

Briefing Document: The Judgment of the Believers' Works, Lesson 3

August 17, 2025

The sermon focuses on the Christian concept of judgment, particularly as it relates to believers' actions and rewards in heaven, drawing primarily from 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

I. Core Concepts and Biblical Foundation

The central theme of the sermon is the **"judgment of the believer's work,"** which takes place at the **Bema Seat** (or judgment seat) of Christ. This judgment is distinct from the judgment for salvation, as it pertains to the rewards received by Christians based on their earthly service. The sermon draws heavily on **1 Corinthians 3:10-17**, where Paul describes himself as a "wise master builder" (or "skillful master builder" as preferred by the speaker) who laid the foundation.

The Foundation: Jesus Christ

- The sermon emphatically states that **"For no other foundation can anyone lay that which is laying which is Jesus Christ."** (1 Corinthians 3:11)
- This foundation was laid "one time in the past" as a "historical event," and cannot be added to or replaced.
- Christianity, a life, a church, a home, or a nation can only have lasting value if built upon this foundation.
- The entire Bible, particularly the New Testament, is presented as being "all about Jesus Christ" – His life (Gospels), His activity in the church (Acts), commentary on His work (Epistles), and His future return (Revelation).
- The speaker stresses that **"Christianity does not need a new foundation,"** nor a "human Jesus" as liberals teach, nor tradition as Catholics do. Attempts to build on humanism, relativism, pseudoscience, morality, ethics, or good deeds without Christ are destined to "fail."
- Peter's declaration in Acts 4, that Jesus is **"the stone which was rejected by you builders which has become now the chief cornerstone,"** is used to reinforce that there is "no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

The Builders: All Believers

- While the initial laying of the foundation (doctrines concerning Jesus Christ) was done by apostles like Paul, the sermon broadens the application of 1 Corinthians 3:10 to include **"everybody that builds upon this foundation."**

- If one is a "believing member of a church that's building on the foundation that is Jesus Christ, then you are in fact... this verse... applies to you."
- This implies that "every one of us should in the church have a ministry" based on our spiritual gifts.

The Materials: Gold, Silver, Precious Stones vs. Wood, Hay, Stubble

- The sermon highlights that "**all churches are not the same**" and "**all Christians are not the same**" in their building materials.
- **Gold, silver, and precious stones** represent works of "eternal value" and "eternal contribution."
- **Gold** signifies "the very best service you can to Jesus Christ," a "most godlike" Christian walk, following "godly principles every day all the time," and "total commitment... to the Lord." It indicates "supreme sacrifice" and being "most Christlike."
- **Silver** is "just underneath a gold."
- **Precious stones** (like granite or marble) also represent valuable contributions.
- **Wood, hay, and stubble** are explicitly stated as "not evil" but "**worthless**" in the eyes of Jesus. They have no eternal value.
- Examples include merely attending church without further engagement or being "busy busy busy" with programs while neglecting evangelism, worship, prayer, or Bible reading.
- The key distinction is not whether a material is inherently "bad," but its **worth in the eyes of Jesus** when building for His glory.

II. The Nature of the Judgment at the Bema Seat

The judgment of believers' works is a time of "**reward,**" not "**punishment.**" The speaker reiterates that even those whose work is burned up will "still be saved."

- **Timing of the Judgment:** The sermon notes that the exact timing is debated (immediately after death, during tribulation, or at the end of time), but Paul's phrase "For the day" (1 Corinthians 3:13) suggests a specific time.

What is Judged? Christians will be judged on three key areas:

1. **Motive (1 Corinthians 4:5):** God will "bring to light... the motives of your heart." A deed that "looks like gold" but has a "stubble motive" will be "disqualified" and become "worthless to the Lord." The purpose of actions should be "to glorify him."

2. **Conduct (2 Corinthians 5:10):** "Each one may receive the things done in the body... whether good or bad." This refers to "things we've done physically, the things we've done to live our life, the things we've done day-to-day in the conduct of our lives, the things we've done in our church."
3. **Service/Use of Spiritual Gifts:** Believers are expected to use their spiritual gifts "to further his kingdom." While "abilities" (like singing as a talent) can be used, "spiritual gifts" are "the supreme way that God wants you to serve in his church." Neglecting spiritual gifts and focusing only on abilities can result in building with "hay stubble and wood."

The Test by Fire: "Each one's work will become... revealed by fire and the father will test each one's work of what sort is it." (1 Corinthians 3:13)

- This fire will consume "hay, wood, and stubble," rendering them "absolutely nothing" and "worthless."
- The goal is to avoid being a "stubble saint" and to "get the gold," even if one has limited time.

III. Practical Implications and Exhortations

The sermon concludes with practical applications for believers:

- **Personal Responsibility:** Every Christian is a builder, and they "**get the choice... to choose what you will build out of.**"
- **Growth and Knowledge:** The speaker encourages growth in the word to build with "gold, silver, and precious stones," preventing believers from being "tossed about to and fro" by cults and false teachers (referencing First John 2).
- **Maximizing Potential:** Believers have "the greatest resource ever, the Holy Spirit," and "the same power" as those building with gold. They should strive to "do abundantly for the Lord what the Lord wants you to do."
- **Focus on Eternal Value:** The ultimate reward is "the presence of the Lord and our ability to praise and worship him." While there will be "some that won't have very many rewards" and others with "great rewards," the eternal presence of Christ is the most significant.
- **Call to Action:** "**Don't waste your time on hay wood and stubble stuff. Waste your time on gold silver and precious stones.**" This serves as a concluding admonition for listeners to evaluate their motives, conduct, and service to God.

IV. Church Activities and Community Life

Beyond the theological discussion, the sermon briefly touches upon the community and activities of the New Life Family Worship Center:

- **Weekly Schedule:** Sunday 9:00 a.m. Bible study (Matthew - Beatitudes), 10:30 a.m. teaching (Judgment of Believers' Works), Wednesday (First John).
- **Ministries and Events:** Bible track ministry, Elders meetings, Prayer meeting, New Life Women's Fellowship, New Women's Bible study (Parables), Kids praise team, Interdenominational Woman's Bible study.
- **Community Engagement:** Mentions of children's programs, giving to missions, and the importance of a church doctrine based on the Word of God.
- **Prayer Requests:** Specific prayers for individuals (Wayne, the Van Warts, Joe Nastal, Chase, Joyce, Valinda, Betsy, Marsha), for the nation, for the peace of Jerusalem, and for leadership to "bow their knee to Jesus Christ."