



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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“A Mirror For The Soul”

(Part IV)

By

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“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does,”
-(James 1:22-25).

In the three previous articles, *A Mirror for the Soul, Part I, II, and III* we considered James illustration of those who are hearers of God’s word and not doers. James tells us that they are like one who looks into a mirror and beholds their appearance, but who is not impacted and transformed by the reality of that image enough for it to have a lasting effect after walking away. The

applications for us that we have considered thus far are that as a mirror reveals the spots and blemishes of our physical appearance, so the word of God reveals the spots and blemishes of our spiritual appearance, and that God’s word is truly a mirror for our soul that shows us what we are in His sight. As we have gazed into the word of God we have seen that, *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,”* (Rom. 3:23), and that the consequence of the stain of sin on our spiritual appearance is death, (Rom. 6:23). Further, we have seen that God’s word shows us what we can be by His grace through the shed blood of Christ that cleanses us from sin, making us spiritually presentable to God. Yet being more keen, insightful, and penetrating than any earthly mirror, God’s Word goes even further to also show us what we will be in His judgement.

Having grown up in a small, rural county in southeastern Ohio the story is told of a salesman who lived in a big city who came to visit his brother who was a farmer during the time of the first cellular phones. The salesman commented

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6:00 pm

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to his brother, “I don’t mean any offense but you all are sort of backwards and behind the times here. I can’t even get any reception for my new cellphone.” The farmer replied, “No offense taken. But you know somethin’. When the end of the world hits...when judgment day comes... you’re gonna wish you were right here in this county.” His brother asked, “Why’s that?” The farmer replied,

“Because when judgment day does come it won’t hit here for at least another twenty years!”

I tell this humorous story not to make light of the coming judgment, but rather to illustrate the attitude and mindset that many, even Christians, can sometimes unwittingly fall into. Even though we understand there will be a definite, final judgment, the fact that it will occur at an unknown time known but to God can make it seem distant and unreal. Many live their lives based on this false notion, living like judgment will not apply to them or as if they can somehow escape or be excused from it. They live their lives as if judgment will never touch them, as if they can simply avoid it like walking between the raindrops. But God’s word tells us there will be a judgment! In Acts 17:31 Paul told those in his sermon on Mars Hill that God has *“appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”* There will be an accounting. You can mark it down and take it to the bank. *“For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God. So then each*

of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Given the reality of a final judgment by God, how can we know what we will be in His judgment? How can we know if our souls will be presentable to God? We can know by examining ourselves as we gaze into the “mirror for our souls”, God’s word. Self-examination is the key, but it can be very difficult. Someone said that self-examination is like peeling an onion...as each layer is removed it often brings more tears. It is not a superficial or cursory process involving a quick glance. True self-examination is a deep, penetrating work that lays bare the mind, intellect, will and emotion. It involves contemplating our very motives, peering into our heart of hearts in a meticulous way that reveals not only the strongholds of sin, but the footholds of self, pride, and worldliness. That little piece of self that lies within that Satan often gets a hold of must be sought out and rooted out. 2 Cor. 13:5 reads, *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.”* We secure a favorable position in God’s judgment by not just hearing God’s word, but by keeping His

commandments, and not forgetting who we are as our original text in James teaches. Also, 1 John 2:3-5 reads, *“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”*

God’s word shows us that eternal life awaits those found presentable through the blood of Christ in God’s judgment. 1 John 5:11-13, *“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”* On the other hand, if our soul remains in an unpresentable sinful condition, uncleansed by the blood of Christ, we will receive the sentence found in Matt. 25:41, *“Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

God’s word shows us what we are, can be, & will be. Now...the choice is ours!