

WHO MADE YOU MY JUDGE?

Key Verse: Matthew 7:1-5

Key Thought: Look at your own life, Before Judging Others

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Matthew 7:1-5

Did you know that this scripture, Matthew 7:1-5, is quickly replacing John 3:16 as the most memorized and quoted verse in the Bible? For instance, let’s go over a few statements and see if you agree with me.

Homosexuality is a sin. Homosexuals need to repent of this sin to be right with God.

All pre-marital sex is wrong. Two people living together out of wedlock are living in adultery.

Abortion is murder. It is the killing of a human being and those doctors who perform abortions, except for rare exceptions, are guilty of taking innocent human life.

Now when those statements are made the world immediately trots out their favorite verse in the Bible: *“Judge not, that you also not be judged.”* Or, they will say something like, *“Who died and made you judge?”*

That brings up this question: is it ever right to pass judgment on the actions of others? Be careful how you answer that question! You might think that Jesus would have said “*No! It is never right to judge another.*” However, Jesus said, “*It depends! There are times when you can judge and times when you cannot judge.*”

The five verses that we have read today have something very important to say about this matter of judging one another. Whether we admit it or not, we all engage in judging from time to time. Some people have even made it their lifestyle to judge others by their standards. Let’s look at what Jesus has to say about this vital matter. I want to preach on the thought *Who Made You My Judge?* There are three issues I want to point out from this text.

I. THERE IS A CAUTION TO BE HEEDED

The word “*judge*” means “*to pronounce judgment; the expression of strong disapproval or harsh criticism. To act the part of a judge; or to pass judgment on the words and deeds of another.*”

Jesus says, “*judge not*”. Does this mean that all judgment is wrong? No! There are some occasions mentioned in the Bible where Christians are called to exercise judgment over others.

1. 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 12-23 – Here, Paul judges a man guilty of fornication with his father’s wife. He condemns the man and his actions and calls on the church to do the same.
2. Matthew 7:6 – We are told to judge some people as dogs and swine and as being unworthy of the precious treasures of the Word of God.
3. 1 John 4:1-6 – Believers are commanded to judge religions and statements of preachers and teachers to see if they line up with the Word of God and the teachings of the Gospel.

4. Matthew 7:15-20 – We are obligated to examine the fruit of those around us and base our fellowship with that person on what we see in their life.

5. Matthew 18:15-18 – There are times when the church must exercise discipline against a wayward member. This will require judging their fruits according to the Word of God.

So, what is Jesus talking about here?

The word “judge” means “to criticize, condemn, judge, censor.” It is an old fault-finding attitude; it is being picky; it is the habit of carping criticism; it is a mean, critical spirit that sees only the bad in others.

Jesus is talking about looking at people and attempting to judge their motives and their real spiritual condition based on what we see in their lives. The idea here is that the judge presumes to know the condition of another person’s heart. He sets himself up as judge and jury and proclaims the guilt and innocence of all those around him. This is the attitude that Jesus condemns!

The person who sets himself up as the judge of others will himself face judgment someday! The critic forgets that he will also face God in judgment, Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10. In that day, God will use the same yardstick to judge the critic that he used to judge others! That is a scary thought! Consider these verses the next time you think about sitting in judgment of another person: James 3:1-2; James 2:13; Luke 6:37-38. In other words, when you judge another person, you will eventually reap what you sow. By the way, for every person you watch and criticize, there is someone else watching you and criticizing your life! There is a vacancy in the Supreme Court. I would not want that job! Every decision you hand down is scrutinized and criticized by the media, the public and by Congress. You are constantly being judged for your judgments.

Here is the bottom line: We have no right to judge and criticize the lives of those around us. There are a few good reasons why I say this.

1) Don't criticize because you don't know all the facts.

I read about an owner of a manufacturing plant who decided to make a surprise tour of the shop. Walking through the warehouse he noticed a young man just lazily leaning up against some packing crates with his hands in his pocket doing nothing. The boss walked up to him and angrily said, "*Just how much are you paid a week?*" Well, the young man's eyes got rather big, and he said, "*Three hundred bucks.*"

The boss pulled out his wallet, counted out three one hundred bills, gave it to him, and said, "*Here's a week's pay. Now get out of here and don't ever come back!*"

Well, without a word the young man stuffed the money into his pocket and took off. The warehouse manager was standing nearby staring in amazement. The boss walked over to him and said, "*Tell me, how long has that guy been working for us?*"

The manager said, "*He didn't work here, he was just delivering a package.*"

2) Don't criticize because we all fail God and sin, 1 John 1:8-10

3) Don't criticize because you do not know the content of the other person's heart.

4) Don't criticize because, when you do, you are attempting to assume the authority of God,

5) Don't criticize because one day you will face God in judgement yourself.

II. THERE IS A CHALLENGE TO BE HEARD

Here, Jesus speaks to the real issue. When we judge another, we always do so from a warped perspective. He uses the humorous image of a man with a log sticking out of his eye trying to help remove little splinter from another person's eye. The word "*mote*" refers to "*a dry twig or a piece of chaff.*" We might call it "*a splinter*". The word "*beam*" refers to "*a load bearing beam in a house.*" Literally, it refers to "*a log*". Imagine how impossible that would be!

When I look at your life and see your faults, I am, in fact, blind to the problems that dwell within my own heart. For instance, if my heart was as pure and as holy as I would like to believe it is, I would not be focused on criticizing and condemning you for your failures. I would instead love you, pray for you and try to help you. I would not be in the business of tearing you down, but I would be seeking how I might build you up and restore you!

The problem with judging others is that we are often guilty of the same or worse sins ourselves, Romans 2:1. None of us are anything to brag about! While we look at the way some people dress, act, and at the outward signs of sin in their lives, we are often blind to the prejudices, hypocritical spirit and other sins that lurk within our own heart! What makes me think that I am in any position to straighten you out when I am in such a mess myself? Here is the hard part. Here is the truth that is so hard to swallow. Jesus is saying that the sin of the critic is greater than the sin of the person being judged! When we talk about the flaw that is visible in someone's life, we reveal a canyon in our own life. We are revealing a heart that lacks genuine love for our neighbor. That ought to make us stop and think before we tear another person down, just because they don't live up to our standards!

An old poem puts it this way:

*There is so much good in the worst of us
And so much bad in the best of us;
That it hardly behooves any of us
To talk about the rest of us.*

III. THERE IS A COUNSEL TO BE HONORED

Jesus uses strong language here. He calls those people who judge and criticize others, hypocrites! He says that when we do this, we are merely acting like we are holier than we really are. Then, He offers some valuable counsel to those of us who fall into this trap from time to time.

Jesus tells the would-be judge to first clean up his own life, then he will be in a better position to help his brother. When our own heart is clean, we are told that we will be able to “*see clearly.*” I get the impression that we will be able to see more than the “*mote*” in our brother’s eye. I think we will see a few things far more clearly.

When we see our own heart more clearly.....

1. We will understand that we are just sinners ourselves who are prone to fail.
2. We will see God and the fact that we will stand in judgment before Him some day more clearly.
3. We will see our brother more clearly. We will see his need for love, compassion and help more clearly.

When our own heart has been fixed; when our own vision has been cleared up, we will be able to reach out to a fallen brother, or a lost sinner in the right spirit. We will not approach them with a spirit of judgment, reproach and condemnation; but we will be able to come to them with a spirit of compassion and restoration. That is the way it should be done! *There ought to be a desire to help a wayward brother and to win a lost sinner.*

Neither is possible if we have a judgmental, critical attitude. When we walk in love, one with another, we will be in the business of building up and not tearing down!

It is not wrong to confront a person with his sin. It is wrong if you don't. Listen these verses:

Leviticus 19:17 “Do not hate a brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.”

Proverbs 27:5 “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”

Matthew 18:15-17 “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Luke 17:3 “So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them.”

Refusing to confront a person about his sin is just as wrong as a doctor refusing to confront a patient about his sickness. If you want to understand what Jesus said in *Matthew 7:1*, you must put right beside it what he said in *John 7:24*, “***Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.***”

Now that says it all. You cannot judge a tree by its leaves. But you can judge a tree by its fruit. You cannot judge a book by its cover. But you can judge a book by its contents. The key is not to judge by appearance.

There was a lady in an airport who bought a book to read and a package of cookies to eat while she waited for her plane. Well, after she had taken her seat in the terminal and began to read this book, she noticed that the man sitting one seat away from her was fumbling to open the package of cookies on the seat between them. Well, she could hardly believe her eyes that a stranger would just open her bag of cookies and eat them. He took one and ate it. She was so hot and steamed. She reached into the bag and took one and ate it. Well, the man didn't say anything. He just reached over and took another cookie. This woman thought to herself that she wasn't going to let him eat all of her cookies, so she took another cookie. When they finally got down to one cookie, the man reached into the bottom of the bag, broke the cookie in half, ate it, glared at the woman, got up and left. This lady couldn't believe this man's nerve. She was thinking to herself how fresh and arrogant he was. Soon the announcement came to board the plane.

This lady got on the plane, still hot and bothered at the audacity of this man, sat down, buckled her seat belt, reached into her purse for a tissue, and there was her bag of cookies.)

In Closing... There are several reasons why people tend to judge and criticize others.

1. Criticism boosts our own self-image. Pointing out someone else's failure and tearing him down makes us seem a little bit better, at least in our own eyes. It adds to our own pride, ego, and self-image.
2. Criticism is often enjoyed. There is a tendency in human nature to take pleasure in hearing and sharing bad news and reveling in the shortcomings of others.
3. Criticism makes us feel that our own lives are better than the person who failed. In other words, criticism builds us up in our pride.
4. Criticism helps us justify the decisions we have made and the things we have done throughout our lives. We rationalize our decisions and acts by pointing out the failure of others.

5. Criticism points out to our friends how strong we are. Criticism gives good feelings because our rigid beliefs and strong lives are proven again by our brother's failure.

6. Criticism is an outlet for hurt and revenge. We feel he deserves it. Subconsciously, if not consciously, we think, "He hurt me, so he deserves to hurt, too." So, we criticize the person who failed.

Here is the invitation. Have you been guilty of passing judgment on other people because they do not live like you do? Has the Lord spoken to your heart about this matter? If He has, then you need to come make it right and get the log out of your eye.

Have you been unjustly judged by others? Have you forgiven the ones who did that to you? You need to! This altar is open to you.

Have you ever been saved? If you have, then live like it. If not, then come to Jesus and look to Him for the needs of your heart and soul!

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30am

Date: September 29, 2024

After Service Song: The Lion & The Lamb