

Did You Know That You're in the Bible?

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of true Christianity, the nature of the church, and the reality of judgment day, where every person will stand before God and be judged according to their deeds.

Duration: 38:54

Scripture: Matthew 7:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 20:11-14

Topics: "Judgment Seat Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the consequences of our thoughts, deeds, and words. He highlights the idea that if our lives were exposed for all to see, we would be ashamed and run away. The sermon also addresses the deception of believing oneself to be a Christian without true evidence of a transformed life. The preacher challenges the notion of reducing salvation to a mere prayer and emphasizes the need for genuine repentance and obedience to God's commandments. Additionally, the sermon discusses the sobering reality of death and the importance of recognizing that it is not the end, urging listeners to prioritize the eternal over worldly distractions.

Transcript

Well, again, it's a great privilege for me to be here. I didn't know I would be here this long, but I praise God that God has helped us and we've been here. It seems that there's been some fruit out of the matter.

This week we've covered a great deal of material. Just in a short way of summary, we started out dealing with the fact that so many people believe themselves Christian when in fact they are not. And that the evidence of true Christianity is not that one time in someone's life they prayed a prayer, and afterward something of a morality and possibly attend church on Sundays.

That there has been a great deception in the last century, a great departure from not only Scripture, but from historic Baptist teaching and principles. We've reduced salvation down to a few little steps that if someone passes through and says yes at each passing, and says a prayer at the end, we declare them to be saved. And even if afterwards they live a very nominal life, not seeking God in His Word, not concerned about God's commandments, not concerned really about God's people except maybe church attendance every once in a while, we still say that, well, they've come to know the Lord.

When in fact, when you look at the tests of Scripture, Scripture says quite another thing. And of course, if anyone were to bring this matter up to the attention of the church, it always hears the verse that is quoted

out of context, Judge not lest ye be judged. And that's not what that text means at all.

We went on after that to talk about also the nature of the church. That the church is made up of people truly born again. That there are not spiritual Christians and continuously carnal Christians in the church.

There are only Christians who walk with the Lord, and when they do sin, they're brought to confession and brokenness. And then there are lost church members who live in carnality, look like the world, talk like the world, walk like the world, and have the same desires as the world. We went on from there to talk about the nature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That the Gospel of Jesus Christ is more than four spiritual laws or five things God wants you to know. It deals first of all with the justice of God and the greatest problem in all the Bible. If God is just, He cannot forgive you.

In the same way that a judge is not allowed, it is not proper for a judge to simply pardon a criminal. But justice must be done. In order for God to save man, justice must first be satisfied.

And that can only be done by God becoming a man, taking the place of man, going to a tree, and bearing the sin of man. And while on that tree, He is crushed under the weight of His own justice and His own wrath. If you are here today and you're a Christian, you're not a Christian simply because the Romans beat Jesus or nailed Him to a tree.

You're a Christian because on that tree He bore your sin and God the Father turned away from Him and then crushed Him under the full force of the justice that was due you. Third day, rising again from the dead. Forty days later, ascending into Heaven as Jesus God, but also Jesus the man.

Seated at the right hand of the Father and He ever lives to intercede for His people by virtue of His own merit. His own merit. We went on to talk even further about the love of God.

That it is true that man before he comes to Christ is in Adam. And in Adam, he is radically depraved. In Adam, he is considered an enemy of God.

Not just that he's declared war on God, but God has declared war on him. There's enmity between the two. That all of man's good works are like filthy rags and no man can stand before God.

Before God and a holy Heaven. The Bible uses terms like man is loathsome. Man is an abomination before God.

The hardest words that can possibly be used are used in the Bible to describe men before they come to Christ. But then we went on to explain that if someone is in Christ, is in Christ, all of that changes. We went to the Song of Solomon.

And we see how God looks at His church and says, you're altogether beautiful, my darling. There is no blemish in you. That our standing in Christ Jesus is absolutely phenomenal.

And tonight, if we have time, I'm going to address that issue. But this morning, I've been kind of led into a departure that I didn't think I would go. But I want us to go to the book of Revelation.

Chapter 20. The book of Revelation 20. Verse 11, Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away and no place was found for them.

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. And books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it. And death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them.

And they were judged, every one of them, according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. This is one of the most, in a sense, terrifying realities that men must face. And if you study men, you will realize something, that although all men may not embrace what is found here in Scripture, believing that it's going to actually happen, there is a real sense.

Well, first of all, according to Scripture, there's no such thing as an atheist. Did you know that? As a matter of fact, if I'm at a university and someone comes up and says, well, I'm an atheist. I look at them squarely in the eye and I say, no, sir, you are not an atheist.

The Bible does not acknowledge atheism in any shape, form, or fashion. But the Bible says all men know. Not only do they know that there is a God.

That's not what the Scripture teaches. They know enough about the real God to hate Him and to also try to drive Him from their thoughts. It says that men in Romans 1.18, that they restrain the truth.

They're constantly pushing it down. They're doing everything in their power to push the truth out of their mind because it bothers them so much because all men know the real God and also all men know that they have sinned and all men know there is a judgment day. They may deny it.

They may mock it. They may seek to explain it away. But in fact, in the heart of hearts, every man knows that there is coming a day when every man will stand before God.

It is a reality. A reality that I'm afraid we do not preach enough in America today. All these celebrity preachers, many of them, some of them at least, I don't even believe are saved, writing books like Your Best Life Now.

Talk to the Apostle Paul about your best life now. He took his best life now and threw it all away to follow Jesus Christ and became the scum of the earth. It is not about your best life now.

It is about the day you stand before God and you are judged. That is what the moment, that is what really matters. Now let's look at this text.

First of all, in verse 11, John says, I saw a great white throne. It was great. It was greater than all the other thrones.

If you were to amass every throne that has ever been built, if you were to take every sovereign power that has ever sat upon a throne, it would be nothing compared to the greatness of this throne. There is a sovereign God. In America today we have this God who almost seems to be up there on some sort of paper mache throne wringing His hands because He can't get anyone to do what He wants them to do.

That is not true. Everything God wants to do, He does exactly according to the way He wants to do it. That's what the Bible says.

He does all things according to His will. Even the greatest kings in Scripture found that out. Nebuchadnezzar.

Thought he was something great. Thought he was almost a God among men. And yet God humbled him to the point of being like an animal feeding in a field.

And when he came to his senses, he realized there is one true God. And He lays His hand on a table and no man can pry it up. He raises His arm and no man can hold it down.

He does everything He desires to do in heaven and earth and hell. There is no place beyond His sovereign reach. The extension of His hand.

Sometimes you'll hear people say, well, you need to make Jesus Lord of your life. I laugh at that statement. Make Jesus Lord of your life.

God made Jesus Lord of your life. It is God who made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. So whether you follow Him or hate Him, He's still Lord of your life.

Absolute Lord. And will do with you whatever He chooses to do with you. And one day you will stand before Him in judgment.

He is a sovereign, sovereign God. His throne is great. But not only does it say His throne is great, He said, I saw a great white throne.

We have a saying, and it's very, very true, that absolute power corrupts absolutely. But that's not the case with God. He has absolute power.

But in that absolute power, there is absolutely no corruption whatsoever. It is a holy throne. A holy throne.

Have you ever heard the word despot? When it says that someone is a despot or despotical ruler. Do you know that that word is used in the Greek New Testament with reference to Jesus Christ? He is called in Greek the despot. He is.

A despot among men is something negative. It means a ruler who has absolute power that's usually corrupt. But in the New Testament, it refers to Jesus Christ as the absolute ruler.

The despot. But at the same time, He is the righteous one. And His throne is righteous.

His throne is holy. His justice exceeds the heights of the mountains. Even up into the heavens and is higher than the heavens.

Now that is both good and bad. It's good in this way. Would you want an all-powerful, all-sovereign God who was not holy? Who was given to evil? The most terrifying existence that one could ever imagine were to be subjects of an omnipotent God who agreed with evil and made compromises with the wicked.

It would be terrifying. It would make Nazi Germany look like a theme park. But we don't have to worry about that.

The God who reigns over the universe is absolutely holy. There is no shifting or shadow or darkness in Him. From all His works are perfect, the law says.

And so does the book of Psalms. All His works are perfect. Now that's good news, but that's also bad news because He will judge the world in righteousness.

And His standard is extremely high. Sometimes, as I said earlier this week, people will say, well, Brother Paul, how can I go to heaven? I say, well, that's easy. You just have to be absolutely morally perfect from the moment of your birth to the moment of your death without one single flaw.

And they go, well, that's absolutely impossible. I say, you're absolutely right. Now can we talk about redemption through the cross of Jesus Christ? His throne is holy.

There will be no batting of the eye. There will be no bribery on that day. There will be no excuses.

We live in a world of excuses. It knows nothing about justice. A man goes into a McDonald's, he kills 40 people.

He gets off the hook because when he was six years old, his father wouldn't buy him a Happy Meal. That will not occur before the throne of God. Well, you have to understand, Brother Paul, my genetic makeup or my social background, you have to understand, I had a chemical imbalance.

It will not wash on that day before the throne of God. None of it. All the excuses in society today that are destroying the very foundation of our society will have no place in that moment before His throne.

Not one excuse. Because He's holy. As Adrian Rogers used to say, I have good news and I have bad news.

The good news is God is here. The bad news is God is here. Depends on what side of the line you're standing.

So he goes on and he said, I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it. From whose presence earth and heaven fled away and no place was found for them. Well, so much for the saying, me and Jesus got our own thing going.

And so much for the saying, yeah, I believe in the man upstairs. You say that before His throne? You dare say that before His throne and you'll melt before Him like a tiny wax figurine before a blast furnace. How dare you use such language? You and Jesus got your own thing going and the man upstairs.

The man upstairs you can't even bear to look at. He is so holy, so righteous and so great. Don't speak about Him in that type of language.

Here sometimes I'm preaching and someone will say, you know, that day I'll stand before Him. I'll tell Him exactly what... I say, no, you won't. You will not.

Look at what's going on here. First of all, John is very, very afraid even to mention Him. First, he talks about the throne because he has a tendency to not want to talk about the One who sits on it.

Because the One who sits on it is so good, so holy, so righteous, so beautiful and therefore so terrible that it says the earth and heavens themselves fled away from Him. Fled away from Him. Sometimes I hear

these preachers talking about, you know, they're shaving and Jesus walks into their bathroom.

You know, these TV preachers with all these every now and then, you know, they have all these encounters with Jesus. When they say, you know, I was shaving this morning and Jesus Christ appeared to me. And I say, well, did you stop shaving? Because every time in the Bible that a man has an encounter with God, he is either told, you can't see me or you'll die.

Or in the case of Isaiah, he sees a glimpse of God on the throne and he cries out, woe is me, I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips. Have you ever been around someone who was holier than you are? And they make you feel uneasy? And you, of course, you've got a great way around this.

You just say, well, they're legalistic. But you know that they really walk with God. Well, imagine then standing in the presence of that God from whom heaven and earth will flee away.

Now there's two things that are indicated here. One is the absolute terribleness of His presence. You say, hold it, my God's not terrible.

There you go. There's your problem. Because the God of the Bible is.

Do you realize that someone can be so good that they're terrible? What does that mean? When someone is so holy and so righteous and so good that it exposes how unholy and unrighteous and ungood that we are that it seems almost terrible. So heaven and earth flee away from Him, acknowledging His sovereignty, His power, His beauty, that no one can even glimpse this One seated upon a throne. But it also indicates something else.

Heaven and earth flee away and no place is found for them because I want you to know something. Everything you see, everything you see and that has become so important to men, on that day will not matter at all. It will be absolutely worthless.

There's a story about some thieves. I believe it was in New York that broke into one of the finest stores in New York. But they didn't steal anything.

They just changed all the price tags. It was something of a joke. And so the next morning, the cashier, to be astounded, when there would be a \$15,000 vase that was being sold for \$1.50 and something that was worth just a few dollars now being sold for \$15,000.

And it caused such a disruption and such a confusion. I want you to know something. There is One coming like a thief in the night.

And in the next morning, all the price tags are going to be changed. The things that had so much value on this earth. The morning after Christ's come will have no value whatsoever.

And some of the things that had no value even to people who attended church will be absolutely worthless. What are you living for? Are you living for an earth that will flee away? Are you living for things that will not last? Is the priority and thought patterns of your life given to the earthly? Or is it given to those things which will never pass away? The Bible says in 1 John, it's the one who does the will of the Lord who will never pass away, will abide forever. And it goes on and he says in verse 12, I saw the dead.

Do you realize something? This is the only time you're mentioned in the Bible. This is the only time that you appear in the Bible. John looks at the great white judgment and he sees an almost infinite multitude of people.

You're in there. You are in the Bible. You are in this place.

When John looked into the future, when God gave him a vision of the great white judgment, the great white throne, he saw you. You will be there. He says, I saw the dead, great and small.

Why is this important? Some men believe themselves so great that they are not accountable to God. Some men believe themselves so great that they will be excused on that day, that they can push their weight around, that they can do whatever they want. Some men are large fish in large ponds.

Other men are large fish in small ponds. There are men who are power brokers over the entire world. There are men who are power brokers over the United States.

And there are men who are power brokers over Muscle Shoals, Florence and Killing. Have more money than anyone else. They're greater than anyone else.

They feel like they can do something others cannot do. They ought to be excused. They ought to get their own way.

Not on that day. The great will be there, and they will not be excused. But also the small.

We have this idea in America today that if you're poor and you're small, you're good. And that's not necessarily true. Some people think, well, I'm so small and I'm so insignificant and they're in that great group of people, I won't even be pointed out.

That's not true. The great will be there and the small will be there. They will all be there.

And you will be there with them. And so will I. That's why when I preach, I'm not so much concerned about your self-esteem or whether or not your checkbook is balanced. The only burden of my heart is how will it go with you on that day when you stand before God.

And He says, and I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. Present before the throne. There are two days that are of utmost importance to men.

The day when Jesus Christ hung before all men. And the day when all men will stand before Jesus Christ. Those are the only two days that matter.

And those are the days that ought to motivate our lives. What motivates us? What moves us? What has changed and shaped and fashioned our lives? The fact that Christ died for us and the fact that one day we will stand before Him. So He says, I saw the dead.

Now I want you to listen to this from the dead. You are going to die. Some of you sooner than others.

You are going to die. I am so amazed. And pastors sometimes tell me the same thing.

They are so amazed. They can go and preach a funeral of a lost man and literally preach about death and how it is knocking at the door. It is barely a pace behind all of us.

Knocking at the door. Chasing us. Speak about these things right with evidence before the pulpit.

A body. A casket. And yet, the very men who are next in line to die walk out of that funeral as though they were somehow immune to death.

Everyone, if Christ tarries, every person hearing my voice is going to die. That is some sort of a sobering thought. It is the very thing the devil does not want you to hear.

We live in a land of entertainment. And that entertainment and all those hobbies have been fashioned with only one purpose. To so distract you that you think about nothing important.

The most important thing you can think about is you are going to die and the worst thing about death is it is not the end. You say, what do you mean that is the worst? Yes, it is the worst thing about death is it is not the end for some. Although you will die and your body will rot in the grave, you, your soul, will stand before God.

It will live on eternally. Either in eternal paradise and eternal pleasure with God or in eternal suffering in hell. But you will live forever.

And he goes on and he says, I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne and books were opened. Now what are these books that are opened? Books you do not want to open. A man would give absolutely everything he owned for those books not to be opened.

What is in the books? It says, the dead, in the last part of verse 12, the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds. Verse 13, towards the end, and every one of them according to their deeds. What is he trying to say? C.S. Lewis in one of his short novels called *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* in the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. The sailors in the boat, they are exploring and they come into this pitch black dark cloud. They don't really know what's happening.

They go from daylight to pitch darkness in just a moment. And as they are making their way in, they hear these moanings and terrifying cries of a single man. And so they are looking for this man, looking for him, thinking, is he shipwrecked? Where is he? So they see him, and he is floating in the sea and he is pale white with terror.

And they bring him aboard and he screams, flee, flee, turn the boat around, turn the boat around, get out of here, save yourselves, save yourselves. And all of these sailors are quite brave. And so they say, what has so terrorized you? Why should we be so afraid? He said, this is the place where all your dreams come true.

And the sailors, all of them broke out in a smile. This is a place where all your dreams come true? You idiots, listen to me. This is a place where all your dreams come true.

See, they heard it the first time. They really didn't understand what he was saying. But the second time, they heard him.

All your dreams. And they turned that boat around. They did everything in their power to get out of there.

Now, he says the books were open and people were judged by their deeds according to the book. You listen and go, oh, okay. No, he says again.

He repeats himself. You will be judged by your deeds. Do you realize, as I said earlier this week, if I could take and make a CD or video of every thought you've ever had, of every deed you've ever done, and display it here in this church right now, you would run out of this building and you would never show your face here again.

All your deeds. All your words. All your thoughts.

The books will be open. If I were right now to open up a book, if I had the power to open up the book just here in this building right now, of your life, and begin to read your thoughts and your deeds, you would jump out of your seat, you would run up here, and you would do everything in your power to throw yourself upon the book. Is that not true? That's the terror of it.

Now, think about this. You would be ashamed for your deeds to be read in front of all of us. And yet, we're like you.

The same thing can be said about all of us. Yet, you would still be ashamed. Now, imagine your deeds being exposed before a holy God.

Don't you realize you have thought things so vile that you cannot share them with your closest friend? Don't you realize you've even spoken against your closest friend? If your closest friend knew everything you thought, your friendship would be ended. To be entirely and completely exposed. The Bible says that the Word of God lays bare a man.

And the word that's used there is the same type of word used of skinning an animal or skinning a deer. It just skins you back, fillets you, opens you up so that absolutely everything is exposed. If that doesn't terrify you, you don't understand even your own self.

It ought to terrify you. And He goes on and He says this, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds. Now, verse 13, and the sea gave up the dead which were in it. And death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them.

What's it saying? On that day, there will be no place to hide. If the dead could remain in the bottom of the sea, they would choose to do so. If men could grab ahold of the handles on their caskets buried six feet under the ground and keep themselves from being brought before God, they would do so.

They would rather remain in the rot and in the bottom of the sea than to be brought together on that great day. Because it is described in the Bible as a day of terror, a day of terror for those who will be judged by all their deeds. But there is hope.

There is hope. Because He says in verse 12, the books were opened and another book was opened. Now, I have to stop us here as we're running out of time.

I want to say this. You say, that's right, I don't have to worry about anything in the day of judgment because my name is written in the Book of Life. Just how did you get it written there? And this is a

problem.

The superficial preaching that is done in so many places lead people to believe. I tell you what, I was driving through Florence yesterday and I don't know whose church it is. And if I knew their name, I'd say it because I really don't care.

On their big sign outside, it said, Salvation. So easy a caveman could do it. I guess they'd been reading Geico or something.

Salvation. So easy a caveman could do it. You know that's a direct contradiction of Scripture? A direct contradiction of Scripture.

After Jesus got through talking about how a man is saved, the apostles looked at Him and said, well then, who can be saved? There's no one on earth that can be saved. And He answered back saying, what's impossible for men is possible for God. So easy a caveman can do it.

That's blasphemy. So difficult only God can do it by sending His only begotten Son to die. And you say, oh no, brother Paul, that's not what He means.

He means on our part, it's so easy to do. All you have to do is accept Him. Really, have you read the Bible? Jesus said, unless you hate your father and mother, unless you take up your cross and follow Me, you have no part with Me.

Now is He telling us to hate our father and mother? No, He's saying this, that your love toward your father and mother, although it ought to be superlative, will not be higher than your love for Me. And you will follow Me to the ends of the earth even if it means dying on a cross. That's what it means.

You say salvation is more than just this little transaction you worked out with God in vacation Bible school. Your name's not written in the Lamb's Book of Life simply because one time you repeated a prayer. You're saved because you repented of your sins and believed the Gospel, but the evidence that you truly were saved is that your life changed and continues to change up until today.

Do you know the people that have professed faith in Christ this week? Every one of them, I've said this, now, if after tonight you do not begin to grow in the things of God, you do not begin to love His Word, to love His people, to seek to serve Him, to worship Him, and so on and so forth, I just want you to know you've got nothing here tonight. Nothing. Why do I do that? Because I don't want this pastor ten years from now to visit their home and they're living like devils and everything else, and them to say to the pastor, Pastor, don't worry about us.

We already got saved that time Brother Paul came. Because if their life hasn't changed, it's evidence they got nothing here this week. And that's why in our churches, for example, in Peru, our church here in the United States, when someone comes forward and says I've been saved, how can we be so careless with people? How can we not care about people? I just don't understand it.

People will come forward and we'll counsel with them for two minutes, three minutes. We'll get them to pray a little prayer and then present them before the church. They're saved.

They're saved. Everybody come shake his hand. He got saved.

Look what you're doing. I was talking to a pastor this week who decided in his church that when people came forward, he really felt the need to counsel them, to take them and counsel them and work with them and everything else. His church got furious with him.

When people come forward, my church in Peru, and they came forward and said, I would say church, wonderful, this dear man has come forward and he's professed faith in Jesus Christ. Isn't that wonderful? Now, what we're going to do for the next several weeks is we're going to counsel him and love him and teach him the Bible so that he'll have biblical assurance and then we'll present him for baptism after we have talked to him, the elders, the leaders, and everything else because we want to make sure he knows that he knows that he knows biblically that he's come to know Christ. But no, we'd rather be able to shake his hand on the first day and let him go to hell for the rest of his life.

You see, just because you prayed a prayer doesn't mean that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Your name is written if you've believed in Jesus Christ. But the evidence that you believe is that you walk with Him.

And when you don't walk with Him, in love, God disciplines you and brings you back. Is your name written in the Book of Life? Is it? Because that's the only way you will survive the judgment. And yes, I use that language.

It's appropriate language. Throughout the Bible, we hear such statements as, flee the wrath to come. There is a moment.

Prepare to meet thy God. Sir, gentleman, lady, daughter, sister, brother, son, whoever you are, prepare to meet your God. Prepare.

Prepare. Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word.

Help us, dear God, to discern if we truly know Thee. Help us. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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