

## The Judgment Seat of Christ

Series 1-10

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### **Series Introduction: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Living for That Day**

For the born-again believer, eternity is not a question of *where*—but a question of *how*. Not *if* we will be with Christ, but *what* we'll bring to Him when we see Him face to face.

The Bible teaches that every saved person will stand before Jesus Christ—not to be judged for sin (that was settled at Calvary), but to give account for their life, service, motives, and stewardship. This is the **Judgment Seat of Christ**—also known as the **Bema Seat**—and it will be one of the most defining moments in all of eternity.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

— *2 Corinthians 5:10*

This series is not meant to stir dread, but to ignite **devotion**. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a courtroom of condemnation—it's a throne of reward, review, and revelation. It's not a place where salvation is questioned, but where faithfulness is evaluated. For some, it will be a moment of indescribable joy and divine commendation—“Well done.” For others, it will be the stinging sorrow of realizing that so much was done for self, not for the Savior.

In this 10-part study, we will explore:

- What the Bema Seat really is—and what it is not.
- The crowns that can be won—or lost.
- The role of motives, hidden works, and private worship.
- The fire that will try every work—and the gold that will remain.
- And most importantly, why every crown earned will be cast at Jesus' feet.

Because in the end, this is not about ego, empire, or even reward.

It's about **Him**.

We don't live for applause—we live for **that moment**.

We don't run for trophies—we run for **a throne**.

We don't build for legacy—we build to lay it **at His feet**.

Welcome to *The Judgment Seat of Christ: Living for That Day*.

## **1 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – What It Is (and Isn't)**

**Clarifying the purpose of the Bema Seat judgment for believers—it's not about salvation, condemnation, or sin's penalty, but reward and accountability.**

(2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10–12)

### **Introduction: Judgment Without Condemnation**

To many believers, the word “judgment” conjures feelings of dread. It's often associated with shame, loss, or the fear of being disqualified from Heaven. But the Bible presents two very different kinds of judgment: one for the **unsaved**, and one for the **saved**. The former deals with eternal separation from God, but the latter—**the Judgment Seat of Christ**—deals not with **salvation**, but with **rewards**.

This judgment, sometimes called the **Bema Seat**, is not about whether or not you go to Heaven. That was settled at Calvary. This judgment is about what happens **after** you get to Heaven—what you did with what Christ gave you. It is a judgment of **accountability**, **examination**, and **reward**.

Let us open the Word of God and rightly divide this doctrine, examining what the Bema Seat truly is—and what it is not.

### **1. The Greek Word “Bema” – Not a Courtroom, but a Podium**

The term “Judgment Seat” in 2 Corinthians 5:10 comes from the Greek word **bēma**, which referred to a **raised platform used for giving rewards**. In the ancient Olympics, victors would come before the Bema to receive their crowns from the presiding official. It was not a criminal trial—it was an **awards ceremony**.

Paul deliberately chose this word to emphasize that the believer's judgment is not about guilt or punishment, but about **honor** and **assessment**.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

— *2 Corinthians 5:10*

This is not the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20—that is for the **lost**. The Bema Seat is a judgment reserved **only for believers**, based on how we lived **after** our salvation.

## 2. Who Will Be Judged at the Bema?

Paul says, “We must all appear...” (2 Cor. 5:10). The “we” is clearly speaking to **saved people**—those already justified by faith in Christ.

This includes:

- Every man, woman, and child who has placed their trust in Christ.
- Pastors and preachers.
- Mothers who raised children in faith.
- Janitors, businessmen, widows, teenagers—**no one is exempt**.

Every believer will stand before Christ—not to be judged for their sin, but to give an account of their **service**.

## 3. What Will Be Judged?

The Bema Seat is a place of **evaluation**, not condemnation. What is evaluated?

### A. Our Works

“...That every one may receive the things done in his body...”

— *2 Corinthians 5:10*

This refers to our actions—our service, our giving, our use of time, our labor in the Lord, our words, our responses to opportunity.

Salvation is **not by works**, but rewards **are**.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”

— *Ephesians 2:10*

### B. Our Motives

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts...”

— *1 Corinthians 4:5*

God is not merely watching what we do, but **why** we do it. Were our works for His glory—or ours? Were they Spirit-led or self-fueled?

### **C. Our Faithfulness**

Jesus emphasized this repeatedly:

“Well done, thou good and **faithful** servant...”

— *Matthew 25:21*

You may not be well-known. You may not have a large platform. But faithfulness in the small things will be richly rewarded.

## **4. What Will Not Be Judged**

The Bema Seat is not about sins. Christ already paid for those in full.

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

— *Hebrews 10:17*

When Jesus cried “It is finished,” He meant it. If your sins were judged at the Bema, then the cross would be insufficient.

### **A. Not Salvation**

Your eternal destiny is not in question. That was settled the moment you trusted Christ.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth... **hath everlasting life...**”

— *John 5:24*

### **B. Not Condemnation**

“There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus...”

— *Romans 8:1*

The Bema Seat is not about fear—but about fulfillment.

## **5. Romans 14:10–12 – Everyone Will Give Account**

“We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

— *Romans 14:10–12*

This reinforces three critical truths:

1. **Universality** – No believer is exempt.
2. **Individuality** – You give account of **yourself**—not your pastor, spouse, or denomination.
3. **Accountability** – Every choice, every motive, every opportunity will be reviewed.

You will not be judged on success—but on **faithfulness** to the truth and calling God gave you.

## 6. The Fire That Reveals (1 Corinthians 3:11–15)

This is the key cross-reference explaining what happens at the Bema:

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest... and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

The judgment seat is a place of **testing by fire**. Not purgatory, not punishment—but evaluation.

**There are two outcomes:**

### A. Rewarded – Gold, silver, precious stones

These works represent **eternal value**, born of truth, love, and obedience to the Spirit.

### B. Loss – Wood, hay, stubble

These are works done in the flesh, for self-glory, or from wrong motives. They will **burn up**—not you, but your works.

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

You may lose **rewards**—but not your salvation.

## 7. The Purpose: Eternal Reward and Position

The Bema Seat is not just about reward—it's about **eternal assignment**.

Jesus said:

“Be thou faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.”

— *Matthew 25:21*

Crowns will be given:

- Crown of life (James 1:12)
- Crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)
- Crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4)
- Incorruptible crown (1 Corinthians 9:25)
- Crown of rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

These are not just gold hats—they reflect **authority, honor, and intimacy** with Christ throughout eternity.

## 8. Why This Judgment Motivates, Not Terrifies

Paul says:

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”

— *2 Corinthians 5:11*

This is not terror in the sense of **damnation**, but of **reverence**—a deep seriousness about the fact that one day you will **see your Savior face to face** and give account.

This truth is meant to:

- **Motivate holiness** (2 Cor. 7:1)
- **Inspire service** (1 Cor. 15:58)
- **Anchor endurance** (Gal. 6:9)
- **Elevate our perspective** (Col. 3:2–4)

You don't serve to get saved—you serve because you **are saved**, and because you'll one day stand before the One who saved you.

## 9. What If I Suffer Loss? Will I Be Ashamed?

Yes—and no.

Paul warns in 1 John 2:28 that some will be **ashamed before Him at His coming**. They will still be saved, but with **eternal regret** for having squandered their earthly life on things that did not last.

But the Bema Seat is **not a courtroom for public shaming**. It is a moment of divine review that brings full truth to light—and then a gracious Savior who wipes every tear away.

## 10. Living Now in Light of Then

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

— *1 John 2:28*

To live with **confidence at the Bema**, we must abide in Christ now. That means:

- **Walking in the Spirit**
- **Serving with sincerity**
- **Enduring with joy**
- **Building with eternal materials**

Every believer is building something. The question is: **Will it last?**

## Conclusion: The Crown or the Ashes

One day, you will stand before Jesus—not as a sinner in fear, but as a servant giving account.

You won't be judged for sin. You won't be cast out. You won't be compared to others.

You'll stand alone before the One who gave everything for you—and He will ask,

“What did you do with what I gave you?”

Did you spend your time for Him? Did you build with things that last? Or did you waste the years on comfort, applause, or selfish pursuits?

The Bema Seat is real. The rewards are eternal. And the time to prepare is **now**.

Let it motivate you—not terrify you.

Because **this judgment is not about punishment—it’s about purpose.**

You were saved for something. And one day, you’ll give account.

**Live today in light of that day.**

## **2 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Rewards and Loss**

**Exploring how believers can gain or lose rewards—not salvation—based on faithfulness, motive, and stewardship**

*(1 Corinthians 3:14–15)*

### **Introduction: Saved Forever—But Not All the Same**

Salvation is free. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8–9). Once a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, they are eternally secure in Him. But what many Christians fail to understand is that while **salvation is equal, rewards in Heaven are not.**

The *Judgment Seat of Christ* is where believers will be rewarded or suffer loss—not based on sin, but on **service**, not based on merit for salvation, but on **faithfulness after salvation**. This judgment has **nothing to do with entering Heaven**—that was settled at the cross. It has **everything to do with what you did for Christ** after you were saved.

This doctrine should not bring fear—it should bring focus. It should awaken us from complacency and drive us toward meaningful, Spirit-led service. Because while **you cannot lose your salvation**, you can lose **eternal reward**.

Let’s go deep into the Scripture and examine what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 3:14–15.

### **1. The Foundation: Salvation Is Settled**

Paul makes it clear that there is **only one foundation**:

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

— 1 Corinthians 3:11

If you are saved, you are building your life **on the foundation of Christ**. You're not trying to become saved. You're not trying to keep yourself saved. You are working **from salvation**, not for it.

Salvation is the starting point. What happens next is what determines reward or loss.

## 2. The Building Materials: What You Build With Matters

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:12*

Paul gives six building materials:

- **Gold, silver, precious stones** – Valuable, fire-resistant, enduring
- **Wood, hay, stubble** – Cheap, flammable, temporary

This is not about *what* you do—but **how** and **why** you do it.

The gold, silver, and precious stones represent:

- **Sincere, Spirit-led works**
- **Actions done in love and humility**
- **Sacrificial obedience for Christ's glory**

The wood, hay, and stubble represent:

- **Religious activity done for show**
- **Works done to earn man's approval**
- **Selfish ambition, pride, and laziness**

Not all Christian activity is rewarded. Only that which is **done in the will of God, by the power of God, and for the glory of God** will last.

## 3. The Fire: A Test of Quality, Not Quantity

“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

This fire is not hellfire. It is the **purifying gaze of Christ**. His judgment is perfect and penetrating. He sees beyond performance into **motive**.

What will that fire test?

- Was it done in **faith**?
- Was it rooted in **truth**?
- Was it led by the **Spirit**?
- Was it aimed at **God's glory**?

The purpose of the fire is not to destroy you—but to **reveal the true value of your life's work**.

#### **4. The Reward: Eternal Recognition and Responsibility**

“If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”  
— *1 Corinthians 3:14*

Rewards are not just heavenly trophies—they represent:

- **Eternal honor** from Christ
- **Positions of responsibility** in the kingdom
- **Crowns to cast at Jesus' feet**
- **Joy of hearing, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”**

Every act of obedience matters:

- A prayer whispered in faith
- A cup of cold water given in Jesus' name
- A hidden sacrifice no one else sees
- A temptation resisted in private

Nothing done for Christ is ever wasted.

#### **5. The Loss: Eternal Regret—but Not Eternal Separation**

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

This verse is key.

- The person is **still saved**.
- But they suffer **loss of reward**.
- They are saved “**yet so as by fire**”—as one escaping a burning building, with nothing to show for their life.

They made it into Heaven—but **empty-handed**.

This is not about **losing salvation**, but about **wasting opportunity**.

There will be **tears in Heaven**—not for sin, but for loss. For things left undone. For gifts unused. For years wasted in spiritual apathy.

## **6. Faithfulness, Not Fame, Is What Matters**

God is not impressed with size—He is moved by **faithfulness**.

You won’t be judged based on:

- How big your ministry was
- How many followers you had
- How much applause you received

You’ll be judged by what you did with **what you were given**.

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

— *1 Corinthians 4:2*

The widow who gave two mites may outrank the millionaire who gave out of abundance. The prayer warrior who labored in secret may shine brighter than the platform preacher who served for self.

## **7. Motive Matters Most**

Jesus warned against doing things **to be seen of men** (Matthew 6). He taught that those who serve for man's praise **already have their reward**.

At the Bema Seat, many who seemed great may stand empty. And many who seemed unknown may shine.

Why?

Because **motive matters**.

Were you doing it to be seen?

Were you doing it to gain praise?

Or were you doing it because you love the Lord?

“Let love be without dissimulation...”

— *Romans 12:9*

God doesn't want performance. He wants **purity**. He wants **love**. He wants **truth**.

## 8. The Crowns to Be Won (And Possibly Lost)

There are at least **five crowns** mentioned in the New Testament:

1. **The Incorruptible Crown** – For those who discipline the flesh (1 Cor. 9:25–27)
2. **The Crown of Rejoicing** – For soul-winners (1 Thess. 2:19)
3. **The Crown of Righteousness** – For those who long for Christ's return (2 Tim. 4:8)
4. **The Crown of Glory** – For faithful shepherds (1 Peter 5:4)
5. **The Crown of Life** – For those who endure trials and remain faithful (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10)

These are not automatic. They must be **earned**. And they can be **lost** (Rev. 3:11).

These crowns are not for our own boasting—but to be **cast at Christ's feet** in worship (Revelation 4:10–11).

## 9. Examples of Reward and Loss in Scripture

### A. The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30)

- The faithful servants were **rewarded** and made rulers.

- The unfaithful one lost his opportunity and his Lord's approval.

### **B. The Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–21)**

- He built barns, but was not rich toward God.
- He lost it all in a moment—he invested in earth, not eternity.

### **C. Demas (2 Timothy 4:10)**

- Once a fellow-laborer with Paul.
- Loved this present world and abandoned the ministry.
- His legacy is a cautionary tale.

## **10. Why This Truth Should Motivate You**

“Set your affection on things above...”

— *Colossians 3:2*

We are not saved by works—but we are saved **unto good works** (Eph. 2:10). And those works will be **weighed**.

What motivates a believer who can't lose salvation?

- **Gratitude for grace**
- **Desire to please Christ**
- **Longing to hear “Well done”**
- **Fear of loss—not of salvation, but of reward**

This doctrine corrects two dangerous attitudes:

1. **Complacency** – “I'm saved, so I don't need to do anything.”
2. **Legalism** – “I need to work to stay saved.”

Both are wrong.

The truth is: You are saved forever—but **you will give account**.

## **Conclusion: Don't Waste What Can't Be Replaced**

Every moment matters.

Every choice echoes in eternity.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is not about guilt—it's about **gain or loss**. Not whether you get in, but **how you'll live once you're in**.

You can't earn salvation—but you can earn reward. You can't lose your place in Heaven—but you can lose your inheritance (Col. 3:24–25).

Let this truth shake you from spiritual slumber. Let it drive you to serve, to love, to give, to obey. Because one day, fire will fall—and what remains will be **your offering to Christ**.

Will it be ashes?

Or treasure?

Will you rejoice?

Or regret?

The choice is now.

The judgment is then.

**Live for the reward.**

**Run to hear “Well done.”**

Because while you're saved forever—what you do now still matters **forever**.

### **3 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Gold, Silver, Precious Stones**

**What are these lasting works? A breakdown of spiritual investments that endure eternal fire—rooted in truth, love, and Spirit-led service.**

*(1 Corinthians 3:12–13)*

#### **Introduction: Not All Work Is Eternal**

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the believer's life is tested—not for sin or salvation, but for substance. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:12–13 that every believer builds something upon the foundation of Christ. The materials we use—spiritually speaking—will either survive the fire of judgment or be consumed by it.

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it

shall be revealed by fire...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:12–13*

This passage introduces a **heavenly quality test**. Not every Christian’s work will endure. Some things will burn up in a moment. Others will be purified and preserved forever.

So what does it mean to build with **gold, silver, and precious stones**? What kind of life and ministry produces **eternally lasting works**? That is the heart of this essay.

## 1. The Foundation Is Already Laid

Before discussing what we build, we must first establish that **the foundation is not in question**.

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:11*

The believer’s judgment does not question their salvation. It assumes it. The foundation is **Jesus Christ**—the Rock of our redemption. Once we are saved, we are building upon that foundation for the rest of our lives.

The question becomes: **What kind of structure are we erecting?**

## 2. Six Materials: Eternal vs. Temporal

Paul lists six categories of building materials:

- **Gold**
- **Silver**
- **Precious stones**
- **Wood**
- **Hay**
- **Stubble**

These are divided into two groups:

### Group 1: **Gold, silver, precious stones**

- Valuable

- Durable
- Refined in fire
- Spirit-produced
- Rooted in eternal things

### **Group 2: Wood, hay, stubble**

- Common
- Perishable
- Consumed by fire
- Flesh-produced
- Rooted in temporary things

The **fire of Christ's judgment** will test the quality of each believer's spiritual construction. Only works built with **eternal motives and power** will survive.

### **3. What Is the Fire?**

"...the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."  
— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

The "fire" is not Hell or purgatory. It is the **searching, refining presence of Christ Himself**. His gaze is described as "eyes like unto a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14). This fire exposes what was real and what was religious. What was gold and what was glitter.

This judgment will test:

- **The origin** of the work (flesh or Spirit)
- **The motivation** behind it (self or Christ)
- **The content** of it (truth or error)

### **4. Gold – Deeds Rooted in Divine Nature**

Gold is a biblical symbol of **divinity, purity, and glory**.

**Gold represents:**

- **Worship done in truth and Spirit**
- **Obedience from love**
- **Faithfulness under trial**
- **Truth uncompromised**

Gold is refined through fire and becomes purer when tested. So are believers who endure hardship and continue serving faithfully. Works of **pure devotion to Christ**—done for His glory alone—are gold.

“The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold...”

— *1 Peter 1:7*

Examples of gold:

- Enduring persecution with joy
- Giving when no one sees
- Forgiving from the heart
- Standing for truth when it costs

## **5. Silver – The Redemptive Work of the Gospel**

Silver in Scripture often symbolizes **redemption**. Jesus was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and the tabernacle used silver sockets to uphold the boards—pictures of Christ’s redemptive support.

**Silver represents:**

- **Gospel proclamation**
- **Soul-winning**
- **Evangelistic giving and serving**
- **Sharing Christ in word and deed**

Any act that contributes to the **spread of the gospel** and the **rescue of souls** is silver.

Examples of silver:

- Supporting missions

- Personal witnessing
- Translating Bibles
- Discipling new believers

“He that winneth souls is wise.”

— *Proverbs 11:30*

These works will **shine in eternity**, for they reflect the heart of our Redeemer.

## 6. Precious Stones – Character Formed Through Trials

Precious stones are formed through **heat, pressure, and time**. In biblical language, they represent things of **beauty, variety, and resilience**. The high priest’s breastplate bore twelve precious stones—each representing a tribe of Israel. The heavenly city in Revelation is adorned with them.

**Precious stones represent:**

- **Christlike character under pressure**
- **Faithfulness in hidden places**
- **Service not seen by man but honored by God**
- **Depth of maturity, wisdom, and integrity**

Examples of precious stones:

- A mother who prays daily for her children
- A believer who suffers illness with grace
- A caregiver who serves with compassion
- A teacher who shapes young minds in truth

These works may never make headlines, but in Heaven, they’ll **dazzle with eternal weight**.

## 7. How to Build with Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones

### A. Build with the Right Motive

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”  
— *1 Corinthians 10:31*

If it's done to be seen by men—it's wood.  
If it's done to exalt Christ—it's gold.

### **B. Build with the Right Foundation**

Not all ministry is built on Christ. Some are built on personalities, programs, or pragmatism. You must build on **truth**.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”  
— *John 17:17*

### **C. Build with the Right Power**

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD...”  
— *Zechariah 4:6*

Works done in the energy of the flesh may look impressive—but will **burn to ash** in Christ's presence. Only **Spirit-led labor** will last.

## **8. Modern Examples of Each Type**

### **Gold:**

- A missionary who serves faithfully for decades with little recognition.
- A Christian who turns down sin in secret to honor the Lord.
- A pastor who preaches sound doctrine when false teaching is popular.

### **Silver:**

- A teenager who witnesses to classmates despite ridicule.
- A donor who finances Bibles for unreached regions.
- A grandmother who shares the gospel with her grandchildren weekly.

### **Precious Stones:**

- A cancer patient who remains joyful and encourages others.
- A husband who cares for his disabled wife selflessly.
- A believer who prays for revival for years, unseen.

These are **eternal works**—and they will be **revealed in fire** as pure and indestructible.

### **9. Contrast: The Perishable Nature of Wood, Hay, and Stubble**

Wood rots. Hay withers. Stubble is worthless. These represent:

- Flashy but shallow ministries
- Works done for attention
- Deeds done in disobedience
- Teaching based on tradition, not truth

These works may impress men, but they mean **nothing** to God. They'll vanish in a moment when exposed to the flame of Christ's judgment.

### **10. The Outcome: Reward or Loss—Not Heaven or Hell**

“If any man's work abide... he shall receive a reward.”

“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:14–15*

The believer is not in danger of Hell. But they are in danger of **loss**—loss of:

- Eternal reward
- Heavenly honor
- Kingdom responsibility
- Personal joy at Christ's coming

This reality should not breed fear, but urgency.

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

— *Ephesians 5:16*

### **11. Building Eternally in a Temporary World**

It's easy to build with what the world celebrates:

- Trendy churches
- Shallow theology

- Celebrity pastors
- Carnal success metrics

But Christ is not grading on popularity. He's grading on **purity**.

You can be **famous on earth** and **forgotten in Heaven**. Or you can be **faithful in obscurity** and **rewarded for eternity**.

## 12. The Ultimate Reward: Pleasing Christ

“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”

— *2 Corinthians 5:9*

More than crowns, more than thrones, the deepest desire of the true believer is to **please Jesus**. To hear Him say:

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant...”

— *Matthew 25:23*

That moment—**His smile**—will make every hidden sacrifice worth it.

## Conclusion: Fire-Proof Your Life

The fire is coming.

Not to destroy you—but to test your life's work. What you do today will either become **eternal treasure**—or **eternal ash**.

You have the foundation.

Now, **choose your materials**.

Build with gold: love, truth, obedience.

Build with silver: gospel service and sacrifice.

Build with precious stones: character formed in trials.

Because one day the trumpet will sound...

The fire will fall...

And your work will be tested.

Will it last?

Or will it vanish?

Only what's done **for Christ, through Christ, and because of Christ** will remain.

Build wisely.

#### **4 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Wood, Hay, Stubble**

**What burns? Exploring vain, fleshly, self-serving works that may have looked impressive to men but are worthless before Christ.**

*(1 Corinthians 3:12–15)*

#### **Introduction: Impressive to Men, Incinerated Before God**

In the eyes of men, much of what is built under the name of “Christian service” appears successful—large crowds, big budgets, impressive platforms, well-crafted ministries. But when the eyes of fire (Revelation 1:14) gaze upon those same works at the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, many will be consumed in an instant.

Paul warned the Corinthian church that believers can build their lives with one of two categories of spiritual material: **gold, silver, precious stones**—or **wood, hay, stubble**. The first group represents eternal works; the second, **temporary works rooted in flesh**.

This essay explores the sobering reality of what it means to build with **wood, hay, and stubble**—works that may have earned applause on earth, but will earn **ashes in eternity**. These are the deeds that **burn**—and their loss, though not salvation, will echo into eternity.

#### **1. The Context: A Judgment for Believers Only**

“Every man's work shall be made manifest... because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

Let's be clear: This is not a judgment for the unsaved. That's the **Great White Throne** in Revelation 20. The **Judgment Seat of Christ** is for believers only.

This is not about **whether** you get into Heaven—it's about **what you bring with you**. It's not about your **salvation**, but your **service**. Not your **faith**, but your **faithfulness**.

## 2. The Two Types of Builders

Paul divides Christian builders into two types:

### 1. Those who build with gold, silver, precious stones (covered in Essay 3)

These represent Spirit-led, Christ-centered, eternally valuable works.

### 2. Those who build with wood, hay, stubble

These represent **superficial, carnal, man-pleasing, or misguided works**.

Both groups are saved—but only one group will be **rewarded**.

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

This verse makes it clear: You can **be saved**—and still **suffer tremendous loss**.

## 3. Characteristics of Wood, Hay, and Stubble

These materials have common traits:

### A. They Are Abundant

- Easy to acquire.
- Cheap.
- Readily available.

These represent the believer who follows the path of least resistance—serving God **out of convenience**, not commitment.

### B. They Are Lightweight

- They occupy space but have no weight or substance.
- Appear big, but lack durability.

A Christian may fill their life with “ministry” that’s heavy on activity but light on **Spirit and truth**.

### C. They Are Flammable

- Cannot survive fire.
- Instantly consumed.

That which is **not of Christ** will **not survive Christ's judgment**. It's that simple.

#### 4. What Exactly Is Wood, Hay, and Stubble?

Let's explore real examples of works that **burn** before Christ.

##### A. Works Done in the Flesh

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”  
— *Galatians 3:3*

Any act done **without dependence on the Holy Spirit** is wood, hay, and stubble. God is not impressed by effort. He is glorified through **obedience and surrender**.

Examples:

- Preaching with no prayer life.
- Evangelism done for numbers, not souls.
- Charity rooted in pride, not compassion.

##### B. Works Done for the Praise of Men

“They have their reward.”  
— *Matthew 6:2*

Jesus warned of giving, praying, and fasting to **be seen of men**. These works appear holy—but are hollow.

Examples:

- Building a ministry to be admired.
- Posting every good deed for likes.
- Serving in church while bitter at heart.

### C. Works Rooted in False Doctrine

“If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

— *Isaiah 8:20*

You cannot build lasting works on **bad theology**. Heresy may gather a crowd—but it **burns before Christ**.

Examples:

- Preaching prosperity instead of repentance.
- Replacing grace with legalism.
- Teaching salvation by baptism or works.

### D. Works Done in Division and Envy

“For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal...?”

— *1 Corinthians 3:3*

Jealous ministry, competitive spirit, and tearing others down to lift yourself up—these works may succeed on earth, but **fail in Heaven**.

Examples:

- Competing with other churches instead of cooperating.
- Sabotaging others for promotion.
- Gossip masked as “prayer requests.”

### E. Works Done Without Love

“Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

— *1 Corinthians 13:3*

Love is the **divine motive** behind lasting works. Labor without love is **religious noise**.

Examples:

- Teaching without compassion.
- Helping to earn favor.

- Serving with resentment.

## 5. Why These Works Burn

Because they fail the test of divine fire:

“The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

It’s not how big, but what **sort**. Fire exposes substance. Fire reveals motive. Fire burns fluff.

That beautiful “ministry” built on self will collapse in a second.

That Instagram-worthy outreach done for attention?

Ashes.

That impressive sermon plagiarized and preached for applause?

Ashes.

## 6. The Pain of Loss—Yet the Security of Salvation

Paul is careful to say:

“...he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

This is not loss of Heaven—but **loss of reward**. Not loss of identity—but loss of **intimacy, opportunity, and honor**.

Heaven is not a flat field—it is a **kingdom** with **roles, crowns, and responsibilities**. Some will **reign with Christ** (2 Tim. 2:12). Others will **barely escape the fire**.

There will be **tears in Heaven** (Revelation 21:4)—tears wiped away by God. Perhaps those tears are from this moment, when we see **what could have been**.

## 7. Biblical Examples of Wood, Hay, and Stubble

### A. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)

- Gave a gift, but lied about it.
- Wanted recognition more than righteousness.

Their gift looked generous—but it was **wood**, done in deception.

### **B. King Saul**

- Offered sacrifices he wasn't authorized to make.
- Feared people more than God.

He kept the sheep, disobeyed the Lord, and justified it. **That burns.**

### **C. Demas**

- Served with Paul.
- Abandoned the ministry for the world.

What looked like faithfulness turned to **fleshly pursuit.**

## **8. When the Fire Falls—A Silent Shock**

Imagine standing before the King of Kings. Your life's work is presented. The fire falls.

The crowd you once led?

Gone in smoke.

The sermons preached for self?

Ash.

The applause of men?

Silent.

But in that moment—**you're still His.** He's not angry. He's not condemning. He's refining.

And you realize what was done for **eternity**—only **that remains.**

## **9. How to Avoid Building with Wood, Hay, and Stubble**

### **A. Stay Rooted in the Word of God**

Build your life on **truth**, not trends.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet...”

— *Psalms 119:105*

### **B. Walk in the Spirit**

Let God lead your decisions—not your ego.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

— *Galatians 5:16*

### **C. Check Your Motives**

Ask, “Would I still do this if no one ever knew?”

### **D. Prioritize Eternity**

Choose the **unseen reward** over the **instant applause**.

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth...”

— *John 6:27*

## **10. The Grace to Start Over**

The beautiful truth is: as long as you are alive, **you can rebuild**.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us...”

— *1 John 1:9*

Today’s wood can be tomorrow’s gold.

Your motives can be purified.

Your works can be redirected.

Your reward can still be won.

Let this essay be a wake-up call. **Stop building straw palaces**. Start laying bricks of eternal treasure.

### **Conclusion: Don’t Build a Bonfire**

The Judgment Seat of Christ is not to scare you—it’s to **sober you**.

You’re going to Heaven.

You’re safe in Christ.

But what you bring with you matters.

Some will arrive **with crowns to cast**.

Some will arrive **with ashes at their feet**.

Don’t spend your life building a **bonfire for the Bema**.

Lay down the wood, hay, and stubble.  
Pick up the gold, silver, and stones.  
And build something that will **shine forever**.

Because one day, when the fire falls—**only what was done for Christ will last**.

## **5 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Why It Motivates, Not Terrifies**

**This judgment produces joy for the faithful—not fear of condemnation. It drives the believer to live purposefully.**

*(1 John 2:28; 2 Timothy 4:7–8)*

### **Introduction: The Misunderstood Judgment**

For many Christians, the phrase "Judgment Seat of Christ" triggers uneasiness, confusion, or outright fear. They've imagined standing before Jesus as a moment of exposure and shame, a celestial courtroom where sins are rehearsed and tears flow from eternal regret.

But this is not the Bible's portrayal of the **Judgment Seat of Christ**.

This is not a judgment **for sin**, but a judgment **for service**. Not a moment of **condemnation**, but of **commendation**. It is a day when Jesus, the gracious and righteous Judge, will **reward faithfulness**, **review motives**, and offer the words every believer longs to hear:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

The Bema Seat—named after the Greek word used in the Olympics for the victor's platform—is not a place of divine punishment, but of **divine prize-giving**. It's a holy review that should not **terrify**, but **motivate**.

Let's explore why this judgment seat is one of **hope, purpose, and glory**—and why the faithful believer has nothing to fear.

### **1. The Nature of the Judgment Seat of Christ**

The Judgment Seat of Christ is **not** the same as the **Great White Throne** Judgment of Revelation 20. That judgment is for the **unsaved**, and it ends in eternal separation from God.

The Bema Seat, by contrast, is for those who have been **justified by faith**. It occurs **after the Rapture** and is based entirely on **what the believer did after salvation**.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...”

— *2 Corinthians 5:10*

This is not a courtroom for sinners—it’s a **review stand for saints**.

## 2. Why It’s Not About Condemnation

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

— *1 John 2:28*

The key word here is **confidence**.

The believer does not approach this judgment with fear of condemnation:

“There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus...”

— *Romans 8:1*

Our sin was judged at the cross. Jesus bore it all. The believer is **robed in Christ’s righteousness**. We will never be judged **for** our sin—but we **will** give account for what we did **after** we were saved.

This is not about losing salvation. It’s about gaining or losing **reward**.

## 3. Joy for the Faithful, Not Dread for the Redeemed

The tone of Scripture regarding this judgment is consistently **positive**—especially for the faithful.

Consider Paul’s words as he approached death:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day...”

— *2 Timothy 4:7–8*

Paul was not terrified—he was **eager**.

He looked forward to “that day” with joyful anticipation, knowing he had **finished well**.

The Bema Seat is not a dark cloud looming over the Christian life. It is a **beacon of motivation**, calling us to live lives worthy of Christ.

#### **4. Motivation, Not Manipulation**

Far too often, pastors and preachers have used the Judgment Seat as a tool of **manipulation** rather than **motivation**.

They portray Christ as disappointed, shaking His head, ready to shame believers. This produces **guilt-driven service, performance-based Christianity, and anxiety about eternity**.

But that is not the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus desires that His children **serve in love**, not out of fear. The true motivation of the Bema Seat is:

- **Love** for the Savior
- **Hope** of reward
- **Desire** for eternal usefulness
- **Faith** in future promises

“We love him, because he first loved us.”

— *1 John 4:19*

Perfect love **casts out fear** (1 John 4:18). The Bema Seat, when rightly understood, inspires **joyful service**, not anxious striving.

#### **5. The Day That Makes All the Sacrifice Worth It**

Many Christians labor in **obscurity**, serve in **difficulty**, and walk in **discouragement**. They wonder:

- Does anyone see?
- Does it matter?

- Will I ever be rewarded?

Yes.

The Bema Seat is the day when **every hidden act of obedience is brought to light.**

“Then shall every man have praise of God.”

— *1 Corinthians 4:5*

God will **personally reward** His children. He sees:

- The quiet giver
- The faithful mom
- The intercessor in the prayer closet
- The pastor in a small church who stood for truth

**No deed done for Christ is ever wasted.**

## **6. It Redeems Present Suffering**

For those who suffer for Christ, the Bema Seat provides **eternal context.**

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...”

— *2 Timothy 2:12*

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

— *2 Corinthians 4:17*

The losses, the trials, the persecution—they will all be worth it on **that day.**

Knowing we will one day stand before our Lord and be rewarded should make us **endure with joy.**

## **7. It Gives Purpose to the Mundane**

The Bema Seat transforms the ordinary into the **eternally meaningful.**

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

— *1 Corinthians 10:31*

Changing diapers, answering emails, making dinner—if done for Christ—can become gold, silver, and precious stones.

Life is not divided into “sacred” and “secular.” Every moment lived for Jesus is a **spiritual investment**.

## 8. It Anchors Us in Accountability

While not meant to terrify, the Bema Seat does **sober us**. It reminds us that **we will give account**:

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

— *Romans 14:12*

This keeps us:

- Focused
- Watchful
- Spiritually alert

We don't serve for applause. We serve for **that day**.

“Wherefore we labour, that... we may be accepted of him.”

— *2 Corinthians 5:9*

We're not earning salvation—we're **honoring our Savior**.

## 9. It Clarifies What Truly Matters

In a world obsessed with platform, performance, and popularity, the Bema Seat cuts through the noise.

Christ won't ask:

- How many followers you had.
- How slick your brand was.
- How wealthy your ministry became.

He will ask:

- Did you serve Me in love?

- Were you faithful with what I gave you?
- Did you seek My glory or your own?

This judgment is not about **size**, but about **sort** (1 Corinthians 3:13). The fire tests **quality**, not quantity.

## 10. It Inspires Us to Finish Well

The Bema Seat gives believers a reason to **press on**, even when tired, even when discouraged, even when unnoticed.

“Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”  
— *Galatians 6:9*

When the Bema Seat is our focus:

- We don’t quit in hardship.
- We don’t compromise in temptation.
- We don’t coast in comfort.

**We run to win.**

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”  
— *1 Corinthians 9:24*

## 11. The Crown of Rejoicing

Paul looked forward to the Bema Seat because he knew what it meant for others, too:

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”  
— *1 Thessalonians 2:19*

The Bema Seat is not only a moment of **personal reward**, but a time of **shared celebration**. It’s when we’ll see the **fruit of our labor**, the **souls we impacted**, and the **lives we touched**.

## 12. The Joy of Hearing “Well Done”

No earthly reward can match the moment when Jesus looks you in the eye and says:

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant...”

— *Matthew 25:21*

Not “well known,”

Not “well connected,”

Not “well marketed”—

**Well done.**

That’s the reward. That’s the aim.

### **13. The Danger of Shame—But Not Rejection**

“...that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

— *1 John 2:28*

It is possible to be ashamed at the Bema Seat—not from **condemnation**, but from **realizing what could have been**.

This is the loss described in 1 Corinthians 3:15:

“He shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

There is a difference between **getting into Heaven** and **being rewarded in Heaven**. You may be saved and still stand **empty-handed**.

That should motivate—not terrify—the believer.

### **14. The Urgency of the Hour**

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...”

— *Revelation 22:12*

Jesus is coming soon—and He’s bringing **rewards** with Him.

The time to serve is now. The time to build is now. The time to obey is now.

The Bema Seat teaches us that every moment **counts**.

### **15. Final Reflections: What the Judgment Seat Says About Jesus**

The Judgment Seat of Christ reveals:

- His **justice**—He doesn't forget our labor.
- His **love**—He wants to reward, not rebuke.
- His **grace**—Even imperfect works done in faith are remembered.
- His **glory**—Ultimately, it's all about Him.

And in the end, every crown we receive—we will cast at His feet (Revelation 4:10–11).  
Because every good thing was done **through Him** and **for Him**.

### **Conclusion: Run With Joy, Not Fear**

The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a guillotine—it's a **graduation**. Not a court of law—it's an **awards ceremony**. Not a chamber of terror—but a **throne of reward**.

So run your race.

Finish your course.

Keep the faith.

Not for fear of condemnation—but for the **joy of commendation**.

Because on that day, the only thing that will matter is this:

**Was I faithful to Christ?**

### **6 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Crowns to Be Won (and Lost)**

**A look at the 5 crowns (incorruptible, rejoicing, righteousness, glory, life) and how they're earned—or forfeited.**

*(1 Corinthians 9:25; James 1:12)*

### **Introduction: Beyond Salvation—The Honor of Crowns**

Heaven is not a flat plain. Though salvation is a gift received by grace through faith in Christ, not all believers will enter eternity with the **same reward**. The New Testament teaches that some believers will be honored with **crowns**—marks of distinction, reward, and glory for lives faithfully lived in the service of Jesus Christ.

These crowns are not merely symbolic. They reflect **eternal significance**, privilege, responsibility, and recognition from Christ Himself. Just as the Judgment Seat of Christ is not about who is saved, but how they served, so these crowns are not about **getting in**, but about **what we gain—or lose—once we are in**.

In this essay, we'll examine the **five crowns** the New Testament mentions. We'll explore what each crown represents, how it is earned—or forfeited—and how this powerful doctrine should influence our walk, witness, and worship.

## 1. The Incorruptible Crown – The Victor's Reward

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”

— *1 Corinthians 9:25*

### Context and Meaning

Paul uses the imagery of an athlete running a race. In ancient Olympic games, winners were crowned with **perishable laurel wreaths**. Paul tells us that Christians strive for a **crown that never fades**.

This crown is given to those who:

- **Discipline the flesh**
- **Run the Christian life with purpose**
- **Do not grow weary in doing good**

### Requirements for This Crown

- **Self-control** in conduct and choices
- **Refusal to be dominated by sin or distraction**
- **Consistent progress in spiritual maturity**

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection...”

— *1 Corinthians 9:27*

This crown is not for the flashy, but the **faithful**. It is not about how fast you run—but how **focused, faithful, and disciplined** you remain throughout your race.

## 2. The Crown of Rejoicing – The Soul-Winner’s Crown

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”

— *1 Thessalonians 2:19*

### Context and Meaning

Paul describes the Thessalonian believers as his **crown of rejoicing**—they were fruit of his ministry. This crown is awarded to those who have led others to Christ.

This is the **soul-winner’s crown**, given to those who:

- **Evangelize faithfully**
- **Disciple others into maturity**
- **Invest in eternal souls through personal ministry**

### Requirements for This Crown

- **Sharing the gospel regularly**
- **Leading others to saving faith**
- **Making spiritual impact through service, support, and sacrifice**

This crown is available not only to evangelists and missionaries, but to **any believer** who takes the Great Commission seriously.

“He that winneth souls is wise.”

— *Proverbs 11:30*

## 3. The Crown of Righteousness – For Loving His Appearing

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

— *2 Timothy 4:8*

### Context and Meaning

Paul wrote these words at the end of his life. He was not only ready to depart—he was **eager** to see the Lord. This crown is given to those who **live in joyful anticipation of Christ’s return**.

This crown is not for those who simply **know** the doctrine of the Second Coming—but for those who **long for it, live in light of it, and love it.**

### **Requirements for This Crown**

- **Anticipation of Christ’s return**
- **A holy lifestyle that reflects readiness**
- **A heart that is detached from the world**

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

— *1 John 3:3*

### **4. The Crown of Glory – For Faithful Shepherds**

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

— *1 Peter 5:4*

#### **Context and Meaning**

Peter is addressing **elders and pastors**—those who shepherd God’s people. The crown of glory is the **shepherd’s crown**, given to those who care for the flock of God with humility, diligence, and integrity.

Though many pastors are never famous or followed by multitudes, those who **labor in doctrine, feed the sheep, and guard the truth** will be richly rewarded.

### **Requirements for This Crown**

- **Feeding the flock faithfully**
- **Guarding against false doctrine**
- **Serving with humility—not for money or glory**

“Feed the flock of God which is among you...”

— *1 Peter 5:2*

While this crown is primarily for pastors, it may also extend to **spiritual shepherds**: Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, disciplers—any who guide others in God’s Word.

### **5. The Crown of Life – For Enduring Suffering and Martyrdom**

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life...”

— *James 1:12*

“...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

— *Revelation 2:10*

### **Context and Meaning**

This is the **sufferer’s crown**—the reward for those who endure trials, persecution, or even death for their faith. This crown is a testament to the believer’s **faith under fire** and **love under pressure**.

This crown will be worn by:

- **Martyrs**
- **Persecuted Christians**
- **Those who endure trials without turning back**

### **Requirements for This Crown**

- **Faithfulness in the face of adversity**
- **Steadfast love for Christ in times of testing**
- **Courage in persecution and spiritual warfare**

This crown is promised to those who prove that Christ is more valuable than life itself.

## **6. Why Crowns Matter in Eternity**

Crowns are not merely accessories in Heaven—they are:

- **Symbols of eternal recognition**
- **Tokens of authority in Christ’s kingdom**
- **Expressions of Christ’s pleasure**
- **Objects of worship, to be cast at His feet (Revelation 4:10)**

Each crown reflects a **life lived for eternity**, not self. They are not bragging rights—but **honors granted by the King**.

## 7. Can Crowns Be Lost? Yes.

“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

— *Revelation 3:11*

This warning shows that **crowns can be forfeited**.

How?

- **Neglecting your race**
- **Growing cold in love**
- **Choosing comfort over calling**
- **Succumbing to temptation instead of enduring**

While **salvation cannot be lost**, **rewards and crowns can**. This should **sober us**, not discourage us.

The fire at the Judgment Seat will **reveal what was real**—and remove what wasn't.

## 8. What Crowns Don't Do

- **Crowns don't determine your place in Heaven**—your salvation does.
- **Crowns don't make one believer better than another**—they reflect different **roles and responsibilities** in Christ's future kingdom.
- **Crowns don't belong to us**—ultimately, they're **cast before Christ** in worship.

They are His reward to His servants—and we return them in love.

## 9. What This Should Inspire in Us

### A. Urgency in Witness

Knowing the **crown of rejoicing** awaits, we should seek to share Christ with urgency.

### B. Endurance in Suffering

For the **crown of life**, we must keep the faith when tested.

### C. Holiness in Conduct

For the **incorruptible crown**, we must not be ruled by our flesh.

## D. Readiness for His Return

For the **crown of righteousness**, we must long for His appearing.

## E. Faithfulness in Leadership

For the **crown of glory**, we must lead with humility and feed the sheep.

## 10. The Connection to the Judgment Seat of Christ

Each crown corresponds to a specific area of Christian life that will be tested at the Bema:

Crown	Tested Area	Key Passage
Incorruptible Crown	Discipline and self-control	1 Cor. 9:25
Crown of Rejoicing	Evangelism and spiritual impact	1 Thess. 2:19
Crown of Righteousness	Love for Christ's return	2 Tim. 4:8
Crown of Glory	Faithful leadership and teaching	1 Peter 5:4
Crown of Life	Perseverance under trial	James 1:12, Rev. 2:10

These are not **trophies for the elite**. These are **rewards for the faithful**.

## 11. How to Begin Living for Crowns Today

### 1. Live a disciplined life

Start saying “no” to sin, distractions, and laziness. Walk in the Spirit.

### 2. Tell someone about Jesus

Be intentional. Tract, testimony, or text—plant a seed.

### 3. Pray for His return

Set your affection on things above. Let eternity shape your priorities.

### 4. Serve in your local church

Not for position—but to feed and strengthen others in the Word.

### 5. Don't quit in the trial

Press on. Your crown is just ahead.

## **12. Crowns Are About Christ—Not Us**

We don't chase crowns to boast.

We chase them because we love the One who bore the cross. We want to hear, "Well done." We want to have something **to offer** at His feet.

Because on that day, everything will be laid bare—and everything we've done will be either **burned or crowned**.

### **Conclusion: Win What Cannot Be Taken**

The believer who lives with eternity in view knows this world is not the finish line.

The real prize comes at the **Judgment Seat of Christ**—when the King rewards His servants.

So...

Run your race.

Win your crown.

Guard it with your life.

And when the fire falls, may your works remain.

Because when He returns, He's bringing **rewards with Him**.

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me..."

— *Revelation 22:12*

### **7 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Motives Will Be Judged**

**Not just what we do—but why we did it. Hidden motives, secret pride, and performance-driven ministry exposed.**

*(1 Corinthians 4:5)*

## Introduction: The Hidden Heart Behind Public Works

In today's Christian world, ministries are broadcast, platforms are built, and spiritual "success" is often measured in followers, budgets, and visibility. Yet God sees through it all—not just to the works done in His name, but to the **motive behind them**.

At the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, God will not only evaluate **what** we did, but **why** we did it. The fire that tries every man's work (1 Corinthians 3:13) will also pierce into the **secret counsels of the heart**.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 4:5:

"...the Lord... will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

This is both sobering and freeing. It means God's reward system is based not merely on *results*—but on *reasons*. Your work may be small—but if the motive is pure, it is **eternally precious**. Likewise, your platform may be massive—but if built for self, it will burn like stubble.

Let us dive deeply into what the Bible says about **motives**, how they affect eternal reward, and what it means to live transparently before the One whose eyes are as a flame of fire (Revelation 1:14).

### 1. The Judgment Seat Is About Motives, Not Just Metrics

Modern Christianity tends to celebrate:

- The **visible**
- The **viral**
- The **voluminous**

But Heaven celebrates:

- The **faithful**
- The **humble**
- The **Spirit-led**

In 1 Corinthians 4:5, Paul lays out a divine principle: at the Bema Seat, **hidden motives will be revealed**. The "counsels of the heart" refers to **intentions, ambitions, and secret desires** behind our actions.

This judgment is not about *appearances*—it is about *authenticity*.

## 2. God Judges the Heart—Always Has, Always Will

“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

— *1 Samuel 16:7*

From Genesis to Revelation, God has always prioritized the heart over the hand, the motive over the motion.

Examples:

- **Cain’s offering** was rejected—not because it was the wrong substance alone, but because it lacked faith and right motive (Genesis 4:5).
- **Saul’s incomplete obedience** was rooted in fear of the people, not love for God (1 Samuel 15:24).
- **Ananias and Sapphira’s gift** was outwardly generous, but internally deceptive (Acts 5:1–11).

The Bema Seat will finalize this pattern: God will test not just what you did for Him—but *why* you did it.

## 3. Motives That Please God

The New Testament gives examples of pure motives God delights in:

### A. Love for Christ

“The love of Christ constraineth us...”

— *2 Corinthians 5:14*

When your service flows from love—not guilt, duty, or fear—it is beautiful to God.

### B. Gratitude for Grace

“...by the grace of God I am what I am...”

— *1 Corinthians 15:10*

Paul labored more abundantly because he was stunned by God’s mercy. Gratitude produces gold, not stubble.

### C. Obedience Without Recognition

“...when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”

— *Matthew 6:3*

Heaven smiles on hidden works done in quiet obedience.

#### 4. Dangerous Motives That Burn

##### A. Pride

“God resisteth the proud...”

— *James 4:6*

Pride drives people to build ministries, write books, and preach sermons—not for Christ, but for **personal empire**. The Bema Seat will reduce proud works to **ash**.

##### B. Competition

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory...”

— *Philippians 2:3*

When the motive is to outshine others, to “win” in ministry, or to prove superiority—it’s **hay and stubble**.

##### C. People-Pleasing

“...if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

— *Galatians 1:10*

Many build their works around **human approval**. But works born of compromise, fear, or political correctness will not survive divine fire.

##### D. Guilt or Legalism

Serving God out of obligation or performance-driven fear—trying to “pay Him back”—is not Spirit-led. It’s **flesh-fueled effort**, and it **burns**.

#### 5. Public Ministry Can Still Be Private Failure

The Bema Seat will expose **performance-driven Christianity**. Some will have:

- Thousands of sermons preached
- Massive ministries built

- Best-selling books written  
And still be met with silence from Heaven. Why?

Because it was done for:

- Self-validation
- Brand building
- Human admiration

At the Bema, Christ will ask:

“Did you do it for **Me**—or for **you**?”

## 6. When Motives Don't Match the Message

Jesus gave a haunting warning in Matthew 7:22–23:

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name...? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you...”

While this passage applies to false converts, the principle carries into the Bema: **activity is not authenticity.**

Some may speak in His name, but serve in their own. The Bema Seat strips away every mask.

## 7. Secret Faithfulness Will Be Rewarded

“...thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”

— *Matthew 6:4*

Heaven will reverse much of what earth applauds.

- The unknown intercessor will receive more than the famous influencer.
- The nursery worker may receive more than the stage preacher.
- The suffering servant will shine brighter than the platform celebrity.

If your motives were pure, even your **unseen service** will be **eternally rewarded.**

## 8. The Fire of Christ's Eyes Will Test Every Thought

“His eyes were as a flame of fire...”

— *Revelation 1:14*

The fire is not impersonal—it is **personalized judgment** by Christ Himself. His gaze:

- Sees through performance
- Dissects intention
- Refines substance

You can fool man. You can fool your congregation. You can fool yourself. But you **will not fool the Lord**.

## 9. Examples of Pure and Impure Motives in Scripture

### A. Mary vs. Judas (John 12)

- Mary poured expensive perfume on Jesus' feet—an act of pure love.
- Judas rebuked her—not out of concern for the poor, but because he was a thief.

**Same setting. Same Savior. Two different motives.**

### B. Barnabas vs. Ananias (Acts 4–5)

- Barnabas sold land and gave freely—earning the name “Son of Encouragement.”
- Ananias sold land too—but gave deceptively, seeking praise without sacrifice.

God doesn't just judge the act. He judges **the heart behind it**.

## 10. Why This Shouldn't Terrify You

When rightly understood, this doctrine doesn't paralyze you with fear—it **frees you** from hypocrisy and **inspires you** to be real.

The Bema Seat reminds us that:

- It's **okay to be small** if you're faithful.
- You can **fail outwardly** and still win eternally.
- **God sees** what others overlook.

- You don't have to perform—you just have to **abide**.

## 11. The Rewards Awaiting Pure Motives

When the fire purifies our motives, what remains is:

- **Gold** (eternal glory)
- **Silver** (gospel impact)
- **Precious stones** (character, suffering, hidden obedience)

Paul tells us that those whose works abide will “**receive a reward**” (1 Corinthians 3:14). That reward includes:

- Crowns
- Eternal responsibility
- Divine commendation
- Unspeakable joy in the presence of Christ

## 12. How to Check Your Motives Today

Ask yourself:

- Am I doing this to be seen or to serve?
- Would I still do this if no one noticed?
- Am I praying, giving, and laboring out of love?
- Am I building the Kingdom—or building a brand?

Let the Holy Spirit refine your intentions.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart...”

— *Psalms 139:23*

## 13. Daily Practices That Purify Motives

### A. Stay in the Word

Scripture is the mirror that reveals hidden motives (Hebrews 4:12).

## **B. Pray for purity of heart**

Jesus said the pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8). Ask for this.

## **C. Practice secrecy**

Do some acts of service that **no one but God sees**.

## **D. Be honest with your weaknesses**

Motives are not purified by pretending—they are purified by confessing.

## **14. When You're Misunderstood or Overlooked**

If your motives are right, and others misjudge you—rest in this:

“The Lord is the judge.”

— *1 Corinthians 4:4*

He will vindicate you. He will reward you. You're not building for men. You're building for **that day**.

## **Conclusion: Let Christ Be the Motive**

At the end of the day, the Bema Seat will not merely ask:

“What did you do?”

But rather:

“Did you do it for Me?”

Your works, no matter how impressive, will mean nothing if they weren't born of **love, truth, and the Spirit**.

So strip away the need to be applauded.

Lay down the desire to be seen.

Let Christ be **the why** behind everything you do.

Because on that day, when fire falls, only one thing will remain:

**What was done for Jesus, with Jesus, and because of Jesus.**

## **8 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – The Fire That Tests Every Work**

### **What does it mean that our works are tried by fire? A biblical exploration of divine testing and eternal evaluation.**

*(1 Corinthians 3:13)*

#### **Introduction: Not If, But When—The Fire Will Come**

For the born-again believer, salvation is settled once and for all. But the moment of conversion begins a new construction project: building a life for Christ on the foundation of His finished work.

The Apostle Paul tells us that this building will not go untested. There is a fire coming—not to burn the believer, but to **try their works**. This fire is not the fires of hell, nor the wrath of God for sin. This is the **refining fire** of divine evaluation.

“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

This essay explores what the Bible means by “tried by fire,” what exactly will be tested, what survives, and what perishes—and how we can prepare to build with fireproof materials for the glory of God.

#### **1. The Context: Building on the Foundation of Christ**

Before Paul discusses the fire, he establishes the foundation:

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:11*

This is key: **you cannot even be judged at the Bema Seat unless you are already in Christ**. Salvation is not on the line. What is under evaluation is what you did **after** salvation—your ministry, service, stewardship, motives, and obedience.

Every believer builds something on that foundation. The question is: **what kind of materials are you using?**

## 2. The Fire Described in Scripture

“The fire shall try every man's work...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

Fire in Scripture often represents:

- **Judgment** (Isaiah 66:15–16)
- **Purification** (Malachi 3:3)
- **Divine presence and truth** (Hebrews 12:29 – “Our God is a consuming fire”)

The fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ is not about punishment—it is a divine purifier. It reveals what’s authentic and exposes what’s hollow.

It is the **testing presence of Christ Himself**—whose eyes are like flames (Revelation 1:14), who judges with perfect insight and righteousness.

## 3. Every Work Will Be Tried—Not Some, But All

“Every man's work...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

No one escapes this evaluation.

Whether:

- A missionary in the jungle
- A megachurch pastor
- A janitor who cleaned faithfully
- A young believer who disciplined a friend

Every act, every decision, every sacrifice done “in the body” will be brought into the light and passed through divine fire.

## 4. What the Fire Reveals: The “Sort” of the Work

“...of what sort it is.”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

Notice: it’s not how **much**, but what **sort**. The fire is not about volume, but **value**.

- Was it done in the Spirit—or in the flesh?
- Was it rooted in truth—or based in error?
- Was it born of faith—or of fear?
- Was it done for Christ—or to impress man?

Many works may look beautiful outwardly—but be nothing more than wood, hay, and stubble inwardly. The fire discerns substance, not style.

### **5. What Survives the Fire: Gold, Silver, Precious Stones**

These materials represent:

- **Truth, love, and obedience**
- **Faithful, Spirit-led works**
- **Suffering endured for Christ**
- **Hidden acts of righteousness**

They endure the fire because they reflect the **nature of Christ** Himself.

“If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”  
— *1 Corinthians 3:14*

This is why **small acts**, done with right motives, may yield great reward.

### **6. What Perishes in the Fire: Wood, Hay, Stubble**

These represent:

- **Carnal works** done for attention
- **False doctrine** passed off as gospel
- **Unrepented sin that stained service**
- **People-pleasing, pride-driven labor**

These works may appear successful to men—but are consumed in an instant before the Lord.

“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

Not loss of salvation—but loss of **eternal reward**.

## 7. What Gets Burned—And What Gets Blessed

### A. Burned: The performance-driven sermon

- Delivered for applause, not transformation.

### B. Blessed: The tear-filled prayer

- Whispered in faith, with no audience but God.

### A. Burned: The megachurch built on gimmicks

- Marketing over ministry. Coolness over conviction.

### B. Blessed: The small group that taught sound doctrine for 20 years

- No spotlight, but deep roots planted in souls.

The fire is **no respecter of persons or positions**. It only honors what reflects Jesus.

## 8. The Fire Is Personal—It Comes from Christ Himself

The fire is not abstract. It is the **presence of Christ** testing what belongs to Him.

“...his eyes were as a flame of fire.”

— *Revelation 1:14*

This fire:

- Sees what others can't
- Knows what you really meant
- Cuts through the performance
- Measures weight, not width

The same Jesus who saved you by grace will now **evaluate your life** through the lens of truth and love.

## 9. The Pain of Regret, The Joy of Reward

### Regret:

“He shall suffer loss...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

Loss of:

- Crown
- Commendation
- Opportunity to reign
- Joy in hearing, “Well done”

Imagine watching a life’s work **turn to ash**. That’s the pain of regret at the Bema Seat.

But...

### Joy:

“Then shall every man have praise of God.”

— *1 Corinthians 4:5*

God longs to reward. The fire is not to **condemn**, but to **clarify**.

If your works survive, the reward is:

- Eternal honor
- Shared reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12)
- Crowns that reflect His glory

## 10. The “Day” That Declares It All

“The day shall declare it...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

This “day” refers to the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, following the rapture (Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10). It will be a day of:

- **Final clarity**
- **Heaven’s audit**

- **No more secrets**

Every believer will stand before Christ **alone**. No excuses. No comparisons. Just **you and Jesus**—and the fire.

## **11. Preparing for the Fire Now**

### **A. Build with the Word**

God's Word is eternal. Build your life and service on it.

“Thy word is truth.”

— *John 17:17*

### **B. Serve in the Spirit**

Fleshly effort may impress people—but only Spirit-led labor endures.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit...”

— *Zechariah 4:6*

### **C. Pursue purity of motive**

Ask yourself: Why am I doing this?

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable...”

— *Psalms 19:14*

## **12. You Can't Take Back Yesterday—But You Can Build Today**

If you've wasted years on wood, hay, and stubble—God offers grace.

You can start again. You can repent. You can recalibrate.

“If any man purge himself... he shall be a vessel unto honour...”

— *2 Timothy 2:21*

It's not too late to build something that **will survive the fire**.

## **13. The Fire Will Reveal the Real**

“His work shall be made manifest...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:13*

The Bema Seat will:

- Reveal who was real and who was pretending
- Separate fruit from fluff
- Expose hidden sins and unseen faithfulness

This is the moment where **truth wins**.

#### **14. Anticipating the Fire With Hope**

For those who served humbly, quietly, and biblically—the fire is not a threat. It’s a **refiner**. It removes the worthless and reveals the eternal.

“The trial of your faith... might be found unto praise and honour and glory...”

— *1 Peter 1:7*

Fire doesn’t hurt gold. It purifies it.

#### **Conclusion: The Test That Lasts Forever**

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the fire will fall—not to consume you, but to **test your life’s work**. What’s done in Christ and for Christ will remain. What’s done for self or in error will vanish.

The question is not whether you’ll stand before Him.

You will.

The question is: **What will be left when the fire falls?**

Build for that day.

Live with eternity in view.

Work—not for the crowd, but for the **Crown**.

Because when the fire tests every work, only what’s built for Christ will remain.

## **9 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Present Living in Light of Future Judgment**

**Practical application: how to live today in a way that prepares for that day. Serving with eternity in view.**

*(Colossians 3:23–25)*

### **Introduction: One Day Changes Every Day**

Every Christian will stand before Jesus Christ—not to be judged for salvation, but to be rewarded (or to suffer loss) based on how they lived after receiving Him. This moment is not a possibility; it’s a divine appointment.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

— *Colossians 3:23–24*

This moment at the **Judgment Seat of Christ** (also called the Bema Seat) is what should govern **every moment before it**. To live wisely as a Christian is to live in the light of that future judgment. It is to invest each present day with **eternal purpose**.

This essay provides practical application and spiritual principles for the believer to live **now** in such a way that they will not be ashamed **then**—but will rejoice when they see the Lord face to face.

### **1. Why the Judgment Seat Affects Everyday Life**

Paul makes the connection crystal clear: believers are to serve, give, love, forgive, endure, and labor **because** one day Christ will reward each one according to what they’ve done.

The Bema Seat reminds us that:

- Nothing is wasted.
- Everything matters.
- Each action has eternal significance.

That changes **how we view time, money, suffering, relationships, and daily choices**.

### **2. Your Work Life Becomes Worship**

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord...”

— *Colossians 3:23*

This verse was written to **slaves and workers**, showing that **secular tasks can become sacred** when done for Christ.

**Practical Application:**

- Do your job with integrity.
- Show up on time.
- Serve your boss as if you’re serving Jesus.
- Refuse laziness, gossip, or bitterness.

Even your paycheck job becomes a **spiritual offering** when done in light of eternity.

**3. Your Words Are Eternal Seeds**

“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof...”

— *Matthew 12:36*

Words are not air. They’re spiritual seeds with eternal consequence.

**Application:**

- Speak to build, not to boast.
- Refuse sarcasm that cuts or humor that mocks holiness.
- Share truth, speak the gospel, lift up the broken.
- Text, post, email, and comment as someone who will answer to Christ.

The Bema Seat will weigh not just our deeds—but our words.

**4. Your Time Becomes an Investment**

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

— *Ephesians 5:16*

Time is one of the few resources you can never get back.

**Application:**

- Avoid time-wasting habits (endless scrolling, unproductive media).
- Prioritize spiritual disciplines: prayer, Scripture, service.
- Use your evenings, weekends, and margins for kingdom impact.

When the fire of judgment falls, what will remain of your calendar?

## 5. Your Money Becomes Kingdom Capital

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”

— *Matthew 6:20*

God doesn’t need our money—but He uses it as a **mirror of our heart**.

### Application:

- Tithe regularly and cheerfully.
- Support missions, Bibles, church plants, evangelism.
- Give anonymously when possible.
- Don’t just consume—**contribute** to eternity.

At the Bema, some will find their true “portfolio” wasn’t in stocks—but in souls.

## 6. Your Suffering Gains Significance

“Our light affliction... worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

— *2 Corinthians 4:17*

When endured faithfully, suffering becomes **spiritual currency** in eternity.

### Application:

- Don’t waste your trial. Worship in it.
- Accept hardship as a means of eternal reward.
- Offer your pain as a sacrifice of praise.

What hurts now may shine **forever** in Christ’s presence.

## 7. Your Ministry—Big or Small—Will Be Measured

“If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth...”

— *1 Peter 4:11*

God doesn't measure success the way we do. He rewards **faithfulness** over fame.

**Application:**

- Serve where you are with what you have.
- Don't compare your ministry to others.
- Focus on **depth**, not just **reach**.
- Be consistent in your calling.

The nursery worker may outshine the platform preacher when Christ tests the motives.

**8. Your Relationships Are a Stewardship**

“As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

— *Romans 12:18*

How you treat people echoes into eternity.

**Application:**

- Forgive quickly.
- Speak truth in love.
- Be gentle, gracious, and slow to anger.
- Encourage, restore, and mentor others.

At the Bema Seat, you won't be judged for how many followers you had—but for how faithfully you loved those you were given.

**9. Your Private Life Will Be Public Before God**

“...will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness...”

— *1 Corinthians 4:5*

God sees the hidden moments:

- The private prayer no one heard.

- The temptation resisted in secret.
- The self-denial that only heaven recorded.

He also sees:

- The compromise behind closed doors.
- The duplicity hidden under church clothes.
- The pride dressed up as humility.

Live **in private** as if you're already **standing at the Bema**.

## 10. Live Each Day With “That Day” in Mind

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

— *Romans 14:12*

When you wake up each morning, ask:

- Will this day matter in eternity?
- Will this conversation glorify Christ?
- Will this decision survive the fire?

Living with the Bema Seat in view:

- Clarifies priorities.
- Kills compromise.
- Fuels obedience.
- Frees you from people-pleasing.

## 11. Guard Against Eternal Regret

“He shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved...”

— *1 Corinthians 3:15*

The pain of loss at the Bema Seat is real. While we won't lose our salvation, we can lose:

- **Crowns**
- **Commendation**

- **Opportunities to reign**
- **Deeper intimacy with Christ**

No reward in this life is worth losing **eternal reward**. Live today to avoid **regret on that day**.

## **12. How to Stay Motivated Without Fear**

The Judgment Seat is not about **terror**, but **tension**—the holy, reverent knowledge that God sees, rewards, and will **test** our works.

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”

— *2 Corinthians 5:11*

This “terror” is not fear of hell—it’s reverence that inspires:

- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Generosity
- Holiness
- Gratitude

## **13. Questions to Ask Yourself Daily**

1. Will this survive the fire?
2. Would I do this if Jesus were watching? (He is.)
3. Am I building the Kingdom—or my kingdom?
4. Is this motivated by love—or pride?
5. Would I still do this if no one ever noticed?

These questions purify your daily decisions and redirect your life toward **eternal impact**.

## **14. How the Great Saints Lived With the Bema in View**

**Paul**

“I press toward the mark for the prize...” (Philippians 3:14)  
He ran to win. He lived for the prize of Christ’s approval.

### **Moses**

“...he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” (Hebrews 11:26)  
He traded the throne of Egypt for eternal glory.

### **Jesus**

“...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross...” (Hebrews 12:2)  
Even the Son of God endured suffering with **future reward in view**.

We follow their path by looking **forward**, not just around.

## **15. Live With One Goal: To Hear “Well Done”**

The crown, the praise, the reward—none of it compares to hearing these words from Jesus:

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant...”  
— *Matthew 25:21*

That moment will make every hardship worth it. Every tear, every hour, every sacrifice—  
**justified by a smile from the King.**

## **Conclusion: Eternity Starts Now**

The Judgment Seat of Christ isn’t just a future doctrine—it’s a **present lifestyle**. It’s not just theology—it’s **urgency**.

So serve now.

Give now.

Forgive now.

Build now.

Not for applause.

Not for earthly gain.

But for **that day**.

Because when that day comes, and the fire falls, what remains will be your offering to the One who gave everything for you.

**Live today in light of that day.**

## **10 of 10: The Judgment Seat of Christ – Casting Crowns Before the Throne**

**The ultimate reward isn't a crown—it's Christ Himself. We'll cast our crowns in worship, not boast.**

*(Revelation 4:10–11)*

### **Introduction: Crowns Are Not the Goal—Christ Is**

The Judgment Seat of Christ is often studied in terms of rewards, loss, and accountability. We've explored the fire that tests our works, the motives that will be revealed, the crowns that may be won, and the joy or regret we will experience at that moment. But it all culminates in this single truth:

**Jesus is the reward.**

The crowns are not for our glory. They are not to be framed in heavenly display cases or worn in eternal selfies. They are for **worship**. They are for **laying at the feet of the One who wore a crown of thorns for us**.

“The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...”

— *Revelation 4:10–11*

This final essay brings us to the climax of the Christian life—not what we earn, but **Whom we worship**. The reward is not simply crowns, but the **opportunity to offer them to Christ**.

### **1. The Judgment Seat of Christ Leads to Worship**

All rewards, all commendation, all honor given at the Bema Seat are not ends in themselves. They are meant to be turned back in **adoration to Jesus**.

Every “Well done” is a doorway to worship. Every crown is a token of His grace. Every reward is proof of His faithfulness in us—not ours in Him.

The purpose of rewards is not:

- Ego
- Comparison
- Superiority

The purpose is this: **To glorify the Lamb who was slain.**

## 2. The 24 Elders: A Pattern for Every Believer

In Revelation 4, the 24 elders represent **redeemed humanity**, seated in glory, clothed in white, and wearing crowns.

When the worship of heaven begins, they:

- Fall down
- Remove their crowns
- Cast them before the throne
- Cry out in adoration

This is not a mere ritual. It is the **culmination of grace**. They recognize:

- The worth of Jesus
- The unworthiness of self
- That every reward they received was made possible **by Christ alone**

## 3. You Won't Hold Your Crown—You'll Cast It

You won't parade your crown in eternity like a spiritual trophy. You'll lay it down with trembling hands and grateful tears.

Because you'll know:

- It was **His mercy** that saved you
- It was **His Spirit** that empowered you
- It was **His Word** that guided you
- It was **His blood** that bought you

No Christian will strut through the gates of Heaven. All of us will fall to our knees and say: **"Thou art worthy, O Lord."**

## 4. Crowns Are Earned—But Never Deserved

Throughout Scripture, we're told to strive, labor, watch, endure, and remain faithful to receive crowns. But even when we receive them, we will **not claim credit**.

The Judgment Seat is not a place of boasting—it's a place of **bowing**.

We are rewarded for:

- Running the race (1 Corinthians 9:24)
- Loving His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8)
- Enduring trials (James 1:12)

Yet every ounce of that endurance was fueled by grace. Every step we took was upheld by God's faithfulness.

The only reasonable response to such grace is **worship**.

## **5. Our Crowns Become Instruments of Praise**

When we cast our crowns, we are saying:

- "This belongs to You."
- "I couldn't have done it without You."
- "You are the reason I endured."
- "You deserve the glory."

These are not dead tokens—they are **living testimonies**.

Each crown becomes a **story of grace**, placed before the One who authored it.

## **6. There Is No Jealousy in Heaven—Only Joy**

At the Bema, some will receive more than others. But there will be no envy, no resentment, no competition—only celebration.

Why?

Because in Heaven:

- All attention is on Christ.
- All differences are seen in light of His mercy.

- Every crown cast magnifies the Lamb.

You won't be ashamed that someone else received more—you'll **rejoice with them**, because **it glorifies Jesus**.

## 7. The More You Love Jesus, the More You'll Long to Lay Something at His Feet

This is the core of it all.

- It's not about getting a reward.
- It's about having something to **offer** the One who gave everything.

Crowns are not payment—they're **praise**. They're not jewelry—they're **joy**.

What will you place before Him on that day?

Will your hands be full? Or will they be empty?

## 8. Casting Crowns Corrects Our Theology of Glory

Some today teach a gospel of self-glory, kingdom dominion, and personal greatness. But Revelation 4 corrects all that.

The true heart of Heaven says:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord... for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

Not:

- “Look what I built.”
- “See how faithful I was.”
- “Behold my legacy.”

But rather:

- “To God be the glory.”
- “Worthy is the Lamb.”
- “All I have is Yours.”

## 9. Crown Casting is the Final Act of Stewardship

Everything God gives us is a trust—a stewardship. That includes:

- Time
- Talents
- Treasure
- Truth

And yes—**eternal rewards**.

When we cast our crowns, we are giving back to God what **He enabled us to do**. This is not a one-time gesture—it is the **eternal rhythm of Heaven**.

## 10. Worship Is the Highest Purpose of Reward

God is glorified:

- When we labor well
- When we finish strong
- When we receive our reward
- But most of all—**when we cast it back in worship**

Crowns are just the wrapping paper.

**He is the gift.**

## 11. If You Lose Your Crown, You Still Have Christ

Some believers will suffer loss (1 Corinthians 3:15). They will arrive saved, but without crowns.

They will be in Heaven—by the blood of Jesus—but they will have **no offering** to lay at His feet.

Will they be banished? No. But they will **miss the honor** of partaking in the full measure of glory.

That's not punishment—it's loss of privilege.

But even then—**Christ will still be enough.**

## 12. Preparing to Cast Crowns: Living for His Glory Now

If you want to have a crown to lay at Jesus' feet, then live **today** in light of **that day**.

**How?**

- **Serve humbly**
- **Give generously**
- **Love deeply**
- **Endure faithfully**
- **Preach truth boldly**
- **Live holy quietly**

You don't need a platform. You need **a heart surrendered to Christ.**

## 13. Examples of Crown Casting in Practice

- A widow who gives her last dollar for a missionary—casting her treasure now and her crown later.
- A father who reads Scripture with his children instead of watching TV—investing in eternity.
- A young person who walks away from fame to follow Christ—storing up treasure in Heaven.

These acts may never trend on earth—but they will be **remembered forever** in Heaven.

## 14. Heaven's Atmosphere Is Crownless Heads and Worshiping Hearts

What defines Heaven is not hierarchy but **humility.**

“They fall down... and cast their crowns...”

— *Revelation 4:10*

Heaven will not be full of people proud of their service. It will be full of **worshippers floored by His grace.**

You'll look at the crown on your head, and you'll realize:  
**He deserves it. Not me.**

### **15. This Is What It's All Been For**

At the end of every sermon preached...

Every song sung...

Every prayer whispered...

Every burden carried...

It has all been for this moment:

**To place it all at Jesus' feet.**

This is the moment that will **echo through eternity.**

### **Conclusion: Let the Crown Fall From Your Hand**

The true measure of success is not how much we gain—but how much we **give back to Christ** in the end.

And when the moment comes, and your knees hit the floor, and your hand lets go of that crown—you'll realize it was all worth it.

The race.

The tears.

The losses.

The loneliness.

The rejection.

The fire.

Because finally, you get to give **something back** to the One who gave **everything for you.**

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...”

— *Revelation 4:11*

He is the reward.

He is the treasure.

He is the crown.

**Live to lay it down.**

### **Series Conclusion: Living Today for the Honor of That Day**

We have walked together through the weighty and wondrous truths of the **Judgment Seat of Christ**—the divine appointment that awaits every believer who has placed their trust in the finished work of Jesus.

We've seen that this is **not a judgment of condemnation**, but one of **evaluation**.  
Not a place of wrath—but a moment of **reckoning and reward**.

We've studied the **materials that last**—gold, silver, and precious stones—and the works that burn—wood, hay, and stubble. We've explored the **crowns offered**, the **motives examined**, the **fire that tests**, and the **privilege of worshiping through crown-casting**. We've learned that **faithfulness matters**, not flashiness. That **obedience outweighs applause**, and that **serving in secret can echo forever in glory**.

But above all, we've been reminded that the **greatest reward isn't a crown at all—it's Christ Himself**.

One day, you will stand before Him.

Not with your pastor.

Not with your platform.

Not with your church.

**Alone.**

And on that day, there will be no do-overs, no replays, no reputation to manage. Just the Lord Jesus, the fire of His presence, and the truth of how you lived.

But that day isn't here yet.

So while there's still time...

- Love Him deeply.
- Serve Him sincerely.
- Give sacrificially.
- Obey joyfully.
- Endure faithfully.

- Worship Him now—so you’re ready to worship Him **then**.

Live now in such a way that when your knees hit the floor before His throne, you’ll be able to say—not with pride, but with tears of gratitude—“**Lord, I lived for You.**”

And then, with trembling hands and a heart full of joy, you’ll cast your crown at His feet... and join the eternal chorus:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...”

— *Revelation 4:11*

This is the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**Not the end of your story—but the beginning of His glory.**

Live for that Day.