

¹⁹Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²²Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. ²⁴"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Do you think people take Judgment Day seriously? Do you take Judgment Day seriously? Judgment Day is like having a wedding (the Bible describes Judgment Day in these terms multiple times), but you don't know what day the wedding is going to be held, so every day is another day of preparation. Some people look at this time as an opportunity to be as prepared as they can possibly be. Others, while they look forward to the wedding, finally tire of the waiting and stop preparing the way they should. Still others reject marriage completely.

Most of the sermons I have heard on Judgment Day focus on that last group. I'm hoping there is no one here in that group, but I think there are probably a lot of us who fall into that second tier. So the question is how do I look at that time between now and Judgment Day? How do I keep from seeing it as nothing more than a perpetual trying on of tuxes or shopping for brides maids dresses? **HOW DO YOU STAY PREPARED FOR JUDGEMENT?**

1. Honor your Judge for who he is.

At Jesus' time, you can see an example of what happens when people tire of the waiting. Jesus had healed a man at the pool of Bethesda who had been lame for 38 years. Imagine the joy that must have filled the heart of this man, and his relatives, and probably anyone who had seen him all those years. But all that the Jewish leaders could see was that he had carried home the litter or mat he had been carried there on all these years. They called it 'doing work' on the Sabbath.

There were two problems with this. First carrying his bed and being healed on the Sabbath was not against the Law of Moses. It was only against the tradition of the elders.

More importantly, they ignored to whom they were talking! Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, had done – a miracle! Any fair minded person could have concluded either

this was one of God's prophets, like Elijah, or it was the Messiah himself. In other words, there should have been a level of respect offered!

Jesus patiently points out he isn't Elijah! (*verses 19-23*) He is more. He is the Son of God with 100% approval of his Father. In addition, he is going to do much greater things, for example, he is the judge of the living and the dead, and he is going to rise from the dead himself. In other words, pay attention! Honor him!

I have the same sinful flesh all of you do. I also know that when something drags on and on, I tend to lose my focus and my interest wanes. And that doesn't matter if it's an overlong email or a story someone is telling you that is like a coyote chasing rabbits. I want to say, "Get to the point already!"

But if we do that with Judgment Day, isn't that what we are saying to Jesus? Is he taking too long? Do you feel like you want to say, "Get it over with already!" And maybe it's not with what we say, but it's what we do. Maybe our weekly visits with Jesus aren't so weekly anymore. Maybe we don't spend time talking with him like we used to. Maybe we are tempted to make a wrong moral choice thinking no one will know or there's lots of time to repent. Maybe that friend or relative that needs to hear about Jesus can wait another day?

That's not really respecting our Judge, is it? Is that any different than the Jewish leaders? Is that honoring Jesus and recognizing him as the power over life and death and our Judge? Or did we just get bored and distracted and fall asleep when we should be looking for him?

2. Respect what your Judge says.

How we see Jesus also affects how well we listen to him. You have had some amazing teachers that you loved and respected. When they said something, you followed through with it. You may not have offered others the same level of respect. How did you listen to them?

So if we are not honoring Jesus as our Judge, what do you suppose is going to happen when he says this in verse 24: *"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."*

Jesus is more amazing than any of those teachers. Jesus has spent your entire life serving you. Jesus is the only person in the history of the world who has loved you perfectly. Jesus is the only person who could make up for all the disrespectful and apathetic things you have done in your life. Jesus crossed over from death to life and gives you the power to do so also. Jesus is your perfectly righteous Judge.

Jesus is coming back. We don't know how many days or years it will be, but he is worth waiting for no matter how many days that may be. Honor him by listening to him and being about his business. Wait patiently. He will be back sooner than you think. Amen.