

In the midst of the paths of judgment

Part 1

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Duration	00:19:52
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/as053/in-the-midst-of-the-paths-of-judgment

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[00:00:01] I hope my voice will hold out, but you bear with me for it being a little bit weaker than usual. 1 Corinthians 2, verse 14. 1 Corinthians 2, verse 14.

But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he, as a spiritual, judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

And then chapter 10, verse 24.

Chapter 10, verse 24.

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. [00:01:02] Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. If any of them that believe not, bid you to a feast, and you be disposed to go. Whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. If any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols. Eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other. For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? And in chapter 12.

Chapter 12, in the middle of verse 8 it says, For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. And in the middle of verse 10 it says, To another, discerning of spirits.

[00:02:02] And in chapter 14.

In verse 29.

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. Other judge.

I'd like to just preface a few remarks on this epistle to the Corinthians. By reading a text.

Proverbs chapter 8, verse 20.

I walk in the path of righteousness, in the midst of paths of judgment.

That he may cause those that love me to inherit substance. And I will fill the treasuries.

Now I would submit, dearly beloved, that the walking in the path of righteousness is the Roman epistle. Roman epistle.

[00:03:01] And cause them that love me to inherit substance. Is the Colossian epistle.

And I will fill the treasuries. Well I think we'll all agree that's Ephesians. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in heaven is in Christ Jesus. But it's that second one in verse 20 that I wanted us to consider just for a few moments this evening. In the midst of the paths of judgment. In the midst of the paths of judgment. And if I might submit what is wrong in the meetings today, there is no judgment. We need men who can discern.

That's what's needed today. Men who can discern.

That's why I've read these scriptures. This came to me quite a long time ago. One of the significant words in the first epistle of the Corinthians is this thought of judgment. Discernment.

The priests in Leviticus 14.

[00:04:03] That's what characterized them, isn't it? Discernment.

They had to look on the leprous person to discern.

To determine what was there.

They made the judgments as to whether the person was leprous or not.

I would submit dearly beloved that perhaps if we were a bit more subject to the Lordship of Christ. We would have that godly discernment that is needed today. Among the assemblers of God's people. When Moses was being instructed by God.

In Numbers, is it 27 or 28? 27 I think.

When Moses was being instructed about handing over the leadership to Joshua. He said Eliezer will stand up with the Urim and the Pimim to give judgment. And I remember reading when I was quite a young believer. [00:05:01] About the reference to the Corinthian epistle.

And there it was speaking you know about. It was an exposition of Leviticus 4 about the priests. And they ate the sin offering in the holy place.

And that's what's going on in that first epistle of Corinthians.

The Apostle Paul is really desirous that these dear saints. May not vaunt in glory in their liberality, their broad mindedness.

That was the trouble.

They were characterized by a world you see.

They themselves in Corinth were natively intelligent. Athens was the place where the intelligence was. They had imported it.

And of course they prided themselves in their knowledge. And they thought we are broad minded. We can tolerate these wrong things that go on.

I won't elaborate them, you know what was there. [00:06:03] And in our broad mindedness we can handle it.

And the Apostle Paul was very severe on them.

And he was desirous that there might be those among them. That would stand up and lead.

As Deborah could say in Judges chapter 5.

For the leaders led.

Leaders led.

So this word judgment occurs quite a lot of times. In the epistle to the Corinthians.

There is the basic word for judgment. Which does mean purely judgment.

And the Apostle uses that. In the first mention in verse 1 of chapter 2.

He says.

I came.

He says.

Sorry verse 2. He says.

I determined. I determined. It says I judged. Not to know anything among you. Saying Jesus Christ.

And Him crucified.

Him crucified.

[00:07:02] And you know.

The tense of the verb would bring out. Not that the Lord Jesus Christ is always crucified. He was crucified once and for all. But the reality would bring before us. That we ever have before us a Christ crucified. Do we walk in the light of that dear and beloved. A Christ crucified.

What effect has it.

On our hearts and minds.

We are not here at our own charges. We are under the effect and the power. Of a Christ crucified.

As that were a bearing on us. As we walk the scene to the glory of God. Anyway.

We come to there. Verse 14.

Here. It's a strengthening form of the word.

And really it does mean.

The cross questioning that goes on. Before hand.

So that you can then come to a right judgment in the matter. [00:08:02] It's the counsel for defense and the counsel for the prosecution. Going through and then they can come to a right judgment in the matter. And here.

The natural man doesn't understand these things at all. The saint of God is darkness to him. When I told one of my colleagues. It still goes on after 40 years or so in the office. I told him I was going over to Ireland you see. To a Christian conference. So I said you stupid and all sorts of things like that. It's darkness to them. You see.

They understand of course when you're dipping into your pocket to give them help in this charity. And that thing and all the rest of it. And you're helping Oxfam and all this stuff. They don't mind that. But they just can't understand that the saints of God want to get together. To enjoy the things of Christ. To be built up in the most holy faith. And the natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God. Every one of us. It's our own daily experience. [00:09:02] Isn't it?

That's how true. So they're foolishness to him. He can't know them because they are spiritually discernment. Spiritual discernment is needed.

Remember in verse 10.

God has revealed these things to us. And then in verse 13.

They're communicated.

We communicate spiritual things by spiritual means. Nothing to do with the natural man's intellect and things like that at all. Nor daily needed.

Nor sending them to colleges and things like that. No. They're communicated by spiritual means. Men who are cast upon God.

They are spiritually discerned.

Come to the judgments about these things. He that is spiritual judges all things.

And it's the same word as that word. Discerning.

He that is spiritual discerns all things.

But he himself is discerned of no man. [00:10:03] Yes. The natural man doesn't really understand. Does he?

That doesn't hinder us.

We go on with God. We seek to go on with God. And enjoy these blessed things.

And we know the mind of the Lord.

We have the mind of Christ. That intelligent faculty. We've been given it.

How blessed and wonderful in his grace. That God has given us an initiation understanding of these blessed truths. You and I are dear saint of God. Isn't that wonderful?

Yes. We know these things. And we can go on in enjoyment of them. The spiritual things.

Judgment occurs in chapter 4. And we'll do that God willing in the readings. In chapter 5. And again in chapter 6.

In the matter of natural judgment. Chapter 7 again.

We get the man there making a judgment as to whether he should get married or not. [00:11:01] He makes a judgment there. In chapter 9.

Verse 3.

Paul is judged.

He says examined or judged. Again.

Same word.

Then we come to chapter 10. That I read.

Because I didn't want to interfere with any of the portions that we're having in the Bible reading. And verse 25 there.

Takes us out of the portion we're having in the Bible reading. Verse 25.

That is asking no question. For conscience sake.

And that word there again is this matter of judgment. Coming to a right judgment about things. And

that the key to all this matter you know.

Is let no man seek his own but every man another's well being.

That's the consideration we should have here.

Apostle Paul says that he would eat no more meat if it was going to make anybody offend. And although we have liberty to an idol is nothing.

[00:12:06] Liberty might seem.

We've got to consider the weaker brethren. And that is a matter that should weigh very much with us dearly beloved. You know things as Paul says.

All things are lawful me not expedient. As much as we could do.

And perhaps nothing exactly intrinsically wrong. But we must consider those who may not be of such a strong conscience on the matter. Those who are weak in the matter. And we should consider these things. And no need to elaborate them. You know only too well.

That this is a matter that should bear with us very much indeed. And consideration of one another.

And that we might not stumble them or lead them astray. We may have the strength to bear and sustain a certain matter. But others may not be in a similar way.

[00:13:03] I'm not of course speaking about outright evil. We can't tolerate drunkenness and murder and things like that. And all these matters no. But there are matters which are often a matter of conscience. And we must be careful in these things.

In chapter 11 of course.

Again we'll have the matter of judgment when we come to the Bible reading. But I refer to the verse 10 of chapter 12.

Where it speaks there of the various gifts and all that elaborated there. And it was particularly that one to another. Discerning of spirits.

Discerning of spirits.

This is really getting in and taking them apart. Really pulling them out.

Examining them thoroughly. Seeing what nature they are. And here we find a joining up almost of Paul and John don't we? John says in his first epistle. [00:14:02] Chapter 4.

Try the spirits.

Try the spirits.

There are those today that say oh well set aside Paul. Let's rely on John's ministry. But then they forget verses like that. It's not Paul that says try the spirits. It's John that says try the spirits. It's John also that says you know. If they come to your door. Don't invite them into the house. They don't bring the name of Jesus.

They don't bring the father and the son. And the true relationship there. It's John that says that. Not Paul.

But guided by the spirit of God. And so we must try the spirits.

And this is a very necessary gift today. Would to desire that more we cultivate it. It's always said if there was. Mr. Darwin he said if there was more devotion. There'd be more gift. The gift is there. It's a question of devotion to the Lord. To enable one to exercise it. [00:15:02] Desire and this is the best gifts we'll be getting in the reading. And here's one here.

I just fastened on this one. The discerning of spirits. Because you know there's a lot of various voices around today. And ideas abroad.

And various teachings and things like that. And very much in this charismatic type of movement.

There's a lot that's getting carried away by it. And we do need to warn dear young saints.

About the dangers of these things. It's greatly needed graciously and kindly to help them. I'm sure they drift along to your halls as they do to ours. And they're all at sea and they do need to be helped. Graciously and kindly.

We need to discern spirits. And to graciously point out the right way.

And the way of the Lord Jesus. And so just moving on now to Paul's last mention of judgment.

[00:16:01] I think of course the key one is what we'll have in the Bible reading. In chapter 11.

But here he finishes up in quite an important one. Very important one.

In 1 Corinthians 14.

Remember of course in passing we didn't read verse 24. But it's helpful to see that the unbeliever coming in.

Verse 24.

He is convinced.

He is convinced of all.

He is judged of all.

As the real God in the order. True minister going out. The word of God. Truly going out. The

unbeliever is convinced of all. He is judged of all.

Then the apostle Paul takes up the battle and confusion that was going on in tongues. And then he says in verse 29. Let the prophets speak.

Two or three. And let the other judge exercise this discrimination.

[00:17:01] Let him exercise this discrimination. It's not a matter of condemnation. It's a matter of exercising discrimination. And don't let us be afraid to exercise discrimination dear beloved. We are a bit weak in that. Let us exercise it more.

Let the prophets speak. Two or three. I firmly believe that there in its initial instance. It really was a prophet who was foretelling. I don't think we really have prophets in this sense today. But I still feel that when the servants of God give up. To minister the word. To give a word of exhortation and encouragement. There still needs to be that discernment of what is being said. As it might be to the prophet. And edification of the saints. And that it might draw their hearts closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. So I trust you will be helped to see something of the value of this blessed epistle.

In the way of judgments.

We need the truth of the Roman epistle.

[00:18:04] And the Colossians and Ephesians.

They always get compared very often. But we are trying to forget the Corinthians. And I would say that that is what it sets before us. The true powers of judgment. And that is what is needed today dear beloved. That godly discernment of what is right and wrong. And that we might walk in that pathway. Cleaving to that which is good. Cleaving to it. And avoiding that which is evil. Going on forward.

And then we will find believers that will come in. And they will be convinced of all. They will be judged of all. They will fall down on their face. And knowing that God is in you.

Of a truth.

God is there. Not that we seek glory for ourselves. We seek the glory of that blessed man Christ Jesus. Whom we are going to see very soon. We read about his apocalypse. As dear brother George always reminds us. When that theme of his apocalypse comes up. Before that moment is coming into the air. [00:19:02] To call us hence away. We are going to descend from heaven with a shout. The voice of the archangel. The trump of God. The dead in Christ shall rise first. The living we. The living that remain when we are caught up together. With them to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Isn't it wonderful? Dear beloved. But we are left here. To go on for him. Let us indeed be taking on that priestly character. And standing up with the Urim and the Thumm. In the matters of judgment in these days. And I feel that Lordship of Christ will help us very much in this. And it will be my desire and prayer. I've been on my knees for several weeks before I came here. As our study of Lordship. Might lead us more into that way dearly beloved. That we might in our usual expression. Stand up and be counted for the Lord Jesus Christ. In a real way today. For his name's sake. Amen.