

Are You Ready to be Judged on Judgment Day?

¹⁶ So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

Many years ago, in a frontier town, a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon. The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge – it was the same man who, years before, had saved his life. So he pleaded for mercy based on that experience. But the judge silenced the man by saying to him, “Young man, many years ago I was your savior. Today, I am your judge, and in the name of justice, I sentence you to be hanged.”

The context of our sermon lesson finds Jesus healing a paralyzed man and some Jews, most likely religious leaders, accusing him of breaking the Sabbath law by doing work on this day of rest and also claiming to be equal to God the Father. So Jesus sets them straight. He and God

the Father are a team that works together in perfect harmony on everything. Every time Jesus healed a person, even on the Sabbath, he and the Father were working together. Every time Jesus spoke it was a message approved by the Father. “But you haven’t seen anything yet,” Jesus told them. “Someday you’ll see the Father and me working together on something even greater.” And then Jesus went on to tell them about Judgment Day, the end of the world as we know it. Many years ago, Jesus suffered the wrath of God on the cross as our Savior. Soon, each of us will stand before Jesus on Judgment Day, and he will be our judge. That’s not what we expect of Jesus, but there it is plain as day in Scripture, **“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son”** (vs. 22). So, are you ready for Jesus to look deep into your heart, look at all the details of your life, and decide your eternal destination? Are you ready to be judged on Judgment Day? It’s not enough to just believe in a Father God and be prepared for Judgment Day. Jesus says, **“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father”** (vs. 23).

Based on this passage, I would say that the majority in our world today are completely unprepared for Judgment Day. Most people do believe that there is some sort of God. Most people believe in some sort of vague higher power who comes in many forms and helps you be more open-minded, who helps you be a nicer person, who helps you be more eco-friendly, who wants you to live life on your own terms. Missing is a message that our sins condemn us to Hell for eternity. Missing is talk of Jesus Christ being God, Savior, and Judge. What do you think will happen to all these people when Jesus returns on Judgment Day? **“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father...and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned”** (vs. 23b, 29b).

What about you? Has the religious philosophy of a generic god rubbed off on you? Are you prepared to be judged on Judgment Day? Jesus says, **“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned”** (vs. 28-29). To do good, as Jesus explains it in Scripture, is to obey all of God’s commands perfectly every moment of your life. Would you consider your co-worker or classmate “good” if he only buckles down at his desk when the manager or teacher is in the room but the rest of the time he chats it up with anyone he can distract from their work? Of course not! We are frustrated by people like that. Likewise, you may be good at flashing a winning smile when your neighbor walks by, but as soon as he is out of earshot do you resume the argument you were having with your children, spouse, or someone else? And what happens on that computer or smartphone of yours when no one is looking over your shoulder? Do you readily visit websites you would be mortified to have splashed across our screen at church? And what kind of story does your bank card tell and how does that effect Gospel ministry efforts here and around the world? Can you have a conversation about the teachings of the Bible just as easily as you can talk about sports, hunting, or another favorite hobby? Or do you just avoid the topic of religion altogether outside of these walls.? Is Jesus as important to you as your

spouse, or your child, or your job, or your health, or sports, or recreation? Are you really honoring Jesus as the God, Savior, and Judge of your life? Are you ready for Jesus to judge you on Judgment Day?

We cannot help but feel uncomfortable when we think about these things. We all know that our lives are filled with sin. We all know what we are like, deep down inside. How can anyone have any hope when thinking about Judgment Day? Jesus gives us that hope, **“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and will not be condemned. He has crossed over from death to life”** (vs. 24). Jesus doesn't give us “5 steps to be ready for Judgment Day.” Jesus simply invites us to do one thing - to hear his word and believe.

Wildfires are raging again in California which reminds me of an illustration I heard once about Judgment Day. Many years ago, the pioneers were making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They traveled in covered wagons drawn by oxen, and progress was very slow. One day they were horrified to note a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely and coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames would be upon them. Only one man seemed to know what to do. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon the burned ground. As the flames roared toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we will not all be burned up?" The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has already been!" And that's exactly what happened – the flames roared all around them, but they were safe on the land where the fire had already been. This is a picture of us on Judgment Day. When God returns, he promises to destroy the world by fire. But you believe in Jesus as our Savior. That means you have crossed over from death to life. You are standing where the fire has already been. The fire of God's Judgment has already burned itself out on Christ when he died on the cross to pay Hell for your sins. You believe in Jesus, which means you are safe forever, because you are standing on the cross of Jesus Christ, where the fire has already been.

Are you ready to be judged by Christ on Judgment Day? The answer is yes. Jesus will look deep into your heart, and he will see that you have faith in him. He will see that you believe in him. He will smile and look at one of the angels, and point to you and say, “This one, is one of mine. Do you see any sin?” And the angel will say, “No, Lord Christ. You have taken his sins away.” And Jesus will look back at you, the great Judge on Judgment Day, and he will smile once again and say, “Come, my child, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.” How blessed are those, who believe in Jesus as God, Savior, and Judge. Amen