

God's Building Outline

1 Corinthians 3:4-15

- I. Why the apostle Paul addresses the sins of the Corinthian church.
 - A. There are great eternal rewards for the Christian
 - B. Paul does not want them (or us) to miss out on the rewards of the Christian life.
- II. Rewards.
 - A. Everyone gets them, even the unbeliever.
 1. Worldly rewards—*enjoy them now because that's it!*
 2. God's eternal rewards.
 - B. "Reward" found 36 times in the New Testament—18 refer to crowns.
 1. Revelation 22:12 "**Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done**".
 - C. Believers will be judged "**at his appearing**"—the rapture (Mt. 16:27).
 1. Believers will be rewarded prior to the 2nd coming at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 19:8—"clothed in fine linen").
 - D. Crowns.
 1. Believer's crown—"stephanus" (originally made of twig, leaves and small branches)
 2. The King of Kings crown—"diadems". (Made of Gold).
 3. The five crowns for believers in the New Testament.
 - a. The imperishable crown—1 Corinthians 9:24-25
 - b. The crown of rejoicing—1 Thessalonians 2:19
 - c. The crown of righteousness—2 Timothy 4:8
 - d. The crown of glory—1 Peter 5:4
 - e. The crown of life—Revelation 2:10
 - E. What do we do with our crowns?
 1. Revelation 4:10-11

- a. The elders = representative of the church.
 - Some think angels: no biblical proof or reference.
- b. All believers will cast their crowns (their rewards) at the feet of Jesus Christ.
 - We cannot comprehend the greatness of all this due to our old sin nature wrapped up in selfishness and pride.

III. The metaphors: Three considerations.

A. The expectation of rewards (Vs. 8-9)

- 1. The field (garden).
 - a. All workers are nothing (greater value) V. 7
 - b. All workers are one V.8
 - c. God causes the growth.
 - All of us have a part in the garden, but God causes the growth.
 - WE ARE REWARDED NOT FOR WHAT WE PRODUCE BUT FOR OUR OBEDIENCE.
 - d. We (Paul and Apollos, V.5) we are God's workers, God's field and God's building. V.9
- 2. Paul's example (Vs. 10-11)
 - a. Paul laid the foundation = Jesus Christ. V.11
 - b. Each one of us are to build our building upon the foundation of Christ: The building is the church (us—our lives: we are to edify the church through our lives.)
 - c. The building materials represent what we are building our lives with.
 - Inflammable – Gold, silver, precious stones.
 - Flammable – Wood, hay, straw.
- 3. Evidence of Right Building or God's Testing (Verses 13-15).
 - a. all people will go through judgement from God.
 - The test of fire.
 - b. The judgement seat of Christ—believers judgment.

-- A judgment for rewards not condemnation.

c. The Great White Throne of God—unbelievers judgement.

-- A judgment of eternal condemnation.

God's Building Pastoral Notes

1 Corinthians 3:4-15

Last week we looked at what makes the Christian life so difficult... In general terms... all Christians battle with two opposing forces... **the world**... which is outside of us and **the flesh**... our own flesh that is inside of us...our sin nature.... between these two forces we struggle in our Christian walk.

The apostle Paul addresses these issues to his beloved church at Corinth, hearing.. that possibly five years after leaving the church to further the kingdom in planting and maintaining other churches... the church at Corinth had not grown at all in their faith and knowledge of God.

Not due to lack of good teaching... Paul had begun the church and for eighteen months preached and taught them the gospel of Jesus Christ... the Word of God... he wasn't alone in this work... Apollos, a gifted teacher preacher and others carried on the exhortation of God's word... even with the great teaching and preaching.... The church stagnated as infants in their faith.

The reason is that they were being greatly influenced by the world around them... and they were living by the impulses and desires of their flesh... we all as Christians grapple with these two powerful "influencers"....the world and our own flesh.

Why does the apostle Paul address these issues?... why is he so tough on them?... and us included if we are listening to him... why is he so tough on us?... he's not going to let up on them or us... the balance of this letter he will reprimand and expose many more sins...why is that so important?

We find out in this passage... chapter 3... Paul doesn't want anyone... his church at Corinth and future readers of his letter to miss out on the benefits of being a Christian.... Sometimes we are so intent on exposing our sins and convicting our conscience we forget why that is so important to do so... there are many benefits to living a Godly life... a life that God wants us to live...

Benefits?

Eternal life is certainly a big one... Revelation 21 tells us we will have a new heaven and earth... that is for the Christian...I'm glad for that!...no more talk about global warming and Covid!... verse 4 tells us that He... God... **will wipe away every tear from their (our) eyes, there will no longer be any death, there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain...** no more Tylenol...Lipitor...Albuterol...Prilosec...Metformin... no more Nature's Miracle commercials!

There are many benefits for the Christian and only for the Christian... **a peace that surpasses all understanding**...A direct access to God through prayer... opened eyes to the revelation of God's word... but something we don't often think about or even understand... the Christian will be rewarded... the Christian will be given rewards by Jesus Christ Himself...

Paul reveals here in 3:14 that each Christian is building a building...**If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.** ...the building we are building is a metaphor for our lives and the works we perform on this earth that will edify the body of Christ...and these works... our building will go through a final test to determine what reward, or rewards we are to receive on that great day of our judgement... there are rewards available in the Christian life.... there are actually benefits attached to how we live out our spiritual walk.

The apostle Paul wants us to build buildings that withstand the test of fire which is God's determining factor in how each one of us will be rewarded.... so this morning... I want to begin with the good/great news of the rewards of the Christian life....then address how that works.

Let's read the passage together this morning... I want to back up and include the three verses we 1-3 that we looked at last week to keep the context...

Read 1st Corinthians 3:1-15

First of all.... EVERYONE GETS A REWARD.... Christian and non-Christian alike... Jesus addressed worldly rewards bluntly in Matthew 6... **“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they will be glorified by men. TRULY I SAY TO YOU THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD IN FULL.**

If you are doing good things for your own gratification and recognition from others... *hey... enjoy how that feels because that's your reward!*... so everyone in this world gets little worthless rewards that bolster their pride...

Cervantes (author of Don Quixote) famously said *“The journey is better than the destination”* ... a more recent “author” wrote a book *“Your Best Life Now”*....True! For the unbeliever...you had better enjoy the journey because it all isn't going to end well!...false for the Believer... the destination is far superior!

All earthly rewards dissipate moments after their received...but God's rewards are eternal...

How does God reward?

The word “reward” is found 36 times in the New Testament... 18 of those refers to a crown or crowns...

The Bible speaks of believers receiving crowns for different things.... The crowns are our rewards... At the very end of the Bible (Revelation 22:12) at the conclusion of the book... I believe Jesus is looking back at the time He removes his church from the earth...I vote for before the Tribulation...He said, **“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done”**

Let's track this down a bit... some of you do not accept the idea of the rapture... that the church of Jesus Christ will be raptured prior to the tribulation...that's ok...but... Paul did... this is what he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4 (you should read it all but I'm not getting into all that this morning)...

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

The church is with Jesus... removed from the world... *we want to be on that trip!*... I believe it is shortly after the rapture that each one of us... all Christians will go through the judgement seat of Christ... we'll get to that later...

Christ will judge the living and the dead **"at his appearing"** (2 Tim 4:1; cf. Matt 16:27; Rev 22:12; Luke 14:14; 1 Cor 15:23). More specifically, Rev 19:8 indicates that when the Lord Jesus descends in glory at the close of the Tribulation period...His second coming.... the bride...the church... all raptured Christians have already been rewarded.... Rewarded with what?...other places in Scripture are clear... Christians are rewarded with crowns.

Interesting...every time a crown is mentioned as a believers crown...it is the Greek word *"stephanos"* ...that's where the name Stephen comes from meaning crown... the average *"stephanos"* was simply a crown of twigs...woven together into a crown...it was used in both the Olympic and Isthmian games... the Isthmian games took place right outside of Corinth.

The winner of the games would receive a *"stephanos"*... in and of itself it was not worth anything... but when God speaks of a *"stephanos"*... He calls them "crowns of gold"... not twigs.

When Jesus returns...His second coming.. we are told in Revelation 19:12 that on His head are what?... not *stephanos* but **are many diadems**.... Many crowns... that's what that great hymn is all about! *Crown Him with many crowns!...*"*Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon the throne....lift high His... what...? Royal diadem* listen to the last verse:

Crown Him the Lord of heav'n, Enthroned in worlds above...Crown Him the King to whom is giv'n, The wondrous name of Love...Crown Him with many crowns, As thrones before Him fall...Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, For He is King of all

That describes the difference between a *stephanos* and a diadem... a diadem is a crown ONLY worn by kings.... And Jesus has many of them!...being the king of kings!. Some think Jesus will have many crowns and we'll have just one... I'm not sure... nowhere does it say that.... In

fact... there are five crowns in Scripture that are given to the believer...whether they are tangible or not that doesn't matter.... Listen to these... they are your rewards!

1) The Imperishable Crown – (1 Corinthians 9:24-25) ...we're going to get to this passage next year... my favorite...**“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown”**.

All things on this earth are subject to decay and will perish...But the heavenly crown... faithful endurance wins a heavenly reward which is **“an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you”** (1 Peter 1:4).

The first crown is the imperishable crown

2) The Crown of Rejoicing – (1 Thessalonians 2:19) **“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”** Luke tells us there is rejoicing even now in heaven (Luke 15:7). The crown of rejoicing will be our reward where **“God will wipe away every tear . . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”** (Revelation 21:4)...what's left?...pure unadulterated joy!

3) The Crown of Righteousness – (2 Timothy 4:8) **“Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”** All of us in Christ will inherit this crown through the righteousness of Christ which is what gives us a right to it, and without which it cannot be obtained.

4) The Crown of Glory – (1 Peter 5:4) **“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”** Though Peter is addressing the elders, we must also remember that the crown will be awarded to all those who long for or love His appearing.

This word “glory” is an interesting word...it's not referring to our glory... referring to the very nature of God and His actions. It entails His great splendor and brightness. **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”** (Romans 8:18).

5) The Crown of Life – (Revelation 2:10) **“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**

We know that our earthly lives will end. But we have the amazing promise that comes only to those who come to God through Jesus: “**And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life**” (1 John 2:25). The crown of life... all of us will receive that crown...those are the crowns...

Let's go further...Revelation 4:10-11...a much debated and discussed passage.

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,11 “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things...

Who are these twenty four elders?...I believe...and I'm not alone in this or I would be scarred... most likely representative of the Church...some think they might be angels... It is unlikely that they are angelic beings...The fact that they sit on thrones indicates that they reign with Christ. Nowhere in Scripture do angels ever rule or sit on thrones. The Church...meaning all believers who are in Jesus Christ... however, is repeatedly said to rule and reign with Christ.

In addition, the Greek word translated here as “elders” is never used to refer to angels, only to men, particularly to men of a certain age who are mature and able to rule the Church. The word elder would be inappropriate to refer to angels, who do not age...there are no mature angels... or immature angels...old or young regardless of what “*It's a Wonderful Life*” suggests...

The golden crowns worn by the elders also indicate these are men, not angels. Crowns are never promised to angels, nor are angels ever seen wearing them. The word translated “crown” here refers to the *victor's crown*,... the *stephanos* crown that worn by those who have successfully competed and won the victory, as Christ promised...

So the church...all Christians will take their rewards off their head... their crowns... **and they will cast their crowns to the feet of Jesus...in complete Christ centered worship**... in fact... the rest of our eternity will be spent worshipping all mighty God...all of the time.

You might be thinking... *that's what we are to look forward to?... crowns?... my reward is a hat?... And then I'm going to take that crown and toss it on the feet of Christ?... That's it?... then we are going to worship God 24/7?! (first of all that reveals a wrong idea of worship!)*

Here's the thing... the reason that doesn't sound absolutely fantastic to you is because you and me are incapable of fathoming such an idea in our current state... You and me are thinking that heaven is going to be this place that is going to give us *our* idea of unlimited pleasures and rewards... OUR idea of what we think heaven should be....

We think that way because we are ME centered... so I want a

A mansion... a penthouse suite... fillet mignon... unlimited chili peppers... golf every day... I want my dog there... I'm hearing too much of that lately... all we have to worry about is getting past St. Peter at the gate... right?... *"What are you doing here?"*... and what is St. Peter supposedly doing?... checking down our list of good works.... And if our good works is greater than our bad deeds... we get to go into heaven!

Well... St. Peter has much greater things to do than stop us at the gate and check our passports!... I'm sure he's standing before Jesus still casting off his crowns to His feet!

None of that is found anywhere in God's word... first of all...(back to St. Peter) your salvation has nothing to do with your works.... what is found in scripture...are crowns...

And we will throw these crowns at the feet of Jesus... think about it... after that day of judgement... judgement for the good things you have done for the kingdom... you will be given a crown... or maybe crowns... you will **WANT** more than anything else...to cast them to the feet of Christ... that will be the greatest pleasure ever... it will be the highest honor... there is nothing you will desire more!

We can't understand that now because we are trapped in this fleshly body (remember last week?)... what's a fleshly body?... basically it is the state of selfishness... everything is about me... my wants, desires, my perceived needs... my pleasures... basically our problem of the flesh is complete selfishness....

Paul has been addressing the problem of disunity within the Corinthian church... Some were following Paul... others Apollos (4)... earlier Cephas was mentioned... everyone had their favorite personality... and that was causing division in the church... what's the root cause?... selfishness!

"I want this guy!...well I want the other guy!".... *I, I, I, me, me, me*... and all that "me" caused jealousy and strife in the church (3)... selfishness... we are all selfish to degrees... that's why you have arguments in your marriage... one or both of your "me's" is trying to elevate over the other "me"...

Now... we catch small glimpses on occasion of what it is like to be unselfish... we give someone a great gift... something that was very valuable to you and you sacrificially give it to someone you love... and you feel this *"It's more blessed to give than receive"* (Jesus's words in Acts 20:35).

“Wow! I just gave so and so my car...and I feel so good about it!”... unfortunately our selfish nature...OUR FLESH... can even creep in with that wonderful “selfless” gesture...that classic statement... *even our good deeds are for selfish reasons*... if that person doesn’t show gratitude for the car we think “I can’t believe I didn’t even get a thank you! For what I did”... They should thank you but there you go... wanting something in return!....

But think of this... as a Christian... you reach the end of life... through death you enter glorification... your glorified state... “glorification” is God’s final removal of sin from the life of the saints...so that selfishness completely disappears... we will be “**like Christ**”

What was Christ like?... Christ in complete humility...100% absence of selfishness gave up His life for us...death on the cross.... not expecting a “thank you”!...instead... *Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing*...

Imagine life without ANY selfishness... We will find the greatest pleasure NOT in satisfying ourselves... but the greatest pleasure will be worshipping our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!...we can’t rally grasp that because we’re still thinking we’ll want a bigger mansion.

We will find such incredible satisfaction the moment we take off our reward... that crown... which represents all the truly good, God pleasing, God centered works... and we cast our good works... that passed the test of fire...our rewards onto the feet of our Savior!...

Now quickly (that’s a word I don’t know!) let’s go back and spend the rest of the time to see how this works...How God rewards.

Three considerations in our passage...

1. The Expectation of Reward (Verses 8-9) 2. Paul’s Example (Verses 10-12) and 3. Evidence of Right Building or God’s Testing (Verses13-15).

1. The Expectation of Reward (Verses 8-9)

Read verses 8-9

There are two pictures here... the first one is the picture of agriculture... picture planting a large garden.. and the other picture is building a building.... Paul just finished addressing the problem of following personalities due to WHAT AND WHO YOU LIKE... selfishness...

Read verses 4-7

Did you catch that?... Paul and Apollos are what?... they in themselves are NOTHING!... neither the one who plants or waters is anything!...one is not better than the other.... so don’t elevate one over the other!...that’s his point.

Now... I completely respect the one who plants... As I sit in my comfortable chair in my office in March looking out my window... while there is still traces of snow on the ground and

miserable weather... I watch Herb...our Herb...our master gardener out in the garden preparing it to plant...

And I think to myself... *so glad I'm not Herb!*...Most of you have no idea all that Herb had to do out there getting ready to plant those vegetables he gave us all to eat all summer and fall...Hours and hours.... Days... weeks... months... to get it all ready to put the seeds in, when?... May?, June?...BUT...

I don't mind being the water guy.... Just stand there with a hose singing happy songs!... Paul says neither of them are anything... what he means by that is that **one is not greater than the other... both are** necessary for the development of the garden...take away the waterboy and your garden is done.... You can see the metaphor here... talking about those in ministry (all are in ministry!)

Like all who minister to God's people... they are equal...they are mere servants...for God to the people,... verse 8 says **Now he who plants and he who waters are one...equal... but each will receive...what?...his own reward according to his labor.** Herbs going to be rich!...There is an expectation of reward.

Before we go on I want us to see some things...

1. All of us have a part in the garden... some are sewers of seeds... some water... some will harvest...no one is greater than the other... all are one.... But all of us have a job to do.... In God's kingdom all of us have a role.

2. We having nothing to do with the garden growing... GOD DOES THAT!...

No... the water guy makes the garden grow!... Have you ever watered a garden and the seeds don't grow?...God makes the seeds grow...[he could cause the rain to fall remember?]

huge ramifications here!

-- We are not rewarded for anything we produce... only our obedience...if God's the producer...WE ARE REWARDED NOT FOR WHAT WE PRODUCE...we're not producing anything! BUT FOR OUR OBEDIENCE....

My preaching cannot produce one Christian!... Only God can produce a Christian!... All I can do is be obedient to God by preaching the word!... That's planting maybe... Randy comes along and maybe waters... only God can produce any results...

I've heard of missionaries being in the field for years with very little results... maybe one genuine conversion... they will be rewarded for their obedience, their love and compassion for the people... their loyalty to God's word...not for the produce.

These can EXPECT a reward...

Read verse 9

Notice everything here is God's?... we are God's fellow workers (Linking verse 5...Paul and Apollos)... you... the church...all Christians are God's field... God's building...everything is God's..... He leaves the metaphor of the garden... the field... to the metaphor of a building.

Think of God as the one who lets out the contract for a construction project... a building... and also the building inspector...After the foundation is laid.... all of us are to build our building... what is the building?... the church... which is us... each one of us builds upon the foundation that has been laid... then God is going to...as the building inspector... inspect the quality of our building.

What's important here is the quality of our building...

2. Paul's Example (Verses 10-12)

Paul tells us he laid the foundation... what's the foundation?... **Read verse 11**...Jesus Christ is the foundation...there is no other foundation!...Paul came to Corinth and planted a church who's foundation was Jesus Christ...

By the way... Paul calls himself a "master builder"... sounds a little boastful until you connect it to what was said before it... **ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD**... The whole building project... which includes you and me... will be successful only through the grace of God... that should keep us a bit humble!... your building isn't going to be amazing because of your wonderfulness or pizzaz... if your building is amazing it is because of the grace of God...

Paul laid the foundation... what is great about the foundation is NOT because Paul laid it... ... but because of what the foundation IS.... Jesus Christ!... **the great thing about a preacher is not the preacher... but the One who is preached!**

Read verse 10

So Paul laid the foundation... we are going to build upon it...How are we building our lives... how are we edifying the church through our lives...how are our lives contributing to God's kingdom?... and did you catch the warning? **Each man must be careful how he builds on it.**

Why's that?... because how we build on that foundation determines our rewards in heaven!

What is vital to a quality building are the building materials used to build it...

Read verses 12-13

The building materials are representative on what we build our lives on... are the materials of a quality that will pass the building inspector (God?) who will test our building materials with fire...the list here includes three materials that can withstand the fire test.... And three that would get burned up.

Gold, silver, precious stones = inflammable.... Wood, hay, straw = flammable.... Interesting that they correspond in value as well... Gold, silver and precious stones = highly valuable.... Because they are rare.... Wood hay straw.... No so much....you find that stuff everywhere!

Right to the point... anything you do in your life that edifies... build up the kingdom are precious, valuable stones...sharing God's word to the lost... Spending time worshipping the Almighty... Spending time in true prayer... time in God's word... preaching, teaching, evangelizing... it could be working in the nursery so that others can hear God's word....

It could be hosting a quilting party where everyone has a good time but the most important time of the night is when the gospel is shared...Gold...Silver... precious stones...

Or you could have a quilting party..... wood, hay, straw.

What often happens though... is that we can get busy...especially in church stuff... doing things we think are gold, silver and precious stones when they are really nothing more than wood, hay and straw.... We can get so into doing good works that we forget the edifying part...

Doing outreach forgetting to present the gospel of Jesus Christ!

This is a problem in the church today...the situation with what is called "the social gospel: churches are getting so wound up about social and cultural issues such as race... and they become all about addressing those issues.... Forgetting and omitting what is truly important and that is sharing the gospel!... which solves all racial issues!....wood, hay...straw.

Feeding the poor may be wood, hay, straw OR it could be gold, silver and precious stones!...Feeding the poor can become so all-consuming that you forget that feeding their souls is far more important than their stomachs...we hear "how can one hear the word if he is hungry... but... what good is saving their stomach but not the soul?

So much to say about all of this... hope you get the point...the bottom line is all of us as Christians will stand before the building inspector and He will test our building materials.

3. Evidence of Right Building or God's Testing (Verses13-15).

Read verses 13-15

Everyone on the planet... from all time will go through eternal judgement... what does the Bible say? **"...each of us will give an account of himself to God"** (Romans 14:10b-12, ESV). We will all as Christians...stand some day before God.

SO many misunderstandings about the judgment believers will go through...it's popular now to believe there will be ***no judgment for the Christian***... some think no judgement for anyone!

Some think the believer's judgment's will be *punishment for the sins they committed after they were saved*. If that's true...we'll spend all eternity being punished ... actually one *said the best thing to do is to live your whole life ungodly, get saved the minute before you die, and then you're all right.....like the thief on the cross...*

'You have to be punished for the sins you didn't confess'?" That's a very popular view. "The ones you forgot to confess or didn't confess willfully will have to be paid for, and you'll have to get zapped." The Bible doesn't say that. That betrays a lack of understanding of confession.

Confession for the believer has nothing to do with forgiveness.... Forgiveness has already taken place. Confession is *homologeō*, [homo-lo-geo]...*to say the same thing*: to agree with God you're a sinner, and thank Him that He already forgave you.

Judgement for the believer is good news!... it's all about rewards!...that's the judgment seat of Christ.

The judgment seat of Christ is when believers will give an account of themselves to Christ. This is the plain teaching of Scripture: **"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad"** (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In the Greek, a single word is used for **"judgment seat"** in Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10—the word is **bema**. [BA-ma]...A bema was a raised platform on which judges sat to view athletic games. Their job was to make sure contestants followed the rules and to present awards to the victors (see 1 Corinthians 9:24–27). *The bema was never a place to reprimand the athletes or to punish them in any way*. It was a place of testing and reward. In the same way, the bema of Christ will not be a place of condemnation or censure.

The judgment seat of Christ is different from the Great White Throne Judgment. That will be the final judgment of the wicked prior to their being cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15). Appearing before the Great White Throne will be unbelievers. Believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

So, believers....you are secure in Christ... but you still must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.... It will be a time of examination and a time of reward... Jesus will inspect our works.

What did we do with the resources God gave us?

How faithful were we?

Were we yielded to the Spirit, seeking to honor Christ and further His work in the world?

If so, we will have reward. Did we neglect our opportunities to serve the Lord? If so, we will suffer loss of reward.

All of that is what Paul refers to as our building.

... each one of our buildings will be put in the furnace... what remains will determine our rewards... what if everything burns up?... you will be the man in verse 15 who escapes his burning house but shows up with charcoal all over his face smelling like smoke!