

“All Depends on the Judge”

What will happen to you in the end? Well, God reveals what it will be like on the Last Day. The Judge will come and sit upon His throne – and you will receive one of two judgments. Either, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” – or, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

You will either be blessed, or cursed. You will receive the kingdom of heaven, or the eternal fires of hell.

So, what’s the difference? What’s the distinction? Why will some receive heaven, and others receive hell? Well, it all depends upon the Judge.

Now, as the Lord reveals what will happen to you on the Last Day – it’s true, that the Judge mentions the good deeds done to Him – and the good deeds NOT done to Him.

And hearing that, maybe you’re thinking to yourself – wait a minute – I thought that we are not saved by our good works, or damned by our evil. If that’s the case, then no one will be saved – none are blessed – no one will inherit the kingdom that has been prepared.

You know God’s Word, His promises. Ephesians 2 quickly comes to mind: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (v. 8-9).

So why this mention of what we have done, or not done? Why this distinction if “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”? What’s the difference between the two? It’s the ONE who sits upon the throne.

With the Church throughout the generations, once again today, you confessed that you believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “sits at the right hand of the Father, and He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.”

This truth has been drummed into your ears. These last Sundays of the Church Year have warned you not to fall asleep – to be prepared for His return – and you have waited your whole life. We go through the days, weeks, seasons and years – as if life goes on without end.

Dearly beloved, the Day will come – Christ Himself will come from the right hand of the Father, to sit upon His throne, and pronounce His eternal judgment. And there are only two judgments – either come – or, depart.

There will not be time to prepare when you see Him coming. There will be no second chances. Some false religions would teach that there is no end – just a continual reincarnation, with your soul coming back into another body – another chance to do better, and gradually make your way upwards. There is no purgatory either, so others can pool their money and good deeds to spring you into heaven.

There IS an end – one day, with one judge – Jesus Christ. And the judgment will be, and IS, and always has been – dependent upon faith in Jesus Christ. Do you trust in Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice for all your sin? Do you believe that Christ alone washes away your sin and reconciles you to the Father? Do you know that Christ has taken your sin, your death – and paid their price, and given you life in return?

The good deeds that are presented as evidence are important. Christ the Judge sees these works – which are the evidence of faith. Yes, you are saved by grace through faith as it says in Ephesians 2 – but immediately after those promises, the Lord says that – “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (v. 10).

The believer does not boast about the good he has done – he does not trust in them for his standing before God – as the text shows, he doesn’t even realize that he has done them. They come forth naturally from faith – from Christ who lives in you, and works through you, for the benefit of your neighbor.

To those who live by faith in His grace, His forgiveness for all the evil they have done – Christ the Judge says, “come ... inherit” that which I have gifted to you.

And to those who had no use for Him in life, on the Last Day they will not be beneficiaries of His grace, His forgiveness, His blessing. “Depart” is what they will hear – receive what your sins have earned – death and eternal damnation.

Only the Father knows when the Last Day will be – so, you are given to live all of your days by faith in Jesus Christ. Do you live this day (and each day), as one who is cursed, or blessed? Do you gather to your Savior to receive, and live by and from His gifts – or do you depart from Him, to spend your days on yourself and your desires?

Dearly beloved, that Day is coming. And so that you may be blessed, the Judge comes to you today. Do you want to hear His judgment? Then listen.

If you have no use for Jesus, then you don’t want to hear His judgment. If you confess your sins, if you need a Savior – His grace and mercy – if you need His blood to cleanse you and His death to destroy your death, and His Spirit to guide you – then hear Him when He says that you are blessed.

Are you not sure? Then listen, for this very day He says to you – “I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” He promised that He would set up over you one Shepherd to feed and shepherd you – and that Shepherd is Jesus.

He says, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” “Take and eat, take and drink ... my Body and Blood “for you,” for the forgiveness of all your sins. “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.”

Dearly beloved, where there is the forgiveness of sin, there is life and salvation. And so we live in these days, confessing – “I believe in ... the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” Amen, Come, Lord Jesus.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.