***Focusing on the Word of Life - PH54-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:17***

Please open your Bibles to Philippians 2:16. We have learned thus far that the way a Christian becomes a light in Satan's world is through focusing his mind on Bible doctrine. You and I obviously are not lights in ourselves to the spiritually darkened world in which we move. We are simply light reflectors. What we are reflecting is the light of Bible doctrine. So Paul has said, "Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." We learned that the words "holding forth" mean to center one's attention on learning the Word of God as a lifestyle.

It isn't only that you and I, by positive outreach, accept what God has provided for us to be lights, but also that you pay attention to the fact that you should not keep others from receiving that light. That's why the Bible says do everything decently and in order, and that includes the church service. It is necessary for us to have a condition such that we can all focus our attention on the Word of God. Those conditions are internal. You've come here today with things in your life that are within your soul, and they may cause you to be distracted from the Word of God, but there are also external things–the things around us that may cause us not to be able to focus our attention.

But that's what Paul is saying. Focus your attention. Get your mind zeroed in on the Word of Life. The focus of our thinking is to be the Bible. This refers to the principles of God's word, particularly as expressed in the form of eternal life, and all that that connotes. We come into this eternal life first through the gospel, and then through the Bible doctrine which we learn. Hebrews 4:12 calls the Word of God something that is living–the same thing that Paul is talking about here–the Word of Life.

We pointed out there may be many false objects for the focus of our minds–objects through which we think we will become enlightened in God's thinking, and we will not, such as an emotional experience; church programs as social activities; rituals and ceremonies; sharing of testimonies; star personalities whom we follow; and, public relations techniques of one kind or another. You may fall into every one of those hazards, but you will not be enlightened spiritually. The only thing that will make you go forward with God is to take in the doctrine of the Word of God.

So Paul's desire for these Philippian Christians is such a positive focus upon doctrine that he himself, who was their teacher, would have ground for glorying some day at the Judgment Seat of Christ when his works were to be evaluated. The work of a pastor-teacher is to explain the Word of Life to the sheep. The pastor-teacher uses a divinely bestowed gift to do this.

We pointed out that it is not the job of women, though women are given the gift of teaching. Some women have the spiritual gift of teaching, which is used within proper context. It is not used in public services of teaching to men and women. Women do not teach men.

Paul's ground for glorying is that his Christians would concentrate on doctrine; be faithful in reception; and, be positive in response. This focus in the believer's mind is to be the top priority of his life. There is nothing more important in your life than receiving Bible doctrine into your soul. That seems to be a simple statement, but it is one that is not readily understood by Christians. There are people who are not here in this study today because they actually thought that something else was higher priority in their life than being here. There will be people who will not be in the next session because they will, in all honesty, make the monumental mistake of thinking that there is something that is of higher priority in their life than the breathing in of the doctrine that will be dispensed and will be explained there. So they will feel that they have appointments to make. They have rest that their bodies need. They have entertainment. They have relaxation. They have television programs to see. They have visits to make with people. They have any number of things that they will actually think are of higher priority.

So I warn you again that indifference toward the Word of God is a contemptuous thing. Remember that there is a report card day coming for Christians. Any pupil who is contemptuous for the instruction of his teacher in school is playing a really stupid game. That is because, sooner or later, report card day rolls around, and then the ax is lowered. What we are going to talk about in this session is the final and the greatest report card day you and I are ever going to face.

Has it ever struck you that one of the miseries of hell is memory? Well, it's going to be one of the miseries of heaven. You'll have the capacity to take it in stride. You'll have an attitude that you will not be bitter about it. But you will think back, and you'll remember all the times that you had the opportunity to have an A+ on your report card when you stood before the Judgment Seat of Christ instead of the D-- that you got because you were so indifferent.

Paul is talking as a pastor-teacher. A pastor-teacher has no ground for glorying because he has some reputation with people; because he has some kind of fame; because he has a large congregation; because he has a very influential church; or, because his property is loaded with massive buildings. He has huge offerings so that they never have to worry about how to pay the bills. He has authored some books, so, therefore, he now is an authority, or he has received some awards while he was in seminary, or after seminary for something else. He was in seminary, so he got the award for the most smiling personality in school. He had the finest set of teeth for the pulpit, and that sort of thing. None of that is significant. All of that will not mean a thing when that pastor-teacher stands up before the Lord for a particularly peculiar and significantly special crown that is reserved only for pastor-teacher's in the way of a reward.

The apostle Paul knows all this. He knows what he's up against in the way of report card evaluation. So he calls upon these believers that he has taught who are going to live in a crooked and perverse generation that they should hang on, and focus in there on the Word of doctrine, "In order that I," Paul says, "may receive a ground of rejoicing–a ground for glory in the day of Christ." There is the thing we want to look at today. The day of Christ is a day of concern for Paul as the day of evaluation, but it is a day that you and I also will face.

**The Day of Christ**

The day of Christ looks like this in Greek: "hemerachristos."

**The Rapture**

The day of Christ is a technical term in the New Testament for the event that we call the rapture of the church. That is the catching away of the believers from the earth. All of you here know that the next thing in God's program of prophecy is suddenly to remove all Christians from this earth and take them to heaven. That includes those who are dead Christians who have died and are in the grave. Their bodies will be raised from the graves to be joined with their souls and spirits and taken to heaven. Those of us who are alive, our bodies will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. That's the rapture. That is the day of Christ.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

However, it also includes another facet. That is that immediately as you do enter heaven in your physical body, you then face report card day. It's called in the Bible the Judgment Seat of Christ. We have already had this referred to previously twice in the book of Philippians. In Philippians 1:6, Paul speaks about the day of Christ: "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." That is the rapture again. Also in verse 10: "That you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." This is the same event referred to here once more. That is the day of the rapture. The day of Christ is the day of the rapture.

If you would like a summary concerning the day of the rapture, you will find that in Philippians 1:6, in the series of tapes on Philippians. The summary of the rapture was given there when we referred to this before. The Day of Christ is referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:52 when the apostle Paul says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It is also spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep (Christians who have died), that you sorrow not even as others who have no hope."

This is the difference between a Christian funeral and a non-Christian funeral. A Christian funeral is a thing of hope. Therefore, the tears and sorrow are tempered by the fact that we are going to see these people again. We are going to be restored to them, and therefore, the funeral should be conducted accordingly, as someone who has been transferred in his tour of duty to another realm.

I hope all of you will have the good judgment that when it comes time for me to have to conduct your funeral, that you will have left orders behind to keep the casket closed. It is not that we are offended by your appearance. Some of you aren't any too good to look at now, and you're not any better then. But that's not the point. The point is that the whole open casket bit is about as heathenistic a custom as one can imagine. It is somehow grasping one last hanging on there in a desperate moment of someone that you're never going to see again. A Christian funeral should never convey that idea in any way.

So as a matter of fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea for you to arrange a funeral service that when you move off to the great adventure in the sky, they just quietly bury you and then let us gather for a service afterwards where we don't even have your casket there, and let us conduct a memorial service in your behalf and give an opportunity of word of testimony to the unbelievers to remind them that someday we're going to hold a service like that for them. You should give that some thought.

Paul says, I don't want you people who are believers acting as if you were without hope and acting as if you were absolutely disoriented animals that see a body that's dead, and like the Greek philosophers say, "That's the end of it. We'll never see that person again." That's not true.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him (believers). For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not precede them who are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shot, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ (the dead Christians) shall rise first. Then we Christians who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with the Christians who have just been raised from the grave, together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

That's our destiny. That is the event that Paul is referring to as the Day of Christ. It is the day of Christ's return for his own people.

There are six references to the Day of Christ in the New Testament, and every one of these references are associated with the Lord's judgment of the believer's Christian service works, and with the reward which He will give them for their divine good production (1 Corinthians 1:8, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 1:14, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 1:10, Philippians 2:16). These verses deal with The Day of Christ, and they relate it to report card day for the believer relative to what he did with his life as a Christian–the life that he lived.

Paul has in mind his own evaluation at the judgment day. This is what he referred to in Romans 14:10 when he said, "But why do you judge your brother, or why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ."

We have this also in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 where we have it laid out more extensively, and the Judgment Seat of Christ is described in more detail: "Now if any man build upon this foundation (that is, his salvation) 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 fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built upon it, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet as by fire."

So let's take a look at the report card day. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5:10. This day was of concern to Paul. It should be of great concern to ourselves. That is because whatever happens on that day is something that you will then live with for the rest of eternity. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that which he has done, whether it be good or bad."

In this passage, if you run your eye back up to verse one, you will notice that the apostle Paul is speaking to Christians: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This house in the heavens refers to something that belongs to believers. Unbelievers do not have any place in heaven at all. So I want to establish that what he is speaking of here is to Christians. Therefore, whatever he says in verse 10 cannot be construed in any way as relating to your salvation. You're going to stand before God, before a place called the Judgment Seat of Christ, but you will not stand at that point before God to determine whether you're going to heaven or hell. That is determined before you die, before you leave this earthly scene. He is speaking here to believers.

So here is a judgment in verse 10 that we as believers are going to face. This is further confirmed by verse 4, which speaks of bodies to be glorified at the resurrection. He's speaking to people whose bodies are going to be glorified. This does not happen to unbelievers: "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not that we should be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." That is, we Christians look forward to having a body someday which never will die again. We have a body that not only will never die, but will be glorified. It will be a body which will be free of sin.

Verse 5 points out that the people that he's talking to are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, which again is only true of Christians: "Now He that has wrought us for the very same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest (or the down payment) of the Spirit." Then verse 8 says, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, to be present with the Lord."

This could only be said, again, of believers. Only believers, when they're absent from the body, are present with the Lord, because unbelievers, when they are absent from their bodies (that is, their souls leave their bodies), they are not present with the Lord, but they are in a place called Hades, in painful punishment for their sins.

Paul is concerned in this passage that he should so serve the Lord that when it is all over, he gets an A-plus on his report card. Notice verse 9: "Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." Paul says, "I want to be accepted by my teacher, by my judge."

Then we come to verse 10 which tells us that all believers, therefore, are going to face a judgment called the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is not to determine whether we enter heaven, but after we have become believers; after the rapture; after the body is glorified, to determine what we have done with our lives as Christians. This is not a judgment of sins committed since the point of salvation, because in salvation, God removes all our sins–past, present and future. Psalm 103:12 teaches that, along with Micah 7:19 and Isaiah 38:17. "Back" there means the shoulder blades. God puts our sins, as it were, behind His shoulder blades, which you cannot therefore turn around and look at (Hebrews 8:12).

Nor is this a time for all of our evil works to be brought up. This is not a time for our evil conduct to be publicly paraded–all those secret sins of which we have been guilty, and are guilty, and will be guilty. God never parades our sin in heaven. So the Judgment Seat of Christ is not for that purpose. All that's already been judged. This is not a judgment for your unconfessed sins. If you die with unconfessed sins, you die out of fellowship, and with certain loss consequent to being out of temporal fellowship, but you go immediately into God's presence because the wall that has separated you has been removed.

**The "bema"**

So let's take a look at the language. It says, "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The word Judgment Seat in the Greek is the "bema." It's a Greek word that means "platform." It was actually the place upon which a judge would sit. The Roman judge sat upon a "bema." It was also the place where the athletes in the Greek Olympics would come to be awarded their prize, the laurel wreath, which would be placed upon their head as a sign of victory and a crown of victory. They would come to the "bema," to the place where the judges sat, to receive this award. So the Christian is going to face the "bema;" that is, the judgment seat. It is "of Christ" which indicates that Jesus Christ is going to be the judge who is seated upon this platform when you and I walk up to it. And mind you, that's just exactly the way it's going to be.

Remember that after the church goes to heaven, the world's history goes on for seven years, minus the believers. Where are the Christians? The Christians are up in heaven, lined up single-file. They'll call your name, and you will literally step up to the "bema" and Jesus Christ will be sitting there, and you will stand there–just you alone. You will not be called up as the Berean group so that you can kind of crouch down and hide there among them. That would be a comforting thought. But that isn't the way it's going to be. It is going to be single-file, and you've got seven years to do it. And they're going to flick it right off. There's not going to be any debate. There's not going to be arguing. You're not going to open your mouth and talk back. Some of you are good at talking back now, but you're going to be bad at it up there, because it's going to be over. You will stand up, and the record will be read. There's your life. There's the human good you produced; there's the divine good you produced; the judgment will be made; and, the reward will be dispensed next. It's going to be a single-file operation.

So the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 says, "Don't you know that they who run in a race run all, but one receives the prize. So run, that you may obtain. Every man that strives for the mastery is tempered in all things. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown. But we, an incorruptible." Paul says, "It is a worthy thing for you to recognize that you're going to stand at this judgment seat, and that you live your life to be a winner. What I'm pleading with you to do is to be a winner. I'm pleading with those of you who are receptive as well as those of you who are not receptive. I'm pleading with you to pay attention to something that's going to hurt you for all of eternity. That is because you are going to stand there; the judgment will be made; and, Christ will be the judge." That is because John 5:22 tells us that the Father has placed all judgment in the hands of the Son, and the record will be there at the "bema," the Judgment Seat of Christ.

So the apostle Paul says, "We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ." "We must" is the Greek word "dei," and it means "it is necessary." You cannot excuse yourself from appearing at this judgment seat. The word "appear" is the Greek word "phaneroo." "Phaneroo" means "to be revealed;" that is, "to be exposed." It means to come through the way you really are. There will be no false front. You will be revealed in your true character–to be disclosed as you really are. It is in the aorist tense which means that at that point of time when this judgment is scheduled after the rapture when they call your name and your time comes up.

It is passive. You have no choice in appearing here. You cannot say, "Well, I would just as soon be excused from the examination." It is necessary, and you will be there, and you will be exposed. Now, as long as we are on this earth in one way or another, we are putting on our little fronts. We are covering up our mental reserves and our internal resistances to the things of God. We are fighting what the Word of God has to tell us. We are fighting the teaching authority of the pastor-teacher. We are fighting what God is offering us in order to get our thinking and our lives straightened up. But we fight it by putting on fronts. We don't want to be too open about it. We have other vested interests that we don't want to endanger.

However, up here, the whole thing is going to be exposed. Nothing is going to be hidden. It is necessary. You will be there. You have no choice. It's passive. You will be there. You'll be brought before God. It's infinitive which indicates, in the Greek language, purpose. This is God's purpose. The moment the rapture has taken place, God's purpose is to line us up and to pass out the report cards.

Here is the reason for the "bema" of Christ: "that everyone may receive." The word "may receive" is "komizo." This means "to receive what you've got coming." This means to receive what is due. It means a recompense. It is aorist again–at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is middle. That is, you personally are going to benefit or be at a loss because of this. This is a very personal matter. And it is subjunctive which means, again, purpose. This is God's purpose that you may receive "the things done in his body." That is, the things done by means of your body–what you did in your physical life here on this earth, "according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." "According to that he has done" means "in proportion to the deeds." The idea is in proportion to what you have done through your physical body. That will be the basis upon which God is going to judge you.

This is not going to be something that you have promised to do. God is not going to say, "I am so pleased with you because all your life you intended to do well. All your life you made great promises." You're not going to kid anybody up here. You're going to receive personally what is due according to what you did in your body–what you actually did: not what you intended to do; and, not what you were promising to do. These things can be two ways. It can be either good, "whether good or bad." The word "good" here is the Greek word "agathos." This is the Greek word for good that means "beneficial in their effects." These are the things that you did that that were beneficial in their effects because they were things that God led you to do. Or they could be bad, the Greek word "phaulos," which means they were worthless.

This is not a reference to things that are morally right or wrong. This is not a matter of sins. This is a matter of whether with your life you did things that were beneficial because they were divine good or whether you did things that were worthless because they were human good. "Agathos" stands for divine good, where "phaulos" stands for human good. You and I are running around producing one or the other. This determines whether our works are acceptable or not. Divine good production is "agathos," through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Human good production is "phaulos," through the guidance of the old sin nature.

So we may translate this verse in this way. Paul is saying: "For it is necessary for all of us to be revealed as we really are before the Judgment Seat of Christ (the "bema"), so that each one may receive recompense in proportion to the things done through the body, whether good (divine good) or bad (human good). You notice it will be recompense "in proportion." The more divine good production that comes out of your life, the greater your reward will be in heaven. The less divine good that comes out of your life, the less the reward will be in heaven.

Let's go back and take a look at the classic passage in 1 Corinthians 3:10: "According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another built on it. But let every man take heed how he builds upon it" (that is, upon the foundation of salvation in his life). Paul laid the salvation foundation in the lives of the Corinthian Christians. Other Bible teachers came in and they built upon that foundation. Now, Paul says, "You take care of what kind of a structure you erect upon the foundation of your salvation."

Verse 11 says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The foundation of the Christian spiritual life is the Lord. That's the way you enter the plan of God.

Verse 12: "Now, if any man build upon this foundation (of eternal life) gold, silver, precious stones, hay, wood, stubble." "If" is a first class condition. That means that every Christian actually is building. First class means that it's true. Every Christian is building something in his Christian life through his Christian service. His works are of two kinds. They may be indestructible, so they are described here as gold, silver, and precious stones. Or they may be destructible things that can be burned up: wood; hay; and, stubble.

Verse 13: "Every man's works shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is." "Every" man in the Greek is "ekastos," and it does not mean every male person. It means everyone, male and female. So women and men who are believers are equally facing this judgment day–this report card evaluation. The stress here is laid upon a valuation as an individual. That's what I'm trying to get across today. This is not a group thing.

You have no hope for saying, "Well, I was part of Berean Memorial Church where we had an understanding of the role of the Word of God. That was dignified. The word was dispensed. People had a chance to enter into the Word of God. They had a chance to be positive toward something that was truth. We had a ministry that reached throughout the country and around the world with the Word of God in some respects. We had a ministry that took concern for the family in a realistic way. So we had a Christian school. We had a ministry for young people that centered in the Word of God," and so on. All of that is well and good. To the extent that you have participated personally in a divine good production way in that operation, you will be rewarded. But just to have been part of that, in itself, is not the basis of reward. It's your individual (in your body) personal performance.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." The word "manifest" is "phaneron." "Phaneron" means "exposed in true value." This is the same word that is used in 2 Corinthians 5:10 when we spoke of the word "appear." "Every man's work should be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." That is the day of Christ–the day of the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is the same again as in 2 Corinthians 5:10. "Declare it" is the Greek word "deloo" which means "to make it plain." It is future. That is, it is still before us, after salvation. It is active. It will be the evaluation of our works by God, not by what other Christians think. It is indicative here. It's a statement of fact.

The day is going to make it plain. It will be revealed ("apokalupto") which means "to uncover" or "to unveil." That means that our works are going to be exposed for what they really are. This is present. It will be a future event. So it's treated as if it actually were taking place here. It is so certain. It is passive. We will have no control–nothing to say about the judgment. That's what I meant earlier when I said you won't open your mouth to debate this. In school, when a student gets a poor grade, he debates it. There will be no debating here. It is subjunctive. It is the day of judgment. God is going to make the determination, and there will be no control over that. This is a potential judgment which is going to take place.

It's going to be tested. Let's look at the word "test," because this is what God is trying to do for you. The word is "dokimazo." "Dokimazo" is to test in order to show what is good. The reason the Lord is testing is not to show how bad we were; what poor Christians we were; or, how foolishly we lived our lives, but to show us how well we did. It is future. It is up there in the future again. It is active. It is going to be performed by God. It is indicative–a statement of fact. There's another word for "testing" called "peirazo" in the Greek, and that's simply a testing to find out what's good and what's bad. Usually this word "peirazo" zeros in on evil. "Peirazo" is to show you what's evil. But "dokimazo" has in view what is good. God is trying to find and to show what is good. He's trying to give us the best grade possible. So it's testing in order to determine what is good–to identify what He can reward. God's own evaluation uncovers this divine good.

"Every man's work" is "hekastos" which means everyone, men and women. Your work is your "ergon" which means your actual service here on the earth; that is, what you did through your spiritual gift–finding your spiritual gift, and using your spiritual gift. "Of what sort" is a quality word. It means "such as." God will test to determine the kind of good works we have produced.

A lot of us are going to find we have produced good works, but they were human good works. They were works from our old sin nature. They came out of the strong side of our old sin nature. Therefore, they are hay, wood, and stubble. Then the judgment of God will declare them to be such. They are not gold, silver, and precious stones. They are not divine good works. So there are dead works that we may perform (Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 9:4), and they are the devil's works (John 8:41, 1 John 3:8). God does not reward us for those.

**Rewards**

Here are the results. Verses 14-15: "If any man's work abide which he has built upon the foundation of salvation, he shall receive a reward." This "if" is a first class condition. Some Christians will produce that which is worthy of God's reward. For divine good, a Christian "shall receive." The word is "lambano" which means in the future, he will actually be given, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, individually, a reward.

Now, naturally, we wonder what is the reward? The Bible only speaks in generalities of the rewards. It may be the commendation of Matthew 25:21: "Well done, you good and faithful servant." It may be the reward of seeing the believers in heaven who were saved because of our testimony, or the believers who are brought to spiritual maturity and thus themselves rewarded, which is what Paul is saying: "I want to see you rewarded, because then I will have a ground for rejoicing in my life work" (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

It may be that somehow there will be a position in the eternal state which will be determined. Luke 19:17 seems to indicate that there will be positions that God will give to us in eternity which will be determined by our works.

Daniel 12:3 indicates a capacity to radiate the glory of God. The spiritual maturity structure which you build in your soul through doctrine is something that you take out in death to eternity. That spiritual maturity is a capacity to love God, and to enjoy God. The capacity to enter in to the joys of knowing God will be determined as part of the reward. Some people will be able to appreciate God a great deal more than others will, because while you were here on earth, you developed the spiritual maturity to do so.

Some works, we're told in verse 15, are not going to survive: "If any man's works shall be burned by the judgment of God, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire." The human works are described as being burned ("katakaio"). "Kata" means "down." You and I say, "Eat up." The Greeks say, "Eat down." This is going to be burned down to nothing. That is what it is saying. This is in the future, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is passive. You'll stand there helpless, unable to do a thing about it. The judgment will be accurate. It is indicative–a statement of fact.

This part "kata" adds as an intensive stroke there. God is going to burn it down, and there'll be nothing left. The result will be that we will suffer loss ("zemioo"). "Zemioo" means "to forfeit." Forfeit what? What could have been yours as a reward, which God is eager to give us. In the future, at the "bema" of Christ, we stand there passively receiving the accurate report on what we have done, and we can forfeit reward though we ourselves will be saved. The same judgment that brings us to condemnation for our works will be the judgment that also declares us to be justified in Christ.

The works that survive are those that flow under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The works that do not are those that simply are flowing from the old sin nature under the guidance of Satan himself.

The time of this judgment is going to be right after we leave this earth. The Bible tells us that we return from heaven with the Lord, dressed in the righteousnesses (plural) of the saints. These are things that are the rewards which are associated with our Judgment Seat of Christ decision. When we return, we are already rewarded (Revelation 19:7).

So coming back to Philippians 2:16, this is the event that Paul has in mind that concerns him. He says, "That I may rejoice, that I may have a ground of glorying in the day of Christ, at the day of the rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ that follows, that." "That" is the Greek word "hoti." It is called an exegetical word. It's an explanation that means "because."

"Because I have not run in vain." The word "run" is "trecho." That means that Paul is like an athlete. He likes to use athletic comparisons. Here, it's a foot race. Paul is saying, "I've entered the race, and I don't want to come in last. I've run to be a winner. When I come to the end of the race, I want to be able to stand up to the "bema" where the judges are seated and receive the laurel wreath of victory." He seeks the joy of seeing the Christians in Philippi rewarded because they have responded to his teaching so that he himself will then find satisfaction and reward for what he has done. It's aorist. Paul's life of service as a whole is viewed as being meaningful. It's active. This is his personal participation in service.

"So that," he says, "my life was not in vain." "In" is the Greek word "eis" which means "to the end," and "vain" is "kenos" which means "to no purpose"–that I didn't waste my life. This should concern all of us as believers. Multitudes of Christians will be in heaven who have wasted their lives. They have been like people who have run a race, and they have lost. Their soul and body was wasted instead of being used in a way that brings eternal reward.

Finally, he makes another comparison, and he says, "Not only that I didn't run the race and lost, neither did I labor." The word "labor" is "kopiao." "Kopiao" means "to work to the point of weariness." It means to grow faint, almost, from your labors. It describes the soul and body in fatigue because of your exercise of your Christian spiritual gift. Paul is saying, "I wore myself out teaching you the Word of God. I held nothing back from you that you should have known." Paul said, "On every occasion, in public and in private, I instructed you, and I was weary. Yet I kept going."

He said, "It would be terrible for me to get to heaven and find that, as I look at my life as a whole (that's the aorist tense), my labors as a whole were pointless; that my active participation was again in vain–to no point." Paul's hope was expressed in Philippians 4:1, which is yet to come, when he says, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." We may translate this in this way: "Focusing the mind on the Word of Life, so that I may have a ground for glorying in the day of Christ, because I did not run to no purpose, nor work to weariness to no purpose."

So report card day is coming for us as Christians. It is a day of personal evaluation, and it is a day of personal choice now as to how you're going to do. You have to decide. That's what I mean when I say that when these doors are open for instruction in the Word of God, nobody can make you come but you yourself. The reason you come is because you say, "That's the top priority in my life. Nothing is more important than taking in doctrine." Or you say, "Something else at this particular point is more important. Therefore, I do it. The distance is too long, the trip is too great," and so on.

When you think that, remember the Judgment Seat of Christ. That will be the time of no excuses and no cover ups. All will be exposed as it is. Then, for all eternity, you will live with the consequences. Is it really worth it to you to put secondary things stubbornly ahead of the Word of God? Is it really worth it to you to take the chance on using your life in what you think is something good and fine and desirable (and it may be in itself), but which is not of the Lord? So it is human good, which is mere hay, wood, and stubble, and you're going to see it all burn down before your eyes. It's not worth it. Having been alerted to it, you should know better than to do it. We trust your own heart will be sensitive to respond to the appeals of the Lord so that He can reward you in the magnificent way that He wants to.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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