

## **Briefing Document: "The Judgment of the Believers' Works, Lesson 2**

**August 10, 2025**

**Overall Theme:** The core theme of this lesson is the "**judgment of the believer's works**" (also referred to as the "Bema Seat of Christ"), emphasizing that this judgment is not for condemnation or determining salvation, but for **evaluating the quality of a believer's service and assigning rewards and praise based on their motives and deeds.**

### **I. Introduction and Church Announcements**

The lesson begins with various church announcements and prayer requests, setting a communal and spiritual tone.

- **Missionary Focus:** Aten Ministries-Sherman and Tammy.
- **August Memory Verse:** Psalm 99:5 – "Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool He is holy."
- **Ministry Initiatives:** Heads for Hope (caps for those losing hair), Blessing cards/Prayed for You cards.
- **Upcoming Events:** New Life Kids and Students (Wednesday night, anticipating 60-70 kids), "Bring Your Own Java Cup" (BYOJC) experiment for community sharing (next month, bring breakfast dishes), Elders meeting (Monday the 18th), New Life Women's Fellowship (Saturday the 23rd at Marshia's house).
- **Communication:** New Life App for sign-ups, September/October newsletter soliciting articles/recipes/jokes/for-sale items.
- **Prayer Requests:** Eva Adams (bad headaches), her grandchildren (going home).
- Ally – Prayers needed.
- Doug Miller (another surgery, in pain).
- Tony (diabetes, high sugar, possibly going to ER).
- Nikki's sister Janie Stoana (panic/anxiety attacks).
- Chase (doing relatively well).
- Renee's dad's property to sell (Ramsey Canyon, Sierra Vista).
- Anita's daughter Tamara's house to sell (Deer Valley, Phoenix).
- Strength for Pastor ("I live for the stress").

- Continued prayers for Joyce and for the hospital.
- For Karen to have a "compassionate heart, sweet spirit as she speaks to the hospital administration."
- **Pastoral Prayer:** Emphasizes God's sovereignty, power, knowledge, and love, and the belief that "Jesus is the answer" and the "true author of peace." Also requests guidance for understanding and sharing God's word.
- **Animals in Heaven:** A brief discussion based on Isaiah 11:6 ("the wolf will live with the lamb..."), suggesting animals will be present in the Messianic Kingdom and Kingdom of God, though the presence of individual pets is less certain.

## II. Motivations of the Apostle Paul

The lesson then transitions to examining what motivated the Apostle Paul, drawing from his writings.

1. **Three Key Motivations: Jesus's Return and Rewards:** Paul was motivated by the truth that Jesus would return and "when He came back it would be a time of rewards." He desired to hear "well done" from Christ and to have "maximized his potential" out of love for Jesus.
2. **Love of Christ Compels Him:** "For the love of Christ compels me or another word that's used there constrains me." (2 Corinthians 5:14). This love drove his actions and service.
3. **Completeness of Christ's Work:** "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul understood that the transformative work of Christ was complete, and people could be transformed by believing in Him.

## III. The Judgment Seat of Christ (The Bēma Seat)

A significant portion of the lesson is dedicated to explaining the nature and purpose of the Judgment Seat of Christ, contrasting it with common misconceptions.

- **Context of Romans 14:** The speaker clarifies Romans 14:10-12, stating it's not about believers judging each other or showing "contempt or favoritism." Instead, "you don't need to spend time evaluating other people... because who will determine the spiritual condition of people-Jesus Christ."
- **Location:** The judgment seat of Christ is identified as the "**Bēma Seat**," specifically for believers.

- **Purpose:** The primary purpose is for "**each of us will give account of himself to God**" (Romans 14:12). It's a place where "every person's works will be manifested, shown and then tested."
- **Misconceptions Debunked: St. Peter at the Gate:** The idea of St. Peter checking names or balancing good/bad deeds is dismissed as "not very biblical" and "silly." Salvation is already "sealed" by faith in Christ (Philippians 3:20).
- **Punishment for Post-Salvation Sins:** This is rejected because "all of our sin has been taken care of at the cross," including "future sins" (1 John 2:12, Colossians 2). There is "no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).
- **Punishment for Unconfessed Sins:** This view is also dismissed. "Confession has nothing to do with forgiveness." Confession ("*homologeo*") means "you say the same thing that God says," acknowledging one's sinfulness while understanding forgiveness is already granted through Christ.
- **True Nature of the Bēma Seat:** It is a place of "**rewards**" and "**praise**." "There will be no condemnation." The speaker quotes 1 Corinthians 4:5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time... until the Lord comes who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels [motives] of the heart. Then each one's praise will... come from God."
- **Varying Degrees of Praise/Reward:** While all believers will be praised, "some will get more than others," implying recognition for "more lasting eternal work for God."
- **Analogy of the Olympics:** The speaker connects the "Bēma Seat" to the ancient Greek Olympic games, where winners would ascend a platform (the *bēma* seat) to receive their laurel wreath or garland. This illustrates that believers are "winners" through Christ and will receive a "prize."

#### IV. The Analogy of Building (1 Corinthians 3:5-8)

Paul's analogy of building a structure with different materials is explored as a metaphor for a believer's works.

- **Core Idea:** Believers are likened to builders contributing to a spiritual structure. Their works will face a "fiery test," and only what endures the fire will be counted as a lasting "reward." Materials like "hay, grain, or stubble" will burn up, while "good stuff" will survive.

- **The Master Builder (Paul):** Paul identifies himself as a "wise master builder" (1 Corinthians 3:10), meaning he was **skillful (Greek: *sophos*)** in laying spiritual foundations.
- He laid foundations where "Christ was not named," establishing churches and teaching "basic doctrine."
- Paul's "wisdom" was demonstrated by his consistent, strategic approach: starting in the synagogue, then ministering to the Gentile community (Acts).
- The term "master builder" (Greek: *architecton*) implies both a "plan drawer" (architect) and a builder who executes the plan. Paul was both.
- **Humility:** Paul explicitly disclaims personal credit, stating his work was "according to the grace of God" and that he "labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). He saw himself as "less than the least of all the saints" (Ephesians 3:7-8), a former "blasphemer," "persecutor," and "insolent man" who "obtained mercy" due to ignorance (1 Timothy).
- **The Role of Others:** While Paul laid the foundation, "another builds on it" (1 Corinthians 3:10). This refers to Apollos and others who "watered" what Paul "planted," but "God who gives the increase." The crucial point is "let each one take heed how he builds on it."
- **No Uninvolved Strategists:** The speaker emphasizes that in the apostolic band, "there were no uninvolved strategists... Everybody is out in the field... working for the Lord." This promotes active participation in ministry.

## V. Conclusion

The lesson concludes with a powerful emphasis on God's ultimate judgment and the importance of individual contribution.

- **God's Honor:** "You don't need to give men honor from other men it's no good anyways let God give the honor ultimately."
- **Surprises at the Bēma Seat:** "I think there will people be people at the Bēma seat that will be surprised what's left after the test." Conversely, "some dear saints out there that really hardly anybody ever knew about that are going to have these great big baskets of rewards." (Example: Mary Cleveland and her encouraging cards).
- **Summary:** "We will all, are all saved, we will all be judged and we will all be rewarded."

- **Call to Action:** The lesson implicitly encourages listeners to be active, intentional, and pure in their motives when serving God, as their works will be evaluated for eternal reward. The ultimate goal is to "lead people to the Lord."