

**The Victory and Judgment of the Lamb (1)**

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*1 Corinthians 3:11-15: “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”*

*2 Corinthians 5:7-10: “for we walk by faith, not by sight— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore, we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

We thank the Lord that we are able to gather here once again. We thank our Lord that several decades have gone by and yet we are still able to stand before Him and be His testimony. The brothers have arranged for me to share with brothers and sisters on this topic. The theme of the conference is *Wherever the Lamb goes we will follow* and the burden given to me by the brothers is: After we have finished our course, how shall we meet our Lord? We thank the Lord. From the passages we just read in 1 and 2 Corinthians, even though they are from different points of view, their focus is till the same: How are we going to meet the Lord?

We thank the Lord. In our experience of believing in the Lord, we all go through a period of struggle before we are willing to believe in Him. But once we have decided we will follow the Lord, we would also have the impression that now we have believed in the Lord, we are saved, we are no longer condemned, and we can wait to meet the Lord without fear. We thank the Lord that this is true from the angle of the Lord’s grace. But in order to enter into receiving God’s full grace, the word of the Lord reminds us of one thing that we cannot overlook: Is it true that we

will just finish the course on earth and meet Him at the end? This is the impression we have and so we place much emphasis on how we live on earth. I am not talking about elevating our spiritual life; I am referring to how we think we ought to enjoy all the blessings: It is the Lord's responsibility to give us both heavenly and earthly blessings and we are the vessels to enjoy all the Lord's blessings. But we thank God, one day we realize that we do not always live in God's blessings. We may not think about why we are in such a state. Are we not saved? Have we not become the children of God? Why would I come across such circumstances? The circumstances trouble us so much that we would have doubt and ask whether we have been saved. And after a short or long period of struggle, we come to one conclusion: The Lord's word tells us we are saved once we have believed. Since I have believed in the Lord, I must be saved. But the issue is we always focus on our problems. We will ask, "If I am truly saved, why would I still come across such problems?" And this kind of thinking will enter into our mind. Thank the Lord, after some struggling, gradually this kind of thoughts will no longer trouble us. Why? It is because the Lord's word has repeatedly told us that God has used His most precious one to take up the chastening that we deserve when He gives us grace. Before we believe in the Lord, we would never consider how we are going to meet God. One day when God's spirit touches us, we realize we are sinners. If our sins are not resolved, we are not qualified to see God. If we are to see God, we will fall under a very severe judgement. Thank God that He has planned a great salvation for us. His Son has taken up the portion that we should have borne. God has spoken these words: And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment. This is a very solemn issue but we do not stop here. It is true that inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, but the Son of God has exchanged position with us. He is standing in our place and has transferred us to a place where we do not deserve to be. And this has brought forth a glorious fact: we are no longer condemned. On the contrary, we have become the sons of God.

But as we read the passages in 1 and 2 Corinthians, we might be troubled. It is true that the Lord has died for us; therefore, we have died so the fact that it is appointed for men to die once can no longer happen to us. However, in reality we feel that if we are no longer pursued by God because of our sins, why does it say that when we see God we need to face judgement? According to our thinking, it should have

been like Stephen going to the heavenly home that the Lord stood to welcome him. It should be a joyous occasion. But it seems what was described in 1 and 2 Corinthians was not the Lord's smiling face. Especially in the Chinese translation of 2 Corinthians 5, it says we must all be *revealed* before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Brothers and sisters, because of the enemy's continuous attempt to disturb us in following the Lord, we often are disturbed in our mind and are confused by him. In the Gospel books, the Lord's word has told us that when the Lord comes there is judgement and each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done.

We have read many scriptures but often we leave a gap for the enemy to disturb us. The reason is that we do not have a firm and accurate grasp of the Lord's word. So even though we have believed in the Lord, we might doubt at what point we actually are saved. Some think that we have to wait until we pass before the judgement seat of Christ and receive God's approval. Brothers and sisters, our weakness often throw us into such confusion. But we thank our God, His words are never vague. He clearly shows us once you are saved, you are saved. Judgment is judgment. But the result of that judgment does not conflict with our salvation. He would not tell us we are saved now but tell us we are still falling short when we face judgment in the future. The Lord will not say such words. You might say that is what is recorded in 1 and 2 Corinthians: each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Especially in the Chinese translation, because of the translation of a term, it gives us this impression that this is a very serious matter. It is in 2 Corinthians 5: we must all be *revealed* or *exposed* before the judgment seat of Christ. The result is you will receive a reward if you are good and will be recompensed negatively if you are bad and so we are very confused by it.

Brothers and sisters, I would like to clarify a concept with you. The New Testament in the Bible tells us the world will go through several judgments when the Lord returns. These judgments will determine whether we can enter into the kingdom. It will be great if we can enter into the kingdom. If not, it will be very woeful. Because if we cannot go to where God is, we will be entering into eternal death. When we look at the judgments, this is the impression they give us: For example, when the Lord returns, there are several judgments that will be executed

on earth. I will mention them in terms of stages and not necessarily in order. When the Lord returns, who are the first ones to meet Him? Thank the Lord, it is us. We are called “the first to hope in Christ” and that affirms our position. When we meet our Lord, we ought to be very joyous. But as the judgment seat of Christ is laid before us, we are not able to be joyous. Brothers and sisters, let me first tell you this good news. If you are able to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, you shall not die. Even though it is a judgment before the judgment seat of Christ, it is to measure whether we are qualified to receive the blessings from God.

Let me first tell you the order in which people of the earth will meet the Lord. First are the believers, then it will be the Israelites who are still living when the Lord returns, then it will be the people who go through the tribulations. I am not going to share on this in details but I want brothers and sisters to firmly grasp the fact that we are saved by grace and not be disturbed by the enemy. For those who believe in the Lord, we will go before the judgment seat of Christ. We thank the Lord. If we look at the meaning of the Lord’s word, it is not a judgment. You may ask, “How is it not a judgment?” Brothers and sisters, take note of this: when we mention about judgment, there must be a result of right and wrong. According to the words *it is appointed for men to die once*, you will either live or die. If you live then you shall not die. You will find the same result for the other judgments. When we look at the judgement of the kingdom after the end of the great tribulation, we know that this has nothing to do with us. Because the word of the Lord state that if you are able to pass through this judgment, you will come before God to be remembered. If you fail this judgment, the result is to enter the lake of fire. This is where Satan will spend eternity. This is a very bad end. We thank the Lord. If we read carefully, first we will find that the judgment of the kingdom has nothing to do with those who are saved. The judgment of the sheep and the goats recorded in the Gospels is referring to the judgment of the gentiles. It does not concern the Israelites or the children of God. If we look at the context of the judgment, we will see that it is for those who trample upon the children of God during that time. But if you see the children of God are trampled upon and you sympathize with them and help them to safety, the word of the Lord says that these people will be remembered and be going to the kingdom. If you take note of the difference between the sheep and the goats, then you will not misunderstand. Whether it is the judgment of the kingdom or the judgment of Israel, the result is

either eternal death or eternal life. Since the wages of sin is death, you will surely die if you have sinned. But if you belong to the Lord, the grace of the Lord covers your sins and He no longer go after your sins because His Son has paid for them. The result for you is to enter into life. You will have nothing to do with death.

There are many judgments recorded in the Bible. God uses judgements as a means to put an end to the world that is of the old creation. But as we shift our focus back to the judgment seat of Christ, you will discover a completely different situation. The term “judgment” is used, so when we see the Lord, we come before the judgment seat of Christ to receive judgement. Brothers and sisters, keep in mind this is NOT the case. The term “judgment” is a solemn word. But according to the reality, it is not a judgment. If you read carefully, you will see the distinction. If we look at the result of that judgment, we will see that it is not a judgment. If we use a more accurate term to describe the situation, it should be the term “examination”. If you read the English translation or the original text, you will be able to see the distinction. Out of all the judgments, only this one brings forth the result not of condemnation but of examination. What is an examination? It is to have all that we have done presented before God. After we have gone through the examination, the Lord will give an evaluation. To put it simply, this person passes and that person fails. It is a matter of whether you qualify. It is to qualify for the grace of redemption. In 1 Corinthians, it tells us very clearly the result of this examination. Does it say, “If you have done right, you will receive a reward. If not, you will receive death?” No. What does it say? If we have not done right, we shall suffer loss. Therefore, when you see the results, you will understand it is not completely the same as what is usually said about a judgment. It has the process of an examination but it does not have the result of a judgment because the result of a judgement must be either life or death. The result of an examination is whether you have achieved excellence or you have failed. If you have achieved excellence, you will receive a reward; if you have not, you will fail. So there is a big difference.

We do not need to speak about those who pass; but for those who fail, because it is an examination, it is quite possible that we have to do it again. We can call it a makeup exam. When you take the makeup exam and you improve, then you can be brought to the level of excellence. When we mention about the judgment seat of Christ, it is for us who have been saved by grace to prepare well to meet the

Lord. When we meet the Lord and we are prepared, the Lord says, “You will receive a reward.” If we have not prepared well, the Lord says, “You still fall short. You are not qualified and you need to make it up.”

From the time you have believed in the Lord until today, what is the grace that we have received from the Lord’s hand? How great is that grace that enables us to rest before God? We thank God. I think this is easy for brothers and sisters to understand. You will say, “Since we believe in the Lord, our sins are forgiven and we do not need to go to eternal death.” It is not wrong but it is not complete. If we truly understand the grace of redemption, we cannot stop here. If we only stop here, we are only touching the fringes of salvation. You have not seen the reason why God has prepared this salvation for us. We confess we are weak and ignorant. When we speak of receiving the grace of God’s salvation, we only stop at grace equals blessings. If we do not see blessings, then it is not grace. This will often trouble us in our spiritual understanding and experience. May we, through the help of God’s spirit and the word of God, truly see what the grace of God’s redemption is. I don’t know if brothers and sisters have ever asked God this question, “God, why do you save us?” “We are rebellious. Why do you save us?” “After you have saved us, all we want is to receive grace from you. When you let us encounter things that are unpleasant, then we don’t think you have grace.” Brothers and sisters, this is indeed our ignorance toward what grace is. If we truly know what grace is, we would not evaluate grace based on our feelings. If we want to know what grace is, we have to return to these facts: The purpose of God creating man. When did God create man? Why does God create man? These are the premises.

We thank the Lord, whenever the spirit of God opens up our understanding and brings us back to the original purpose of God creating man, we will clearly see why God creates man and when He has this thought. Brothers and sisters, when we return to these facts, our spirits cannot help but to be opened up. When does God first have this thought of creating man? We don’t know. We might say for sure it is during the time of Genesis. In the Book of Genesis, it tells us that God had the thought of creating man and therefore He created man. It is not the case. It has nothing to do with the truth. This is just an impression we have because man appear in the Book of Genesis so therefore it is during that time man is created.

Whenever the Lord's spirit opens up our understanding, we can see from the Book of Ephesians and also from other scriptures that God has willed to create man even before the foundation of the world. We are then confused. Even before man is created, even before the foundation of the world, God has already foreknown that man will fall short of His purpose and fall, and He has prepared redemption to restore man to his original purpose which God has intended for them.

Brothers and sisters, if you look at more scriptures, you will see in 1 Peter 1 that God has already seen the blood of the Lamb before the foundation of the world. If you can grab hold of the entire process of God's creation of man, you will then realize how great the purpose of God's creation of man is. We have the confidence to believe that God's purpose of creating man was established long ago. In Genesis chapter 1 that God states the purpose of the creation of man clearly. In chapter 2 God explains the function of creating man. In chapter 1 God says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." Brothers and sisters, can you tell me what man is created for? Outwardly speaking, there is no meaning at all. A lump of clay. God uses His hands to shape the clay and the clump of clay becomes a man. What is so great about it? What do you do it for? Even the school children can do this kind of crafts. What is that for? There is no special meaning in it. But when God creates man, He speaks of the purpose very clearly. God also makes the process very clear. Why does God create man? In chapter 1 we see God says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness and let them rule over all the creation." To summarize it, there are two clear facts. First, God creates man in order to express Himself, or to manifest Himself. When you see man, you see God. If you want to know God, you can look at man.

This is one of the components of the creation of man: In God's image. When man is displayed, he is the image of God. How about his function? His function is to represent God and to accept God's entrustment to rule over all creation. Simply put, God is to manifest Himself through the created man. In practical terms, the created man is to execute God's authority. This is a component in the creation of man that we must see clearly.

Why did God create man? If God had not created man, there would not have been so much problems. After man was created, things became very complex. As we can see in the Bible, out of nothing all kinds of things came about. When we look

at Genesis 2, we see God gave man a test. Can man, who was created from dust, take up such purpose? According to the process of the creation of man, we cannot see that man qualifies for accomplishing such a purpose. Even though man is formed by God's hand, he is still a lump of clay nevertheless. How is man able to carry out such a solemn, majestic, and immense purpose of God? Man himself does have the qualification. We are made from dust and we are but dust. But God first placed this purpose in us and we are to accomplish His purpose. If we are wise, we would ask God, "By what can we do this? I don't have the authority to accomplish this. I am but dust." God did not provide an explanation but God placed man in a test.

What is this test? When God placed man in the midst of the garden, He let them face the two trees in the center of the garden. When we read Genesis 2, we see there were the fruits of the tree of life and the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We might think this is the test God had for man so man can know whether God's words were right. But that is not the case. You are created after my own image and you have this duty to be my manifestation among all the creation. Not only to be my manifestation but also to rule over all the creation.

I don't know what Adam and Eve had in mind at that time. If I were Adam, I would think, "How can I undertake such a great entrustment and such a grand plan from God?" "Now God has placed two trees there and told me, "You can eat the fruits of all the trees in the garden." Brothers and sisters, do not be mistaken. This does include the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We often will separate the fruits into the one that they can eat and the ones that they cannot eat. But there are just different consequences when he eats the fruits of different trees. If Adam eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the consequence is that he will have authority and power. He will be able to discern all things and do all things, he will be like God. We can see this very clearly in Genesis 3. But, even though you can gain such great power and wisdom, you cannot escape this fact: The day you eat of it, you shall surely die.

Brothers and sisters, if we are wise we ought to understand it is useless if we have all the authority, wisdom and power but we cannot escape the consequence of death. How would I be able to express the purpose of God creating me? God said that we are created after his image and are to manifest Himself. God is a God of

eternity and a God who gives life. There is no death in God. With God there is wisdom, power, and authority. If you see the function of the tree of life and of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Do not let the function of the tree of knowledge of good and evil overshadow the function of the tree of life. The tree of life not only has all the attributes of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it also unites us with God. It is not a general union but a union of life. If we eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we will gain many outward functions but we will not live long. Man's foolishness and the deception of the enemy caused man to make this decision: I want what is in sight. The fruits are so delightful in my eyes and look so delicious. I don't care. If I die, I die. Little did man know that he had made the wrong decision.

When the Lord places the choices before us, He clearly shows us there is only one way if we are to fulfill God's glorious purpose. What is that way? It is to eat the fruit of the tree of life. This is to tell us to unite with God. When you are united with God, what God has become yours. Had Adam been able to hold fast to this, the Bible would not have been so complex. Then, Genesis 1 would have told us that God's creation of man, and chapter 2 would have told us the choice of Adam. If Adam had made the right choice, then the purpose of God would have been accomplished. The foolishness of Adam and the deception of the enemy are all in God's foreknowledge. God had a plan to deal with the dominion of darkness. Man was foolish and made the wrong decision. Man did not want to choose God. Man chose what he liked and the deception of the enemy. And this brought about complications in the world. We thank the Lord, this is the beginning of salvation. God has placed man within a boundary that is of great glory, majesty, power and authority. As long as man knows he needs to choose God and he must be united with God, then he will be able to accomplish God's purpose of creating him. Positively, it is to manifest God's glory; and negatively, it is to get rid of the power of darkness. God through the created man, who are from dust, deals with the power of darkness.

But the foolishness of man completely disrupted God's plan. Now here comes the question: Should the plan continue? God must continue. But how would God move forward? God is to get rid of Satan's power over all creation and to manifest He is the origin of all things. He must restore the fallen man. If the fallen man is

restored, then the function of man, which is to deal with the power of darkness, can also be restored.

Now we can understand the reason why God has prepared the redemption grace and the reason why God is restoring man from despair to his original position. Now we understand God has His purpose in redemption when He redeemed us. The reason is to restore us to God's original purpose of creating man. It is to put an end to the dominion of darkness. We thank our Lord.

If we are not restored, God's plan to deal with the dominion of darkness will stop and cannot go forward. But God will not let it stop and He must complete the restoration. Then how is God to seek those who are lost? What kind of price must God pay? Even though You are God and You have the power and authority to restore man, if You casually restore man then You will lose Your holiness and righteousness. You will only be pouring Your grace on man blindly. God will not do so. In order to restore man, not only did God allow our Lord to pay the price, but through the price our Lord has paid, He has also filled up all our shortcomings. We can clearly see in the word of God that God is to restore the created man in order for man to be delivered from the curse: On the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. But it is still not redemption if we stop at being delivered from the curse. So, what is redemption? God has paid a price. The Lamb of God took man's place to receive the curse, and then He manifests the fruit of redemption.

2 Timothy tells us how trustworthy the word of God is. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." This shows us the purpose of redemption. It is not only to restore our relationship with God, but also let us live before God through the word of God. It is in order that we will manifest God from our inner nature to our external expression. As a result, man will be made perfect. When man is made perfect, we will be equipped for every good work. Good work does not mean accumulating merits. What is the good work in God's eyes? It is the fulfillment of God's purpose.

Brothers and sisters, now we can see God has spent so much time from the planning, preparation, to the bringing forth of the purpose for the grace of redemption. In Revelation 4, we see the worship from eternity to eternity. If we

have a good understanding of the content in Revelation 4, we will see this heavenly worship is very glorious, majestic, tremendous, and rich. All God's creation is there to worship God. But when we come to chapter 5, John sees what is happening in the heaven and what is his response? Is he very happy? No. John is very sorrowful. Why? In the heavenly worship, all God's creation in heaven prostrates before Him. But man and all the things on earth are missing. When John sees it, he was sad. Why would this happen? And he wept. Brothers and sisters, usually the elderlies don't cry easily, especially for the one who can go to heaven to see God face to face. Why would John weep greatly? It is recorded that John wept, and wept greatly. Then the angle tells him, "Stop weeping, John. I will show you some other things." Chapter 5 shows us there is a Lamb brought before God, and He is to take the book from the hand of God. As He takes the book, the angels of God proclaim, "The Lamb is worthy of opening the book." When the book is open, there is a great change on earth, from being destroyed and disrupted to being restored to perfection.

As we see the Lamb appears in chapter 5, not only is there continuous worship in heaven, there is also worship on earth, under the earth and in the sea. All creation turns around because of what the Lamb has done and give thanksgiving and worship in heaven without reservation.

Brothers and sisters, do you see the key? The key is that when the Lamb appears, when He has gone through resurrection from death, the worship in heaven manifests the fact that Christ has become the Lamb of God. "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Why would all creation bow down before God and give Him all the glory? That is because of the fruit of the work of the Lamb.

We thank the Lord. We see how this resonate with the words in Ephesian 1, "We who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." And through those who are the first to hope in Christ, He brings all things into Christ. At this time, I think John is no longer weeping. God lets John see that the Lamb is opening the book and He has dealt with all the power of darkness. We thank the Lord. In chapter 4 and chapter 5, we can see all creation is returning to the Father and is coming before the Lamb to confess that the Lamb is worthy.

We thank the Lord. Now we put all these things together and go back to look at the matter of being revealed at the judgement seat of Christ. Brothers and sisters should know the judgement seat of Christ is not to condemn us. Positively speaking, it is to bring us back to the original purpose of God's work. This is the reward. For those who do not qualify, God will use the time in the kingdom for them to make up the lesson. My time is up today so I will share with you what the result of this makeup lesson in the next session.

The Lord will return and we will see the Lord. We are the first to go before the judgement seat of Christ. How shall you meet the Lord? You must mature. If we are not able to grow up to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ, we will hinder the completion of God's eternal purpose. We must understand what kind of change will take place when we see the Lord. Then we will realize how tremendous this grace is in God's redemption. Through the history of His Son becoming the Lamb of God, it brings forth the change in all creation in the spiritual realm. When the Lord returns, all the old creation will pass. The return of the Lord will bring all the old creation into the new creation. So, brothers and sisters, the reason the Lord leaves us on earth is not just for us to know Him as the God who gives blessings, He wants us who are from dust to represent Him and to execute His authority. We must follow on the same path that the Lamb has trod on. Before the Lord returns, let us not be someone who only knows to ask for His blessings, we must ask the Lord to help us to be built up to become the vessels for completion of His will.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank You. When Your words are opened up, we can see light. For such a long time we have been living in our foolishness. We only know that You are the one who bestows blessings upon us but we did not know You are to be our Lord. You are to bring all things from ignorance and foolishness back to Your own glorious riches. Lord, may You use the words of the Holy Spirit to speak to us, so that our eyes can see, our ears can hear, and our hearts can be brought before Your throne so we will seek, understand, and experience the completion of Your eternal will. We thank you, Lord. May You listen to our prayer. We pray in the name of our Lord Christ Jesus.