

I. Introduction to the Judgment Seat of Christ

If you have your Bibles today, I want to invite you in time, we are going to turn to two passages of Scripture. You can turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 at this particular moment in time, and then we will kind of move from there. Last week, you remember we started 2 Corinthians chapter 5. I gave you basically an introduction to that great chapter, and we have been coming through the book of 2 Corinthians with the idea of just as a church taking the concept of ministry and really laying it out, hoping that by the time we get to the first of the year that God will raise up some men and women here that will really want to be a part of our counseling ministry to be able to work with people and help them. We are excited about that.

We entered chapter 5, and last week we talked about one of the greatest teachings for you and for me as a Christian, and that is the concept of the Judgment Seat of Christ. You remember I laid out two aspects last week, and that is really what I wanted to do. Many things in the Bible, when you look at them, the way to understand it is to realize that many times it has a two-fold concept. Take the Judgment Seat of Christ, which is what we are looking at. It has a doctrinal aspect, and we learned that last week: the fact that when you got saved, God clothed you in His righteousness and He sealed you unto the day of redemption. We know that from our past studies that that is your standing in Christ Jesus.

But then there is also a practical side to it, and that is the fact that we saw it last week that when you got saved, God saved you for a purpose. He saved you unto good works. He wants you to do something for Him, and we saw how the Bible says that we are to be careful to continue in walking the good work that God has called us to do, the ministry. Of course, that is our state.

Two of the greatest concepts that a Christian has to learn and understand very quickly in life, and we talk about a lot around here, I have laid it out on Thursday night many, many times, it is that great aspect of your standing and state. These are two different concepts for you and me as a believer. The standing means that the day you got saved, you are sinlessly perfect in Christ and you are seated in heavenly places. As far as God is concerned right now, you are already up in heaven. That is how sure your salvation is.

Of course, there is a practical side to it, and the practical side is we may be seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and in His mind we all may be there, but we have got to finish out living the rest of today and tomorrow. That is the practical side, and that is our state. Paul said, "Whatever state I am in, therewith to be content." You are in Missouri, so that means that you have to be content with being in Missouri.

Today, this is going to be, and I am somewhat excited about this from one aspect. We have had a lot of new people come into our church here in the last six months, and visitors here today, and this is going to be a good practical lesson for you today. If some of you just started coming to this church, some of you have just gotten saved, and you are getting plugged in, this is really going to help you today. This is going to be something that is going to give you some real

direction in your life from where you are at right now. I am excited about that because I like to do things for people that really meaningfully help them and give them direction. Sometimes you have to preach some things that are good and everybody needs to hear it, but there are times that you just need to give a practical application to something. This is what it is going to be today, and this will help you a lot today, I do believe, in where you want to get to. We are going to look at the Judgment Seat of Christ from two different aspects again.

II. The Analogy of Building

I also told you that in reference to you building your life for Christ, a while back we talked about the book of Zechariah. I told you that the book of Zechariah is the next to the last book in your Old Testament, and Zechariah is one of the Old Testament prophets. What he does is he writes to the nation of Israel and he tries to motivate them. I have told you many, many times, every book of the Bible, we talked about this a couple of Thursday nights ago, every book of the Bible has an underlying theme or meaning to it, why it is being written.

When it comes to the book of Zechariah, if you do not have that note already in your Bible, it is pretty obvious what he is doing. The nation of Israel had gone back in Ezra and Nehemiah and began to rebuild the temple, but now they have quit. For almost twelve years, this temple that God said needs to be finished has not been fulfilled. They just kind of gave up on it, and yet that is such a beautiful picture of what God's people do many, many times.

Where in the Old Testament there was a physical temple that the center of God's worship was around, in the New Testament we know that our body is the temple. In the Old Testament, God dwelled in a building. In the New Testament, He does not dwell in a building made with hands. He lives inside you if you are saved this morning, and your body, the Bible says, is the temple of God, which is in you, which you have of God. You are not your own, you are bought with a price, the Bible says. So we see the parallel there: they started out to build this building and they quit building it. Many times God's people get saved and they start to build their building for God, and it does not get finished either.

What Zechariah does is he tries to motivate them. He tries to tell them, tries to reason with them, and he tries to tell them, and one of the great things that he does out of that book, and it is my favorite aspect of what he tries to do, he tries to get across to them, "Look, guys, as a nation of Israel, you need to finish this building." Then he tells them, "You are not just building a building, you are building Israel's future, because Israel cannot have a future without that temple."

I think to myself many, many times, you as God's people need to understand. I told you last week, you are not just building something for God, your body, but you are building towards something for God, and that is the day you stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ. You are not just building your body for no purpose. You are building your body because of the fact that it is for your future, and you will never, never fulfill what God wants you to do and really what He saved you for until you first get that concept down. We saw the same, as I said, the parallels are so incredible with the nation of Israel.

III. The Two Defining Passages

I told you last week that there are two defining passages that deal with the Judgment Seat of Christ in your Bible. The first one is 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and the second one was 2 Corinthians chapter 5, which we started last week. If you do not have this already done, you need to have these two chapters concerning the Judgment Seat pretty well laid out, and we will help you with some of that today. But if you do not have that, in time you need to get that.

I want to move past the intro for last week today, and I want to look at both passages, and I want to try to get you to see how these things match up, and you can get some of your notes along the way. Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 11, when he was talking about the Judgment Seat of Christ, he called it "the terror of the Lord." He says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." That is really what I want to do today. I want to try to take a practical look at this, but I also want to try to persuade you. I want you to see that serving God with your life is what He saved you for, and I want you to understand, and I will preach on it week after week after week, because it needs to be the number one thing in your life and my life, that we never forget that God saved you for a reason. That is what I am trying to do today, is to persuade you to understand that the Judgment Seat of Christ is coming, and we are all going to give an account, and maybe after today, maybe you will understand it just a little bit better and help you come to that appreciation in your life.

Let us have a word of prayer before we jump into these chapters here.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You today, and I thank You for these people that have come today, and may they get a blessing out of what is said. May it be clear, may it be true, may it be uplifting, may it be something that no matter how young of a Christian is here today, to take and grasp the truth of the Word of God. Help me, Father, to lay it out, help me to put it to them where they can grasp it. Forgiveness, Lord, in our life today if there are things in our life that are not pleasing to You. Make us bring it to Your remembrance in my life and in the life of people. Let us put everything under the blood that we might be able to learn and teach and give everything that needs to be said today, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

IV. The Operational Structure of the Judgment Seat of Christ

You are already in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Let us pick it up in verse 1 and let us read that first, and then we will come back to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and I want to see the comparison between the two. I want you to understand the difference between the two.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

That verse is pretty much self-explanatory. It is the context of the Judgment Seat of Christ, verse 10. He lays some things out there.

Now I want to read 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

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 burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

It is really important to understand all the material in these two chapters. There are a lot of similarities between the two, which we also want to see, but then there are some real differences

between the two, and we need to see that also. I think the best way to lay it out is that 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 9 through 17, where I read, this is what I would call the operational structure of the Judgment Seat of Christ. In this chapter, you are going to find everything you need to do. It is going to tell you almost play by play that if you want to come to the Judgment Seat of Christ and get everything that God has for you, if you want to have all of the things that God has for you, then 1 Corinthians chapter 3 is your "how-to" chapter. It is going to show you how, and everything from the day you got saved right up to the day you stand before Christ.

But then on the other hand, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 1 through 12, it now forms, as I said last week, our perspective of the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is a lot like this: 1 Corinthians chapter 3 tells me what I should be doing in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ, and 2 Corinthians chapter 5 tells me what I should be thinking in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ. One shows me what I ought to be doing, the other one shows me how I look at that day. There are a lot of similarities between the two, but the thing you want to remember is the differences between the two. They have got to go hand in hand, and when you put them hand in hand and you see how the thing works, it really kind of goes together to give you a complete understanding of this great subject. You have got to understand what you have got to do, but then you have got to understand what you are dealing with and looking at it. In understanding chapter 5, the real key to it is understanding chapter 3, and to get them both together: the operational side and then also the attitude of heart side.

So what I want to do today is take 1 Corinthians chapter 3. In my Bible, if you look at my study Bible, you would find that, and I told you this a couple of Thursday nights ago, that the goal that you ought to have in your life at some point is to get every book of the Bible broken down. That you understand how that book relates to the overall concept of the Bible. Everything we do lends itself. That is what we did in Bible basics. We do that on Thursday night. There is hardly a time that I do not teach you something that I lay that out so you can kind of pick it up as you go along so you can kind of get the stuff. That is what you need to do.

Along with that, you are going to find that every chapter has its breakdown. So at some point in your life, not only are you going to have to have the overall conceptual view of the Bible, you are going to have to have the understanding of the books, how they fit in the Bible, and then you get in and you break down the chapters and see how they fit within the book, within the Bible. This is what I am going to do for you today. If you look at my 1 Corinthians chapter 3, you would find that chapter simply is broken down into eight concepts. That is how I memorize things. That is how I remember things. There are 31,171 verses in a King James 1611 Authorized Version. I cannot remember all of them. So what you do is you have got to find a way that you can keep the material you need to have at hand because you just know when you are going to do it. For me, it is breaking it down in sections.

I told you a while back about the book of Genesis. I think the book of Genesis is probably one of the most key books in the Bible. It is the book of the beginnings. When you look at Genesis, I think the two key books that you have in the Bible that the whole Bible is built around is Genesis and then there is the book of Acts. The book of Acts in the New Testament does for you and for

me what Genesis does for you and me in the Old Testament. It is the key book back in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the key book is the book of Acts.

Yet when I look at the book of Genesis, that is 50 chapters. In all of those things, and I told you before that when I look at the book of Genesis, I have two choices. I can get in there and try to break it all down and memorize it all and figure the whole thing out, or I can be smart about it and realize that the Bible says that I am to rightly divide the word of truth. Now I look at Genesis, 50 some chapters with a lot of things going on there, but in reality, you know what you have in the book of Genesis? You have about ten stories. The whole book of Genesis is built around ten stories. Instead of trying to memorize the whole book, just take the ten stories, remember the ten stories. Some of the most godless, worldly Christians you ever met in your life that went to Sunday school from the time they were five years old to the time they were twelve and then quit going to church and had not been to church for forty years, they still remember the story of Adam and Eve. They still remember Daniel in the lion's den. They still remember the story of Abraham. They remember stories, and that is why God puts stories in the Old Testament. When I look at the Old Testament, it is not all the chapters in the books, it is stories. When I come to places like in the book of 1 Corinthians here and I have this subject about the Judgment Seat of Christ, then I break this thing down into eight concepts that help me remember it all.

So if you do not have these in your Bible today as we start to come through them, I think that once we get a handle on 1 Corinthians chapter 3, then we get a better handle on 2 Corinthians chapter 5, then we get a better handle on the whole concept.

Now turn with me back to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 if you are not there, and let us pick it up in verse 9. Let me show you my first concept as I have it laid out in my Bible. I am basically just going to show you what I have and why I have it and how it helps me.

- 1.) Laborers Together
- 2.) God's Husbandry
- 3.) A Wise Master Builder
- 4.) The Foundation
- 5.) The Materials of the Wise Master Builder
- 6.) Reward and Work
- 7.) Tried by Fire
- 8.) Whose Temple Are Ye?