

06 – WHAT WILL BE EXAMINED?

- ✓ Today we're going to look at ten specific areas that will be addressed at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (This isn't a comprehensive list, but it *does* cover ten of the most important areas that we can work on.)

1.) The Love Walk – (John 13:34)

- ✓ If love is our only commandment, it only makes sense that He'd bring it up at the Judgment (Bema / Reward) Seat of Christ. And He does!

Luke 6:35 – “Love your enemies ... and your reward shall be great.” (Amp)

- ✓ Notice there's a reward mentioned in connection with our love walk. (How did you treat your enemies? When they treated you badly, did you *retaliate*, or did you walk in love? If you chose to walk in love, there's a reward for that.)

2.) Giving to the Poor

Proverbs 19:17 (NIV) – “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.” (Luke 14:12-14)

3.) Faithfulness in Our Vocation

- ✓ Sometimes we leave the impression that the only vocation that God rewards is pastoring. That's not true. God rewards faithfulness in *whatever* occupation you have.

Colossians 3:23 (JMNT) – “Be constantly working (doing business; practicing a trade; earning a living) ...” (He's talking about your secular vocation here.)

INT - “Do all your work cheerfully and wholeheartedly as if you were doing it because the Lord himself asked you to do it, and you want to please him. Do this because you know that when you obey your employer, you are really serving the Lord and He will give you a reward.”

Phillips – “Whatever you do, put your whole heart and soul into it, as into work done for God, and not merely for men—knowing that your real reward, a heavenly one, will come from God, since you are actually employed by Christ.”

4.) Winning Souls – (Witnessing)

John 4:35-36 – “Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life.” (ESV)

- ✓ I often ask myself, “If He were rewarding me per person I witnessed to, how many rewards would I have earned this week?”

5.) How We Responded to Temptation

James 1:12 – “How blessed is the man who perseveres through temptation! For after he has passed the test, he will receive the crown of Life which God has promised to those who love him.” (CJB, KJV)

6.) How We Treated the Family of God

Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV) – “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Galatians 6:10 (Amp.) – “So then, as occasion and opportunity open up to us, let us do good to all people. Be mindful to be a blessing, especially to those of the household of faith [those who belong to God's family with you, the believers].”

Matthew 10:42 (GNT) – “You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward.”

7.) What Kind of Church Member We Were

- ✓ I wonder how many Christians know that this is going to come up.

- ✓ Christians are commanded to *behave themselves* in God's house.

1 Timothy 3:15 (HCSB) – “These things I write to you, hoping to come to you very shortly; but if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to *behave themselves*) in God's ... church.”

- ✓ When Paul tells Christians to “behave”, he's primarily referring to how we treat each other and the effect our presence has on the body. Are we causing strife and division? Do push our agenda and fight to get our way? God wants us to walk in love toward each other!
- ✓ That applies to *all* of us, no matter *what* role we play in the body. We know *leaders* get the strictest judgment (James 3:1). But that doesn't mean that everybody else is “off the hook”. We *all* get evaluated on how we functioned in the body.

Heb. 13:17 (MSG, TLB, CEB) – “Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Their work is to watch over your souls, and God will judge them on how well they do this. Give them reason to report joyfully about you to the Lord and not with complaints about you. (Causing them to complain would not be to your advantage.)”

8.) Our Attitude Toward His Return

2 Timothy. 4:8 (TLB) – “... there is waiting for me a *crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all those whose lives show that they love his appearing.”

- ✓ Notice, the reward isn't for those who *say* they love His appearing. It's for those “whose *lives show* that they love His appearing. If you truly love the message of the Lord's return, you'll begin to purify yourself, even as He is pure (1 John 3:2-3), and live with eternity's values in mind.

9.) How We Used Our Spiritual Gifts

1 Peter 4:10 (Phillips) – “Serve one another with the particular gifts God

has given each of you, *as faithful dispensers* of the magnificently varied grace of God.”

- ✓ He gave you those gifts, expecting you to use them to bless people! When you use your gifts to minister to others, you earn rewards.

10.) The Persecution We Endured

Luke 6:22-23 – “Blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall *separate you from their company, and shall reproach you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, *your reward* is great in heaven.”

Crowns as Rewards

- ✓ The Bible speaks of at least five crowns that can be earned.

a.) The Victor's Crown – (for running your race well and exercising self-control)

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (Phillips) – “Do you remember how, on a racing-track, every competitor runs, but only one wins the prize? Well, you ought to run with your minds fixed on winning the prize! Every competitor in athletic events goes into serious training. Athletes will take tremendous pains—for a fading crown of leaves. But our contest is for *an eternal crown that will never fade*. I run the race, then with determination. I am no shadow-boxer, I really fight! I am my body's sternest master, for fear that when I have preached to others I should myself be disqualified.”

b.) The Crown of Rejoicing – (the soul winner's crown)

1 Thessalonians 2:19 – “For what is our hope, or joy, or *crown of rejoicing*? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (KJV)

c.) The Crown of Righteousness – (for living with His return in view) – (2 Tim. 4:8)

d.) The Crown of Life – (for enduring temptation) – (James 1:12)

e.) The Crown of Glory – (for faithfully shepherding God's flock)

1 Peter 5:2-4 (NLT) – “Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly – not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

- ✓ It may seem strange (to our culture) that we would receive crowns as rewards. And even *more* strange that we would cast them at Jesus' feet. I've heard people say, “Why would I work so hard to *earn* a crown, if I'm going to throw it down at Jesus' feet, then it's gone?”
- ✓ That's not how it works. The tense that's used in Greek indicates repeated action. When we come before the Lord in worship, we'll cast our crowns at His feet, as if to say: “Lord, I owe you everything! Even the *rewards* I have are because of You!” But remember, this is not a one-time act. It's repeated over and over. That *must* mean, when we leave His presence, we'll pick up our crowns and wear them until the *next* time we come to worship. (Then, off they'll come again.)
- ✓ Why do crowns even matter? It's not what the crowns *are*, it's what they *represent*. First, they mark you as one who was faithful to the Lord and has received His “Well done”. Secondly, it's evident that those crowns indicate levels of responsibility that will be entrusted to us. (Not every believer will rule and reign with Christ. Some believers serve; others reign.)
- ✓ Martha Snell Nicholson wrote a wonderful poem that captures the feelings of the moment. (“His Plan for Me”.) Crowns may not seem important now, but they will matter greatly then.