The Divine Appointment

II Corinthians 5:9,10 (NKJV)

Please open your Bibles with me to the II Corinthians chapter five. And follow along with me as I read verses 9,10.

II Corinthians 5:9,10 (NKJV)

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

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.

PRAYER

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Introduction

I have entitled my message this (morning/evening) “The Divine Appointment.” In this message I want to address a very serious matter and that is the day you and I will give an accounting of our lives before The Judgment Seat of Christ.

What is the purpose of this judgment? Didn’t Jesus Christ pay the full penalty for our sins upon the cross? Doesn’t Paul tell us in Romans 8:1a “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus?” Doesn’t GOD promise us in Hebrews 8:12 that He “forgives our sins and remembers them no more?” And doesn’t God promise us in I John 1:9 that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?”

If all of these promises are true, and they ARE, then why must we be judged by? Why can’t we just quietly slip from our life here on earth into eternal life in heaven without having to go before “The Judgment Seat of Christ?”

As we are going to see in (today's/tonight's) message The Judgment Seat of Christ has nothing to do with our salvation. Those who appear before The Judgment Seat of Christ are already SAVED. The Judgment Seat of Christ is EXCLUSIVELY for those who are saved. Not one unsaved soul……not a single unbeliever will appear before The Judgment Seat of Christ. Revelation 20:11-15 tells us very clearly that all of the unsaved will appear before GOD at The Great White Throne Judgment.
At the Great White Throne Judgment every lost soul will be held accountable and found guilty for every sinful deed they ever did....every sinful thought they ever had.....every sinful word they ever spoke.....every sinful desire and motive they ever had in their heart.

Every secret.......every dirty, rotten, shameful detail of their lives is going to all come to light when they stand before GOD and He opens His "BOOKS." God will have meticulous records of everything.....EVERYTHING; things that lost soul will never even remember doing or saying.........it will all be there in GOD'S RECORD BOOKS. And every lost soul will be found guilty and be condemned to the eternal lake of fire. There will be NO MERCY and NO GRACE at the Great White Throne Judgment.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is different. In the original Greek, the word Paul used for "Judgment Seat" is the word "bema." This word was taken from the ancient Isthmian Games where the contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of a judge who evaluated their performance. And when the athlete had finished his race, he would be brought before the bema seat or the judgment seat where he would receive a wreath or crown as a symbol of his victory.

At "the bema" or "The Judgment Seat of Christ" we will appear before Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge, to be evaluated on how we ran our "race"......in other words, how we lived our lives after the LORD saved us.

Our faithfulness to the LORD will result in great rewards, while our unfaithfulness will result in great loss of rewards.
One of the clearest pictures of what will happen on that day when you and I keep OUR DIVINE APPOINTMENT BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST can be found in I Corinthians 3:12-15.

If you will, please turn with me in your Bibles to that passage and follow along with me as we read it together.

I Corinthians 3:12-15 (NKJV)

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 foundation upon which we are to build our lives individually as a Christian, and collectively as the Lord’s Church is JESUS CHRIST. JESUS CHRIST is “the foundation” of our Christian life. JESUS CHRIST is “the foundation” of the Church.

But not everyone uses the same building materials. Some use “cheap building materials” of wood......hay......or straw. These materials are worthless......they are temporary. When tested with fire, these materials burn up easily and are reduced to a pile of ashes.

But then there are those who use “valuable building materials” of gold......silver......and precious stones. These things are not only valuable, they are durable, and lasting. When tested with fire, these materials will endure and survive the test.
The late Leonard Ravenhill made this interesting observation. He said, “The wood, hay, and straw are all things above ground, while the gold, silver, and precious stones are hidden below the ground. The wood, hay, and straw are the things that are seen outwardly by men, while the gold, silver, and precious stones are the inward things seen only by God.”

Many Christians are building their Christian lives on the “outward, visible things”....the wood......the hay......and the straw. They are doing things that give them the outward appearance of being a true, devout Christian. But when these Christians stand before The Judgment Seat of Christ their “shallow, superficial” Christianity will be exposed as worthless.

Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:10a?

10 For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ,

When Paul says, “For we must all APPEAR.......” he uses the Greek word “phaneroo” for “appear.” That word “phaneroo” literally means “to be turned inside out.” Bible scholar, Philip Hughes explains it this way.

“When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ our lives will be turned inside out. We will be laid bare; stripped of every outward facade and openly revealed in the full reality of our true character. All of our hypocrisies and concealments, will be open to the scrutiny of Christ.”

The Judgment Seat of Christ will be like having to disrobe before the Great Physician, to stand humbly in His presence with the bare nakedness of our souls clearly visible to His eyes as He carefully examines every nook and crevice of our minds and hearts. Nothing will remain a secret! Nothing will remain hidden!
As we think about OUR DIVINE APPOINTMENT BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, there are three important questions I would like to answer.

The first question is this……

I. What Will We Be JUDGED On At The Judgment Seat of Christ?

1. What will Christ look for when He judges us? The scriptures mention several things for which we will be accountable for when we appear at The Judgment Seat of Christ.

(A) We will have to give an account of EVERY WORD WE SPEAK.

Matthew 12:36 (NKJV) *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.*

Our words are powerful! Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) *The tongue has the power of life or death……*

When we stand before the LORD we are going to have to give an account of how we used our tongue. Did our words build others up or tear others down? Did our words encourage others or discourage?

Before you open you mouth without thinking…..
Before you pass along gossip and rumors……
Before you harshly criticize and judge others……
Before you open your mouth to complain…..
Before you say those swear words….before you tell that dirty joke…..JUST REMIND YOURSELF…..
THAT ONE DAY WE ARE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF EVERY IDLE WORD WE SPEAK!

(B) We will have to give account of our Christian WITNESS

I Timothy 5:24 (NKJV)  Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.

While it is true that there will be no eternal condemnation for our sins that have been covered by the precious blood of Christ, we must understand that we will be accountable for the effect our sins had upon the lives of others.

This is why the apostle Paul warns us in Colossians 4:5 to “be wise in the way you act toward out-siders.”

The LORD takes the matter of our Christian witness very, very seriously! And if by our sinful example, we caused others to stumble, we will be held accountable for it when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

(C) We will have to give an account of our STEWARDSHIP.

Jesus illustrated this in His telling of “The Parable of The Talents” in Matthew 25. Remember in that parable, The man traveling to the far country (which represents Christ) entrusted His business to His servants. To one servant he gave five talents. That servant was a good steward over what had been entrusted to him and he doubled the five talents to ten.
To another servant he gave two talents. That servant was also a good steward over what the Master had entrusted to him, and he doubled the two talents to four.

To a third servant he gave one talent. That servant was NOT a good steward over what the Master had entrusted to him. In fact, he took what was entrusted to him and buried it so that it was of no benefit to the Master or to anyone else.

One day, when we stand before Christ at The Judgment Seat we are going to be accountable for our stewardship over the things the Lord has entrusted to us; namely our time.....our talents.....and our treasures.

Are you wasting away your time or using your time to serve others? Are you utilizing those talents and abilities God has blessed you with in ministering to others or have you buried those talents and abilities where they are of no benefit to anyone? How about your money? Are you laying up for yourself treasures here on earth or are you generously investing your money back into the Lord’s kingdom so that one day you have treasures in heaven?
(D) We will have to give an account for our MOTIVES.

You remember in Matthew 6 Jesus warned us not to do our good deeds to receive glory and honor from men. He said if that is our motive in doing good deeds, then the praise of men is all the reward we will get.

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.

Paul is reminding us here that God will NOT forget the work we did with the right motive. Anything we do in the way of good deeds must be motivated by our love for GOD and our genuine desire to bring glory and honor to GOD, rather than ourselves.

What motivates you to serve God? What motivates you to teach that Sunday School Class? What motivates you to sing in the choir? What motivates you to do good deeds for others? What motivates you to open up your wallet to help someone in need?

Were we faithful in our prayers? Were we faithful in our doctrinal beliefs? Did we seek to bring the lost to salvation?

These are just a few of the things for which we must give an account when the Lord reviews our life at His Judgment Seat.

This brings us to our second question, and that is.........
II. **What Do We Stand To LOSE At The Judgment Seat of Christ?**

1. I think a lot of Christians struggle with the idea that there will be some **negative consequences at the Judgment Seat of Christ** but it's TRUE!

2. For the clearest understanding of this we need to go back to The Parable of The Talents in Matthew 25.

   Remember when the Master returned from His long journey, He called His servants together to give an account of what they did with those talents He had entrusted to them.

   When the servant who had received the **five talents** told the Master he had increased it to **ten talents**, the Master said to him, “’*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.*’” (Matt.25:21)

   When the second servant who had received the **two talents** told the Master he had increased it to **four talents**, the Master said to him also, “’*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.*’” (Matt.25:23)

   But when that third servant who had received one **talent** told the Master he had “*went out and hid his talent in the ground*” do you remember what the Master said to him? He said, “You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited My money with the bankers, and at My coming I would have received back my own with interest.
So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.” (Matt. 25:26-28 NKJV)

3. What did that third servant lose?

First, he lost His master's APPROVAL. He didn't get to hear “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Instead he heard, “You wicked, lazy servant.”

Oh brothers and sisters, can you imagine what it would be like to stand face to face with the One who died to save us from our sins......and have Him look us in the eye and say, “You wicked, lazy servant?” Can imagine the searing pain of hearing that indictment upon a life not-well-lived for the LORD.

Second, he lost His Master's PROMOTION. Remember the Master gave the first two servants a promotion by entrusting them with even greater responsibility. But to that third servant He said, “Take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.”

Third, he lost His POSITION. In Matthew 25:29,30 the master went on to say to the wicked servant, “For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance, but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
Now keep in mind, this Parable illustrates what will happen at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We have already established that only those who are saved will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. So how are we to interpret what Jesus meant when He said, “Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth?”

Bible scholar Warren Wiersbe explains it this way:

“We need not see this servant’s punishment as hell, but rather the deep remorse of a man who was an unfaithful servant. He grieves deeply in the darkness outside of the King’s palace, but he is still a servant and thus will be welcomed back into the King’s estate. The man was dealt with by the Lord in the most severe terms. He lost his opportunity for service, and he gained no praise and no reward. This is “outer darkness.”

You remember that passage in 1 Corinthians 3:15 that we read earlier? Paul wrote:

15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

4. What Paul is telling us is there are going to be those who have very little if anything at all to show for their time on earth with regards to what they did with what the Lord entrusted to them. They will still be saved, but they will have lost the praise and the promotion and the position the LORD had in store for them had they served Him faithfully.
Now let's consider our third and final question.....

III. What Do We Stand To GAIN At The Judgment Seat of Christ?

1. The Lord always rewards FAITHFULNESS......ALWAYS! Don't ever, ever think that your service to the Lord here on earth is insignificant or meaningless.

   Jesus says in **MATTHEW 10:42 (NKJV)** And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

   The apostle Paul writes in.............

   **Colossians 3:23-25 (NKJV)** And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

2. Let me just quickly go through just some of the things we stand to gain when we stand before the Lord at His Judgment Seat.

   (A) For one thing, **WE STAND TO GAIN THE LORD’S DIVINE APPROVAL.** Don’t you want to hear the LORD HIMSELF say to you, “Well done good and faithful servant?” To have the Lord place His stamp of approval on a life well-lived will be worth more than we could ever possibly imagine.
(B) For another thing, **WE STAND TO GAIN THE LORD'S DIVINE PROMOTION** Can you imagine hearing Jesus say, “You were faithful over the few things I entrusted you with while you were on earth, I will now make you ruler over many things!” In other words, “I am going to entrust you with even greater responsibilities!”

(C) And the scriptures also teach us **WE STAND TO GAIN A CROWN.**

(1) **THE IMPERISHABLE CROWN**

*1 Corinthians 9:24,25 (NKJV)* 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. 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.**

The Lord will reward this crown to those who faithfully ran life’s race and crucified every selfish desire in order to point men to Christ.

(2) **THE CROWN OF REJOICING.**

*I Thessalonians 2:10,19 (NKJV)* You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; *(v.19)* For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

The Lord will reward this crown to those who dedicated their lives to winning lost souls to Jesus Christ. In fact, this is often called “The Soul-Winner's Crown.”
(3) **THE CROWN OF LIFE**

**James 1:12 (NKJV)**  Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

The Lord will reward the CROWN OF LIFE to those who endured through great testing and hardships and trials in life, especially to those who endured persecution.

(4) **THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**II Timothy 4:8 (NKJV)**  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.

The Lord will reward the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS to those who lived holy and righteous lives and longed for the day of the Lord's return.

(5) **THE CROWN OF GLORY**

**I Peter 5:1-4 (NKJV)**  The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly,[a] not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.
Most Bible scholars agree the Lord will give this crown to faithful Church leaders who were shepherds over His Church. This would include faithful Elders and faithful preachers of the gospel, and faithful deacons, and Sunday School teachers, and missionaries.

What do we stand to GAIN at the Judgment Seat of Christ? We stand to gain greater rewards than we can possibly imagine in these frail human minds of ours.

**CONCLUSION**

Perhaps after hearing this message you are sitting there with a sense of fear and hopelessness. Perhaps you are thinking, “there is no way my life will pass the intense scrutiny of the Lord's firey judgment.

Well let me leave you with this comforting and encouraging thought.

We must remember that our Lord is a fair and righteous Judge. We must remember we will be judged by the One who loves us with an undying love.......who loves us despite ourselves.......who loves us enough that He was willing to lay down His life for us on the cross of Calvary.

While the Lord's judgment will be severe, it will be tempered with His grace and His mercy. We will be judged by the One who would rather forgive us than condemn us.
Having said that, let me remind you that we don't want to trample on the grace of God. Our Lord's grace and mercy should inspire us to give our all for Christ; to live our lives to His honor and His glory, so that when we stand before Him we will not be ashamed.

**His Plan For Me**

When I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ  
And He shows His plan for me,  
The plan of my life as it might have been  
Had He had His way - and I see  
How I blocked Him here, and checked Him there,  
And I would not yield my will,  
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,  
Grief though He loves me still?  
Would He have me rich and I stand there poor,  
Stripped of all but His grace,  
While memory runs like a hunted thing,  
Down the paths I cannot retrace.  
Lord, of the years that are left to me  
I give them to Thy hand  
Take me and break me and mold me,  
To the pattern that Thou hast planned!

-Author Unknown