

The Judgment Seat of Christ



Into the Harvest (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

We're talking about the harvest. There's a verse in Proverbs which is very searching. Proverbs 10:5:

> "He who gathers in summer is a wise son but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame."

So, as a child of God, which are you? Are you gathering in the harvest or are you sleeping? Because if you're sleeping you're a source of shame to your Father in heaven. He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

Now I want to close by referring to a judgment scene which I believe every one of us will appear at. There will be no exceptions. You may miss every appointment you ever make on earth but this appointment you will keep. I'm referring to 2 Corinthians 5. I'm talking about the judgment that takes place before what is called the judgment seat of Christ. The Greek word is bema which is the word used for the place where Pontius Pilate sat while he was judging Jesus. There's another judgment later which is called the great white throne judgment but this is a judgment only for Christians. Paul says, speaking as a Christian, and he also uses the same words in Romans 14:10:

> "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..."

I believe the word appear really means be made manifest. In other words, there'll be no secrets. Our whole lives will be totally laid bare 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."

And notice there are only two categories. There's nothing that is neutral. Everything is either good or bad. Everything that's done in accordance with the Word and the will of God, everything that's done for the glory of Jesus. Paul said in Colossians, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by

Him.

People used to come to me when I was principal of a college for training teachers in Africa and say to me, "Is it all right if I do this or that? Is it all right if I go to dances?" I said, "I can't give you any answer about that but I'll give you one principle. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him. If you can do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, fine. If you can't, no matter what it is it's wrong." Paul says here it's either good or bad. Whatever is not good, whatever is not positive, is bad. It's negative. We are going to have our lives laid bare in the presence of Jesus Christ one by one, individually, and we'll look back and we'll be given an overview of our past life. We'll see the things that were good and the things that were bad. Please bear in mind there is no other category. Nothing is neutral. Everything is either positive or negative.

And then Paul goes on to say knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men that we are well known to God and, I trust also, well known in your consciences. Paul had a vision of the terror of the Lord. He had a vision of what it would be like to stand a single individual before Jesus as Judge with eyes like flaming fire, a voice like many waters, feet like bronze burning in a furnace, out of His mouth coming a sharp two-edged sword, and give an account of our lives. If that doesn't inspire terror I don't know what will.

Paul says knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men. I don't believe we can really persuade people unless we have a vision of the terror of the Lord. Because, it comes from a totally different background. Remember, we are eternal beings. We have an eternal destiny. Our time here on earth is very, very short. And believe me, the older you get the quicker it goes.

So, how will it be when you stand before the judgment seat of Christ? I don't know this, I don't have a revelation, but I think one of the things He asks you is, "What did you do during your lifetime to make the gospel of the kingdom known to all nations?" Tell me, what did you contribute? Did you give time? Did you give your money? Did you give your life? Or did you just sit in church and sing hymns?

It's a strange thing but two people here already today have referred to the parable of the talents. I want to go to that to close. Matthew 25, I'm going to read the whole passage which is not very long. It's found in Matthew 25, beginning in verse 14.

> "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country who called his own servants and delivered his goods [or his possessions or his wealth] to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability."

Notice, God allots talents according to our ability to use them.

> "And immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them."

Remember, God is going to settle accounts with each of us.

> "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents. Look, I have gained five more talents beside them.' His lord 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.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents. Look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"

I noticed a principle there, it's not the amount, it's the percentage of the increase. One man gained five, the other gained two, but each of them gained 100 percent and each of them received exactly the same words of commendation. God doesn't ask more from you than you are capable of producing but He does ask what you are capable.

Now we come to the real, I think the climax of this parable.

> "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed…'"

I think one of his problems was he had a wrong vision of the lord. All he could see of the lord was a hard man.

> "...and I was afraid..."

And that's bad motivation.

> "...and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant!'"

Do you know that laziness is wickedness? I think it's much more wicked than drunkenness, myself. We would probably object to people being drunk in the congregation but how many lazy people do we have in a congregation? From God's side they are more of an abomination, I think, than the drunkards.

> "You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Therefore you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest."

Now, listen to the judgment.

> "Therefore, take the talent from him and gave it him who has ten talents. For 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."

I've seen that. It's true in experience. The ones who have get more, the ones who use what they've got get more, and the ones who don't use what they've got lose even what they have.

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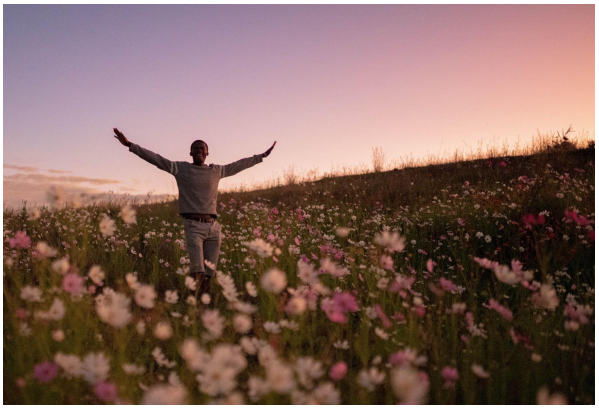
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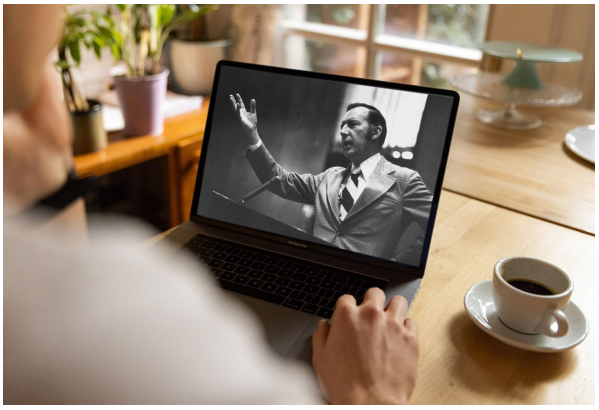
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