Grace Evangelical Free Church December 4, 2022

**2 Corinthians 5:10** Judgment Seat of Christ

There are different kinds of Christians: the faithful and the unfaithful (**Matthew 25:21**); the spiritual and the worldly (**1 Corinthians 3:1**); and the diligent and careless (**Ephesians 5:15-17**). What does it matter, then, as to the kind of Christian we are, if when the Lord comes again, we shall all be caught up in the rapture anyway? It matters very much indeed:

**2 Corinthians 5:10**: **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**”

Note: now is the time to see to these things per **1 John 2:28**!

* **Grammatical Usage: “appear”** or in the Greek, “phaneroó” meaning, “to be revealed”; “**judgment seat**” or “béma” meaning, “raised place” (Paul references a throne, which Herod built in the theater at Caesarea, and from which he used to view the games and make speeches to the people); “**what is due**” or “receive back.”
* **Literal Interpretation:** **For all of us will be revealed before the raised place of Christ, so that each one may receive back the things done in the body whether good or evil.**

Note: that God is serious about this judgment is clear from **v. 11**!

* **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. For the Christian, there is a great examination day coming, and we must live and work in the light of that day if we would “be rewarded fully” (**2 John 8**)! It makes a tremendous difference what kind of Christians we are. No believer will ever be judged for his sins, for the sins of every believer have already been judged and punished in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross (**John 5:24**); but we are to be judged concerning our life and service:

1. When we appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ we shall appear as we really are.

Down here we are never seen by each other as we really are; only God can see our hearts (**1 Samuel 16:7**). **2 Corinthians 5:10** may literally be translated, “**we must all be manifested without disguise**”, or, “**in our true characters**.” In this connection, look up **Acts 5:1-10**, and then notice in **1 Corinthians 3:13-15** that the fire is to try the kind of work we have rendered to the Lord - not the appearance of that work. In **1 Corinthians 4:5**, we are told that the one thing which counts before God is reality, and that at the Judgment Seat of Christ He will make manifest our motives and reward us accordingly.

2. When we appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, we shall have to give an account of ourselves and of our service per **Romans 14:12**. Notice that there are no exceptions, for Paul says, “**each of us…**”; notice also that the account that we shall give is of ourselves - not of others. It will be revealed then:

* Whether we have lived for God’s glory or for self-pleasing (**2 Corinthians 5:15**)
* How we have used our time (**John 9:4**; **Ephesians 5:16**; **1 Peter 1:17**)
* How we have used our money, possessions, property (**Matthew 6:19-21**; **1 Timothy 6:17-19**)
* Whether we have sought the salvation of the lost (**Daniel 12:3**; **2 Corinthians 5:11**)
* Whether we have been faithful in prayer (**Luke 18:1**)
* All the words that we have spoken (**Matthew 12:36**)
* Our attitude towards our brethren (**Romans 12:10**; **14:10**; **Galatians 6:1**)
* Our work will have to be accounted for (**1 Corinthians 3:13**)

3. When we appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, everything which is worthless and empty will be burned up and only that which can stand the test of fire will remain.

Read **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** and notice the two kinds of material:

* That which abides the testing of fire and which is purified by the fire (gold, silver, costly stones).
* That which is easily burned up because it is worthless (wood, hay, straw).

The life we live and the way we serve is one of two kinds: either that which will stand the test of fire, or that which will not!

4. When we appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, the purpose of the Judge will not be to punish unfaithfulness but to reward faithfulness. After the Grecian Games were over, the successful contestants assembled before the Bema, or the Judges’ Stand. This was an elevated seat upon which the umpire sat to pronounce the results and to make the awards. You and I will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ in order that He may give honor, promotion and reward where they have been merited. Prize days at school are held, not in order to punish and degrade those who have not done well, but in order to reward those who have. How important it is for us to live and labor in the power of the Holy Spirit in order that we may receive a reward (**1 Corinthians 3:14**)! When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ:

* Some will hear the word of Divine Approval (**Matthew 25:21-23**)
* Some will receive Promotion (**Luke 19:17-19**; **Romans 15:10**; **Revelation 20:4**)

All of us may receive Crowns: the Incorruptible Crown for living a disciplined life (**1 Corinthians 9:25**); the Crown of Life for enduring trials (**James 1:12**); the Crown of Rejoicing for soul-winning service (**1 Thessalonians 2:19-20**); the Crown of Glory for shepherding the flock (**1 Peter 5:2-4**); the Crown of Righteousness for loving His appearing (**2 Timothy 4:8**).

5. When we appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, it will be too late then to wish that we had been more faithful, more zealous or more careful in our work and witness.

* **Conclusion**: Paul issues a call for introspection. Only you and God know the truth.