

2 Corinthians 5:9-11, "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 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. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust are made manifest in your consciences."

The Bible teaches with clarity of a day, the last day, when all will be gathered before the Lord and separated one from another as a shepherd would divide His sheep from the goats (Matt 25:31-46). That final day of judgment and separation is one which will include the declarative judgment of God for His people (Matt 25:34, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"), and the executive judgment upon the wicked (Matt 25:41, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels").

The Bible also teaches the reader about the temporal judgment seat of Christ. This judgment seat is one from which the Lord judges His children, who live in this world, by the works that they commit, "whether it be good or bad." The temporal judgment seat of Christ does not have eternal consequences, as He has already paid for all His people's sins on the Cross of Calvary by the offering of His precious life in their room and stead. This judgment seat is one that has temporal (in-time) consequences for the child of grace.

Since 2 Corinthians 5:9-11 is dealing with "labour"; "things done" (works); and the works done which are "good and bad", we are able to conclude that this portion of scripture is referencing a temporal context of judgment and not an eternal. We are also able to gather at least three lessons from these verses, which are:

(1) The Lord sees and knows all that we do and think! For the Lord to judge "according to that" we have done, it would require Him to know everything about us. Proverbs 15:3 reads, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." According to Hebrews 4:12, He "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The very thought of the Lord knowing and seeing, not just our actions, but all the way into our hearts, is extremely sobering for anyone who has a fear of the Lord.

(2) We reap what we sow ("receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done")! Without question, the Lord is merciful to His little children. If we all received the judgment we deserve, in a temporal context, it would be beyond every fear of us all. But the Apostle made it clear in Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." When we sow tomatoes, we reap and gather tomatoes. When we sow potatoes, we reap and gather potatoes. And so it is, when we sow evil, we reap and gather such. When we sow good works, we reap and gather such.

(3) The Reverential Fear of the Lord is a powerful motivator to a godly life ("Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord")! Our greatest reason we have to serve the Lord is love. We only love Him because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19), and we should show that we love Him, who loved us with an unchangeable love, by serving Him in Spirit and in Truth. We also should serve Him because He is God and we are His creation (naturally and spiritually). Paul said in Romans 11:22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Brothers and sisters, this portion of scripture is one that the Apostle used to encourage the Corinthians to godliness. I trust and pray that it will do the same for us today. The Lord, He is God,

and He possesses the power and authority to judge, and He is the ONE we should strive to please with our everyday lives. Amen!

Elder Ronnie B Loudermilk