

Judgement seat of Christ

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[0 : 00] We turn to the chapter we read in Paul, chapter 5, and concentrate our thoughts for a time this evening on the words that we have in verse 10.

Verse 10 in the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians. 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.

We have a different time throughout scripture brought before us the fact that our lives come to an end here.

We don't need the scripture to remind us of that. We have evidences of it all around us every day and each moment we live.

And yet that is not the end for man. Our text tells us there lies another event for man to face after death.

[1 : 45] And I want this evening for a time to look first of all at the fact that this is a certain event. We must all appear.

And I want to emphasize that little word, all. Because it means quite simply that every single person in here tonight, you and I, we are part of that all.

Just as the congregation next door is, and the congregation in the seminary. And every congregation gathered throughout the length and breadth of this island.

And more than that, every soul that is at home or out on the highways and byways of life, every one of them will also be gathered at this certain event.

We must all appear. And I want us also this evening to reflect upon the fact that there is not only a certain event, but Paul tells us here that it is to be at a certain place.

[2 : 57] Notice what the text says again. The judgment seat of Christ. And that will be a very different judgment seat, we'll see in a moment, to the judgment seats perhaps that you and I set up in our own little minds.

Or even the courts of our land set up. So it's a certain event. So it's a certain event. With a certain place. And it is also a place where there will be a certain judge.

What does our text say to us? It says it is the judgment seat of Christ. In other words, Christ will be the judge.

And it is a certain event. At a certain place. With a certain judge. And a certain judgment. What does our text say to us again?

We will receive according to that we have done in this world, in this body. Whether that is good. Or whether that is bad.

[4 : 05] I want us to simply concentrate on these four stages. That are quite clearly brought before us. A certain event.

We must all. I have said that this means that none will be excluded on that day. Now perhaps it's difficult for you tonight to comprehend that this is so.

But we have God's word to tell us. That this is so. And I'm sure most of us at least in here tonight.

Most of you in here tonight would say that you believe what I say to you. I hope you do. I hope you do. Well if you believe what I say to you.

What I say to you is based upon my belief in God's word. And if you believe the word of the preacher. Why not ought it to be that you believe the word of God that the preacher communicates to you.

[5 : 13] And if that is so. Then we must begin to reflect upon the different kinds of people that this affects. For example it affects those ungodly characters that scripture presents to us at different times.

Those who perhaps try to convince themselves that really God does not exist. Who thought in their own hearts that they could outwit the living God.

And who at times perhaps even acted as if that was possible. Men like Pharaoh way back in the Old Testament. And he says who is God that I should obey him.

And yet at another level he was a witness to the power of the living God. And ultimately that living God destroyed him. So it's important for us as we look at this certain event.

That we grasp this real truth. That it affects every single person who ever lived. And it affects also perhaps many who come into this category.

[6 : 29] Those whom we will call the self-righteous. Those who dressed themselves and submitted themselves in a sense to the very letter of the law.

And yet never submitted themselves to the Christ of the gospel. They thought it sufficient by their own works.

By what they thought they could do and achieve themselves. They thought that to be sufficient for them. And would not be convinced otherwise.

Would not want, would not give place to the thought that perhaps, even perhaps, that there was a possibility that man was justified.

Not by self-righteous deeds. But justified by faith in the living God. And those who deluded so many souls.

[7 : 27] And I find this, to a great extent, a very solemn thought. That there are millions in the world tonight who submit to various teachings and isms.

And are submitting to delusions which stem from the very pit of hell. And yet men are convinced in their own minds, in their own lives, that these isms are a sufficient element for them to gain the presence of God.

Now let's look for a moment just to remind ourselves of what it is that is brought before us here by the apostle. And we'll return to this in a moment, but just in passing.

He tells us towards the end of this chapter that reconciliation for man rests only in Jesus Christ. Rests only in Jesus Christ.

So that everything else that puts a man, a person, an idol, or whatever, in place of Christ is diminishing his power, his position, and what is his potential to do in the life of an individual.

[8 : 47] So when Christ is replaced by something else, then man is immediately reducing the concept and the reality that Christ is the supreme answer to man being reconciled to God.

And then you see, you can go beyond that. And I was thinking of it in this sense, and I want to apply another couple of situations that develop for us from the scriptures.

Let's think for a moment of this judgment seat and of this certain event. And you see here that in this judgment, there is this great view that man will have of seeing the whole world gathered.

As one. The whole world from Adam to the last person that ever lived. Now I know that the sort of logistics in working that out seem nigh impossible to us, but that is ultimately only because we are limited in our own perceptions, in our own perspectives of what we think is possible for us or for a man to achieve.

But that is not so with God. And so it is that in this certain event, all of mankind, and there is this solemn thought that so many whose lives were so near to the kingdom will now appear at this particular place.

[10 : 25] You know, you can think of men like Pilate. He who passed judgment upon the Son of Man. This day the tables will be turned.

It will be what they call reverse order. Instead of Pilate being the judge arrayed in his finery of his royal position. It will be Christ who will judge.

Judging men like Pilate. Judging men like, perhaps like, like Felix. Men who set aside the claims of the gospel until a convenient season.

And I would like to impress upon those of you in here tonight who do not know Jesus Christ as your own and your personal Savior.

That one of the greatest delusions that you can entertain in your mind is this. That you will put off Christ until a convenient season.

[11 : 33] That you will say, I will slot him away into the back of the filing cabinet of my mind and heart. And leave it until later on. And I will leave it as Felix did.

Until it suits me. But when you think about it, it is so illogical. When Christ is here, offered freely to you.

A sinner who is heading towards judgment. When Christ is actually on offer as the Savior. As the one who offers us terms of reconciliation.

That you will put that, as it were, on the back burner. And leave it for another time. All of us, at different times, are made to stop in our tracks.

When we see how quickly situations change in life. When you see, perhaps, those that you know. Some of you young people, perhaps even.

[12 : 40] People you've known. And all of a sudden, they place the friendship. The camaraderie you had with them. It's all gone. Because their lives are cut off in a moment.

You see, the convenient season is not the most safe. And as it sounds, the convenient season. Now, the Bible tells you. It's the accepted time.

Now is the day of salvation. No, no, no. Not tomorrow. Not next week. Not next year.

God commands his love to you and to me. As sinners this night. And you see, it is like this also. That when we come to look at this convenient season.

It seems so suitable. You reflect upon it, perhaps, in your life tonight. You think of how suitable it is to you tonight.

[13 : 38] Who do not know Christ here. To say to yourself, I'll just leave it off, perhaps, till next Sunday. I've got so much planned this week. I couldn't possibly find time for God, for Christ, for religion.

Everything is so busy with me. Life is abuzz. It's so exciting. So many people think and have thought that way. And before the next Sunday has come around, they have gone to eternity.

Never, never, never to return again. You see, it is something that is certain. And it is in, as it were, the diary of Almighty God.

Because he tells us, it is appointed unto man once to die. No second chance. No second offer. Once to die.

And after that, the judgment. Well, let me ask you tonight. If that messenger who comes with such suddenness sometimes.

[14 : 39] Who comes with such an element of surprise and unexpectedness. If he should come tonight and call you away.

How would it be with your soul? Where would you open your eyes? Would it be in heaven? Or would it be in hell?

There's only one of two ways. There is no middle road. There is a way that seems right to a man, the Bible tells us. But the end is destruction.

You see, Felix thought that it seemed right for him to leave off this blissiness of his soul to a convenient season. Let me give you another example also from Acts.

And I'm giving you these because I'm sure they're well known to many of you. There's another character whose life is soul wrapped up with the life of this man who wrote this letter to Corinth, Paul, Saul of Tarsus as he was.

[15 : 41] He encountered not only Felix, but he also encountered a man called Agrippa. And the astonishing thing about Agrippa is this.

That he was almost, almost persuaded to become a Christian. And perhaps I'm speaking to someone here tonight who has come to that point.

And who has come to that point, who came to that point, perhaps somewhere along the road, a week, a year, perhaps 10 years ago. Perhaps some of you are old and still without Christ.

20 or 40 years ago. 20 or 40 years ago. 20 or 40 years ago. And there was a point at which you were almost persuaded. A point at which you thought, yes.

And yet, you drew back. Where is your soul tonight? How is it in relation to this certain event?

[16 : 45] How is it in relation to this certain event? You're left off for a convenient season.

You're left off although you were almost persuaded. And tonight, perhaps far away, or you maybe never have stopped coming to church.

Perhaps you come morning and night. And yet, you don't have the Christ who reconciles you to God.

We must all appear. And I sometimes think of it in this way. That as you and I will go to that judgment seat, perhaps you will want to turn away from it.

And go in another direction. The Bible tells us that when this day comes, when Christ appears, people will call on the mountains and the hills to follow him.

[17 : 56] They would rather die under that sort of situation and go and face the judge of all the earth who does right. And I sometimes think of it in this way.

That when we gather there and we see those, perhaps who have witnessed to us, if you come to that place without Christ, you perhaps see some of, perhaps the ministers who have preached from this pulpit.

some of you, perhaps from other congregations, the ministers who have preached to you, perhaps the elders who have spoken to you, witnessed to you, warned you, pleaded with you, perhaps parents and families who pleaded over your soul, and you heard praying for you in your early days.

And they are going to judgment. And you are going to judgment. One to heaven and the other to hell.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of God. Now, I know full well that it is extremely difficult for us to try and, as I said already, to fit into our mind's eye the manner, the system, even the place itself, where the judgment will take place.

[19 : 35] But John tells us that he saw people stand before the throne of God in Revelation. I don't want to spend any time this evening with trying to, as it were, work out a theory for the location of this judgment seat.

But I want just to move on and to try and impress upon you the importance of the fact of this place, the judgment seat of Christ.

and I want to think of it in this sense, especially in relation to today's service. Now, some of you might have been in the service this morning.

Some of you maybe only come out in the evening anyway. Perhaps even some of you tonight only come out on a communion Sunday. How are you going to account for that on the day of judgment?

Are you going to account for the fact that you only came on communion Sunday? Perhaps you hardly ever hear your own minister preaching, you only hear visiting preachers.

[20 : 48] And you're going to stand at the judgment seat. What's your argument going to be? What's your justification for that kind of action? And I want to impress upon you that it is with Christ that the judging is done.

and tying it in with what we saw this morning, there was a powerful evidence of the fact that Christ died.

Powerful evidence in the symbols of the broken body and the shed blood. These are symbols of what took place in the life of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

And it is with that that man should be concerned. We could spend hours debating the location of this judgment seat. But really, the concern that you and I should have is not with the location or the place, but with the verdict that he gives on that day.

The verdict that he will give on that day. Some may think themselves safe, going in their self-righteousness to judgment.

[22 : 00] Some will be judged and will inherit eternal life. What do you reckon your prospects to be as you stand at that certain place?

What do you think the judge of all the earth who does right will do? What verdict will the books reveal when they are open regarding your life and mine?

John tells us, he says, the books were opened. It's as if they're around the throne and you have, as it were, a picture of a book, a wall.

And that book being opened and the search for your name being there. And it's not. What does the Bible tell us that takes place then?

Whosoever's name was not found written in the book of life is cast into the lake of life. Although I find it extraordinary, you who are free church people, who are exposed to the gospel week in and week out.

[23 : 20] And in the end, except you seek the Savior, you will be cast into a lake of fire. The Bible calls it outer dark.

A place beyond, as it were, the darkness that we experience if we went out into the country where there are no street lights, no stars, no moon. outer darkness.

All because you have come to a certain place and the judge of all the earth has viewed your life. Your name was not found with you in the Lamb's book of life.

And let me say this about this certain place. that trial will be absolutely failed. There will be no one there to state your kiss for you.

No one there to state your kiss for you. Only you and the Savior of the world. will be but if he's not your Savior he will be your judge.

[24 : 49] And if he will be your judge who has no record of you in his book of life he will cast you away and your self-righteousness and your Sunday best and your church attendance and all you sought to do by your own efforts will be of no avail.

A certain event that affects us all and it is there at a certain place with a certain judge by the man God has appointed Christ Jesus.

It's an amazing turn of events. Once he was tried by an earthly court and they put him to death now he now he comes and places every man on trial and some will know eternal death and some will know eternal life.

Perhaps there are some of you here tonight and you put Christ on trial at times. You make your analysis of Jesus.

You try and work out in your mind what you think of this Jesus well it's our reverse order again on this day. He will give his lead and the word tells us that the judge of all the earth he does right.

[26 : 41] The judge of all the earth he does right. Such is the place of judgment such is the judge who comes here.

Perhaps you're saying you're giving me no hope tonight. Perhaps some of you who are long gone in years your harvest of life is ended your summer is ended your harvest is gone and you're still not saved.

You're saying what hope have I got? Well the apostle tells us in the chapter go home and we did no let's just read it before you go home.

God verse 19 God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Reconciliation presupposes enmity.

reconciliation through another. Go to verse 11 you say why someone says tonight why are you so so worked up about this matter preacher?

[28 : 05] Well verse 11 you read on from the verse beyond our text going there for the terror of the Lord oh you say you're at it again no read on to the next word we persuade man that's the job in a sense of preaching to persuade through the power of the Holy Spirit you who are lost you who are on that broad road that will take you to the lostness of our lost eternity we would persuade you with all the might and power that the Holy Spirit would enable us to persuade you with because we fear for your soul and we long for your souls we long to see them in the bosom of Christ we long to see you coming to find that place with the Lord's people at his table we want to see you in the kingdom of heaven we want to see you going to that day of judgment with that calm assurance that you have reconciled yourself to

God that you have made your peace that you have been to Calvary that you have seen there the purpose of the death of the Son of God and that there you have bowed in submission to him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree we would want we would plead with you with all our might that you would lay hold upon this Lord and this Saviour because he is going to be the judge make no mistake about it it is an absolute truth an absolute fact there is no deviation from the truth of the word of God he alone will be the judge of you and of me and so we would seek to persuade you as the apostle tells us when he contemplates the terror of the law the word tells us in another place that it is a fearful thing an awesome thing to fall into the hands of the living

God and then look also the manner of judging a certain judgment the deeds done in the body whether good or bad it's amazingly simple isn't it it's it's one of these statements that's just so so simple every child in here tonight knows these two words good or bad we would say to the child that was good that was bad that was good that was bad well it's as simple and yet as profound as that that the judgment that takes place at the throne of judgment it is based upon whether you have to put it in the most simplistic terms lived a good life here or a bad life ah you say

I've lived a good life well that might be so up to a point many good people upright people honest citizens that's not enough not that it's not enough you read master 25 there another picture of judgment there you will see that that our Lord sets before us certain elements of that which the outward eye is good we have done certain things we have done good deeds what the problem well they did the good deeds but they didn't to carry the picture of the good deed that brought them to repentance and to salvation good or bad what kind of response do you give tonight to that what kind of response do you give to these concepts goodness and bad goodness of what is right and what is wrong that's the basis of the judge's verdict whether it has been good or whether it has been bad whether you have accepted his terms of reconciliation or whether you have not whether you thought you could like a psalmist says be like wicked men who go on and sin and do not keep his law whether you thought there was sufficiency in what we developed the outside of that self-righteous streak in you that said

I am as good perhaps some of you here today looked at those at the Lord's table you said to yourself I'm just as good as these people you made yourself the judge and jury upon others and Satan's quite happy with that because it keeps you from looking to Christ you see the great problem with you tonight is this that you will think of a convenient season that you can think of being almost persuaded and you can think yourself just as good as the Christians who profess their faith in Christ here today all the time you are focusing on self you are focusing on yourself instead of focusing on Christ and it's only when you come to focus on Christ when you begin to realize that this

[34 : 41] Jesus that this Savior is what matters that it is this that the preacher persuades you of that the preacher seeks to convince you of that it is only as the Holy Spirit begins to work in your life and you respond to that and see yourself hopeless and helpless without Christ have you come to that stage in your life where you think yourself hopeless and helpless at a spiritual level without Christ where do you see yourself as having no hope without Christ well I believe that's a healthy stage to come to but allow it to develop further don't leave it there because there is hope there is life and I look at the crucified one there is life and life abundant offered freely in and through

Jesus Christ and instead of him being the judge who will eternally say will say to you you will eternally depart from me instead of him being the judge he will say I never knew you he will say come come into my kingdom come and enjoy the rich fellowship of eternalness in the glories of heaven oh what a difference that would make what an end that would be to your life if you are taken knowing that you go through that valley of shadow of death and you fear no evil the great shepherd is with you his rod and his staff they comfort you how do you get to that road well we've said it already you get it by coming by the cross of calvary you have to do small business at calvary you have to grasp there that there

God in the person of his son is carrying your sin the sin of all who will come to him he is carrying these sins he is paying the penalty that is due to you and to me for our sins on the cross and grasp the awesomeness of that picture that the son of God innocent and guiltless comes to bear to carry your sin and my sin in his own body on the tree what gospel what message compares with this message there is no message like the message of the gospel there is no hope outwith the hope of the gospel there is no hope for you tonight outwith the hope of being reconciled to God in Christ ah my friend where are you going beyond this life we are all as said at the outset heading to judgment poor lost sinners here tonight heading to judgment you have no hope outwith

Christ you young people life is so uncertain life is so fragile death is no respecter of persons in a moment young people cut down and that was no remedy those of you who are middle and advanced youth ah have these days come that Solomon speaks of in Ecclesiastes before the evil days come when I shall say when you shall say I have no pleasure in these things ah what a solemn thought you old unsaved people in here tonight your days are near gone and you haven't grasped the cross evangelized but lost another communion

Sabbath how many have you had thirty years forty years fifty years evangelistic services preach and still no room for crying well he passes by again tonight have you any room for him tonight have you any place for him in your heart in your closing days and years as your sunsets do you young people you boys and girls you come to know Jesus in your young days you're young people still at school you teenagers perhaps waiting longing to get away from the island and the influence of home and church wanting to get to the cities towns for a good time there's no good time without

[41 : 03] Christ ah yes there's the pleasures of sin for a season for a little time Christ is the great answer love perhaps some young people here tonight confused perhaps even with a sense of emptiness because you've discovered that life can be so almost cruel at times because you've discovered perhaps some friends that friend that you knew all of a sudden life is gone I wonder what it's all about it's all about being reconciled to God in Christ it's all about coming to know Jesus it's all about bowing before him and saying Lord take my life it's all about bowing like the other man and calling

God be merciful to me a sinner it's all about that great exclamation or prayer of the thief on the cross Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom Lord you say to me tonight I can't pray I have no prayer I don't know what to say the Lord knows the Lord knows your heart knows what's in me knows that cry if it is from the heart that is really searching and seeking he knows whether he knows also whether there's just a momentary event as it were and he knows that perhaps it is that the moment you get out the door there and you meet with your pals and you go out and you have a laugh it's all gone lay hold on Christ there's not a preacher who wouldn't take you if he could and place you in the very lap of the

Savior but I cannot do that the preacher cannot do that but I can take you to the cross and I can take you to him who died on the cross and I can persuade you as best I can to lay hold on him who died to redeem our people for himself how will you not come will you not come let us pray that thou art the God that gives the increase we would leave all these matters in thy hand we would plead for in these closing moments of ourselves our lost souls we fear

Lord that they will come into judgment without Christ as their Savior and we plead that the Holy Spirit will come and bring them to a state of awakening that would lead ultimately to their souls being reconciled to God oh Lord our God we would plead for the Holy Spirit to revive and to stir the church for thy glory sake amen