

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Thank you, gentlemen, for that message that surely encourages us to walk with him. Shall we pray as we open the scriptures this morning? Our father, we thank thee for the message and song to which we've just listened. And our hearts have gone out unto thee and pled that we might day by day, walk close with thee in fellowship and in obedience. We pray as we come to the word of God again this morning that the spirit of the Lord will take it and use it and help us by thy grace to be willing to apply it to our lives so that indeed, while we wait for his appearing, while we serve him here, we'll walk close with him, to him and serve him. Speak to us now we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

James T. Jeremiah:

If we could know our future as well as we think we know our past, we would probably live our present with a great deal more care. I say that in the light of what I read in the following scriptures, Romans chapter 14, verses 10 to 12. "Why dost thou judge thy brother?, Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

James T. Jeremiah:

First Corinthians chapter three, beginning with verse 11. Chapter three, beginning with verse 11. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 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. And the fires will try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved. Yet so as by fire, know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you."

James T. Jeremiah:

Second Corinthians chapter five and verse 10, which will be our major text this morning, dealing with a subject that has to do with our future, the future of every believer in Christ. Verse 10, chapter five, Second Corinthians. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

James T. Jeremiah:

Every one of you here today is aware of the fact, I am sure, that there are three judgments in which the believer is particularly involved. First of all, there is the judgment of the believer's sin. This took place on the cross of Calvary when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, when he was made sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Somewhere just recently, I came across an illustration of this in the writings or in the ministry of Dr. Harry Ironside, who was for a long time pastor of the Moody Church. Lady came to Dr. Ironside one day terribly distressed about her sins. She couldn't understand how she could be living in this generation or in the generation in which she was living back a few years ago, and God could forgive her sins and take care of them. And this man of God replied, "How many sins, how many of your sins were past, present, and future when Jesus died

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

on the cross?" She finally got the message that Jesus Christ died on that cross for all sin. She wasn't even born when he died, but he died for her sins past, present, and future.

James T. Jeremiah:

And I think every day we live, we ought to thank God for this great fact that our sins have been judged on Calvary and borne away, buried, remembered against us no more forever and all that the other things that the word of God says about their disposal. He bore our sins. There is another aspect of judgment in the believer's life, as you well know, and that has to do with a believer and his daily walk. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians in the 11th chapter of First Corinthians reminds them that some of them were sick and some of them were sickly. Some of them died because they had not judged sin in their lives. And we read in the scriptures about a sin that is unto death.

James T. Jeremiah:

And we read also in First Corinthians chapter three, verse 17, that God will judge the body, he will judge us if we do not judge sin in our own lives. I think that in the light of the context of that verse with the preceding verse that we just read, know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy for the temple of God is Holy, which temple ye are." And may I point out this morning to all of us, including my own heart, the importance of a daily judgment of sin, when we know there's sin to put it away, to get right with God and to walk in the way that he would have us to go. But there is another day coming when the believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ that we've been reading about this morning, I'm going to make it very clear that this does not deal with the believer's sins.

James T. Jeremiah:

We're not going to be held into account when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ about our sin, God the savior dealt with it once and for all. But I must also insist that sin can have a lot to do in the believer's life so that when he stands before the judgment seat of Christ, that he will suffer loss if he does live with unconfessed sin, the loss of reward, the loss of works that should be done to the glory of God. And we need to understand that, this judgment seat of Christ is not just a rewarding tribunal where we stand and all that's involved is a reward, though, it does say every man shall receive his own reward. And I don't want to neglect that entirely though the emphasis this morning will not be on the five crowns.

James T. Jeremiah:

There are five crowns available, and God wants us as his people to really be concerned about that. Somebody said, well, I'm not interested in crowns. I surely don't want to get into heaven and be marching through the glory streets with crowns on my head. I don't want to be proud. I have news for you, brother and sister, if you have that attitude, you won't have many crowns anyway. So probably you shouldn't be getting ulcers over any worrying about the matter. You see, when you get there to heaven with the crowns, they're going to be put at his feet and that's where they belong because whatever we have in salvation or whatever we've been privileged to do as believers, he has enabled and given us grace to do it.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

Now this week, we have tried to emphasize the importance of the Christian's body. Beginning, we talked about be Holy, for I am holy. I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies holy. H-O-L-Y, Holy, unto God. This is God's appeal for a godly walk. Yesterday we talked a little bit about the body of the believer being the temple of the Holy Spirit. We read that in First Corinthians 9:19, and also in those passages, in the Book of Ephesians, in which we referred. Paul said your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. That's a literal fact. God, the Holy Spirit lives in every believer's body. You need not waste your time after you get saved, pleading for him to come. You don't have to tarry and pray and wait and agonize, get all upset about it. When you get saved, the spirit of God comes to live in your body and he stays there.

James T. Jeremiah:

He stays there. He doesn't get grieved away. And when you have a feeling in your soul of conviction and your conscience is bothering you, or when my conscience bothers me, as it has often done and will do, I trust as we go along through life with God, then it's time to find out what grieves him. But there's a passage of scripture that we read this morning that I want to bring to your attention as emphatically as I can today. And that's the one found in Second Corinthians 5:10. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that we may receive the things done in the body." Not done in the soul, not done in the spirit, not done in the mind, though all of this is related but done in the body.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, this refers to an event that is very certain. God has a specific time for this in his timetable. First Corinthians 3:13. "The day shall declare it." Reference to judgment. It says he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world. He also has appointed a day in which he will judge the believer. It's a certain time in his schedule. It's an unavoidable meeting. We must all appear. We must all appear. Every man's work shall be made manifest. It is an unavoidable meeting. Someone will say at certain times when we have commitments down here, well, I'm too busy. I have too many excuses, just can't meet that commitment for Christ down here. Can't keep my appointment at Christian service. Can't keep my appointment in doing the work that God has given me to do on campus. I have something else to do.

James T. Jeremiah:

Well, let me tell you when that day dawns and we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, there will be no excuses. For every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Christ, to the glory of God. And as it's said of the people being judged at the judgment of the great white throne, every mouth shall be stopped. I believe the application could well be put here as well in that case. It's an inclusive group. We must all appear, young and old, the new converts and the old saints, the worldly and the spiritual, the faithful and the backslidden. It's an event we will not avoid. Second place, it'll be an experience that is very humbling.

James T. Jeremiah:

Frequently we are led to believe that the judgment seat of Christ is some kind of an ethereal heavenly, glorious county fair, where as we stand before the tribunal, every one of us receive a blue ribbon for some great thing we've done. There will be rewards, but it's a humbling thing. There are statements in the Bible, which would lead us to believe quite the contrary. So far as this glory kind of thing is concerned. I'm trying to impress upon you this morning, the seriousness of this. We're going to meet him. And it will be a day of submission. Every knee shall bow. We have difficulty now presenting our

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

bodies to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he may use them, but we will present our bodies to him in that day that he may examine them. It's a day of retrospection.

James T. Jeremiah:

The things done in the body. He'll wipe away all tears from our eye. I wonder if the tears he's talking about are not the tears we may shed when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ and we look back and we see what we could have been, what we could have done for him, what we might have been able to accomplish in his name. And instead of doing it when the opportunity in our youth and in our lives was there, we bypassed it. Going back to think about it, his fiery eyes will gaze upon us. Be a time of confession.

James T. Jeremiah:

Romans 14:11 says every tongue shall confess or acknowledge, confess from the heart. Now, you see our weaknesses are excused. We have taken, I think, sometimes too lightly, the enormity and the awfulness of sin. And we've said, well, God will forgive me. And there's no brokenness and no repentance about it. We go along and think that God being the gracious and loving God he is, he will just somehow not look upon our sins with the stain. Now we're saved, but in that day, we'll stand before him and there'll be confession.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, in order to not take away the seriousness of the moment to illustrate a point, I'd like to mention the fact that it's going to be a day of joy, surely, to stand before the Lord and to see him. And that day after the rapture, sometime in the glory, but it's going to be a very serious thing. We're going to meet the judge. You ever met the judge? If I have not had any listeners until now, I have one right now. I met the judge. You say, "You mean you've been in court?" Yes, I've been in court and I want to tell you about it.

James T. Jeremiah:

41 years ago, I became a pastor. I didn't know anything about all of the rituals that went along with the business. And one of the first things that happened, the very first wedding I ever performed, a young couple came to the house. I lived next door to the town clerk so we eventually had a good thing going there, you know. And this couple came and said, "We want to be married." I said, "Fine, stand up here." And I said, "Do you?" And they did. And I pronounced the famous words and they went on their way.

James T. Jeremiah:

And that night, about 6:00 somebody came on the porch of the home, knocked at the door and I went to the door and there stood a policeman, at least 10 feet high. And he asked me if I was the pastor of the church. I said, "Yes." "Did you marry so-and-so today?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Here's a piece of paper, a subpoena to come to court." I submit to you young preachers, that's no way to start your ministry. But anyhow, I went and met the judge on Wednesday. This was on Friday and the next meeting was on Wednesday. If he'd only give me the paper on Friday and we could have had the meeting on Saturday. It would have helped my day on Sunday. While we waded through and I took my wife along, because I didn't really want to leave her at home and really, I needed all the comfort I could get.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

I walked into the courtroom, here comes the stately judge with his black gown. He brings the father of the bride up. He said that the problem was that these kids had eloped and the father was unhappy, the father of the bride. He wanted it annulled. The judge said to the man, "Did you know that these young people were keeping company?" "Yes, your honor." "Did you know that she was wearing a ring that he had given her?" "Yes, your honor." "Did you know they planned to be married?" "Yes, your honor." "Case dismissed."

James T. Jeremiah:

The happiest words I'd heard in four days. But I want to tell you something, I shall never forget that day. I stood before an earthly judge seated on a bench in Jamestown, New York, and I was concerned as a young 22-year old preacher. But I'll tell you, folks, as I walk through life and I think about standing before the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't have fear of that other than this, that I want to do my best for him, God helping me so that when I stand before him, my life work will not be a handful of ashes, a lot of smoke in my eyes, nothing that's worthwhile.

James T. Jeremiah:

This is an examination that is revealing. We will give an account of ourselves. Of what? Of the things done in the body. The judgment seat of Christ, it seems to me, is one of God's wonderful equalizing agents. Those of us who have a part in the public ministry may get the idea at times that this is the kind of thing that's going to be rewarded more than anything else. Forget it. Some dear Christian person who is praying and dedicated to God and living sincerely for him in maybe a remote spot may stand head and shoulders on that day because God is going to judge faithfulness what we've done in our bodies. One of the reasons we're not going to stand well there I think is because sometimes of pride, which is inordinate self-esteem. Pride. How many people have gone down the drain to oblivion because of human pride? We'll stand there and it'll all be judged upon gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. It'll be judged, whether it's imperishable or perishable, whether it's what God has done or what man has done. You see, you can make wood and hay and stubble look pretty attractive, but there isn't much to it. It's going to be whether it's eternal or temporal, our bodies at the judgment seat of Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, every time you preach in chapel, you stand the risk of being misunderstood. And I don't really care much about being misunderstood at this late day in my life, so here goes. What I have to say hereafter in relation to the first part and the second part, I want to make it very clear what I don't mean. I have every desire in my heart for each one of you that you should achieve. If you're here preparing to serve God and you have no goals to achieve for his glory, you ought to get on your knees and ask God to give you some. I have nothing but the greatest desire in my heart for you to be on the high list in your academic achievement.

James T. Jeremiah:

I do not hold a position that when you graduate from this institution, you've finished your education. You've just started it. If you're going into a profession, you go to the farthest point you can go and you get the best training you can get and you be the best servant you can be. Now I want that said, because what I'm going to say hereafter, somebody is going to listen to what I've said hereafter, and they haven't listened to what I've just said. And I want you to hear what I just said before I say what I'm going to say.

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

James T. Jeremiah:

Other words, before I preach, I'm going to say something. Don't misunderstand it. Excellence, aggressiveness, growth, all the rest, but I get weary sometimes and so do you, with just an outward manifestation of spirituality. Some of you have never heard of Jim McGinley, but some of us heard him, knew him personally. He was a great Scottish preacher. There's nobody like him. He's now with the Lord. Jim McGinley tells the story about going to a religious meeting. I know that's really just meeting one of the dignified preachers with the cloth, one of the cloth, was giving a spiritual address. And he said to the people, "Oh, to be a keyhole for Jesus." McGinley said, "I didn't want to be a keyhole at all." And he developed this keyhole idea for a while and then he said, "Oh, that I might be a doormat for Jesus." He said, "I wondered what would happen if somebody stepped on him."

James T. Jeremiah:

And he said, the final thing of it all was, "Oh, that I could be nothing for Jesus." I know a lot of people like that, want to be nothing for Jesus, just nothing. And if that's your high ambition, brother, sister, you better get a revival in your heart. You ought to be something for him. Everything for him, not nothing. This pious business, a religious religiosity that is extremely sickening. Now, the other day, I'm coming to what I want to say now. The other day in one of the messages I referred to, I'm going to have to go fast on this one. I referred to the fact in Psalm 33:3, that the believer could be an instrument of 10 strings. And this instrument of 10 strings is going to have a glorified body, made like unto the body of his glory. We'll stand before him at the judgment seat of Christ and he's going to examine us.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm going to start from the bottom down and work up because the bottom down part of it hits me pretty much. By my feet, I'm traveling for Jesus. Am I running around the country just because I like a 1978 Oldsmobile? Well, I do it because I like to fly. I like both. And I have to ask myself sometimes whether it's possible to get selective and participate in so many things in Christian service that we could miss the real point of it all. If that's what happens do you know what's going to happen at the judgment seat of Christ? A handful of ashes, smoke in my eyes. I don't want that. What about my hands or your hands? You're gifted with artwork. You'll be able to draw, you do it for your glory and his. You're a writer, you write for Whispering Cedars. And you're so happy about it that instead of putting your name, you put your initials. That's how inglorious you are. You graduate from Cedarville College and you began to write for Moody Monthly. You achieve higher aims and you get to the sword of the Lord.

James T. Jeremiah:

And finally, you'll get to that magazine, that quarterly called Bib Sack. Bibliotheca Sacra, whatever you call it. It's a great magazine. And you'll write down all of this great theological business and you'll sit back in your chair and you'll say, "I have made it, my hands have written it. My, what glory there comes. Ashes, smoke, fire, all for anything but for the glory of God. Now, it doesn't have to be that way. It will not be that way in your life, but it can be.

James T. Jeremiah:

Ears. You've got two of them. That's so something can go in one and out the other. It would be terrible if you just had one. But two ears. What about your gossip and your criticism that you listen to? Oh brother, this is going to get it. What about the bad music you listen to? You're going to argue with the judgment seat of Christ and you're going to say to Jesus, "Jesus, you really don't understand my interest

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

in rock." Yeah, I bet you will. I ask you to think of yourself right now at the judgment seat of Christ and try in the future projection to argue with God about that.

James T. Jeremiah:

What about your eyes? Your reading? What do you read? There is an avalanche, a truckload, a carload of junk. You can waste your time reading it and stand before the judgment seat of Christ and say, "I'm sorry, Lord. I didn't have time to read the good books. Sorry, Lord, I didn't have time to read the Bible. I was so anxious to know what the present society was like." Or you may say, "Lord, I read 50 books a week. Lord, I'm a speed reader." And so before the judgment seat of Christ, we present the arguments of our achievements, with our eyes. What about the mouth? This is where the preachers and the singers come in.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, once again, I don't want to discourage you in any way and I want to make it very clear again, that I'm for the languages, I am for seminary. I had two boys that went through seminary. I'm for seminary. Don't just turn off what I'm not saying, listen to what I'm saying all the way through. I remember years ago when I was a boy, a new Christian, I went to church one Sunday morning and that little, not a real little church, church of about thousand members. Johnson City, New York. My pastor had gone somewhere to preach and he invited one of his friends. He came to church that morning dressed as our formal church always did. If you want to know why I'm sick of formalism, I got sick of it when I was a new Christian.

James T. Jeremiah:

We stood up, we sat down, we prayed. We sang at different times. And then the preacher always walked out on Sunday morning with stripped britches, claw hammer coat, gates-ajar collar, and all the things that went along with it. This fellow come out that morning and he stood up and quoted to all of us the first chapter of Genesis in Hebrew, I think. We're all impressed. Now you'll say, well, don't knock it, brother, Hebrew is the heavenly language. You're going to have to get it when you get to heaven. I know a lot of people are going to get it on the way up. Somebody said, it's Greek, going to speak Greek in heaven. Well, let's solve the problem by saying heaven's going to be bilingual.

James T. Jeremiah:

But you know, all of that show and manifestation of how much that dear fellow knew about Hebrew impressed me. I guess he's dead by this time. He was rather in that direction that morning. Our oratory, our language ought to be the best it can be for God, but if we get it in the realm of pride and we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, it will be ashes. What about singing? We sing to entertain or do we sing to get across a message? We're going to sing in heaven the great song of the Lamb. And I think every singer ought to read Revelation 5:9. And when he comes or when she comes face to face with a singing responsibility to see that Jesus Christ is presented in such a fashion that we get what the message is. I could care less whether you can hit the high note and most people would care less either. I would care less whether you are able to demonstrate how much you know, and how capable you are, if Jesus Christ is not in it.

James T. Jeremiah:

James T. Jeremiah  
Examination for Christian Living  
October 27, 1977

I don't understand how people like Alexander and PP Bliss and Ira Sankey and all those people ever did it without a PA system sang they not unto them. I'm not against that, but when I hear people singing with a background of music that's so loud I can't hear Jesus, it's too loud. And when it's sung so that you can get the message, it is entertainment. It's not the real thing that we need in our day when people can hear the gospel sung. We heard it today and we heard it yesterday and often hear, often hear like that so we can understand it. Well, I mentioned the heart. Whatsoever you do, do it heartedly unto the Lord. It ties it together.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm not finished, but I'm quitting after I tell you an illustration. I guess probably this illustration is the most convicting one that I've ever had in my life. So listen to it briefly. We'll be on our way in a minute. I was pastor in Dayton. I lived on Amherst Place. I can still see it. I had a study that was in the upstairs of the home that opened out, the windows opened out into the backyard with trees. It was a delightful place to read and study. I can see that day yet as I sat there and I picked up a magazine, a news magazine, and I read a story. I read it and I wept. And every time I tell it, it gets to me.

James T. Jeremiah:

There was a couple, elderly people, who had saved their money. They were frugal. They saved every cent they could, and they put their money in a can, tin can in their home. These people lived in that city of Dayton. One day, they got the bright idea they ought to put it in the bank. So the woman took it downtown, the city of Dayton, one of the banks. She knew nothing about banking hours. She arrived at 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon and the banks were closed. So she brought it home with the intention the next day, taking the money down to the bank. I remember the exact amount, \$34,500.

James T. Jeremiah:

They tried to find it in the morning. It couldn't be found. They looked upstairs, downstairs, in the attic, in the basement, in all the rooms. Went through the dresser drawers tried to find out if they put it in one of them. Finally, one of them walked down to the back of the house where they'd been burning some trash and as they looked at it, they saw at the base of the burner, a handful of ashes in the form of \$34,500. I read that and tears came to my eyes as I thought about those people, what agony must have been there. And then as though God would use that to make me see something I needed to see, need to see always. Preacher, it's possible for you to live your life, come to the end of it and stand before the judgment seat of Christ with a handful of ashes, smoke in your eye, as the fire burns away the dross. Oh, I don't want that. I don't want that.

James T. Jeremiah:

I want to be able to stand at least and have some words said that will be commendation. Oh, there'll be dross, I know that, but I don't want all my life like that, and I know you don't. And I trust as you think about your bodies, your bodies, it's what is done in them as Christians, that you're going to give an account to God about on his day when he calls you and me and all of the church to meet him at the judgment seat of Christ.