**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Rolla, Missouri**

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**The Judgment**

The Bible teaches that the Day of Judgment is coming when all mankind will be judged by Jesus, and at that time all will either enter into eternal life or into eternal punishment. Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Paul talks about the judgment in 1 Cor. 4:1-5. He says, *“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 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. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 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 was a servant of Christ. He was a steward. A steward was a servant who was entrusted with the property of his master to be used according to the will of the master. Paul had been entrusted with the mysteries of God, to make known and proclaim the mysteries of God. One day he knew that he would stand before his Master to be judged as to whether he had been faithful as a steward. From this passage there are some important lessons we learn about the judgment. These are the lessons I want to consider today on our program. We are glad that you are with us.

The first thing we learn about the judgment from this passage is that the opinions of men have no say whatsoever in the judgment. Paul says, “*Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court.*” (**1 Cor. 4:2-3**)

One fact about stewardship is that a steward is judged by his master and not by other stewards. Other stewards may think their fellow steward is serving faithfully, or they may think he is failing in his service, but their judgment means nothing. What really matters is what the master thinks. Paul’s responsibility as a steward was to proclaim the mysteries of God to a lost and dying world. Was Paul faithful as a steward of the mysteries of God? Others within the church may have thought Paul was not a faithful steward, but that didn’t matter to him. Their judgment of him was a small thing. What did matter to him was the Lord’s estimation of him and his stewardship.

I have to admit to you that when I die I hope the person who preaches my funeral can express a confidence, a hope that I am with the Lord. Now, I don’t want the funeral to be all about me, but I hope they can say I was a faithful servant of Christ. BUT, for someone to say that about me at my funeral makes me no safer in the judgment before Christ than if he didn’t say it. What a man says at my funeral does not amount to anything as to how prepared I am to meet Christ in the judgment. The opinions of men don’t count in the judgment.

And this is the reason why hypocrisy is so irrational. Hypocrites, on the outside present themselves as faithful Christians, but on the inside, in their hearts there really is no love for Christ, there is no commitment to Him. They put on this show so they might impress men. They want the good opinion of men. Jesus talks about this in Matthew 6. Look at verse 2, *“Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”* Hypocrites offer service to Christ to be seen of men, so they will receive the praise of men. Jesus says, “they have their reward.” They got what they wanted, the praise of men, but that is their reward in full. They will not have any reward from the Father in heaven. The opinions of men mean nothing in the judgment. What will matter is the opinion of our Lord.

Let me illustrate it like this. There was a woman who was a professional violinist. She played before large audiences. One night she gave a beautiful performance that resulted in a standing ovation of the audience. After the performance, a friend of hers went back stage to congratulate her. Her friend found her weeping. She asked, “Why are you crying? You played beautifully. The audience loved you.” She said, “Yes, all but one. He didn’t applaud. He didn’t stand.” Her friend said, “Are you going to allow this one man to ruin your evening when everybody else thought you played beautifully?” She said, “You don’t understand. That one man is my teacher.” You see, in her mind if she didn’t please her teacher, then she was a failure. We may please the whole world in how we live our lives, but if we don’t please our Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, then it will not go well for us in the judgment.

Now look back with me at 1 Cor. 4. Another thing we learn about the judgment from this passage is that my opinion of myself will not count in the judgment. Look again at verse 3 and 4. Paul says, “*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. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.*” When Paul says, “In fact, I do not even judge myself,” he is not saying that he did not practice self-examination, so he could make proper changes in his life, but he is saying that even his judgment of himself is not the final say concerning the acceptability of his stewardship. He may think his work is wonderful, but he is not justified by that. What really matters is the Lord’s evaluation of his service? Paul says, “For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.” When Paul says, “For I know nothing against myself,” he is not saying that he never committed sin. As a matter of fact in one place he calls himself a chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). What he is saying here is that by the grace of God he was not aware of any un-forgiven sin that stood between him and God. It is a wonderful thing that one can say “I know nothing against myself.” But Paul is also saying here that he is not justified by this. A person may have a very high opinion of himself, but that will not count in the judgment. What matters is the Lord’s judgment.

Occasionally you hear people say, “I just know I am saved because of the peace I have right here in my heart.” But, we must understand that my evaluation of myself is not the basis by which I will be judged. The Bible teaches that it is possible for us to be deceived and think we are right we in actuality we are wrong. Proverbs 14:12 says, *“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”*

There may be something that seems right to me, but it is the way of death. How can I know what is right? By reading what the Lord says in His word. Jesus said in praying to the Father, *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”* (John 17:17) In John 8:32 He said, *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* Look with me in Matthew 7:21-23. *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'”* Here Jesus tells us about people at the judgment who believe they are right, but the Lord says, “No, you are not all right.” “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” Why? It was because they had not done the will of the Father. They were practicing lawlessness. They could have known and done the will of the Father if they wanted to. They could have learned the law and done the law so that they would not be guilty of lawlessness. But they had neglected to learn and do the will of the Father. They evidently relied on their own ideas about what was right and wrong. They were secure in how they felt in their heart, rather than knowing what the Lord said. And so it is not a matter of how I feel, or being so sure in my heart, it is a matter of whether I have done the Father’s will. This is why Bible study is so important. The only way we are going to know the will of the Father is by reading and studying it. I may think I’m right because it feels right, but that will not matter in the judgment. What will matter to the Lord is whether I have learned and done the Father’s will.

To illustrate, let’s compare coming before the Lord in judgment to taking a final exam in school. Have you ever come to a final exam quite sure that you really didn’t know what was in the text book? You don’t know what’s in the book, and yet, you are about to be examined by what’s in the book. That’s an uneasy feeling, isn’t it? But can you imagine standing before Christ in judgment to be judged by what is in the book and you have not taken the time to make sure you know and have done what is in the book? Jesus said in John 12:48, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”* The words of Jesus will be the standard by which we will be judged. We better know what is in the book.

Look with me again in 1 Corinthians 4. What’s going to count in the judgment? It’s not what others think about us. It’s not what we think about ourselves. What really will count in the judgment is to have the praise of God. Look at verse 5 again, *“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.”* Several things here: First he is talking about a judgment that will take place when the Lord comes again. And secondly, notice what kind of judgment will take place. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. The Lord will make manifest those hidden, evil things that we think no one else knows about. He will bring it to light in the judgment. Here is a person who is doing some sin in secret, thinking no one knows about it. The community doesn’t know about it. The church doesn’t know about it. That’s the very thing God is going to make manifest. If you think no one will ever know, it will be known then.

But also those who have done good and been faithful stewards will receive at that time praise from God. Paul says, “Then each one’s praise will come from God.” In the parable of the talents recorded in Matthew 25, Jesus says that the master will say to those servants who did the lord’s will, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”* (v. 21) If you hear these words from your Lord in the judgment, what other people may have thought about you or said about you won’t really matter. These will be the sweetest words you have ever heard. And that’s the praise of God.

What will matter in the judgment? It’s not what others think of you. It’s not what you think of yourself. What will matter is what the Lord thinks of you.

Are you ready for the judgment? Make ready today.

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