

STANDING BEFORE JESUS

Please open to our church memory verse that we began to learn this morning. In 1st Peter 3:10-11 we learn what God says really matters in life. Listen to the voice of that wizened old fisherman, with a glowing heart of hope and joy--named Peter. He is speaking to us by the power of God's Spirit.

2 Peter 3:10-11 *But the **day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night, in which the **heavens will pass away** with a great noise, and **the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.** 11 Therefore, since **all these things will be dissolved**, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*

It is called Christ's Judgment Seat or Bema Seat. Are you ready? Our future is all about little choices we make that reveal what we really are in the sight of God.

Open with me to Romans 14:10b-12

". . . For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

What will matter when you stand alone right in front of Jesus?

What do you wish to have in your hands to give to the One who loved you and gave Himself for you?

What ever that is – that is what we need to live for TODAY!

So what is valuable here? What is the currency of Heaven? Today -- you and I are God's priest's on earth, offering to Him our worship that He receives in Heaven. This is what I would be trying to do as much of as possible if I really believed that I would stand in front of Jesus Christ some day—and I do believe that. Do you? Does your life look like you believe this to be true?

Your devotion can be a burnt offering:

Mark 12:33 And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Have we offered our devotion up to Him irretrievably, completely, and lovingly—by giving Him time each day because we love Him; by giving Him our complete attention as we focus upon Him in His Word and in prayer?

Your life can be a sacrifice:

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 15:16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

Have we recently renewed that offering of all we are to Him? Have we repeated those simple words of the child Samuel, that the Lord so delights to hear from us, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening!"

Your service can be a drink offering:

Philippians 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 2 Timothy 4:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Are we pouring out what we cannot keep--to Him so we cannot lose? Each time you serve look up in your heart from the classroom, nursery, choir room, AWANA room or where ever you offer that service, and say to the Lord, "I am giving this time to you. I can't keep it, I could selfishly squander it, but instead I give it to YOU as an act of devotion and worship!"

Your gifts can be fragrant worship offerings:

Philippians 4:18 *Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.*

What is the aroma ascending from our living before Christ's eyes today? Make more of your offerings by praying over each check, hold it in your hand as you mail it or place it in the offering and breathe out to God, "I give this to YOU as an offering of love and gratitude!"

Your worship can be praise offerings:

Hebrews 13:15 *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

When is the last time we stopped and launched a wave of praise filled worship toward His Throne? Plan to burst forth in your car, or on a walk, or when you are all alone into a cry of love to the Lord.

Say something like you sing, "I love YOU Lord and I lift my voice to WORSHIP you...!"

Your deeds can be spiritual sacrifices:

Hebrews 13:16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

What acts of kindness have we premeditated and carried out this week? Plan to do intentional sacrificial acts of kindness for others. Do things unasked, unseen, and unexpectant of any thanks. As you do that act (like the trash, laundry, sweeping, mowing, what ever) lift you eyes above and say, "I am doing this in YOUR Name Oh Lord because I love YOU and I want to serve like You served!"

Your prayers can be incense offerings:

Revelation 8:3-4 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

What do we have in the bowl of our collected prayers? If God loves our prayers so much that He collects them all (like notes from my wife & kids) why don't we send more? Up your times of prayers. Invite God into every praise and problem, every fear and frustration...your life will be revolutionized as you say to the Lord, "I need YOU in every part of my life!"

THE APPOINTMENT:

This evening each of us has an unavoidable appointment. This appointment should constrain our flesh and motivate our spiritual hearts. The Time of this appointment is the Day of Christ. This time is so important that Paul mentions in not once or twice, but eight different times in the New Testament, and the Apostle John once for total of nine times.

1. Romans 14:10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
2. 1 Corinthians 1:8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. 1 Corinthians 5:5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

4. 2 Corinthians 1:14 (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.
5. 2 Corinthians 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.
6. Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;
7. Philippians 1:10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,
8. Philippians 2:16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. This is the judgment of the church, one of three last day judgments.
9. 1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

In our text of 2nd Corinthians 5:10 we see several elements of our time before Christ's Throne.

- So, its going to be first of all a very public event: ***phanerotheranai*** which means more than just to appear, it means to make manifest. Before the God of the universe and all of creation, we will be made known before all. And ***bema*** is the judgment seat of the rulers of old. It is raised for all to see. That is the place all will appear one by one.
- Secondly it is also a very personal event ***heskaton*** [plural] must appear in order that each one individually which is the literal meaning of 'may receive'. Our lives amount to either good or ***phaulon*** translated bad does not speak of evil but 'good for nothingness'¹ The believer is either going to have to answer for the good things done faithfully for the Master, or for the rest which was good for nothingness. This is 'light, unstable, blown about by every wind'. Oh, to stand before all in that day and to answer to Him.

THE FIRE:

At Christ's Throne there is the presence of a refining fire. God's plan is to take all of our life, our time, our choices, our deeds, our priorities, our savings, our possessions—in other words, everything to show for our life from conversion and onward. All that we were is placed in a celestial tub, just like at the airport screener's station. Down the conveyor belt it goes. Instead of being x-rayed, it actually passes through celestial fire from God. That fire is meant to burn away anything that was done for self, done for pride, done for worldly or fleshly purposes. Then, after that fire is finished, all that is left in our celestial tub is what was done for God's glory, in obedience to Him.

The contents are emptied into our hands we get to present what we were for the glory of God as our gift to our Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 *"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*

¹ Trench, 296-97.

each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; 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. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

THE CROWN:

1. Revelation 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you **THE CROWN OF LIFE**. (For being saved—all of us get this one).
2. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an **IMPERISHABLE CROWN**. (For denying ungodliness)
3. Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and **CROWN**, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. (For winning souls and disciple making).
4. 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the **CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (For looking for Jesus).
5. 1 Peter 5:4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive **THE CROWN OF GLORY** that does not fade away. (For serving and shepherding Christ's Church).

Christ's Throne of Judgment is a part of His overall plan. Remember GOD'S PANORAMA OF AGES? These are the steps from here tonight to Eternity that God's Word has mapped out for all who study His Word.

RAPTURE	I THESS. 4	BE READY – The Son of Man cometh
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST	2 CORIN. 5	BE HOLY – We must all appear.
TRIBULATION	REV. 6-19	BE THANKFUL – Christ will keep us from the hour.
SECOND COMING	REV. 19	BE PATIENT – Christ will right all wrongs.
MILLENNIUM	REV. 20	BE FOCUSED – Christ will perfect the earth
GREAT WHITE THRONE	REV. 20	BE FAITHFUL – Point people to Christ.
HEAVEN	REV. 21-22	BE INVESTING – Lay up treasure in Heaven.

What does the Judgment Seat of Christ always boil down to? TIME. Time is the only thing we can't recover, earn more of, get from someone else, or do over again. It is an irreversible river flowing by ceaselessly at sixty seconds per minute, sixty minutes per hour. Are you giving significant, regular, sacrificial time to God?