

# Living In The Light Of Christ's Judgment Seat

by Zac Poonen

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a genuine Christian life, focusing on the need to align our inner walk with God with our outward actions. It highlights the dangers of hypocrisy, the significance of confessing sins to God and others, and the preparation needed for the judgment seat of Christ. The speaker urges believers to have a life that matches their knowledge of God's truth, to do good works, and to seek genuine transformation rather than just outward appearances.*

**Scripture:** 1 John 2:28, Acts 10:38, Matthew 5:16, James 3:1, John 8:32, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Luke 4:22, John 1:4, Acts 17:30, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Authenticity in Faith", "Transformation through Confession"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a genuine Christian life, focusing on the need to align our inner walk with God with our outward actions. It highlights the dangers of hypocrisy, the significance of confessing sins to God and others, and the preparation needed for the judgment seat of Christ. The speaker urges believers to have a life that matches their knowledge of God's truth, to do good works, and to seek genuine transformation rather than just outward appearances.

---

## Transcript

We have been seeing that there is a message for us from the Lord's messages to the churches in Revelation. And we saw that even the churches planted by the apostles, within 30-40 years they sank into a sad condition. And like I said, we can learn from the mistakes of other people.

To see where did they fail, why did they fail. What we can learn so it doesn't happen to us. So, we looked at some of those churches.

I want you to look at Revelation chapter 3 verse 1. Here is a church in Sardis. There is a church in Sardis. The flaw of this church is that even if you have the name of a living person, you are dead.

How do we get the name that we are alive? There are many ways. We can be active. Lot of meetings and evangelism and distribution tracts and we get a name that we are alive.

Or we can be associated with some good church and then we get a name, oh we are connected to that church. Or we can get a good name through lot of good preaching. But ultimately what God looks for is our life.

Our inner life and our inner walk with God. And if that is not the most important thing in your life, it is very easy to get a name that we are alive. We may be dead.

So, in all these churches we find that the Lord was trying to tell them, you must think of my opinion about you and not what other people think about you. It is a big temptation in us to think what do other people think about us. And we have to battle it all the time.

Lord, I want to live before your face. It is a constant battle. I will tell you from my experience.

I still have to battle it. Lord, I only want to live before your face. I only want to be concerned about your opinion about me.

Because you know all the secret areas of my life. You know every thought that goes through my mind. You know my attitudes to different people.

Other people don't see all that. Even your husband and wife can't see that. And it is very easy to slip into being happy with a good reputation.

And even elder brothers can just glory in a good reputation before others. And if you live like that, you can get a big shock when you stand before Jesus one day. If the Lord tells you in that day, you had a name that you were alive.

Everybody thought you are a wonderful brother and sister. But now I will strip that outside and show people what your inner life was like. I find that the thing that helps me to be free from caring for the opinion of men is to think frequently about the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

See, here was a church. I am sure it started very well. And they had a good testimony.

And over a period of years, just like many of us, we have got a good testimony. And after sometime, we can live on that testimony. And inwardly, we are backsliding.

But we cover it up. And we live on that good testimony. We have to be very careful.

Because after sometime, it will be very difficult to get out of that. It's like a disease. Having a name that we are alive but actually dead inside.

Having a name that we are alive but actually dead inside is a disease. I have heard of people who go to a doctor for a check up. And the doctor says, you and you had a cancer for so many months.

It's been spreading all over. But man says, I don't feel anything. I feel okay.

Yeah, sometimes Jesus' cancer is like that. You don't realize it till it has spread for 5-6 months. And the doctor says, if you had come to me 6 months earlier, I could have done something for you.

But now it has spread so much. You got about 3 months and you will die. I heard of one man who got leprosy in his hand.

He was working in an office so he didn't want people to know about it. So he always used to wear long sleeve shirts. So that nobody would see it.

But the leprosy spread. Gradually his eyelids all went off. His hair on top of the eyes.

Then he had to go to a doctor. The doctor said, you should have come to me as soon as you saw it. Now it has spread so much, it's very difficult to stop it.

Then you have so many other problems. Then you have leprosy. Hypocrisy is like that.

Once we get into the habit of thinking, other people think I am alright. Secretly think of our testimony before people. I can tell you, it's like a cancer.

It will spread and spread and spread. One day it will destroy you. So this is a very serious thing.

You have a name that you are alive but you are dead. We have to be very careful. Especially sometimes we like to have a good testimony before an elder brother.

But you ask yourself in the final day. Is your elder brother going to sit on the throne and judge you? No. He will also be standing in line to be judged by God like you.

So to think about the judgment seat of Christ frequently is one way to be saved from hypocrisy. I do that many times. See 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Not only me, the apostle Paul used to do that too.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 9. We have as our ambition. Whether at home or absent means whether we are in heaven or here on the earth. We want to please him.

At home means at home in heaven. And if you are away from there that means you are on earth. So he is saying whether I am in heaven or on earth I have only same ambition.

Just think of that phrase. I have only one desire. And when I go to heaven my desire will be the same.

And here on earth my desire is the same. Let me ask you. What will be your desire when you go to heaven? Supposing Jesus comes today and we go to heaven.

There also will you be trying to please your elder brother? No. You will only want to please God. Paul is saying.

It makes no difference whether I am in heaven or on earth. I have only one desire here. The same desire I will have when I go to heaven.

That is to please God. That is the difference between a true child of God and all the other people. You must be honest now.

You ask yourself. Do you say things and do things? And behave in a certain way to impress your elder brother? Now I want to tell you. You are not ready for the coming of Christ.

You will not be able to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The purpose of all these conferences is to prepare all of us for the judgment seat of Christ. There are many parents who send their children for tuition classes.

There are many people in Bangalore. They don't know Hindi. So they send their children for tuition classes in Hindi.

Or someone is weak in mathematics, they go for tuition to a mathematician. That costs money to get such tuition. And for the bigger examinations, medical, engineering and all, they go for sometimes one year

tuition.

Why do they spend so much money and time? They are preparing, preparing, preparing for a big examination. And if they take their tuition class well, they will get a good result. So all our conferences are like tuition classes.

Not only our conference, even our Sunday meeting must be like a tuition class. In our church in Bangalore, I have told people this many times. If you come here regularly, and you listen and do everything that you hear, I can guarantee you will get 100% when you stand before God in the final day.

Isn't it wonderful to get 100% at the judgment seat of Christ? 2 Corinthians 5, verse 10. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be rewarded for the deeds in his body according to what he has done, good or bad. Today on earth, there may be a difference between you and me.

In the church you may see people respecting me more than they respect you. Oh, he is an elder brother, we respect him. This is just an ordinary brother and an ordinary sister.

That is only on earth. When we stand before the Lord, there will be no difference between you and me. I will be standing in the same queue that you are standing.

One by one to be called before the judgment seat of Christ. Christ will set up his judgment seat. Some people think only unbelievers will be judged.

Those are the people to be sent to hell. But believers will also be judged to see how they should be rewarded. So Paul is saying, we, he is including himself, we have to appear at the judgment seat of Christ.

He is not saying all those unbelievers will go up there. That is another judgment. But we believers will have to stand before Jesus for a final judgment.

And everything will be judged from the day we were born again. Whatever you did before you were born again is all blotted out. God is going to judge you from the day you were born again. Why? Because the days before you were born again you were ignorant.

Many of us have done so many evil things in our unconverted days. You can be thankful that that has all been blotted out and God will not ask you about anything between those days. Because Christ died for you and when you received Christ he blotted out your past.

In God's eyes the day you were born again is like a new baby being born. That's what it means to be born again. One old man has died that's buried and God is not bothered what the old man did in his life.

So you don't have to worry about all the things you did in your unconverted days. If you cheated anybody of money of course you must return it. But the Lord is not going to bring up the record of your past life.

But after you were born again God wanted you to live in a certain way. It says from that day every single thing that you did and said and thought God is going to judge you. Your previous life before you were born again it's written in Acts 17 and verse 30 it's a wonderful verse.

You'll find a great comfort in this verse. Acts of the Apostle chapter 17 verse 30 God overlooks the times of your ignorance. Before you were born again you were ignorant.

And this verse says God shuts his eyes to that he doesn't look at it. Those days you didn't know me you didn't know the Bible you didn't know Jesus. I don't even look at it.

I praise God for that. He says I don't look at it. But now now he's telling everybody to repent.

Now he's saying don't live like that now. So you know our responsibility increases as soon as we are born again. Because before you were born again you were in darkness.

Now light has come. And if you are preaching the word of God to other people then you are going to be judged by a higher standard. Do you know this that God will judge me by a higher standard than you? If I do the same wrong thing that you do God will judge me by a hundred times higher standard than you.

If your elder brother does something the same wrong thing that you do that elder brother will be judged by ten times higher standard than you. But since I am preaching even to the elder brothers I will be judged by a hundred times standard. See this verse.

James chapter 3 verse 1 James chapter 3 verse 1 It says here don't let many of you become teachers my brothers because you will incur a stricter judgment. My brother Jacob chapter 3 verse 1 See there are many brothers in the church who like to be elders and teachers to other people. Ok But remember that that will expose you to a much stricter judgment when you stand before God.

Because Jesus said to whom more is given more is required. So you should not try to be an elder unless God wants to make you an elder. I am sorry to say there are some people who love to have the honor of being an elder.

Those are the people who are totally unfit to be elders. The only man fit to be an elder is the one who says I am not worthy to be an elder. There are very few people like that.

Most people think I am quite worthy to be an elder. Those are the most unfit people to be elders and their judgment will be very severe. So at the judgment seat of Christ everybody is not going to be judged by the same standard.

See, when all the children go to a school for an examination do all the 800 students get the same question paper? No. No. All different classes will be different question paper.

First standard will be very easy. Kindergarten will be much easy. 10th standard question paper will be very tough.

To whom more has been taught more will be expected. Think of how many conferences you have come to and heard the word of God. You are being taught more.

Your question paper is going to be very tough. Do you think God will judge all of your brothers and sisters with the same standard He judges the people in the CSI church? It will be 100 times easier for them than for you. Because they are not hearing all the things you are hearing.

It will be easier even for the people in the Pentecostal church than for you. Because they are not hearing all the things you are hearing. There is a lot of difference between 10th standard and first standard question paper.

Remember that. Don't just say we are hearing so many wonderful truths. We are so happy to come to this conference.

Yeah but that's good. That can lead you to a wonderful life. But also with a higher standard of judgment.

So we were thinking of the Lord saying you have a name that you are alive but you are dead. That's like saying you talk all 10th standard language but your life is like first standard. If I speak 10th standard spiritual language, my life must also be 10th standard.

If I am speaking 10th standard language and my life is even 9th standard, I am a hypocrite. If I am speaking 10th standard language and my life is even 9th standard, I am a hypocrite. My life must be exactly equal to my knowledge.

That is the only person who can say I am not a hypocrite. That means you should be able to say my life is equal to my knowledge. My life is equal to what I share with other people.

Ask yourself everyday. Life and knowledge are like the two legs we stand on. Think of a baby.

His leg is only so much. Left leg. Right leg is also the same size.

Then you see that baby after 2 years. Oh, the left leg has become bigger. But the right leg has also become bigger.

You see that baby after 15 years. Oh, the left leg is so big and the right leg is also so big. That is normal growth in all of us.

How many people do you see walking like this with one leg short? Very few people like that. But there are many Christians like that. Knowledge is so much.

Life is so much. And the more and more conferences they go to, this left leg is becoming more and more and more bigger. Knowledge leg.

The knowledge leg is becoming bigger and bigger. The same way our other leg must also grow. That means your life also must be like that.

I remember one sister who was from a non-Christian family who accepted Christ. And she came for baptism. And her husband didn't know that.

But I told her, now that you are baptized, your life must be much better now as a wife at home. Now your husband must see a more meek and quiet spirit and submission in you. Not just preaching to him.

Say, you got a wrong religion, I got the right one. That's not the way to go. We should never speak like that to anybody.

Our life must be like a light. See, what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5. Matthew 5 and verse 16. Matthew 5 and verse 16.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. How will other people glorify our father? Not by hearing our words. Everybody can preach words.

What is the light? The light is not your words. It's one of the big mistakes that Christians are making. They think the words they speak, that is the light.

People say, I've got more light. Many of us have used that expression. I went to this conference and I got more light.

What does that mean? Does it mean according to this verse that there's going to be more good works in your life? It says that. Life does not mean knowledge. It's a big mistake we can make.

I got light in the conference. The purpose of God giving us light in our heart in terms of understanding is so that our life will change. Jesus said, when you know the truth, the truth will set you more free from sin.

John 8, 32, you shall know the truth, the truth shall set you free. If you are not free from sin, what you got is not the truth. Only knowledge.

So everything we hear, we must say, Lord, I want that in my life. Lord, my knowledge leg has grown about one foot in this conference. Now my life leg also must grow one foot.

I want to be stable standing equally on both legs. So if you've got unconverted partners in your home, you know so many husbands and wives complain, my husband is not obeying the word of God, my wife is not obeying the word of God. Let your light shine before them, that they may see something.

That's what Jesus said, not that they hear something, but they see something. They see your life and they glorify God. See John chapter 1, we read about the light that was in Jesus.

John 1 verse 4, in Jesus Christ was life and that life was the light of man. He began to preach only when he was 30 years old. But the light of his life was shining for 30 years in Nazareth even though he never preached anything.

I've often thought what a fantastic testimony Jesus would have had as a carpenter in Nazareth. He never preached a single sermon. He did not get a reputation in Nazareth as a great preacher.

You know the reputation he got for 30 years in Nazareth? Let me show you a verse of what the people said in Nazareth. Luke chapter 4. Jesus came to Nazareth, verse 16, where he had been brought up. He was there for 30 years in Nazareth and what was his testimony at the end of 30 years? He had never preached a sermon in 30 years.

This is the first time he was preaching. But before he preached he had a testimony for 30 years. What was the testimony of all the people in Nazareth? Verse 22.

Everybody was speaking well about him. Everyone's testimony was, this is an amazingly good man. He's never preached a sermon.

We never heard him preach in 30 years. But we have seen how he helped the poor. As a carpenter he would sometimes make things and give them as a gift to poor widows and orphans.

And they had seen that. They never saw him getting angry in 30 years in Nazareth. We saw so many people irritating him and calling him an illegitimate child.

We don't know who your father is. But he never got upset with them. What a testimony! My dear brothers and sisters, what shall we glory in CFC churches? That we have so much knowledge.

That we can distribute books and DVDs with so many wonderful teachings. All that is useless if it is not backed up by people who are living a good life. There is no use of my standing here if I can't back it up with a good life.

You know the way I live at home with my wife. Or if I have a servant how I treat the servant at home. I tell you, the way you treat a servant, poor servant at home is a very good test of your Christianity.

And how you bring up your children. And what's the testimony of your neighbors. They may not like you as a Christian.

That is another thing. But they have to say we can find nothing wrong with his life. That was the testimony of Jesus in Nazareth.

Not one who had so much knowledge. Oh, when you sit with him he will teach you this and teach you that and teach you the other thing. What is your testimony in your neighborhood and in your town? All of you elder brothers who are supposed to be the leaders of the church.

Are you just longing that you will get a testimony as a fine fiery preacher? Jesus never had it for 30 years. Don't seek for that. I was speaking well of his life.

You know when Peter Peter did not know Jesus for 30 years. He knew Jesus only for 3 and half years. What is his testimony? See what he tells Cornelius in Acts chapter 10.

See Cornelius has never heard about Jesus. He doesn't know who that person is. And Peter is explaining to him about Jesus.

And Peter does not tell him Oh you know Jesus how many miracles he did. Oh you should listen to his sermons they were so fiery. That's not what he says.

Acts 10.38 You know Jesus of Nazareth God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power. That's when he was 30 years old. And Peter says it's only after that that I know him.

And I will tell you what I have seen him in the last 3 and half years. We saw what the people of Nazareth said in the first 30 years. Now you see Peter's testimony for the last 3 and half years with the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

What did he do? He went all over the place doing good to people. That's the first thing. He went around doing good to people.

And delivering people who are oppressed by the devil. That doesn't mean just casting out demons. Everybody is gripped by the devil.

Some are demon possessed, very few. The devil has gripped everybody's life. In our unconverted days the devil had gripped us also.

I want to tell you wherever you are living you are surrounded by people who are oppressed by the devil. They live in adultery. That is being gripped by the devil.

They tell lies. They are gripped by the devil. They cheat in their business.

They are gripped by the devil. The pastors go taking money from the poor people. They are gripped by the devil.

Jesus went around delivering these poor people who are gripped by the devil. You can do it also. By sharing people from your life how God delivered you from the grip of the devil.

So that's how Jesus lived. He went about doing good. And that's what he told others.

Let your light also shine that people will see your good works. See Jesus said in John 8.12 Sorry not John 8. Let's turn to John chapter 9. Verse 5 As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world. See light is something people have to see.

Life should be something people can see. You see these lights? Tube light. No sound.

But you can see. Our life must be like that. Sometimes tube light will make a lot of sound but no light.

Then there is something wrong with it. That is how some believers are. A lot of noise but no light.

It's no use having so many bulbs in a hall if they are all fused. It's better to have one light that's burning than 300 bulbs that are fused. Many churches are like 300 fused bulbs.

What's the use? You can collect more fused bulbs and say we now have 400 people in our church. Who is the one who collects fused bulbs? All these junk collectors. Many preachers are like that.

They are collecting fused bulbs and saying our church is increasing in size. It's better to have one bulb that's burning. Somebody whose light shines that he has a good testimony before others.

Don't think just somebody who can preach well is the most important person in your church. The most important person in your church may not be your elder brother. In the eyes of men this is the great man of God in our church.

But in God's eyes whose ever light is shining brightest that is the most important person in that church. It may be some poor sister who nobody cares for. That may be the most important person in the church.

Because she is manifesting the life the goodness and the humility of Jesus more than anybody else. So remember one day we will stand at the judgment seat of Christ and everything we have done in our life will be shown on a screen. See like if there is a screen over here and your whole life is going to be projected from the day you were born again.

And the Lord is going to show all the people sitting here your life. All the things you did in secret how you handled your money in secret what all thoughts went through your mind is all going to come on the screen how you spoke to your wife what all you did all the secret sins you committed in the dark here and there after you were born again day by day by day by day by day till the day Jesus came or till you died will you be happy there or will you want to run away from here from this hall you can run away at the judgment seat of Christ you cannot run away you will have to stand there and not only the Tamil Nadu people the whole world is going to see live today in such a way as one who recognizes one day your whole life is going to be exposed to the world you say Lord you say brother what shall I do about the wrong things I have done after I am born again you know what the Bible says confess to God Lord I am sorry I did this

don't just say I have sinned 10,000 times that is alright before you are born again you can't confess all your sins after we are born again Lord I looked at the dirty picture and I lusted after that woman there and I keep looking at cinema bad cinemas and Lord I spoke very rudely to my wife and I cheated somebody in the business please forgive me I have done one part I have confessed to God but you know in the cross there are two parts when you confess to God you have finished only one part now there is one more part and that is to confess to human beings Zacchaeus confessed to Jesus I have cheated many people that is the vertical part and then he said I am going to give back to all the people all the money that I took from them Jesus said when you come and pray to God and you realize that you have hurt somebody by your anger or words go and confess to that person then come and pray so if you want things to be removed from that your screen in the last day it can be removed now there are two things you have to do confess to God and if your sin is only against God then you only confess to God for example if you had a bad thought that is only against God if you had a little bitterness in your heart that is only against God so confess it to God but if you have opened your mouth and spoken evil about somebody or got angry at your wife or cheated somebody then you have to go to that person also and say here is the money I took from you no sometimes it may take 10 years for you to give back all the money you took from others ok start even if you have to give only 10 rupees a month start now and if you have heard somebody go and write a letter or make a phone call and meet that person and ask forgiveness and then both arms are complete of the cross and that part will be wiped out you see now for example there is a videotape going on here everything that I said and did has been recorded there if I scratch my head it is there if I say something good or bad it is there when you play it back you will see the whole thing but that cannot record my thoughts no videotape can do that but in the final day the videotape which God plays will also record your thoughts your or the motive with which you did certain good things I sometimes get letters from people brother I am writing this with a great burden for the purity of the church and all full of complaints he can fool me that he has got a great burden for the church God will say in the final day I knew why you wrote that letter you had a grudge against somebody and you wanted to get your own back on that person God will say you can fool Zak Poonen you can't fool me and it will come on the screen your wrong attitudes and motives will all be on the screen are you ready for the coming of Christ 1 John chapter 2 1 John chapter 2 verse 28 little children abide in him so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame at his coming all of us you and me have done many wrong things after we are born again thoughts words actions attitudes to people wrong motives with which we do many good things seeking honor when we preach seeking honor when we pray seeking honor when we give money seeking honor by fasting or any religious thing we have to confess it if we confess it the blood of Jesus will blot it out from that tape it will not be there so when your videotape is played all those parts will be blank there is nothing there it's all blotted out you must set it right with God and with man but here it says when Jesus comes we should have boldness not shrink back in other words if Christ is to come right now let's say he comes right now and sets up his judgment seat and the Lord says who is the first person who is ready to come and be judged will you run to the back of the queue or will you say yes Lord I am number one that is what is written here say yes Lord I am ready please show my videotape my whole life I have not lived a perfect life I have confessed every sin that is blotted out you will not see those things I confessed it's all gone in eternity nobody will see it because God is faithful to cleanse us from whatever we confessed to if we have set it right with man so if you have hurt somebody go and ask forgiveness now don't shrink back so then some clever people may say then it is very easy every time I sin I confess it is blotted out from the tape but when your turn comes and everybody sees your tape they say what is this so many blank hours of tape I think something is there they may not see your sin but they will know how you have lived by all those blank, blank, blank, blank, blank tape they will still know even though they may not know exactly

what you did so don't be so clever and smart with Jesus you will still be ashamed if the Lord shows a 3 hour tape and 2 hours 59 minutes is all blank one minute they show where you are sitting in some conference and clapping your hand or something like that you are not going to be happy let's come before the Lord in brokenness and say Lord from today I don't want a name that I am alive I really want to be alive inside I want to walk with a sensitive conscience and live according to the light you have given me in my heart let's pray Heavenly Father help us to be ready for the coming of Jesus Christ we know it's going to be very soon we don't want to sit on our pride and think that everything is alright help us to go and set everything right with God and man from today onwards help us through the Holy Spirit don't give us sleep at night until we set everything right wake us up in the middle of the night tell us what we have to do we pray in Jesus name Amen

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/GUu7ycOwVWQ.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/living-in-the-light-of-christs-judgment-seat/>

# *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)**