

The Role of Mercy on the Day of Judgment

James 2:13 caught my eye today:

“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

And as Hebrews 9:27 tells us:

“And just as it is appointed for people to die once, and after that comes judgment,”

Also 2 Corinthians 5:10:

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

WE WILL ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There are no exceptions to this, and judgment will be rendered according to our deeds, whether good or bad. I know many people have a problem when they hear about judgment. “Faith,” they say, “has saved me, and I won’t have to face any judgment.” “I can live however I want, just like everyone else, without mercy or love for my fellow human beings, but since I ‘believe,’ it doesn’t matter,” they add. But my friend, it does matter! Because, quite simply, faith without works of mercy and love is dead, nonexistent, hollow, false, and theoretical. Such a false faith will not save anyone. Paul tells us this, and James tells us this as well:

Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of

which I warn you in advance, just as I also warned you in the past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

James 2:14-18

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but you do not provide them with the necessities of life, what good is that? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

So we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, one by one, and there our deeds will be revealed. Not our theological knowledge, our Bible studies, or the verses we’ve memorized. These things don’t matter. They are means to an end, not the end itself. I read the Bible not to parrot it but to help me live the Christian life better. After all, even the Pharisees had theological knowledge! So did the priest and the Levite, who came upon the traveler beaten by robbers and left on the road to die in the parable of the Good Samaritan. But it did them no good. Instead of showing mercy to their half-dead fellow human being, they passed him by! They left him to die! Nothing stirred within them! And what difference did it make that they were priests or Levites? Or that they offered sacrifices? Or that they tithed from what they had? Here is what Christ said to them:

Matthew 23:23

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint, anise, and cumin, yet you have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.”

Justice, MERCY, and faith—these are the weightier matters, the most important ones, both then and today. They are constant and unchanging. And again our Lord says:

Matthew 9:13

“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”“

And again in the same Gospel, addressing the same people:

Matthew 12:7

“But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.”

God desires mercy. And mercy, to return to James, will be our defense at the judgment. Whoever has shown mercy will have it speak in their favor on the day of judgment. As the Apostle Peter also tells us in his first epistle:

1 Peter 4:8

"Above all, love one another deeply, for ‘love covers a multitude of sins.’”

Mercy is an expression of love. You cannot have mercy if you do not love. And you cannot love and be without mercy! Love, then, will cover a multitude of sins. Mercy triumphs over judgment! But if there is no mercy, then the judgment will also be merciless! As our Lord told us once again:

Matthew 6:14–15

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

You will be forgiven if you forgive. If you have shown mercy, mercy will be shown to you. We will all die, and after that comes judgment. We will all stand before Christ to receive our reward according to what we have done. And even if we have done wrong—which is absolutely certain—but we showed mercy to our fellow human beings, and even if we had many sins, but we had love within us, showed mercy to our neighbor, did not pass by and leave the wounded to die, but bandaged his wounds, lifted him up, and helped him—then these deeds will speak in our favor and cover our faults. They will erase judgment; they will render it nonexistent. It is in this sense that I understand John 5:24:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

Who will not face judgment? The one who hears the Word of God and “believes” in it merely intellectually, mentally, without putting it into practice? No! That is not whom the Lord means. He made this clear:

Matthew 7:21–27

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and performed many miracles in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ “Therefore, whoever hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice, I will compare him to a wise man who built his house

on the rock: and the rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. “But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: the rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.””

It is not a theoretical, intellectual “faith” that gives us eternal life, but an active, living faith that is put into practice—a faith, therefore, that DOES the will of God. So, the one who truly believes, by doing God’s will—and love and mercy are at the very heart of His will—that one, yes, will not face judgment. For him, mercy will be his boast on that day, and judgment will have no power over him. Theoretical faith, which exists only in the mind and is not accompanied by love and mercy, is simply not faith. And for those who have not shown mercy, judgment will also be without mercy! Let us have no illusions about this.

So let us walk, my brothers and sisters, with mercy and love toward our fellow human beings, and let us see each day as an opportunity to increase our account in heaven with deposits of mercy and love. For as our Lord told us:

Matthew 5:7

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”