

## Hebrews 9:27-28

### *The Truth About Judgment*

**Main idea:** God's judgment is not bad. In fact, it's very, very good.

A couple weeks ago, we looked at The Truth About Hell.

- If you weren't here, I encourage you to listen to that message this afternoon.
- This week, we're looking at what the Bible says about God's Judgment.

I get an email about once a week notifying me of crime in our area. [photo]

- Two things stick out to me here:
  - "We're very sorry." Why should they apologize for no crime?
    - We secretly like to hear about crime.<sup>1</sup>
    - We like judging others for their sins while excusing our own, or claiming God's grace.<sup>2</sup>
  - "No Crime Data This Week!" That's simply not true.
    - I often hear about drugs, domestic violence, or even murder right here in our community.
    - It happens in every big city and nearly every small town.<sup>3</sup>
- The truth is: we are all sinners, and there's a lot of sin in the world.<sup>4</sup>
  - And because of that, we all long for judgment.<sup>5</sup>
  - Today, I want to show you why God's judgment is not bad news at all, but very, very good news.<sup>6</sup>

Truth #1: God is the Judge, and He will judge all the earth. [Hebrews 9:27]

- We all long for judgment because we know that so much that happens in the world isn't right. [chart]
- We long for sin to be dealt with.<sup>7</sup>
  - We long for there to be justice in all of the world.<sup>8</sup>
  - So we rightly judge so much of the world as ungodly, worthy of God's judgment.<sup>9</sup>
- And we're given the promise that God will bring about justice. [Psalm 96:13]
- And yet, this is also a problem for us, because we're all sinners.<sup>10</sup>
  - We're all the very people that need judgment.<sup>11</sup>
  - We all judge, sometimes rightly, but our judgment is also broken.<sup>12</sup>
  - Our judgment is flawed, inconsistent, hypocritical, and often cruel.<sup>13</sup>
  - Yet, we can't help ourselves. We judge others for their failures, while giving ourselves a pass.<sup>14</sup>
    - But I'm not saying we shouldn't judge, only that we should judge rightly.<sup>15</sup>
    - But we don't do that often.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 17:4, 1 Corinthians 13:6

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 7:3, Romans 2:1

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 6:11

<sup>4</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 96:11-13, Revelation 6:10

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 98:7-9

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 30:18

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 146:7, Amos 5:24

<sup>9</sup> Acts 17:31

<sup>10</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:12, 1 John 1:8

<sup>12</sup> Romans 14:10

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 23:23

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 7:3

<sup>15</sup> John 7:24

<sup>16</sup> Galatians 6:3

- Left to ourselves, our judgment often only leads to despair for ourselves or self-righteousness toward others.
- Ultimately, our judgment is sin. [Proverbs 14:12]

Truth #2: God's judgment is mercy through the cross. [Hebrews 9:27-28]

- When talking about Judgment, we often point to Revelation. [Revelation 20:12] [Revelation 20:14-15]
  - When we talked about the truth about hell two weeks ago, we saw that the lake of fire is not hell.<sup>17</sup>
  - But Jesus says that the Judgment happened 2,000 years ago.
- The cross was and is God's judgment. [John 12:31-32]
  - At the cross, sin was condemned, Satan was defeated, and death was destroyed.<sup>18</sup>
  - We judge ourselves and others out of God's kingdom, but God judges us in.<sup>19</sup>
- You see, God's judgment is not Him abandoning us; it's Him rescuing us. [Romans 8:1]
  - The world says, "You're guilty, you're disqualified, you're too far gone."
  - But God says, "I've judged you righteous in Christ. You're mine."
- I think this is surprising to most people, even most believers.
  - We're used to thinking, "Judgment = punishment." We think judgment is bad.
  - And certainly we can receive it as bad. But it can also be very, very good. [John 9:39]
  - In the gospel, judgment = salvation. The very act of judgment that fell on Jesus is the same act that brings us life. Judgment isn't God's rejection: it's His mercy poured out at the cross.<sup>20</sup>

The Lie: God's judgment is only for some people. [1 Peter 4:17]

- Through His judgment, God purifies what He loves. [1 Peter 4:18]
  - Jesus didn't come to call the righteous to repentance, but the unrighteous.<sup>21</sup>
  - And if Jesus came to save sinners, then judgment cannot stop until every sinner is made right.<sup>22</sup>
- Many people will point to the future Judgment as the time when God judges unbelievers and casts them out forever.<sup>23</sup>
  - This is the most common misconception about judgment: that judgment only means wrath, destruction, and hopelessness.
  - But Scripture reveals something very different. [Hebrews 12:5-6]
    - Yes, judgment burns, but what it burns away is sin, pride, and death. [John 3:19]
    - Until we see it as very good, judgment is certainly going to feel like hell. But when we accept it as mercy, we see it's actually God's consuming love.<sup>24</sup>
- So instead of thinking "judgment is for someone else," we need to recognize judgment as God's refining fire, for all of us. [1 Peter 4:12]
  - Peter says it begins with the household of God.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>17</sup> It can't be, because Revelation 20:14 says that hell is cast into the lake of fire, which is God's all-consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29

<sup>18</sup> 1 John 3:8, 1 Corinthians 15:55

<sup>19</sup> Colossians 1:13

<sup>20</sup> Isaiah 53:5

<sup>21</sup> Luke 5:31-32

<sup>22</sup> Romans 11:32, 2 Peter 3:9

<sup>23</sup> John 5:28-29

<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:13

<sup>25</sup> 1 Peter 4:17

- And if it begins with us, it will not end until it has reached all. Because the same judgment that purified us in Christ is the judgment that will, in the end, purify the world through Christ.<sup>26</sup>
- Judgment isn't a sign of rejection; it's a sign that God loves us enough to make us right.<sup>27</sup>
- At the cross, the judgment of all fell on Jesus. [1 John 2:2]
  - On the last day, the judgment we face will not be a different judgment, but the very same one: already endured, already finished, already victorious.<sup>28</sup>
  - It's good news for all, because Jesus bore it for all.<sup>29</sup>
  - And true justice is not people "getting what they deserve," but God receiving what He deserves: all of His creation loving Him and praising Him forever.<sup>30</sup>

So, the two truths:

- God is the Judge, and He will judge all the earth.
- Our judgment is sin, but God's judgment is mercy through the cross.

And the lie is that God's judgment is only for some people, for "those people."

The truth is that at the cross, God's judgment fell on Jesus. And through that judgment, we're set free.

- So God's Judgment isn't bad. It's very, very good.
- Many believe judgment means separation from God forever, but the Bible says nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.<sup>31</sup>

So judgment is God coming closer to us, not moving farther away.

But until we accept God's Judgment, we exclude ourselves from the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>26</sup> Psalm 66:4, Psalm 145:8-9, Zephaniah 3:9, John 1:29, John 3:17, John 12:32, John 12:47, Romans 11:32, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Philipians 2:10-11, Hebrews 2:9, Hebrews 10:10, 1 Timothy 4:10, 2 Peter 3:8-9, 1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:14

<sup>27</sup> Hebrews 12:6

<sup>28</sup> John 12:31

<sup>29</sup> Luke 2:10

<sup>30</sup> Romans 11:36

<sup>31</sup> Romans 8:38-39