking to please God with as much diligence and intensity as an Olympic athlete seeking a gold medal?

What would happen to the church if Christians truly believed that the rewards God wants to give us are a billion times more valuable than an Olympic gold medal?

Paul knew how important it was to serve the Lord. He said, "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Disqualified? What does that mean? He wasn't talking about losing his salvation. He was talking about being disqualified for the prize. He is worried about the fearful possibility that he might forfeit the eternal reward that God wants to give him because he did not fulfill God's purposes for his life.

He says, "If Olympic athletes are willing to do what they do to win a perishable crown, what should we be willing to do to win an imperishable crown?" Paul told Timothy.....

2 Tim. 4:5-8 (NKJV)

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

[6] For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Peter said.....

2 Peter 1:10-11 (NIV)

Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, [11] and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews said.....

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus said.....

Rev. 22:12 (NKJV)

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

I don't know about you but when I stand before Him I want to hear Him say, "Well done good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your Master!"

Give invitation!