

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT CHRIST/BEMA

JROC/Week 3 – Rewards?

September 5, 2021

*I Cor. 4:1-5 - Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. <sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

Paul expressed his humility as he explained God as judge.

Servants – lit. “under rowers” referring to the lowest, most menial, and most despised galley slaves who rowed on the bottom tier of a ship.

Stewards – referring to a person entrusted with and responsible for his master’s entire household, i.e. buildings, fields, finances, food, other servants, and children.

Faithful – the most essential quality of a servant or steward is obedience.

Human court – Paul explained that a human verdict on his life is not the one that matters, even if it was his own verdict on himself. Paul’s own sincere evaluation of his life did not acquit him of all failures to be faithful.

The Lord – He is the ultimate and only qualified Judge of any man’s obedience and faithfulness.

Hidden things of darkness...counsels of the hearts – referring to inner motives, thoughts, and attitudes which only God can know. Believers’ rewards will be based on inward devotion.

Even following the revealing of inner motives... Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, states that each one’s praise will come from God.

Everything a believer has in life – whether it is intellectual capacity, natural gifts, physical health, spiritual gifts, or wealth – is a gift from God. And, we will be asked to give an account regarding how we used God’s gifts to us. Have we been faithful in using what God has committed to us?

I Cor. 3:9-15 – the believer’s life is viewed as a building built upon Christ as the foundation. This has been referred to as building a structure of service/works. Will this structure have eternal value or will it be worthless.

Are we bearing fruit as a believer? In Scripture, the word *fruit* is often used to describe a person’s outward actions that result from the condition of the heart. The statement “you

will know them by their fruit” (Matthew 7:16) is part of Jesus’ teaching about recognizing true followers and avoiding false prophets.

The seventh chapter of Matthew in verses 21–23, Jesus makes a chilling announcement to many who assumed they belonged to Him. He warned them that on Judgment Day they will hear Him say, “Depart from me. I never knew you.” He told His followers that the “fruit” of their lives proved what was inside their hearts (Mark 7:20–23).

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In our lives, every word and every action is fruit from our hearts. Galatians 5:22 lists some of the fruit produced by a heart in tune with God. Our attitudes, actions, words, and perspectives change as we walk in fellowship with the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:6–7).

Displaying good “fruit” may include making disciples (Matthew 28:19), using their gifts to benefit others (Romans 12:4–8), leading lost people to Jesus (James 5:20), loving their fellow believers (1 John 3:14), and seeking humble ways to do good everywhere (Jeremiah 29:7). All of us stumble from time to time, and we may go through seasons of bearing little fruit (1 John 1:8). But 1 John 3:4–10 makes it clear that those who know God will not continue a lifestyle of bearing bad fruit. We have been transformed, and the fruit of our lives is evidence of that transformation.

Good fruit is that which is produced by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 gives us a starting place: the fruit of His Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Jesus told His followers, “I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). Righteous fruit has eternal benefit.

Jesus said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4–5). When we neglect our spiritual life, ignore the Word of God, skimp on prayer, and withhold areas of our lives from the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit, we are like a branch broken off the vine. Our lives become fruitless. We need daily surrender, daily communication, and daily—sometimes hourly—repentance and connection with the Holy Spirit in order to “walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

God is the judge of even our thoughts and motivations. All will be brought to the light when we stand before Him (Hebrews 4:12–13). A poor widow in a one-room hut can bear as much fruit as a televangelist leading giant crusades if she is surrendered to God in everything and using all He has given her for His glory. As fruit is unique to each tree,

our fruit is unique to us. God knows what He has entrusted to each of us and what He expects us to do with it (Luke 12:48). Our responsibility before God is to be “faithful with little” so that He can trust us with much (Matthew 25:21).

The most significant occurrence for the believer is salvation. “From that point of commitment until homecoming in heaven, a Christian should focus on glorifying God in preparation for stepping into the judgment hall of the King Eternal – Jesus Christ.”

I John 2:28 – John tells us to ABIDE in Him so that we will have confidence and not be ashamed at His coming. The BEMA of Christ should truly motivate us for godly living in the “here and now” ...to live passionately for Jesus NOW.