

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST/BEMA

JROC/Week 4 – Rewards for ???

September 19, 2021

John 5:24 - *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.* For believers there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). Our sin was judged at the cross! Isn't that comforting?

Our aim is to be well-pleasing to God (II Cor. 5:9). God rewards believers for works of service that have eternal value – that will last eternally. Serving Him faithfully with pure motives!

I Cor. 4:1-5 - *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards (having management over ALL that God has given us) of the mysteries (what He has fully revealed to us in His word) 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. (Human courts don't judge us) <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, (WHICH COMING? At the rapture when we meet Jesus in the air and He takes us to heaven? OR at His physical Second Coming when NT believers will follow Him on white horses – dressed in white linen garments and Jesus is wearing many crowns – and He engages in the campaign of Armageddon? Look what happens in this passage when “the Lord comes” – He *will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts* (Jesus will judge – He will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. *Then each one's praise will come from God*. God will give to each one individually whatever praise is due.*

It appears from I Cor. 4:5 that the Bema will be the first order of business following the rapture. Also...

Rev. 22:12 - *And behold, I am coming quickly (shortly, suddenly, without delay), and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

“Work” – what's that about?

Eph. 2:8-10 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Face-to-face with Jesus at the Bema:

Rom. 14:12 - *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

II Cor. 5:10 - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

2

Three images in the NT help us understand what God will be judging at the Bema. These images: a building, a manager, and an athlete.

A Building – the materials that we are using

I Cor. 3:5-15 - *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?(God has given believers spiritual gifts. We don't pick and choose the ones we want. God decides.)* <sup>6</sup>*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.* <sup>7</sup>*So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.* <sup>8</sup>*Now he who plants and he who waters are one (united in one work under God), and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.* <sup>9</sup>*For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.* <sup>10</sup>*According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.* <sup>11</sup>*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* <sup>12</sup>*Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* <sup>13</sup>*each one's work will become clear;* (with what type of material are we building on the foundation which is JESUS?) *for the Day (not the Day of the Lord which is judgment; the Day is the Day of Christ/the Messiah when we are caught up to meet Him in the air and He takes us to heaven – and our bodies are transformed – we are given glorified bodies) for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* (The Bema will occur following the rapture) <sup>14</sup>*If anyone's work which he has built on it endures,* (is of value, is lasting, is eternal) *he will receive a reward.* <sup>15</sup>*If anyone's work is burned (because the materials with which this believer build are wood, hay, and straw – noted as worthless materials because they will be burned), he will suffer loss (no rewards or loss of some rewards); but he himself will be saved (he won't lose his salvation), yet so as through fire (through refining/purging).*

A Steward – God is looking for faithfulness

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?

At the Bema God will evaluate how we used the time, treasure, and talents He entrusted to us (Matt. 25:14-30).

Matt. 25:21 – Will we hear the Master’s praise, *Well done, my good and faithful servant?*

An Athlete – displaying discipline and focus

I Cor. 9:24-27 (READ)

Athletes are willing to subject themselves to the suffering and demands of rigorous training to get a corruptible/a perishable crown of leaves (or a trophy of plastic, metal, or wood) How much more should believers be willing to sacrifice for an incorruptible/imperishable reward in heaven?

3

Even Paul trained himself knowing that he, too, could be disqualified from reward if he lived an undisciplined life.

II Tim. 2:5 - *...if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

How would you train for the Olympics?

GOD has given us the exercises, the method for training, so to speak.

CONSIDER:

How do we treat other believers?

How do we use our God-given spiritual gifts and abilities?

How do we use our finances that God has given us?

How well are we enduring personal injustice and mistreatments?

How are we enduring suffering and trials?

How are we spending our time?

How effectively are we controlling our fleshly appetites?

Are we sharing Jesus with others in words and in living out our lives as believers before others?

How faithful are we to God’s word?

How hospitable are we to others?

Do we support others in ministry?

How is our speech?

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.

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 (pure motivation – not lifting up ourselves) to do good everywhere (Jeremiah 29:7).

The fruit of our lives is evidence of that transformation.

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; I Cor. 3:9-15). Righteous fruit has eternal benefit.

Jesus told us clearly what we must do to bear good fruit. He 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. 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).

4

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).

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.

Crowns

Imperishable Crown – I Cor. 9:24-25 – exercising discipline, self-control in all things.

Crown of Righteousness – II Tim. 4:8 – given to all those who have loved Jesus’ appearing; longing for His return.

Crown of Life – Rev. 2:10 – being faithful unto death. This crown has at times been called a martyr’s crown, reserved for those who die as a result of their faith in Jesus. More broadly, some suggest that this crown will be given to those who persevere through difficulties and persecution of many kinds. James 1:12 - *Blessed is the man who endures trials/tests; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

Crown of Rejoicing – I Thess. 2:19 - *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?* It is not clear whether this crown is related to a heavenly crown or an attitude of joy that will be experienced at Jesus’ return. It is clear that other believers in whom we have invested will be a source of great joy in eternity.

Crown of Glory – I Pet. 5:4 - *and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.* In this context Peter was writing to those who serve well as leaders in the church, according to God’s standards and qualifications.

Phil. 3:13-14 - *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* Of all people, many thought that Paul might be thinking that he was perfect. NO!

Paul desired to lay hold of that for which Jesus has also laid hold of me – Paul pressed on for what Jesus wanted in Paul’s life. Paul desired to do God’s will, not his own.

5

“Apprehend” is from the same Gk word translated “attained.” Paul wanted to make God’s will for him – his own.

Some might think, OK, Jesus got hold of me – I’m a believer – I’m going to heaven. End of story.

Jesus has laid hold of us to make us new creations in Him (Rom. 6:4).

Jesus has laid hold of us to share the gospel with others (II Cor. 5:20 - *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.*

Jesus has laid hold of us to conform us into the image of Jesus (Rom. 8:29; I John 3:2 - *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall*

*be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. MAC*

*Paul was focused on one thing... forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*