



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Corinthians 4:1–5; Luke 16:1–9

1 Corinthians

“The Final Tribunal”

TRANSCRIPT

Well, it's time for us to begin, so let's open our class with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, again we turn to Thee with appreciation for the Scriptures. We know that they are the Word of God. We know that we are, in our Christian lives, to not go beyond that which stands written. We thank Thee for the way in which they have ministered to us, how they have brought us the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And all of the many blessings that accompany him are set forth in Thy Word, and we praise Thee Lord for the unconditionality of those great promises, depending ultimately not upon us but upon Thee.

We thank Thee for our great God in heaven; we know that Thou art altogether true to Thy Word. That Thou art not only omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, but Thou art true to the Scriptures, full of lovingkindness and mercy. And we know, Lord, that all Thou dost say in Thy Word comes from the God who created the universe, and who is responsible for our existence and responsible for our salvation.

And Father, as we turn to the Word, we want to express to Thee our gratitude and thanksgiving for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ from beginning on through to eternity. We know it has no end. We pray that we may be responsive; give us responsive hearts and minds to Thy truth. And we ask that this evening maybe an instance of that as well. And we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

[Message] Returning to 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 1 through verse 5 tonight, and the subject is the Final Tribunal. It’s not the final tribunal in its details, but the apostle does mention it here when he talks about the coming of our Lord. I’m going to read verse 1 through verse 5.

“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court.”

The Authorized Version, I believe, has by man’s day that’s actually literally what the text says, by man’s day. But the term “day” is one that we often use in connection with judgment day. We say the judgment day. And so this translation that I have, The New King James Version, has rendered it, I think accurately, by a human court. We could say by human judgment.

“In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified in this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each man’s praise will come from God.”

It is often been said—and I think this epistle states this—that the central idea of Paul’s writing, particularly here, is the cross of Jesus Christ. And to it, he relates every subject which he handles that’s fundamental to the things that Paul talks about. Arthur T. Pearson, who was a minister of the Word of God in the days of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in the earlier part of this century and the latter part of the last century, put this in a slightly different form. He said, “The nuptial union between Christ and the church is the key to the main divisions of 1 Corinthians. Factions in the

church dishonor it. Impurity is destructive of it. Marriage illustrates it and is hallowed by it.

Identification with idols profanes it. The Lord’s Supper expresses and emblemizes it. Disorderly assemblies disgrace it. The resurrection consummates and crowns it.”

That’s a marvelous little expression of the relationship between the union of Christ and the church with the subjects of the epistles. There’s no doubt about it that the union of Christ and the church is one of the great subjects of 1 Corinthians. And the problem of Corinth, the problem that existed there, naturally brought out these things. Because the factionalism that existed in Corinth was tearing the church apart with squabbles, envy, jealousy, and self-esteem equals pride.

So we’re not surprised then when we turn to this particular epistle and find the apostle laying stress upon the relationship between Christ and the church. Now, he has talked about the problems of factionalism, and let me just review it for a moment. Back in verse 11 of chapter 1 he said, “For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household that there are contentions among you. Now, I say this, that each of you says ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’” So there we have the factionalism referred to.

And then again in chapter 3 in verse 4, “For when one says I am of Paul and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?” So against that background the apostle writes a great deal about the relationship of Christ and the church. And in the course of setting up the discussion of it in these verses that we’re looking at, he’ll talk a great deal about what is the relationship of a servant of Jesus Christ to the work that has been committed to him. I want you to notice, first of all, the statement of verse 1 which has to do with the nature of a servant. Now, verse 1 is a return to the subject of service which he has outlined in chapter 3, verse 5 through verse 17. But then in verse 18, he launched into something a little different, but now he’s coming right back to what he was talking about in the earlier part of the chapter when he was talking about service. Let a man so consider us as servants of Christ.

Now, the word that the apostle uses here for a servant is not the ordinary word, not the word *{diakonos}* from which we get the English word “deacon.” But this is a word that means an

“under-rower.” So you can think of an ancient ship, and you can think of the captain, and you can think of all of those people with their oars outside the boat who were moving the boat along. In other words, they were people who were completely dependent upon someone else. And that’s the term he uses when he talks about himself as servants of Christ, under-rowers. Apostles and teachers are not party leaders. We are servants of Christ. We have no authority on our own. Our authority comes from the Lord.

The second term that he uses is also an interesting one. He calls them “stewards of the mysteries of God.” What was an ancient steward? Well, an ancient steward would be very much like a man who managed a farm in Texas. He might manage the farm for someone who owned the farm but did not even live on the farm. It was an investment, and so they had managers. Stewards were managers. They were entrusted with the master’s business or his property. In fact, the word {*oikonomos*} is the word from which we get the word that has to do with dispensations. So these are the stewards. They are the household masters of the mysteries of God.

Now, if you think for a moment about it, when he says that we are stewards of the mysteries of God, and if you will think about a man who is the manager of a farm or the manager of some other enterprise, you will know immediately that that individual is not the one who has ultimate responsibility. Now, what Paul means by that, of course, is that he and the others with him are not originators of the truth. They are individuals who are responsible for that truth that has been entrusted to them. They’re responsible to their manager, just as a manager is responsible to an owner. So we are stewards of the mystery of God.

Now, the mysteries of God are those things that have to do with the truth of God. In fact, mystery, by the way—the Roman Catholic Church frequently speaks of the sacraments as mysteries. That is never found in the New Testament. They are never called mysteries. The term {*mysterion*}, from which we get “mystery,” is a term that means something like a revealed truth from God. In fact, we could say that a mystery is a revealed doctrine. So stewards of the mysteries of God were individuals who were responsible for the doctrines that are given by God to them.

Now, that tells us a lot about the responsibility of the man who stands behind a pulpit like this and teaches the Word of God. He is an individual. He is not responsible to those who are here to hear. He is responsible to the Lord. These are the divine secrets that he has handed down to us. And, consequently, we are responsible to teach the Word of God that is given to us. In other words, one well-known interpreter has said, “They hand over to men from hand to hand, as we say, not what suits their own tastes, but what the Lord has committed to their charge.”

Now, that sounds like John Calvin, doesn’t it? Well, it is. That’s precisely John Calvin, “We are responsible not to hand over what suits our own tastes. We are responsible to hand over what is given to us in the Word of God.” Every teacher of the Word of God is simply a steward, and his responsibility, the responsibility by which he will be judged, is his faithfulness to that which is given into his hand.

I’ve mentioned Don Carson, who is the professor of New Testament, I think now he is called the Professor of New Testament Research or something like that at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is really one of our finest New Testament scholars. He’s a relatively young man. And he has written a number of interesting things and probably if you want to know something about the New Testament, he is probably the man you would go to who could point you to where you might find the information, if he doesn’t have it himself. He has a little book on this section which I’ve been reading along with these messages that I’ve been giving you, and I’ve borrowed a lot of things from him. And if you read that little book you would say, “Ahh, I see where Dr. Johnson got that, and I see where he got that. He’s not as smart as I thought he was,” it’s Don Carson all right. I don’t mind that at all. He’s a steward, too. We’re stewards of the mysteries of God.

He has an excellent statement about the stewardship here that I’m going to give you as best that I can without reading every word in it. He said, “There is no Christian leadership that does not throb with this mandate that we are stewards of the mysteries of God. In the West (talking about us now, in the West we) must repent of our endless fascination for leadership that smacks much more either of hierarchical models, I’m the boss and all who are below me on the ladder, I want you to

know that what I say goes, or (that’s in the church, by the way. That exists, too. Did you know that? There are people who are called senior pastor. And the junior pastor and others in the church better pay attention to what the senior pastor says, or he might be looking for another position before too long) or of Democratic models, give the people what they want, take another survey, conduct another poll, and scratch where they itch.” Those are the words of Dr. Carson.

“All valid Christian leadership, however varied its style, however wise its use of sociological findings, however diverse its functions must begin with this fundamental recognition, Christian leaders have been entrusted with the gospel, the secret things of God that have been hidden in ages past and are now proclaimed by their ministry. That is our responsibility.” That’s why—I hope that I speak for everybody in Believers Chapel. That’s why in Believers Chapel fundamentally, we must always proclaim the Word of God as our fundamental ministry. We are stewards of the mysteries of God. If we do not do that, we are not being faithful to our stewardship. And there will be an accounting, and you and I will stand before that judgment seat of Jesus Christ and receive that accounting from the Lord. *Stewards of the mysteries of God*, that’s a magnificent expression, just even thinking about it. Makes you realize what a marvelous thing it is to have the Word of God and to be a steward of it and to share it with others. Now, having said that, that’s what a servant is. He is an under-rower. He is a steward. The apostle now points to the responsibilities. It’s very simple. He says, moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

So special attention now to the stewards, and his doctrine is important. Household managers of doctrine—these incidentally, often were freed men or who had been slaves and had been freed, or they were slaves themselves who managed the businesses and farms of ancient people who owned property. And so these individuals were individuals who were stewards of the work of the mysteries of God, just as others were stewards of farms or other properties.

Now, in this passage, Augustine makes an interesting statement that I want to refer to, also. This passage joins issue not only with bad teachers, remember in chapter three he has talked about the people who build on the foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, and then those who build on it

wood, hay, and stubble, and then thirdly, those who destroy the foundation, destroy the building—three kinds of people. Augustine has a word or two about that, and he talks about bad teachers, and he talks about good teachers. And the bad teachers he calls wolves. They are individuals who come in and, like a wolf attacking the sheep, attack the sheep, destroy the work. The good teachers, of course, we know what they are. They are the stewards of the mysteries of God, and they proclaim the mysteries of God. But, he also talks about hirelings, those who are doing their jobs simply because they are going to be paid for money. That is their primary thing.

Listen to what our friend John Calvin says, “For it is not the case that everyone who teaches the truth is consistently faithful, but only the person who desires from the bottom of his heart to serve the Lord and to advance the kingdom of Christ.” And indeed, Augustine helpfully assigns to hirelings a middle position between wolves and good teachers. So we have wolves and good teachers, but in between we have hirelings. And he says further in that passage Augustine speaks more clearly indeed than Paul about the fact that Christ also requires wisdom of a good steward. So stewards—and, remember, there are those who stand in the pulpit who are not true. “Faithful,” this word is a word that means “trustworthy.” In fact, it’s the word that has the same root as to believe, credible, trustworthy, trustworthiness, under review when the books are submitted for scrutiny. It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Now, we shouldn’t have to even discuss the question of trustworthiness or faithfulness when our newspapers are blaring in the headlines now the questions that surround the trustworthiness of the chief executive and others in this government under which we serve. Because there comes a time of reckoning, and that’s what Paul means when he says it’s required in stewards that one be found faithful.

So you’re going to have to submit your books. I’m going to have to submit my books, and then the one who judges everything with equity will look at them. This is a human figure, of course. He won’t have to look at them. He knows. But he will look at them, and you and I will be judged thereby. Those of us who are stewards of the ministries of the Word of God, no doubt greater

responsibility perhaps than some others, but you are a steward of the Word of God, also. Every one of us really belongs in that state.

Now, I’m going to ask you to turn with me to Luke chapter 16, and we’ll look at the unjust steward, the parable that our Lord told, and it’s recorded in Luke chapter 16. It’s a very interesting parable. It’s interesting because nobody really understands everything about this parable. It may be the most difficult of the parables that our Lord told. You’ll see in a moment why I think that no one fully understands it outside of the Godhead, of course, they understand.

Now, in chapter 16 in verse 1 of Luke we read:

“He also said to his disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’ Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’

So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ (That means, of course, take the piece of paper that shows your debt and change the number from a hundred to fifty.) Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the

sons of light. ‘And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.’”

What a strange parable our Lord tells, commending the unrighteous steward. That seems so out of harmony with his parables that he normally gives. In fact, a variety of interpretations, therefore, have been suggested—if we listed all of them we’d probably be here for five or ten minutes—but some of the interpretations of the steward have been these. It was intended to mean the Jewish hierarchy, they were the steward. Or the tax collectors. Others say no, Pilate. Still others, Judas. Some Satan. Some Penitence. Some St. Paul—seems strange. Some Jesus Christ.

So we have all of these contradictory interpretations and so I’m just going to say this, our Lord gives the key to the interpretation, no doubt in verse 8, “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.”

Now, the steward, however wanting in fidelity and care, showed a great deal of prudence in what he did. He knew the accounting was going to come, and he knew he was going to suffer for it. So what can he do? Well, he can make friends by reducing the debt of those people, so when he is out of his office, they’ll be happy to be with him and to help him out. So what our Lord is saying—and we’re not going to say anything about other things in it. He’s just simply saying the believer ought to exercise similar prudence in using the material advantages in this life as a means of providing for the life to come.

If Christians were as sagacious and persevering in using the wealth that God has given them to promote the welfare in their next world, then of course, they would be measuring up to this particular parable, our Lord tells. So just as worldly men promote their interests, maybe selfishly, but nevertheless do it, because of a goal, so Christians who have great advantages are to use their wealth with a view to the future as well. We can put aside the details of the parable, and—because we are not trying to expound it all, but I think you should see that what the steward is doing is providing for

the future, and that our Lord is talking about. In other words, he’s doing what he’s doing. And our Lord would not, of course, agree that what he did was the finest thing to do, but that which was back of it was something he could commend. He was concerned about the future. What is interesting also about it is that the steward was using funds that were entrusted to his care, and that, my friend, is precisely all of your funds, too. They are entrusted to your care by the Lord. They don’t really belong to you. They are entrusted to your care.

And our Lord then commends shrewd use of the things that have been committed to our care, that we too in the life to come may find our Lord pleased with what has been done. So, stewardship, that’s what we were talking about, and this reminded the reader of stewardship, Luke chapter 16.

Now, the judgment of the servants is described in verse 3 through verse 5. “But with me, Paul says, it’s a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court, in fact, I do not even judge myself.”

Now, you might ask the question at this point, what right had Paul to reject church condemnation and exempt himself from men’s judgment? Well, we don’t believe that Paul really had that right. He elsewhere talks about coming under the judgment of others. And so we’re not to understand that to mean what he’s saying here when he says, with me it’s a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. He’s not saying that judgment by others is not a valid judgment under the proper circumstances. But what he’s saying is, there is a judgment that’s far greater than that, and that’s what he’s talking about. But with me, it’s a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by human court, because he’s going to be judged by the Lord God in heaven. He did ask for judgment when appropriate and discusses judgment when it’s appropriate, even talks about the people who had said things about him. So he knows about judgment, but this is judgment in the light of the divine judgment. And what he says, in essence, is the insignificance of the world’s judgment cannot be compared with the judgment that I ultimately must bear before the Lord God. With me, it’s a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court or by man’s day.

The faithful steward has no reason to be concerned by the opinions of others if his master is satisfied. There are many people who are criticized by other Christians, but if they are faithful to the stewardship committed to them, then their master’s approval is the thing that is of significance, of no consequence is the blame or praise of others.

Now, of course, Paul was talking about the Corinthians. And they were comparing him with others. They were comparing him with Apollos, and they were comparing him with Peter, and there were some individuals who were telling the others that they were of Christ, and they were comparing them Paul with them. We know that Paul in 2 Corinthians acknowledges the fact that he had the reputation of not being much of a public speaker. They said, as a matter of fact, his bodily presence even was weak, and the adjective is sometimes translated “contemptible.” So people did say lots of things about the Apostle Paul. But of no consequence was that in the light of the fact that he must stand before the Lord God in judgment. And, furthermore, for those who praised him, Timothy and others, who were his apostolic legates like Titus, their praise is not the ultimate thing with the apostle either. It’s the Lord’s praise for which he would be glad.

In chapter 2, verse 15 he wrote, “But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one who is not spiritual”—is the point the apostle makes. So I think I can understand then why Paul says, I do not even judge myself. It’s the Lord who is to judge me.

Now, in the 4th verse is a remarkable statement, “I know nothing against myself.” Isn’t that strange? For I know nothing against myself. Do you think anyone can say that? Do you think the Apostle Paul could say that? Listen to what Paul says elsewhere, “For the good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.” And here Paul says, I know nothing against myself. What a strange thing. In fact, if you want to eliminate the Apostle Paul, listen to the Proverbs: “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.”

So even when we think that we are right, even when we say, I know I’m right, the ultimate judge is the Lord. And Paul says, I know nothing against myself. Well, really what he said here is that you may actually feel precisely as he does, but even this silence of conscience doesn’t mean you will

not be judged by a brighter light in heaven by the Lord himself. In Romans chapter 14 in verse 4 there is a text that bears on it, too. The apostle says, Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. He’s the servant of the Lord, and finally he must stand before the Lord God.

The Lord knows not only where we stand, but he knows all the little thoughts and motives of our minds, too. So he not only knows the result, but he knows that which produced the result. He knows the condition of the heart that did the work or service that is to be judged. He knows it all.

Now, what then does Paul mean? Well, it’s obvious in the light of these texts I’ve cited that he’s referring to his service as an apostle, not to his life as a whole. He knew, of course, the condition of the human heart. But he says to the Corinthians, I don’t know anything against myself with reference to my service as an apostle to you. That, it seems to me, we must say is what he means. It’s a magnificent statement even to say that. And you’ll notice he says: yet I am not justified in this, even though I don’t know anything in which I have offended in my service of you Corinthians, I’m not justified in that. But he who judges me is the Lord. Therefore—the Greek text says “so then”—but the word can mean therefore, upon occasions. So then judge nothing before the time. Any present judgment—wait a minute. Does that include what I say about my fellow Christians? Yes. Does it include what I say about those that I knew, that I don’t know now, but I’ve said some things about them, or include those things that I’ve say in the future about my fellow Christians? Yes, it includes them as well.

Therefore, judge nothing before the time. Why should I not judge before the time? Well, for the simple reason that my judgment now is partial, it’s premature, it’s incompetent. I don’t have the power to do it properly. I don’t have a divine mind. I have a very poor human mind in the image of God. But to judge is premature. There are many things I might think about you that are wrong, but I discover that actually what you did was right, and the results show it. I don’t have the kind of knowledge to know that, so my judgment is partial, it’s premature, it’s incompetent; therefore, judge nothing before the time. And since the Corinthians evidently were judging, we can render this, Stop

judging anything before the time. Turn aside from the kind of judging that you’ve been engaged in and do not judge before the time.

Now, Don Carson has another thing that he says that I think is well worth noting. He says that, “It’s possible to bleed some of these passages and find more in them than they actually say.” For example, there are those who talk about Christians being judgmental. And we know, of course, how often we are judgmental. But what Paul means when he says, stop judging anything before the time, is not to prevent the legitimate judgment. Because if we do not have legitimate judgment, then how can the church exercise discipline? The elders are responsible to exercise judgment by and from the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God speaks about that. And, in fact, this very next chapter that we’re going to look at week after next in chapter 5, the apostle rebukes immorality and exercises judgment with reference to that.

So when he says, “Judge nothing before the time,” he does not mean that we are not to legitimately judge, but illegitimate judgment is what Paul has in mind, the kind of careless, gossipy kind of judgment that will be remembered, perhaps not even by you, but by the Lord at the judgment seat. So stop judging anything before the time, is Paul’s word to us.

Now, he goes on to say, “Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the councils of the hearts.” That, I think, is a most interesting statement. Notice what he says. He says, Don’t judge anything before the time until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness. What hidden things of darkness? Why, the depths of my heart, the depths of your heart, the hidden things of darkness, and, further, the councils of the hearts. These are the things that we often don’t even realize exist, and surely about someone else, we don’t even know ourselves. He’s going to reveal the counsels of the hearts.

If this is a true and proper statement about the day of Jesus Christ it follows—our friend says, John Calvin, “That the affairs of this world are never so well ordered that many things are not enveloped in darkness.” We don’t really know the status of everything. We don’t know the status of many things. And he says that, “Never is there so much light that many things do not remain

obscure.” I’m speaking about the life and actions of men. In the second part of the sentence he explains what’s the cause of darkness and disorder so that everything is not plain now. It is, of course, because there are extraordinary secret places and very deep recesses in the human heart. Examine your motives. Examine what you really think about the things that you talk about, about the kind of life that you have. If you look a little bit more deeply into your heart, you’ll discover that a lot of the things that you don’t think you’re being moved by, you are. And there are things of darkness. There are motives that are contrary, that are not in harmony. They are contrary to the Word of God itself.

So what a convicting few little verses the apostle has given us here. I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified in this but he who judges me is the Lord. Therefore, don’t judge anything before the time. Until the Lord comes, that’s the end. The Lord’s coming, he looks forward to that. In the meantime, don’t judge anything. If you want to judge, wait until the Lord comes, then you can judge, if you think you want to judge. But you won’t want to judge then, I hope.

So I know nothing against myself so far as my ministry is concerned, but I’m not justified in this. And therefore, we are not to judge anything before the time comes. At that time, the hidden things of darkness, the counsels of my heart, they will be unfolded. I’m going to be very embarrassed. I’m going to be very hurt. I have a long list of things that I can know are things that represent counsels of my heart that are not pleasing to the Lord. I know many thoughts of my heart that are not pleasing to the Lord. Now, for many years, since in 1941, I was converted to Jesus Christ. Fortunately, the Word of God tells me the guilt of those things has been covered in the blood that was shed on Calvary’s cross. But my service will come up for judgment as he said in chapter 3, it’s going to come up to judgment.

When the Lord comes, then the darkness, the counsels of the heart as they affect my service, well, will be revealed. Paul calls them the hidden things, the inner motives of which we may be unconscious. I’m not worried about those that are unconscious. I’m worried about those that are conscious, those that I face constantly. And I have to often, sitting at my desk, just bow my head and

ask God to forgive me for the kinds of thoughts that intrude into my mind. Sometimes, they are not things that I’ve brought in there, into my heart. They have come. I assume some of these things come from Satan, to test me, to try me. But some of them come from my heart. The heart in the Bible is the seat of understanding and will. And so when he mentions here reveal the counsels of the hearts of our understanding and our will.

But then, I don’t want to stop without a word that’s a little better word. Notice the last statement. Then each one’s praise will come from God. That’s rather interesting, isn’t it? Look at it. Then each one’s praise shall come from God. I’m just going to read it as it is in the Greek text for you, because it’s even more emphatic in the Greek text than it is here. And the translation I just read may not do the job quite as well. Perhaps your version has it, but my version here, I don’t think, was done too well. Then each one’s praise shall come from God. The Greek text says very definitely, And at the time praise shall come to each from the Lord. Praise shall come to each from the Lord.

So, in spite of all the counsels of my heart that are contrary to his will, in spite of all the hidden things that are unfolded, the Lord’s going to say to Samuel Lewis Johnson Jr., “This, Lewis, is praise.” And, incidentally, it comes from me through you. Isn’t it nice? It’s really wonderful to know I’m going to have some praise at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

John Calvin has another statement. I’ve been reading him as we’ve been going through this particular time, “It’s as if he said, now you Corinthians act as if you were superintendents of the public games, for you give some the crown and others you send away in disgrace.” He’s talking about, against the background of the games, the athletic games of the Greeks. And you know the Olympics began there. And so it’s like you Corinthians are playing like judges of the Olympic Games, and others you send away in disgrace, but this right and this function belongs to Christ.

So my Christian friends, when you think about other Christians and when you think about the fellow believers in Believers Chapel, remember what the apostle has said to us. This is part of the mysteries of God. Those doctrines that have been given into our hands. And we are responsible to obey them. And we’re going to stand before the great white throne—I’m sorry. We’re going to stand

before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, which he mentions in the second letter, the 5th chapter in the 10th verse. We will stand there, and we’ll answer for the life that we are living at the present time.

May God help us to be faithful and remember we are stewards. We are servants. We don’t own the property. The one who owns the farm, the one who owns the whole thing, is in heaven. He owns it all. We don’t have the right to be our own judge. He will judge us. Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the warning passages which are found in the Word of God, those that counsel us to remember that the life that we live is a very solemn life given us in marvelous grace, and we know that it has a happy ending in that we shall end in Thy presence. Help us also to remember that there is a judgment seat of Jesus Christ, and there we shall be judged by our great God in heaven with reference to the tasks that have been committed to our hands as our work.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.