

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #50

Romans 14:10-12

There is a day that is coming for every person in this sanctuary that is going to be the most intimidating experience that we will ever face. **It is the day we will face Jesus Christ.** Every believer will be called to face the “Judgment Seat of Christ.” At this judgment, each of us will have our life carefully inspected. When it is our turn, our work, our spirituality, our life will be reviewed by the King of Kings. Whatever we did or did not do for God will be sealed on our account for all eternity. Our condemnatory sin will not be judged because it was dealt with at the cross - but our work will be judged.

If we have given it our best, we will receive great reward. If we did not give it our best, we will suffer loss of reward. **There are many texts of Scripture which speak of the fact that our works will be carefully examined by Jesus Christ, but there are only two that actually name His judgment seat - 1) II Corinthians 5:10; 2) Romans 14:10-12.**

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT EACH OF US WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL LIVES BEFORE GOD, WE MUST NOT WASTE OUR LIVES JUDGING EACH OTHER OVER GRAY AREAS; RATHER WE MUST INVEST OUR TIME DEVELOPING OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

In Romans 14:1-9, Paul did not want us judging our brothers over gray issues, because he was God’s property and God will judge him (14:7-8). Now, in this section, Paul does want us judging ourselves because God will judge us. Paul wants us to stop judging others concerning matters which are gray and judge ourselves in view of the fact that we will face Christ.

REASON #1 – Because we will all stand before God. **14:10c**

The verb “stand” is a future tense, middle voice, indicative mood verb which means, “It is a fact (indicative mood) that at some point in the future (future tense) every individual will stand before God for judgment.” The middle voice indicates that each person will himself be involved in this action. **We will all individually take our turn at the judgment seat of Christ, the judgment seat of God. According to II Corinthians 5:10, we will appear to receive a recompense for what we did while in our bodies on this earth.**

Now the Greek word for “judgment seat” is the word “Bema” (βημα). It is from this word that we get our English word “Bema.” In the Roman world when Paul mentioned the “Bema Seat” judgment, it would have triggered a vivid picture of a very intimidating and very real place.

The “Bema” (βημα) was a place of legal judgment at the Roman forum. A person was taken there to appear before one of the magistrates. If a person lived in the Roman world, there were no words you feared any more than the words “you must appear before the magistrates at the forum”; “you must appear at the Bema Seat.”

On the day of your hearing you were taken to the Roman forum. It was a huge place with tall columns and pillars. Seated high on perches (called “bema seats”) were the magistrates. The accused would carefully and humbly and fearfully make his way to the particular magistrate who had his case. You knew that this magistrate had the authority of Rome to condemn you to death or to pronounce an acquittal. No person would confidently skip up to a magistrate like some arrogant and proud peacock. When it came your turn you were scared and rightly so.

That picture is what would have raced through the First Century mind when Paul mentioned “Bema Seat” judgment. **He wanted the Roman Christians to realize that there is coming a very serious moment in each of their lives when every believer will be called before the highest court in the universe.** It is going to be a moment that will be very humbling and very intimidating. It will be a very solemn and sacred moment, the moment that each of us face Jesus Christ to be judged by Him.

Now knowing this truth should motivate each one of us to work on our own lives, our own spirituality, not wasting our time judging other believers on foolish gray areas.

REASON #2 – Because we will all bow before God. **14:11a**

Notice carefully what Paul uses as his authority base for discussing judgment, “as it is written,” the written Word of God. Donald Grey Barnhouse said this is talking about the Bible. We will not stand before Jesus Christ and be judged because Paul thinks it is a good idea, but because God’s Word says it. **Not only does God’s Word say we are going to stand before God, but we will also bow before God.**

Paul’s quote is taken from Isaiah 45:23 and Isaiah 49:18. In both of these passages, God is promising Israel that all of her enemies will ultimately bow before Him. That is an encouraging thought. John Wesley once was forced to pay the same bill twice. He wrote on the receipt, “To be settled on the day of judgment” (Barnhouse, pp. 195-196).

However, do not lose sight of what Paul is saying in this context. Paul is discussing the believer and the fact that we will bow. We have a tendency to read a statement like this in Romans and the same quote in Philippians 2:10-11 and say, “Yes that will sure be a great day when those people bow their knees to Christ before God; that will be something.” But what we must not forget is that this text is aimed at the believer. We are also going to bow before Jesus Christ. This reality should stop each of us from judging one another on gray issues. In fact, in the Philippians context Paul says, “... wherefore work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

REASON #3 – Because we will all confess to God. **14:11b**

The idea of every tongue giving praise to God is the idea of every tongue confessing individually before God. The words “give praise” is literally in Greek (εξομολογεομαι) a word that means to speak out the same things.

One of the things which our tongue will confess is that Jesus Christ is God and worthy of our total devotion. This will be a great praise service. **In the context of Romans 14, the point is we will say the same thing about our lives as Jesus Christ says about them. We will agree that Christ's judgment of our life is accurate.** Every tongue of every believer will attest to this reality. His judgment will be impartial; it will be accurate and true.

REASON #4 – Because we will all give an account of ourselves to God. **14:12**

Every one of us will give a verbal account of our own lives. **The text is clear and emphatic that every person will go through this process.**

We will have no one to blame. We will have no excuse to offer. We will not get off the hook. We will face Jesus Christ and we will give an account of ourselves to Him.

Donald Grey Barnhouse said this thought affected him in six ways:

- 1) It made him watch what he was doing with his time;
- 2) He kept him developing and working on his own spiritual life.
- 3) It kept him carefully searching the Scriptures to understand them.
- 4) It motivated him to stay faithful in his giving to the Lord.
- 5) It kept him guarding his speech.
- 6) It kept him taking inventory of himself every day.

(Romans, Vol. 4, pp. 213-223)

Ladies and Gentlemen, an audit of our life is not a “might” or “maybe”; it is a futuristic reality. We will be audited by Jesus Christ. Now is the time to make the right choices. Now is the time to set the record straight. Now is the time to watch what we do, how we think and be careful what we say. If we have done our best our audit will go fine. “Well done” we will hear.

No one will ever have a perfect record at the judgment seat. Even Paul, who wrote Romans, said when he was about to die, “The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom” (II Timothy 4:18). But it is certainly possible to hear “well done.”

But for any who have not trusted Jesus Christ, they need to know this - it is far better to be a loser at the Judgment Seat than not to be at the Judgment Seat. It is true that every person at the Judgment Seat may not receive rewards, but they will be in heaven and not hell.