

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Words by Matthew Bridges (1851); Music by George Elvey (1868)

Old Orchard Church

November 25, 2012—10:15 to 11:50 a.m.



So we make it our goal to please the Lord,
whether we are at home in the body
or away from it.

For we must all appear
before the judgment seat of Christ,
that each one may receive
what is due him
for the things done while in the body,
whether good or bad.

— 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 —

Credits

Cover art: Christ the Pantocrator ("ruler of everything"). In a church in Lesnovo, Macedonia (former Republic of Yugoslavia.) **Song**: Public domain.

Anticipating Now the Judgment Seat of Christ at the Second Advent

Thanks be to God that the ground of our salvation is not our own works
but the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross!

It is he **“who shall confirm you to the end,
blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Yet we are called to a life of holiness before the Lord:
all our works will one day be sifted and we shall suffer loss
for those that do not survive the Refiner's Fire,
and be rewarded for those that do.

Today we celebrate that our choices matter before God,
that our faithfulness will be rewarded,
that everything impure in us will one day be burned away,
And that God himself has called us to be holy,
even as he is holy



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Malachi 3:1-7a

New Testament Lesson/Pearlstring: Romans 14:9-12;
1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Christianity in Ephesus, Christianity in St. Louis Series Sermon

“On Our Duty to Be the Church—But How?”

Ephesians 4:1-16

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Getting Beyond A “Whatever” God

The New Testament teaches that at our Lord's return at the end of history even we who are Christians will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to have all of our deeds and thoughts exposed and weighed in the balance of pure, white-hot holiness. It is perhaps this doctrine more than any other that provides modern believers with the wake-up call they need: God is there, and he is what he is, and it is his evaluation of us that will be decisive—not ours of him. *Groan, groan.* That's cold water in the face. We can't keep God in our hip pocket and take him out occasionally to bless our own agendas. But cold water in the face is good sometimes—if you're falling asleep at the wheel, let's say. Modern Christians, by virtue of the familiar, easy going, authority-suspicious temper of the times, could use a little more emphasis on the idea that being a believer in Jesus involves a serious call to a holy and devout life. If we will stand before the severity of Pure Goodness one day, it's no wonder that God comes to us now not only as our Father in heaven but also as a Refining Fire to burn away the dross of our self-centeredness and the corruption of our will. Better to have it burned away now than to stand before our holy and gracious Father one day, saved, yes, but filled with shame because we lived an impotent life of spiritual shallowness.

Indeed, be warned. But be comforted and encouraged, too. Is it actually possible that God will commend us for good work well done as a Christian by the power of the Holy Spirit? It is possible. And it's more than possible; it's certain:

For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward his name, in having ministered—and in still ministering—to the saints. (Hebrews 6:10)

No effort expended, no pain or persecution or injustice honorably endured, no motion of the heart to love, forgive, or encourage someone, no act of kindness however hidden now, will fail to be marked and praised by Christ when he comes—and duly rewarded!

That means that the Coming Judgment of believers is not only sobering; it's also comforting.

—Ron Lutjens

