

The Secrets of the Heart

by Chuck Smith

We have a responsibility to share the gospel with others and to live in a way that is pleasing to God, and we will be judged according to our works at the judgment seat of Christ.

Duration: 32:51

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-12, Proverbs 24:10-12, Ecclesiastes 8:11, Ezekiel 3:18-19, Romans 9:22

Topics: "Secrets"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of standing before God's judgment seat and giving an account of our actions. He highlights that as Christians, we will face the judgment seat of Christ, where all secrets will be revealed. The preacher urges listeners to consider if they are fulfilling their responsibilities of sharing the love and truth of God with others. He emphasizes the need to share the gospel of God's love and forgiveness with a lost and dying world, warning that failing to do so may result in the blood of those who die in their sins being required at our hands. The preacher also cautions against mistaking God's patience and longsuffering for ignorance or lack of judgment, reminding listeners that God sees and knows all.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Psalm 139 for our scripture reading? I'll read the first, the unnumbered verses. Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses, and shall we stand as we read the Word of God? O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising.

Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Whether shall I go from thy spirit, or whether shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

For thou hast possessed my reins, and thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.

When I awake, I am still with thee. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.

Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Let's pray.

Lord, it's a rather awesome thought to realize that you know us so well. There is nothing that is hid from you. You ponder our thoughts.

You know our hearts. Lord, we pray that in light of this, that we will live in such a way that our mind and our heart might be in such a place that we are pleasing, Lord, in all that we think and all that we do. Lord, our desire is to be pleasing unto you.

We know that's why you created us. And may we, Lord, fulfill the purpose of our existence by bringing pleasure unto you. Guide us, we pray, Lord, in the study of the word today.

Open now our hearts, our minds, to the understanding of your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

This morning we'd like to draw your attention to the 24th chapter of Proverbs, beginning with verse 10, where Solomon said, If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. But if you forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain, if you say, Behold, we did not know it, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keeps your mind, does he not know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works? Basically, these three verses, forming a single thought, speak to us about the responsibility that we have towards those who are perishing in sin. Verse 11, those that are about to die, those that are ready to be slain.

It's much like when the Lord spoke to the prophet Ezekiel and said unto him, When I say to the wicked, you will surely die. And if you do not give him warning or speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, that wicked man will die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand. But if you warn him and turn him from his wickedness, then if he doesn't turn, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul.

Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, I want you to bear record that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. You see, knowledge brings

responsibility. It's a glorious thing to know that Jesus died for our sins.

It's wonderful to know that God loves us so much that he was not willing that we should perish, but desired that we would repent from our sin and be saved that we might spend our eternity with him in the kingdom of heaven. These are wonderful truths. We've come to embrace these truths, but we need to realize that knowing these things brings a certain responsibility that we should share these truths with others who are perishing in sin and don't know God's love and the provisions that God has made for them to be forgiven if they would but believe on Jesus Christ.

Paul said, woe is me if I preach not the gospel of Jesus Christ. He wrote to the church in Rome and he said, I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and the unwise. So as much as I am able, I'm ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also, for I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

It's the power of God unto salvation to those that believe. So Paul felt that obligation. Woe is me.

He saw himself as a debtor. I have received the glorious good news that God has provided forgiveness for my sin and now I am a debtor. I need to share that truth with others.

I'm not ashamed of that truth. It's God's power unto salvation. What is that good news? The gospel that Paul preached that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures and whoever believes in him will be forgiven all their sins.

We cannot shirk our responsibility of sharing the gospel of God's love for a with a lost and a dying world. The willingness of God to forgive a person their sins. In verse 11, if we fail to deliver those that are drawing near to death, are ready to die, then as God said to Ezekiel, they will die in their sin, but he will require their blood at your hand.

You cannot excuse yourself. There in verse 12, for if you say, but I didn't know. Well, does not he that ponders the hearts consider it? The Bible says, not the Bible, our law says that the ignorance of the law is no excuse.

God ponders our hearts. It's really a folly to try to deceive God or to try to make ourselves out something before God that we're really not. God sees right through us.

He sees our hearts. He ponders the thoughts of our minds. David said to Solomon, his son, know the God of your father, serve him with your complete heart and with a willing mind for the Lord searches all hearts.

He understands your imaginations and your thoughts. If you seek him, he'll be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

David in Psalm 10 wrote the wicked because of his pride will not seek God. God is not in his thoughts. That is the wicked doesn't even think about God.

The wicked, David said, has said in his heart, I do not need God for I shall never face adversity. His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud. David said he has said in his heart, God has forgotten.

He will never see it. Why do the wicked, he said, contend God and say in their heart that God will not hold them responsible for their sins. Psalm 94, David said, he that created the ear, don't you realize he can hear? The one who created your eyes, don't you realize that he can see? We've already read in the

Proverbs, for the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all of his ways.

Again, last week in Proverbs 21 to we had, every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord ponders the heart. As God ponders your heart today, as God sees, what does he see? Does he see a heart that is totally toward him? Does he see a divided heart? What does God see as he looks at your heart today? Ezekiel said, God brought me to the door of the court, and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. And he said to me, son of man, dig now in the wall.

And when I dug in the wall, I saw a door. And he said to me, go in and behold the wicked abominations that they are doing in there. So I went in and I saw, and behold, every foul and abominable practice was taking place.

All sorts of pornography was portrayed on all of the walls. Then he said unto me, son of man, you have seen the elders of the house of Israel, what they do in the dark, every man in the secret chambers of his own imagination. For they say, the Lord does not see us.

The Lord has forsaken the earth. God took Ezekiel right into the minds of the elders of the nation, the rulers. God showed him the perversion in the minds of those leaders of the nation.

I dare say if the Lord would allow us to dig a hole in the wall and to go into the minds of the leaders in our nation, we would be shocked at what we would see, even as was Ezekiel. You see, God knows what's going on in your mind. He knows what's going on in your thoughts.

He knows your every fantasy. In Hebrews 4.13, we're told, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto him with whom we have to do. But because God is so patient as he deals with us, there are times when it would seem that we are getting by with our evil.

And this is when people often are deceived into thinking that God does not see or know what they are doing. Much like the leaders of Israel who were saying, the Lord does not see us. The Lord has forsaken the earth.

Jesus said to the church of Thyatira in Revelation chapter two, I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not. God is so patient. He is so long-suffering that he oftentimes gives us space.

Space to repent. We are doing things that are not right in his sight. We are guilty.

And God sees what's going on, but he gives us space to repent. You see, the Bible says that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And so often, God just gives us space to repent.

But with Thyatira, God said, because they did not repent, I'm going to cast them into the great tribulation and all that commit fornication with them. But our mistake is often we look at the space that God gives to us as blindness on the part of God. We begin to deceive ourselves into the thought that, well, God really doesn't see, or God really doesn't know, or worse yet, God really doesn't care.

God approves of what I am doing. Paul asked the Romans in chapter two, do you despise the riches of his goodness and his patience, his long suffering? Do you not realize that the goodness of God is intended to

give you opportunity to repent? But through your hard and unrepentant heart, you've stored up against yourself wrath, that in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, you will be judged. Paul spoke to them in chapter nine, verse 22.

What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, bore with great patience those vessels of wrath that were ripe for destruction? The Bible says concerning God, he's slow to anger, long-suffering, patient. But be careful that you don't mistake that as God not seeing, God not knowing. In Ecclesiastes 8, 11, Solomon said, because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the heart of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.

God doesn't bring instant judgment. The sentence against an evil work is usually not executed speedily by God. But then men mistake that and they're fully set to do evil.

Because God has not yet intervened in San Francisco, do you think that God doesn't know what's going on up there? Do you think that God approves of these same-sex marriages? It's a classic example of the patience of God and of the long-suffering of God with the rebellion and the disobedience of man against the Word of God. He's giving them space to repent. The Apostle Peter wrote, in the last days there will come scoffers who are walking after their own lust.

They will say, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers have fallen asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of time. Of this they are willfully ignorant, that the heavens which were of old and the earth that stood out of the water and in the water were created by the Word of God. And that world that existed then perished in the flood.

But the heavens and the earth which are now are by the same Word of God being preserved by God for that day of fiery judgment and the destruction of ungodly men. Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years. A thousand years is one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, but is faithful to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But then Peter went on to say, but the day of the Lord will come. Don't be deceived.

Don't fool yourself that the day of judgment is not going to come. God has been long suffering. The day of the Lord will come.

You can be certain of that. And though God has been patient, his judgment is on the way. The consequences are very severe on not heeding the warnings of God.

Back in the first chapter of Proverbs we read, because I have called and you refuse to listen, I've stretched out my hand, but no one paid any attention. You have set aside my counsel. You would not respond to my reproof, and thus I will laugh when the day of your calamity comes.

I will mock you when fear grips you. Then you will call upon me, but I will not answer you. You will seek me early, but you won't find me.

For in as much as you hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, would not listen to my counsel, because you despised my reproof, you will eat of the fruit of your own way and be filled with your own devices. As Solomon said, you can't really say to God, well, I really didn't know, because he ponders the heart. He considers it.

He keeps your mind, and he knows it. And shall he not render to every man according to his works? Over and over, the Bible affirms to us that God is going to one day judge according to righteousness, and we will be judged according to our works. Jeremiah 17 10, the Lord said to Jeremiah, I, the Lord, search the heart.

I test the mind, and I will give to every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doing. Again to Jeremiah, Jeremiah declared, the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is his name, great in counsel and mighty in works. For your eyes are open upon all of the ways of the son of man to give to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

The day will soon come when all of us must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged and to receive the rewards that we have earned while in these bodies, whether they be good or bad. Paul writing to the Corinthian church about the judgment seat of Christ for the believers said, we labor that we might be accepted by him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the judgment for the things we did while in these bodies, whether good or bad, knowing therefore, he said, the terror of the Lord, we seek to persuade men.

I'm afraid that somehow we have looked rather carelessly at the judgment seat of Christ. Yes, we thank God that there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. But I think that oftentimes we think that, well, we're going to slip by and the Lord will be easy on us.

But listen to what Jesus said concerning when he does judge to those who will come and say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name and in your name cast out devils and in your name we did many wonderful works. And Jesus will say unto them, I never knew you depart from me, you that work iniquity. Those that were doing the work of God with wrong motivation, those that were doing it for their own glory and their own enrichment, he'll reject them.

The one that was given a dollar by the Lord. Remember he gave one \$10, \$1.5, \$1.1. And when the Lord returned, he brought them in that they might give an accounting of what they did with the funds that he invested with them. To the one that he gave the \$10, he brought back an extra 10 and said, Lord, you gave me 10 and I've used it.

I now have 20. The Lord commended him. The one that had received five doubled it.

The Lord commended him. The one who received the \$1 said, Lord, I know that you're an austere man. You take up that which you did not lay down.

You reap that which you did not sow. And so here is the dollar back again. I hid it in the napkin and kept it safe for you.

Jesus said, I will judge you by your own words. You knew that I was an austere man. You knew that I took up that which I did not lay down and I reaped that which I did not sow.

Why then did you not put my money in the bank? That when I came, I might receive my own with interest. And he said to those that stood by, take from him the dollar and give it to him who has the 10. To that servant who was entrusted with the Lord's goods.

And when the Lord did not return when he was expecting him, said the Lord delays his coming. And he began to eat and to drink and began to abuse the responsibilities that the Lord had entrusted him with.

Jesus said, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he is not looking for him at an hour when he is not expecting him and he will cut him off.

He will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers and that servant that knew the Lord's will and did not according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes. As Paul said, knowing the terror of the Lord will have no excuses. He ponders your heart.

He knows your thoughts. You can't make up some clever alibi. You won't have some clever attorney.

Who is looking at some little flaw in the prosecutor's case. You're going to stand naked and open before God. Nothing will be hid.

And we will give an account of ourselves unto him. There's another judgment coming. That's a great white throne judgment.

That's another deal. But as Christians, we're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The secrets will be revealed.

That which has been hidden will be made manifest. You need to think seriously about that. You need to consider and ponder that in your heart and ask yourself, am I fulfilling the responsibilities that I have knowing the love of God and knowing the truth of God? Am I sharing that love and that truth with others faithfully, diligently? Am I fulfilling my debt that I have because of my knowledge? God help us.

One day we will answer and he will answer that for us. Father we realize today the seriousness of the Christian walk in life. And Lord we do thank you and we do rejoice that you have forgiven us our transgressions, our sins.

That you have provided for us salvation from the judgment that will come upon the disobedient, the unrighteous. But Lord we pray that you'll help us to realize also that one day every man will give an account of himself to you. How we used or how we abused those things that you entrusted into our care.

May we be faithful Lord. On that day may we be able to present to you not only that which you invested in us but a return Lord on that investment. Lord how we want to hear your words, well done good and faithful servant.

May we be Lord good and faithful servants. Faithful to the responsibilities and the duties to which you have called us. Faithful in the things that you've entrusted in our care.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

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