

As you look at your calendar for the next few months, are there any days on that calendar that you are afraid of? Maybe if you are student there is a test coming up that you are really afraid of. Maybe if you are an athlete you have a game coming up on the schedule that makes you a little nervous. Or maybe you got a trip to the dentist in few weeks and you're a little nervous about that. Judgment Day is not a day on our calendar because we don't know when that day will be. But Jesus will come back and he will judge every person who has ever lived. And just like those other dates on the calendar we might be a little afraid of Judgment Day. But the good news of the Bible is that you don't need to be afraid of Judgment Day. Jesus said that when Judgment Day comes *we can stand and lift up our heads*. Judgment Day will be a day of joy for believers. Today we are going to look at important things to know about Judgment Day. And as we look at these important things we will see that we don't need to be afraid of judgment day in fact we can look forward to Judgment Day.

The important things to know about judgment day are 1. Who the Judge will be. 2. What the standard will be. And 3. What the evidence will be. So the Judge, the Standard, and the Evidence.

First, who will the Judge be? Our passage today says that the Judge will be Jesus Christ. Jesus starts off our passage today by saying, **"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing," (John 5:19)**. This means that Jesus would never do anything against his Father. He and his Father will not disagree on any decision that is made on Judgment Day. Jesus goes on: **"because whatever the Father does, the Son also does."** (John 5:19) This is a remarkable claim for Jesus to make. Think about some things that the Father does. The Father keeps the planets in orbit. The Father gives life to little babies. The Father sends rain. When Jesus said, I do whatever the Father does, Jesus was claiming to be divine.

Jesus goes on: **"For The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does."** There is nothing that the Father does as God that he keeps away from Jesus. **The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he [the Father] will show the Son even greater things than these."** Jesus had already shown his divine power by doing some miracles. In John 2 he turned water into wine. Just before this in John 5 Jesus healed a man who could not walk. But Jesus says, **"[the Father] will show the Son even greater things than these."** Well, what greater works is Jesus talking about? He's talking about raising the dead and judging the world. Jesus says: **"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son."** (John 5:22-23) The one who will be your judge on Judgment Day is Jesus Christ. And that's the first reason you don't have to be afraid of judgment day. When you look up at the judge on Judgment Day, you will be looking up into the face of the one who loves enough to die for you.

It's always good to have someone very powerful who loves you and is on your side. Your Savior Jesus is enormously powerful. Jesus says, **"For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself."** (John 5:26) What does it mean to have "life in himself"? Well, I do not have life in myself. I depend on other things for life. I depend on food for life. I depend on oxygen for life. But Jesus does not depend on those things. He has life *in himself*. Jesus is enormously powerful.

It is very important to our salvation that Jesus is the all-powerful God. Because if Jesus loved us but he didn't have the power to save us, then that wouldn't do us any good. Or if Jesus loved us, but he wasn't in the position of Judge, then that wouldn't help us either. But since Jesus is God, he is powerful enough to save you. And since Jesus is the Judge, we can look forward to judgment day.

So the first important thing to know about Judgment Day is that the Judge is Jesus. The second important thing to know about Judgment Day is the Standard. What will be the standard of judgment? The standard of judgment will be faith in Jesus. The Bible says, **"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, whoever does not believe will be condemned."** (Mark 16:16) Earlier in John's Gospel it says, **"Whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."** (John 3:18)

Believers in Jesus will not be condemned. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It doesn't just mean that you know the facts about Jesus' life. To believe in Jesus means that you trust in him to get you into heaven. You trust him for the forgiveness of sins. You trust him for eternal life. Whoever trusts or believes in Jesus will not be condemned in the final judgment. That's what Jesus says here in our passage: **"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."** (John 5:24)

The standard for judgment on the last day is believing in Jesus. But we should not think that faith is the work that we do. Faith is not a work. Faith is simply the cup into which God pours all of his love and forgiveness. Faith itself is a gift a God. It's not something we were able to do on our own. Also, the Bible says that by nature we are spiritually dead in sin. Since we were spiritually dead, we don't have the naturally ability to believe in Jesus. Since we were spiritually dead, what needed to happen in order for us to believe in Jesus was a spiritual resurrection, and that's exactly what Jesus did for us. Listen to what he says: **"Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."** (John 5:25) When we first hear that we might think that Jesus is talking about Judgment Day when he raises everybody from the dead. But that's not what he's talking about in this passage. He says **a time is coming and has now come**. He's talking about something that's happening right now. This isn't talking about Jesus' raising people's bodies on the last day, this is talking about Jesus raising people from the dead spiritually when he brings them to faith. **"A time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."** (John 5:25) You believe in Jesus. That means you have heard the voice of the Son of God and you have been raised from the dead spiritually. And since you've been raised from the dead spiritually you already have eternal life. Jesus says, **"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."** (John 5:24) You don't need to wait until Judgment Day to find out whether you'll have eternal life, you already have eternal life right now. That's what Jesus says, **"has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."** (John 5:24)

We've looked at the Judge, that's Jesus. We've looked at the standard, that's believing in Jesus. Finally, we will look at the evidence. Jesus says, **"A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out."** On Judgment Day, Jesus will raise the bodies of all people. And he says, **"Those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned."** (John 5:29) But you might say, "Pastor you just said that the standard is faith. Those who believe in Jesus will go to heaven. Those who don't believe in Jesus will go to hell. The standard is believing in Jesus. But this is talking about our works. It says, **"Those who have done what is good will rise to live,"** (John 5:29). How do we explain that?

Well, whenever you have a court case, the judge will always look at the evidence. And the evidence that you have faith is that you do what is good. Faith produces good works. The apostle Paul said, **"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."** (Gal 5:6) Faith will express itself through love. Love is the evidence that faith is in your heart. The Lord's brother James said, "I will show you my faith by what I do. And "he also said that faith without works is dead." We are saved by faith alone, but faith is never alone. Faith will always produce good works. We are not going to perfect, but there will be evidence of faith in our lives.

Good works on the outside are evidence of faith on the inside. Jesu once said, "By their fruit you will know them." Look at a tree. How can you tell if the tree is alive? What is the evidence that the tree is alive? It has fruit on it. But the fruit doesn't give life to the tree. No it's the opposite. The tree is alive and so it produces good fruit. Faith will produce good works in the life of the believer. And of course we don't do good to try to earn eternal life. We do it because we are thankful to Jesus. Jesus has taken all our sins away. So we don't have to be afraid Judgment Day. And since we don't have to be afraid of Judgment Day, that frees us to not worry about ourselves and instead think about how we can help other people. So Judgment Day is not a day that we need to be afraid of. It's a day we can look forward to. The Judge is our loving Savior Jesus. The standard is believing in Jesus. The evidence is the good works that our faith produces. I began the service by talking about dates on our calendar that might make us afraid. But there are other dates on our calendar, that we look forward to, like vacation or our birthday. Since Jesus has taken all our sins away Judgment Day is one of the days we can look forward to. Amen.