

April 28, 2024

The Bema Seat... 2 Cor. 5:10

Last week we learned that Jesus is the Righteous Judge, Who will evaluate our *...deeds...* at the *...bema...* for the purpose of giving rewards.

When Paul wrote this passage, he was keenly and soberly aware that he had not run his *...race...* perfectly.

In **Phil. 3:12** Paul told the church that had not attained perfection. Then he told them *...but I press on...*

As a result, several years later, Paul wrote Timothy:

...I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing... [2 Tim. 4:7-8]

Knowing that he was not perfect, what was the Source of Paul's confidence?

2 Tim. 1:12 *...I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day...*

Paul's confidence was grounded in the fact that he was in Christ.

Paul's confidence was the same as Jude's:

Jude 24 *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling [out of the race], and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with [His] great joy...*

As a result, in **2 Cor 3:4** Paul explains the Source of his confidence:

4 Such confidence we have [is] through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 Who also made us adequate...

Paul knew that God had made him adequate to run *...the race...* all the way to the finish line. Paul knew that he could run this *...race...* because he had been outfitted with the *...Righteousness of God...* as a member the God's Divine Team [2 Cor. 5:21].

Paul knew that he was running the race as a member of Jesus' Team, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 3:20 *Now to Him Who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power [dunamis-Acts 1:8] that works within us...*

This confidence in the power of Jesus' Righteousness by the Spirit allowed Paul to say in the face of any failure, *...I press on toward the goal for the prize [Phil 3:14]*

Paul ran his race with the same attitude expressed in **Heb. 12:1-2**

Therefore, since we are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God...

Phil. 2:9-11

Why have I shared Paul's confidence about the ...bema...? Because we can so often stumble, we need to have the same confidence to *...press on toward the goal for the prize [Phil 3:14]*

Remember 1 Peter 5:8.

Now let's answer the question: Why are our ...deeds... so important to God? Once again, the answer is found in **Gen. 1:26-28**, *Let's Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...*

Our ...deeds... are God's means of advancing His creative purpose in and through us.

Rom 8:28-30 *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

In this way, we are the corporate of the Image of Christ for the glory of God.