

# Will My Works Survive The Judgment

by Tim Conway

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of the quality of our actions in God's eyes, comparing them to gold or hay that will be tested by fire on judgment day. It highlights the need for believers to focus on building with valuable materials like gold, silver, and precious stones, representing wise and fruitful works, rather than wood, hay, or straw, which symbolize superficial or misguided efforts. The speaker urges listeners to consider their motives and strive for works that bring glory to God, as rewards based on the quality of our labor await believers on judgment day.*

**Duration:** 20:14

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:6, 1 Corinthians 3:9, 1 Corinthians 3:12, Romans 2:14, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 3:13

**Topics:** "Quality of Actions", "Eternal Rewards"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of the quality of our actions in God's eyes, comparing them to gold or hay that will be tested by fire on judgment day. It highlights the need for believers to focus on building with valuable materials like gold, silver, and precious stones, representing wise and fruitful works, rather than wood, hay, or straw, which symbolize superficial or misguided efforts. The speaker urges listeners to consider their motives and strive for works that bring glory to God, as rewards based on the quality of our labor await believers on judgment day.

---

## Transcript

We all are living lives. We're all living lives where what we do is going to be tested in the end. And there's a quality about things.

It's like some of the things we do, if you look at the quality, in God's eyes, it's gold. There are other things that we do that in God's eyes, it's hay. It's something, but it's not going to stand the fire.

And so we want to be certain not just that we do things, we want to be certain about the quality of what we do. And I want you to biblically try to discern this, try to answer this. Saved so as by fire.

This often gets questions from people. First Corinthians chapter three, verse six. First Corinthians 3.6. Paul says, I planted Apollos watered.

Now, obviously that is farmer language that is being applied to church planting. Paul broke up the fields and the forest. He broke up the rocky ground.

He broke up the wild lands and he created fields for farming. He planted the seed there. And Apollos, he comes along afterwards and he builds on top.

He does the work that has to happen after. He watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

And by anything, he doesn't mean that they don't matter. He doesn't mean that they're not essential to, to the church being established. But if it's kind of like we say, if God, if God doesn't protect the city, I mean, we keep watching vain.

If God doesn't build, we build in vain. The fact is that God has to give the increase. God have to give the growth.

God, God, we can plant the word of God, but God has to make it sprout. He has to make it come up and become fruitful. Only God who gives the growth, he who plants and he who waters are one.

Well, he's not saying we both do the same thing. He's basically saying we're both in the same category and each will receive his wages according to his labor. Now that's, that's key because what he's saying here is no matter how much it's God who gives the growth, each one of us are responsible.

That's where the wage comes from. And it's, it's not this, this obviously is a reward. It's not, it's not these guys working for their salvation.

This is a reward, but we are going to be rewarded according to our labor. And even though he said before, we're nothing in nine, he says, we are God's fellow workers. I mean, we work with God.

Now God's the one that's essential in all of this. He doesn't really need us, but he does use us and we work along with him and God works through us. You are God's field.

He's talking to the Corinthians, God's building. In other words, that's, I mean, like the Corinthians, they're the ones that are being planted. They're, this is the field.

This is where the planting's happening. This is, and then he changes his metaphor, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder.

So you see the whole metaphors change now, but it's according to the grace of God. You see, it's all dependent on him, but it's given to men. It's given to me.

But Paul says, even though it's given to me, we all have to work. We all have to labor and we're going to receive wages or it's, it's the wage of a reward. Like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation.

Someone else is building upon it. Well, you see the metaphors changed, but that's the same imagery. I plant, someone else waters.

I lay the foundation. Someone else builds upon that foundation. Two metaphors, but we see one guy starts the work, other guys come along and they begin to fulfill that work.

Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid. Now that's interesting.

He says, let each one take care how he builds upon it, the foundation. He said, I laid a foundation. Someone else is building on it.

Let each take care how he builds on it. And then he reverts back to the foundation in verse 11. No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And what he's saying is not just no one can lay a foundation other than that. He's saying it is laid and I laid it. I mean, he said, I laid the foundation like a skilled master builder.

I laid it. Let me tell you what it is. It's Christ.

That is what I laid. And so everyone needs to take care how he builds on it. In other words, you better be using the same building materials that I use to lay that foundation because in the end, that's how we're going to be, that's how our labor is going to be evaluated.

And you see what he says in 12, if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw. So the first three are good. The last three, not so good.

Each one's work will become manifest for the day. We'll disclose it. We've got judgment day.

It's going to show us what all of this is because it will be revealed by fire. And the thing about gold is it can stand the fire. Silver, it can stand the fire.

Precious stones, you take diamonds, they can stand the fire. Wood, hay, stubble or straw, that doesn't abide the fire. The fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. You see that? Now it's reward. It was wages before, now it's reward.

So we see what it is. But notice the reward is based on the building materials. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself, and this is interesting, if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

And it makes sense. He's going to be saved, but he and his works are going through the fire. And the idea here is that Christians can suffer loss on judgment day.

Why? Because their works are going to be tested, and some of our works are going to be burned up. If it's wood, hay, and stubble, it's going to be burned up. And the truth is that he speaks in absolute terms.

We know that we're his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. The fact is this. Christ has a people, a particular people, peculiar people of his own possession, and we know this.

We are a people that he has saved for that very sake, to accomplish good works, to be a people zealous of good works. And he said, by this you prove to be my disciples. We know this, that the fruit in our life, you can tell the tree by the fruit, but though he speaks in absolutes here, we get the idea.

Judgment day is going to burn burnable stuff away. The building materials here, it seems to be, he's talking about himself and Apollos. I planted, others came along and watered, or I laid a foundation, others came along and built.

Well, you are the field. You are the building. Who? The church.

And so we see building going on, but you know what the thing is? We're all builders to some degree. I was just, I'm thinking about Paul using the term built. Here's some examples.

Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. So each one of us are involved in building each other. This building gets built as each person is added and as each person is strengthened and edified.

That's our word, built up. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. Or it says it here, we are God's fellow workers.

You are God's field, God's building. You are. So we are, we're God's building.

And how do we get built? Well, God builds us, but how does he do it? Through human instrumentality. And it's not just through apostles and prophets and pastors. We're each building.

You get texts like this. I want you to all speak in tongues, but even more prophesy. The one who prophesies greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets so that the church may be built up.

Do you have all this? Strive to excel in building up the church. He says, let all things be done for building up. We know that there's, we know apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers have been given to equip the saints for the work of the ministry for building up the body of Christ.

But then Paul goes right on to say that the body grows. It builds itself up in love. So the body itself builds itself.

Let no corrupting talk come from your mouths, but only such as is good for building up. My point is this, we're all building. We're all building.

We're all building one another. And we all are living lives. We're all living lives where what we do is going to be tested in the end.

And anyways, that's a very sobering passage. What we know is this. We all have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Why? So that what was done in our bodies is going to be brought to judgment. It's going to be examined. And there's a quality about things.

It's like some of the things we do, if you look at the quality in God's eyes, it's gold. There are other things that we do that in God's eyes, it's hay. It's something, but it's not going to stand the fire.

And so we want to be certain, not just that we do things, we want to be certain about the quality of what we do. How can quality be bad? Well, I was reading something to Joshua from John Piper, and he said something like this. He said, would hay and straw seem to refer to things like when we think about people in the ministry, perhaps defective teaching, not blatant gospel denying heresy, but some lesser erroneous distorted.

And it goes into it as whether it's our works or our teaching, our love, whatever, if it's unwise, if it's irrelevant, if it's misapplied, if it's poorly explained, if it's superficial, twisted to fit on biblical traditions or worldliness, I think those are really good thoughts to apply. We want to think about our doctrine. We want

to think about if we're supposed to be building up one another, well, one of the things would be this, we need to be making attempts to build up one another.

You recognize what I'm saying. If we're even going to get to the place where our building is going to be tested for whether it's diamond or whether it's some kind of chaff, we actually have to be making an effort to build up one another. I mean, we have to apply ourselves to the building process.

You don't want to be the person that comes there. I think for most Christians, what's going to happen is we're going to have a pile of diamonds, but we're also going to have all this other stuff over. And I think it's all mixed together.

And when the fire hits it, you know what's going to happen. You hit a pile, you got a pile of dried up grass there, and you spread some flakes of gold and silver through it. What happens when you hit it with the flamethrower? Well, you're just going to basically blow all the worthless stuff off.

It's going to burn up. It's going to turn to ash. It's going to blow away.

And what you're going to be left with on the ground is now going to be what's really valuable and what's going to stand the fire. And that is exactly how Paul is describing the day. And you just think about him.

He talks this way in Romans, talking about judgment day. He says, when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do what the law requires, they're a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts.

While their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day, when according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. We can go through, but that day, that day, the day. Paul speaks about that day in various places and very obvious what it is when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, to be marveled at among all who believe because our testimony made the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day.

Anyway, we, we see how Paul uses it, but that day is coming. We really, every one of us have to think it's like, you don't, you want, you don't want to take it lightly. Like, you know, you go down, you go down to the city center and you seek to evangelize.

Is it possible? Like, what would be an example of wood, hay, and stubble? Well, I, I, I know this like in teaching. I just, I just think in teaching, I got to teach the scriptures. I've got to make Christ central.

I got to make him preeminent. I've got to teach scripture the way I've got to be balanced the way scripture is balanced. I just seek to emphasize the things that scripture emphasizes.

I want to seek to bring the glory of God out. I want to seek to, to make this real. And, and I mean, can a guy who just speaks monotone possibly lose something? A guy that just wants to put up tradition or talk about the 1689 London Baptist confession all the time, or as we live our lives, we want to think about motive.

I mean, can, you know what? Two people can do the exact same thing. And I almost guarantee you that motive, no, I will guarantee you. Why? Because first Corinthians chapter four says that it's, Paul is telling them, don't judge anything before the time you wait, God's going to come.

He's going to sort all the motives out. You know what that means? That means that our motive can make the difference between two people doing the same thing, but one is going to be stubble and one is going to be gold. Why? Because of motive.

One guy can do something selfishly or hypocritically. Somebody else can do it for the glory of God. And we just have to watch all that.

Anyway, we're at the end of time. We're five minutes past, but those are verses that are, we are all heading towards judgment day. Anytime we get some teaching on judgment day for us to think about, you really want to think about it.

You want to soak it in because you can't escape it. It ought to form our lives. It ought to be something that quickens our step, makes us think.

Listen, you know one thing you can't get away from? There's nowhere in there where Paul says rewards are foolish, rewards are selfish, rewards are carnal. Don't even think about it. And no, he speaks about rewards there as desirable.

Like you want gold and silver and precious stones and get the reward. You don't want it to get burned up. You don't want to be saved so as by fire.

You don't, on judgment day, I mean, maybe somebody would think, well, I'm just glad I made it in. Why would you want to think that? I mean, if you're serving the Lord Jesus Christ and you're trusting in Him, then why would you not heed all the admonitions to be as fruitful as you possibly can and have the greatest possible reward? Why would you want to waste your life to be the guy, what do you want to, I mean, don't you think that's just crummy thinking to think, oh, I just want to slip in the back door and just barely get in. I mean, that's really shoddy thinking.

It's like, no, God has saved me. I mean, I want it to be acceptable to Him because obviously if it gets burned up and I get no credit for it, well, that means God's not pleased with it. Why would I want to live and try to do things God's not pleased with? Don't you agree? About 14 years ago, Tim also dealt with a similar question on the same passage.

You can find that resource on [illbehonest.com](http://illbehonest.com).

---

Video: [https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/tTa3X\\_PWvm4.mp4](https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/tTa3X_PWvm4.mp4)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/will-my-works-survive-the-judgment/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**