

The Judgement Seat of Christ

by Oswald J. Smith

The judgment seat of Christ is a judgment for those who are already saved, where their works will be tested and rewarded.

Duration: 33:53

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 2:6-8, Romans 14:10, 1 Corinthians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:8, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "Eternal Salvation", "Heavenly Rewards"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the foundation and superstructure in the Christian life. Salvation is dependent on being on the foundation, which assures eternal salvation. However, the rewards we receive in heaven depend on the superstructure, which refers to the kind of life we live and the works we perform. The preacher highlights the need to live a life dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ and to turn away from worldly pursuits. He also mentions that it is possible to be saved but receive no reward, instead suffering loss. The sermon is based on 1 Corinthians 3 and provides nine important points about the judgment seat of Christ.

Transcript

I'm glad to see so many here tonight, and I trust that God will bless each and every one who has come. Now, this is my last opportunity during this period of speaking on the judgment seat of Christ. There are two messages that should still be delivered.

One has to do with the overcomer, the overcomers of revelation. That has to do, of course, with the judgment seat of Christ, but that will have to wait for some other time, the message on the overcomer. Then, of course, there should be some message, one message at least, on the great white throne, judgment, and we get that described in the book of Revelation, but we're not going to be able to turn to that during this time.

Sometime in the future, we may turn to those last two great judgments, the judgment that has to do with the overcomer, and then the judgment of the great white throne. Tonight, we've come to the final message for this period at least, because I'll not be on next Wednesday night, the judgment seat. If you have your Bibles, will you turn with me to 1 Corinthians, the third chapter? Now, this is a very, very important passage in connection with the judgment seat of Christ, and I want to read the entire passage, 1 Corinthians, the third chapter, and I'm going to commence reading at the tenth verse.

Keep in mind, if you will now, the judgment seat of Christ as we read this passage, 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, and verse 10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation. Now, claiming the crucified Christ, men and women accepting Christ as their Savior and thereby being saved, then they're on the foundation.

Paul says that he laid the foundation, and of course he did for the Corinthian church because he took the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. And another builder thereon, someone else comes along like Apollos or someone else, and builds on that foundation. So Paul says that he laid the foundation, another builder thereon, but that every man take he how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation. Jesus Christ is our only hope of salvation.

He's our one and only foundation. Now, once we're saved, once we're on the foundation, once we've passed out of death into life, then we're going to start building, and from then on we'll be building on that foundation. And according to the life we live, the deeds we perform, so will the building be erected.

Verse 12, Now, if any man build upon this foundation, and here are the building materials, gold, silver, precious stones. Now, those are the building materials that we should use, those represented by gold, silver, precious stones. Then here are some others, wood, hay, stubble.

Those are the ones we should not use, wood, hay, stubble. Now, why not? Verse 13, Every man's works shall be made manifest, or tried, or tested, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. The fire is going to be applied, and the foundation, of course, will not be touched by the fire, but the building erected on the foundation will be touched by the fire.

The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, and the fire will be applied not to the foundation. The fire will be applied to the silver, the gold, the precious stones, the wood, the hay, the stubble. Now, verse 14, If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If you have built on the foundation, Christ Jesus, with the precious metals of gold, silver, precious stones, your building will be unaffected by the fire. It will stand the test. If you have used wood, hay, stubble to build on that foundation, then your building will not stand the fire.

It will be burned up, and as a result, you'll suffer loss. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. There's a reward for every Christian who builds on the foundation, Christ Jesus, with gold, silver, precious stones.

Verse 15, If any man's work shall be burned, and if he builds with wood, hay, and stubble, it will be burned up. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss. But, and here's a glorious truth, he himself shall be saved.

His works will be burned up. He'll be saved. His works will be destroyed.

There will be no reward, but he himself will be saved. Yet so as by fire. So we come now to the final address on the judgment seat of Christ, and we base what we have to say on the passage I've just read, 1 Corinthians, the third chapter.

There are nine things that I want to mention as briefly as I can about the superstructure, about the passage we have just read. Here's the first thing I want to say. It is a judgment for those already on the foundation.

Now, if you're not on the foundation, this judgment will have nothing to do with you whatever. You will not be judged before the judgment seat of Christ if you are not standing on the foundation. Jesus Christ is the one and only foundation.

If you are not standing on him, then you will not be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Your judgment will come a thousand years later when you stand before the great white throne, for every man who is not standing on the foundation will be judged before the great white throne. This judgment, therefore, is for those and only for those who are already on the foundation.

Now, all you have to do is ask yourself this question. Am I standing on the foundation, or am I not? If I'm standing on the foundation, then I'll be judged before the judgment seat of Christ. But if I'm not standing on that foundation, I'll remain in my grave for a thousand years, and I'll not be judged until I stand before the great white throne.

So my first point is this. It is a judgment for those already on the foundation. You can answer at once as to whether or not you are going to share in this judgment.

I pray God that you may. In the second place, works are not recognized until we are on the rock. God never recognizes our works until we're on the foundation.

It doesn't matter how often we go to church. It doesn't matter how many good deeds we do. It doesn't matter what kind of a life we live.

There will be no judgment for us unless we're already on the foundation. If you are not a Christian, if you have never been saved, if you have never been born again, if you are not on the foundation, then those works of yours, whatever they may be, will not be judged before the judgment seat of Christ, because you'll not even be there. But if you're on the foundation, if you have passed out of death and into life, if you have been saved, if you have been born again, if you're standing steadfastly on the foundation, then you will be judged.

Works are not even recognized until we are on the rock. God pays no attention to what we do until we're saved. Not until we pass out of death and into life, until we're his children, until we're born again, until we're saved, does God pay any attention to our works.

Only then will he deal with our works. Therefore, if you want to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and I'm sure everyone does, you'll have to be on the foundation. You'll have to be saved, or else you never will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

The third point I want to make is this. Every disciple is building a superstructure, whether you know it or not. From the very moment you were saved, from the moment you passed out of death and into life, from the very moment you got on the foundation, from the moment you were in Christ, from that moment you started building, and you have been building a superstructure from that day to this.

Now, have you been using the right materials? Have you been building with gold and silver and precious stones, or have you been building with wood and hay and stubble? You can't avoid building. Whether you

want to or not, you will build once you're on the foundation, but everything depends upon the materials with which you build. You can use gold, silver, and precious stones if you want to, or you can use wood, hay, and stubble if you want to, but you will be building nevertheless with one or the other.

From the very moment you're saved, from the very moment you're on the foundation, from the moment you're in Christ Jesus, every disciple is building a superstructure. Fourth, the kind of building depends entirely on the materials used. The type of building that you're building on that foundation depends upon the materials that you're using.

The Word of God says, Take heed. Take heed. Beware.

Be sure that you're using the right material. Each disciple chooses his own materials. Now, you can decide whether you're going to build with gold and silver and precious stones or whether you're going to build with wood and hay and stubble, but build you will from the time you're on the foundation.

But you must choose the building materials with which you're going to build. It'll be either the one or the other. Now, in the fifth place, the materials used are to be exposed at the judgment seat, and they'll never be exposed until the judgment seat.

But at the judgment seat of Christ, the materials that you and I have used to build on the foundation upon which we stand will be fully and completely exposed before the judgment seat of Christ. And then as we look at the results, we'll realize whether we have been building with wood, hay, and stubble or with gold, silver, and precious stones, either with one or with the other. We have to decide now which we're going to use.

On that day, the materials will be exposed before the judgment seat of Christ. Therefore, we have the injunction, Take heed. Beware.

Be careful that you choose the right materials, that you build with gold and silver and precious stones, the things represented by those different metals, gold, silver, and precious stones. The materials used are to be exposed at the judgment seat of Christ. Then in the sixth place, the foundation is not tried.

The believer is put on trial for his state, not for his standing, for his works, not his faith. That's a tremendous point. The foundation is not tried.

Of course not. You are secure for all eternity. If you are on the foundation, if you have been saved, if you have passed out of death and into life, if you have been born again, if you have been placed on the foundation, then you're secure.

You're safe for the rest of eternity, even though your works may suffer loss, even though your works may be burned up, even though your works may be destroyed. You yourself will be saved, as we read from in Corinthians, the third chapter, if we're on the foundation. The foundation will never be tested.

It will never be tried. It will never be judged. I'll never have to stand before God in regard to whether or not I'm on the foundation.

That was decided when I accepted Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior, and I passed out of death and into life. At that moment, I stepped on the solid rock. I stepped onto the foundation, and I've been on the foundation from that day to this.

But what kind of a building am I erecting? What kind of a structure, what kind of a house am I building? I'm on the foundation. But now the question is, what kind of building am I erecting on the foundation, now that I'm safe on the foundation? Am I using the right materials? Am I using gold and silver and precious stones, or am I using wood and hay and stubble, something that can be destroyed by the fire? I say the foundation is not tried. You do not stand before God to find out whether or not you're saved.

That was settled when you accepted Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. Now you're on the foundation. The believer is put on trial for his state, not for his standing.

It is your state, whether or not you have faithfully served the Lord Jesus Christ, whether or not you have been true to him, whether or not you have been faithful to him, whether or not you have left the world behind you and you're out and out for the Lord Jesus Christ, whether or not you have been Spirit-filled and whether or not you're living a Spirit-filled life and living entirely and wholly for the glory of God. The believer is put on trial for his state, not for his standing. His standing is safe.

His standing is secure. I know that I'm on the foundation. I've no question about my standing.

My only question is about my works, about my state, but whether or not I'm using the right building materials. Not his faith, but his works will be tried before the judgment seat of Christ. And your works, the life you have lived, the things you have done, the things you have failed to do, the kind of life you have lived since you got on the foundation, will be tested and tried and judged before the judgment seat of Christ.

For that judgment seat will be set up directly after the Lord Jesus Christ returns. And the question is, what is going to be the outcome of your judgment before the judgment seat of Christ? The foundation will not be judged, but your works will be judged. For the remaining portion of Dr. Smith's message, please turn this tape to side two.

Now in the seventh place, salvation depends on the foundation, reward on the superstructure. That's a tremendous point. Salvation depends on the foundation.

Am I on it or am I not? If I'm on it, then my salvation is assured. I have no worry then about my salvation. I know that I'm saved for time and for eternity if I'm on the foundation.

Therefore, my salvation depends on the foundation, whether or not I'm on it. Reward depends upon the superstructure. What kind of a house am I building? What kind of an edifice am I erecting? What kind of a life am I living? What kind of works am I performing? Am I hobnobbing with the world? Or have I turned my back on the world completely and altogether? And am I out and out? For the Lord Jesus Christ, for the rest of life, what kind of a superstructure am I building? Then in the eighth place, both reward and loss are plainly taught again and again in the Word of God.

Whenever the judgment seat of Christ is spoken about, reward is discussed, and the loss of the reward is mentioned again and again and again. There are Christians who are going to suffer loss. There are others who are going to be rewarded.

Both reward and loss are plainly taught in the Word of God. Don't think that just because you're saved, everything's all right. From the moment you are saved, everything depends upon the kind of a superstructure that you erect.

As to whether or not you will get the reward that you want to receive. Therefore, we ought to be very careful about the superstructure, about the life that we're living now that we're on the foundation. And then in the last place, the ninth place, it is possible to be saved and receive no reward, but rather to suffer loss.

Think of that if you will. According to the Word of God, it is possible to be saved and yet receive no reward, but rather to suffer loss. The loss of the reward.

The reward that might have been yours. The diadem that you might have had. The crown that you might have received.

That I'm not going to be able to talk about until I speak on this subject again. There are eight crowns. Are you going to receive one of them? Are you going to receive two of them? I don't know what they represent.

All I know is that God compares the reward of his saints to crowns, to diadems. What that means, I do not know. But I know that there are eight crowns, there are eight diadems that can be won.

And the question is, are we going to win them or are we going to win any of them? Everything depends upon the superstructure. The kind of a life we live from the day we pass out of death and into life. It is possible to be saved and receive no reward, but rather to suffer loss.

Now those are nine very important points regarding the judgment seat of Christ. Now let me sum it all up. I want to sum it all up by turning to 2 Corinthians, the 5th chapter and the 10th verse.

And this verse sums it all up. 2 Corinthians, the 5th chapter, the 10th verse. 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.

Now let's look at that for a moment. For we, we, who is he referring to? Who is Paul talking about? He's referring to the Christians. He includes himself among the number.

He uses the pronoun we. Therefore he's referring to the Christians and only to the Christians, not to the unsaved. He doesn't speak about them.

He speaks about us. He says we, and he's referring to the saints, those who have been born again and are saved and are God's children. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, every one of us.

I hope there's no one here tonight who wants to escape. I hope that you're glad that you'll be numbered among those who will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And if you're living the kind of a life God wants you to live, you'll be delighted to appear before the judgment seat in order that you may get your reward.

You'll want to appear before the judgment seat of Christ because you'll want to receive your reward. And there's no way to get your reward unless you appear before the judgment seat of Christ and he decides that you're worthy of a reward. And so Paul uses the pronoun we, referring to the Christians.

We must. It's inevitable. Even if you wanted to escape, you couldn't.

There's no way that a Christian can escape appearing before the judgment seat of Christ. M-U-S-T spells must. No way of escape.

Every Christian will be there. Every Christian will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And if we're right with God, we'll be glad to appear in order that we may get our reward because it will honor Christ.

And he'll be honored by being able to bestow upon his followers the rewards that they have earned since they were saved. So we must, all, every one of us. There's no escape.

Every Christian will be before the judgment seat of Christ. We must all appear. And the word appear means that it's going to be a public affair.

We'll be on public display. It's going to be open to the eyes of all present. Everyone will see us.

We'll be manifested before all those present, probably before the angels of God as we appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That word appear means a public display where we must all appear before, in front of, the judgment seat of Christ. Again and again and again, the Bible speaks about the judgment seat of Christ.

And you must always differentiate between the judgment of the throne at the end of the millennium and the judgment seat of Christ at the beginning of the millennium. We must always differentiate between the two, the judgment seat of Christ. It doesn't say the judgment seat of God.

It is not God the Father who is going to bestow the rewards. It's God the Son. This is not the judgment seat of God.

This is the judgment seat of Christ when he judges his own followers, those who are his disciples, and when he has the joy of bestowing upon them the rewards that they have earned during the days of their Christian lives. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and everyone, not a single exception, everyone, all of us individually. So it's going to be an individual judgment.

We're not going to be judged in masses. We're going to be judged individually. When you say that'll take a long time, well, there'll be plenty of time.

I don't know how long it'll take, but there'll be lots of time, no matter how long it takes. I have no idea. I know that God can hurry it up.

Jesus Christ can speed it up. But however long it takes, we're going to appear individually, one by one, everyone. Your father is not going to appear for you.

Your mother is not going to appear for you. You're going to appear for yourself on your own behalf as an individual, for it's an individual judgment. Everyone, each one individually, may receive.

There's the bestowal of a reward. Think of being handed a reward by Jesus Christ. Think of yourself as an individual standing there before the judgment seat of Christ and having Jesus Christ himself hand you your reward.

Each one individually may receive the things that everyone may receive, may be rewarded for the things done in his body, in his lifetime, while he was in the body, while he was in the body. You and I are now in our bodies. This is our lifetime, and we're to be rewarded for the deeds done while in the body, while in this life, while upon this earth.

This is our only chance of winning a reward. What we do in this life will determine our reward hereafter. There'll never be another chance.

This is our one and only chance, and everything depends upon the kind of a life we live for the Lord Jesus Christ here and now. As to whether or not we'll receive a reward, as to how many crowns we'll receive, how many diadems, how many rewards, what kind of rewards, the deeds done in his body while he was in the body upon earth, according to that he hath done. This has nothing to do with faith.

Our faith is not rewarded at this judgment. Our faith puts us in the body. Our faith puts us on the foundation, but now it's what we do once we're in the body, whether it be good or bad.

Now, Christians can perform good works, and Christians can also perform bad works, and whether our works are good or whether they're bad, they're going to be dealt with. If they're good, then they will be represented by gold and silver and precious stones, and they'll stand the fire. The fire will try us, and they'll stand that fire.

They'll go through that fire. If our works are made up of wood and hay and stubble, the fire will burn them up. They'll be devoured, and we'll stand before God without a single work of any kind, because our works will have been burned up by fire.

What that means, I don't know, but I know it means they'll be destroyed. They'll be gone, and we'll have nothing to point to, nothing for which God will be able to reward us. Wood, hay, stubble.

You've got to decide whether the life you're now living for Jesus Christ and the works you're performing are going to be works of gold, silver, and precious stones that can be tried by fire and will stand the test and will never be destroyed, and you'll be rewarded, or wood, hay, and stubble, and they'll be destroyed by the fire, and there will be no reward. Think of going to heaven without a reward. Now, it'll be wonderful to go to heaven, but think of going to heaven without a reward, getting no reward of any kind whatever.

No crown, no diadem, and the rewards depend upon the kind of lives we live after being on the foundation, the kind of works we perform, whether they're wood, hay, and stubble, or gold, silver, and precious stones. I think tonight we'll turn in this closing message on this subject for this time, we'll turn to hymn number 127. I think we'll sing the first and last verse.

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