

Recap

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

²⁵Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

³⁰By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. John 5:24-30

I. Judgement Day Future

1. Everyone will be held accountable.

Everyone will get what they deserve. Evil will be punished and good will be rewarded. Life will one day be fair.

2. Justice will be served.

No one will get away with anything. All the injustices in the world ever committed will be dealt with. The guilty will be punished and the victim vindicated!!

3. We will be judged according to our deeds.

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged” (vs. 24)

Fruit does not give life to a tree it reveals that the tree is alive!

“If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”

4. We will be separated.

It’s the ultimate punishment and it is also the fairest punishment. People get to have it their way. You don’t want God involved in your life. Fine, you can live eternally without him. Judgement Day is not a happy day for God.

It’s a great day for us. It’s a day of salvation, resurrection and restoration for us.

It's a sad day for God. Have you ever had anyone break your heart, who rejected you and didn't want you to be in their life anymore? If so, you have inkling as to the amount of heartache God will experience on Judgement Day.

I know one reason some people have a hard time believing in God is because of Judgement Day. They cannot believe in a God who would cast people into hell.

If that's you, let me take away that reason for you. God does not send people to hell. People send themselves there.

So where are you at with God? Are you part of his family or are you squirming, trying to get away from God? Here this warning: If you persist, one day God will let you have your way and let you go. He doesn't want to. It'll break his heart but he will give you what you want.

So, I plead with you again. Stop squirming! Grasp God's hand now! Don't put it off. Don't wait until "you've had your fun" or for "your retirement years."

Scripture sure says, concerning the taking care of this important spiritual matter: *"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."* (2 Corinthians 6:2)

II. Judgement Day Past

Judgement Day past occurred on the cross where Jesus, the Savior of the world, took on our sins and died in our place so we will not be judged but will cross over from death to life! Because of Judgement Day past, we who believe will not face the Judgement Day future!

Now that's good news. Can I get a witness?

"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" Romans 5:9

Now for the implications.

III. Judgement Day Present

If you take this doctrine seriously, if you take Judgement D to heart, it'll shape your life in many ways. I'm not exaggerating when I say it will revolutionize your life.

What does it mean for us today? I'll give you seven (See why I split the message in two)

1. It'll mean the end to boredom.

Everyone wants to be missed. Everyone wants to make a difference. Everyone wants their lives to count. Everyone needs to feel significant, important.

The doctrine of Judgement Day tells us, we are judged by what we do. What that means is everything we do counts. AND it not only counts a little. Everything we do carries eternal weight.

What you do matters! It's part of your permanent record. Nothing is forgotten. Everything we do and say is significant and will be rewarded. Our sins have been forgiven so there is no punishment for the sins we committed. Jesus took care of that on the cross. The only things we will receive from God on Judgement Day are rewards, rewards for all the good things we did.

Have you ever been “weary in well doing?” You think: “I'm not making any difference. Why bother. No one notices. I never hear a word of appreciation. I'm going to stop caring, stop serving, stop volunteering, stop getting involved and retire. I'm done with it.” Do you feel underappreciated or taken for granted?

Here's good news: People may not notice or show the appreciation you deserve but God notices everything and all accounts will be squared. You'll get the recognition you deserve! So, don't give up. Hang in there. In the end everything will be made right!

2. It'll lead to a greater transformation of your life.

How so?

Why do we have surveillance cameras? Why are there cameras at intersections? To improve our behavior! How many of you will run a light if you know there's no camera at that intersection? How many of you speed when you know there's no police waiting ahead? Be honest! Why? Because no one knows what we are doing. No one sees. Judgement Day reminds us God sees and forgets nothing. Everything will be made right!

If we take this to heart it'll give you the motivation you need to change in the right direction. It'll help you stop habits and behaviors that are sinful. And it'll help you become a better person. It'll help you treat people better and say nicer things to people when irritated.

How do people look when they know they are on camera? Have you noticed how people look when they know they are going to be on TV? Have you ever seen an ugly reporter? No. They are all beautiful! And they are immaculate. When on camera we all what to look our best and we make sure we are on the best of behaviors. And when people are off camera and they think no one can hear or see them, how do they act and speak? A lot differently. We tend to be our “worse selves.”

If we take Judgement Day to heart, we will realize we are always on camera and it can help us continually put our best foot forward. We’d be more motivated to do live better lives and this will be to our advantage. We will experience fewer negative consequences for bad behavior that we suppress and we will experience more positive consequences for good behavior.

I know I’m being idealistic but it can happen!

3. It’ll make you into a more affirming and less critical person.

I didn’t come up with this application, the Hebrew writer did.

*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but **encouraging one another**—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*
Hebrews 10:24-25

What is the writer referring to? Judgement Day. The Hebrew writer says if we really too it to heart we’d be more loving, and encouraging. We’d do more acts of kindness and that’ll inspire others to do the same. And if they begin to be less critical and more affirming, the people they touch pay pass it forward themselves and who knows what could break out! Maybe this world would become a better place?

In Luke 16 Jesus tells us that one day in heaven people will come up to you and tell you that it’s because of you that are in heaven. Because of word you said or an act of kindness you did, it led them to consider Jesus and they did. Think how awesome that will be one day. Talk about experiencing significance!

4. It’ll free you from bitterness and revenge.

Let’s go back to the revenge obituary we saw last week. It’s contradictory.

Notice the writers believe in a judgment day, yet feel the need to “have the last word.” If they truly believed in a judgement day then they wouldn’t have felt

the need to have the last word. Because they know God has the last word, not their mother. And God will settle all accounts. She will face the consequences for her choices. In life she partly did. She lost out on the opportunity to have life-giving relationships with her first two kids.

If we take this truth to heart, that one day there will be a final day of reckoning, one day everyone will be held accountable for choices, then it'll free you from feeling the need to take revenge. Scripture even tell us: *“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”* (Romans 12:19)

You don't have to settle the score. God is already going to do that! If you let God be God, it'll not only free you from bitterness and revenge, it'll save you from making some big mistakes, like these two made. What they did was deplorable. Now everyone around them knows what kind of people they really are! Would you want to associate with people like these two? Would you want to employ them?

One more thing about letting God having the last word: It'll free you in one more area? It'll free you from wasting time spent mulling over in your mind what the person said or did to you! You be set free from the prison of bitterness and resentment that you built for yourself. You think by holding a grudge that you can get back at the person. More than likely the person has forgotten about what they said and did. They've moved on already. The only person you are hurting is you.

So why not give yourself a break and let your grudge(s) go and spend your time in more life enriching ways.

5. It'll give you a heart for justice.

The cross informs us as to the level of commitment God has to justice. Why not just forgive us without going to the cross? Why suffer and die a horrid death? Why leave the comforts of heaven to live in this slime hole? (Don't get me wrong. I think the world God made is beautiful. However, in comparison to the house he lived in, it is a slime hole!) Why not wink at sin? Because it's not in God's nature. He is a just God so he can't merely forgive. Things have to be made right.

Example. This happened to Holly and I. We were driving home. As we passed the market at the Running Y a lady ran the stop sign and crashed into our car. It was an accident. No one was hurt. We weren't upset. She took responsibility

for it and was good at providing the necessary documents so we could get the car fixed.

She could have injured us. She was reckless. And this wasn't the first time. She said this happens to her a lot. Her husband came to help clean up the mess. All he did was roll his eyes and put her bumper into his truck and drive home. We forgive her instantly. Does that make everything right? No. The car is damaged. I can forgive the lady but restitution has to be made. A price has to be paid in order to fix the damages done to our car.

The same is true of God. For justice to occur, the damage caused by our sin has to be paid for. It's the only way for restitution can occur. The difference between me and God is, whereas both of us forgave, I made sure the lady paid for the damages. She had to make the car right. So she bore the price for the damages she made to our car. God did not make us pay for the sins we committed and the damages we did to others and our relationship to him. He paid the price for us on the cross. That's how committed he is to doing justice!

If that's what God is like, then as followers of Jesus we need to have that level of commitment to justice as he does! When we see an injustice we need to speak up and do our best to get rid of the causes and source of that injustice. I'm not advocating that we become political. It's not being political. It's being just.

God want us to reflect his heart and God has a soft spot for the victimized, marginalized, those crushed by power, sinned against through unjust laws, and hamstrung by inequities.

*“But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream.” Amos 5:2*

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” James 1:27

Why did James mention these two groups of people? In his day they were the most vulnerable and marginalized. The culture said there was only one thing lower than a woman and that was a child. The reason that sentiment no longer exists and we value both immensely today is because of the teachings of Christ and his effect on the human heart!

6. It'll compel you to share your faith.

Knowing what's at stake, that people's eternity stands in the balance, it should create urgency within us to share the gospel. But not in the way I've seen it done or was taught. I was a very aggressive and confrontational form of evangelism. In one conversation you had to, like a car salesman, make the pitch, set the hook, and land the deal. And if you didn't you failed to “win souls.”

I've never liked that approach. It never fit my personality. Nor did I find it to be very loving. What motivated Jesus to come and share the gospel with us? It wasn't to provide fire insurance. His pitch was not, “If you don't believe in me you are going to hell! Or “Follow my religion and be a better person. If you don't you are going to go to hell!” It says he went around and preached the good news of the kingdom. (Mark 1:16)

The Apostle Paul says that *“Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.”* 2 Corinthians 5:14. It's not the threat of hell that compels us to share our faith but our experience of the love of Jesus. You see it all through the Gospels. Once a person encounters Jesus and they put their faith in Jesus they can't help telling others what Jesus did for them.

You see this with the demoniac. Jesus casts out multiple demons, heals the man and set his mind straight. He asked Jesus if he could become one of his disciples but Jesus encouraged him to stay in his home town and tell others what God had done for him. Nothing more is said. Later Jesus revisited the area and discovered a large crowd waiting to meet and hear from him.

The guy encountered Jesus and then shared with everyone in his town what God had done for him.

Remember the Woman at the Well in John 4. She had an encounter with Jesus and then ran all over town telling people what Jesus did for her. That's what sharing your faith is. It is “bearing witness to the reality of Jesus in our lives.” ~ Stanley Ott

I don't know about you, I didn't have to have anyone tell me I was going to hell. For some reason I knew that all ready. What I didn't know was what to do about it. I needed to hear the “good news.” I needed to hear the Gospel and what Jesus did for me to save me from myself and a dark future. Does anyone here think “If you don't trust in Jesus you are going to go to hell!” is an attractive pitch?

And it's not biblical. Scripture says this is how to share your faith:

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15

Just tell others about what God has done in your life but be gentle and respectful. Notice it says we are to respond to people's questions as to why we are different, why we are so hopeful. In order for people to ask what makes us different, we need to live different lives. We need to show them the difference God makes in your life....and it should be a good difference!

I like how Tim Keller put it one time...“We are to live our lives in such a way that they contradict our culture in pleasant ways.”

One more thing...

7. It'll provide much needed peace.

Judgement Day is a day when accounts are settled, people are held accountable, and things are made right. It's also the day of resurrection. We rise to new life, to an eternal life. There is an afterlife. We live on. That's good news but there is even better news.

What good would it be if we lived forever but live alone or alone and in poverty? What kind of existence would that be?

Scripture says that Judgement Day for us is the Day of Resurrection but it is also a day of restoration. *“He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”* Revelation 21:5 Earth and heaven are not destroyed, they are renewed. They are re-booted to their original condition.

That's important because there are a lot of people who didn't catch a break in life. They were born into less than ideal circumstances. They were born into the wrong family, wrong culture, wrong country, at the wrong time. They never had the opportunity others did.

Do you envy others? Do you wish you had their life or a better life? Do you have a bucket list with nothing crossed out, or unmet dreams and hopes that you know at this point in your life you'll never be able to fulfill?

Do you feel as if life has passed you by? Do you feel ripped off by life? You were born with a handicap, a learning disability, contracted a debilitating illness, or

experienced an accident that has trapped you in a body that no longer cooperates with you?

There's good news. Judgement Day tells us we haven't missed out on anything! There is justice of eternity. You have all the time in the world to do, acquire, experience, achieve, and learn all those things you've always wanted to but lack the time, energy or opportunity.

If you internalize this. If you believe it. It'll bring a sense of calm to your life, especially as the end draws near. Near the end of your life you won't feel the need to complete your bucket list. You won't feel frustrated by the fact that you never will complete it. You won't die with regrets and anger over what you missed in life. **YOU HAVE ALL ETERNITY TO MEET ALL THOSE UNMET HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS!**

See the difference Judgement Day makes! If you take it to heart it can really revolutionize your life.

On the surface it seems harsh or over the top, but under careful examination and consideration of the alternatives, it's what we need.

This life is unfair. Sometimes good people die young. Corrupt people do prosper. Life is also unjust and people do get away with a lot of things. The victim does not always get justice. The world is corrupt. The powerful oppress and use power to squish the little guy. Good people of character barely make ends meet, while people who lack integrity prosper.

The good news of Judgement Day is a day is coming when life will be fair. Everything will be made right. Justice will be served. All that was lost will be restored!

So, how do you end up on the right side of Judgement Day?

First, stop trying to squirm out of the loving arms of God.

Second, run into his arms by bowing the knee to God your only judge.

Say to God, “You are right! I deserve judgement. Thank you for being a loving and merciful judge. Thank you for Jesus, who took my judgment upon himself. He paid my debt. Now I am free from Judgement Day. I am not condemned but have already moved over from the category of death to life. Thank you Jesus for saving me. I place my life in your hands. Melt me, mold me and shape me in your likeness! Amen!

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believe on him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” John 5:24