

**The Messiah Has Come**  
**Week 28**  
**Matthew 7:1-6**  
**“Don’t Judge Me!”**

**Introduction**

*He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee was standing and praying like this about himself: ‘God I thank You that I’m not like the other people — greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.’ “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this one went down to his house justified rather than the other, because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”* **Luke 18:9-14**

I heard recently that a survey was taken several years ago in America, asking people which was their favorite *Bible* verse. The overwhelming response was “**John 3:16**”. Then, many years later, the survey was repeated and the question once again posed to the populace. **John 3:16** had been replaced with **Matthew 7:1 “Judge not, lest ye be judged.”** (KJV). This should come as no surprise in a society that believes it can do whatever it pleases, and there are no consequences for their actions. The faithful preacher, who used to warn people of the imminent danger of hellfire, has been replaced by the spineless crowd pleaser, who speaks in platitudes and warm hugs, afraid of even the slightest mention of sin for fear it will drive away the crowd, and thereby, lessening the amount of money in the offering plate.

When Christ spoke of “judging” in the Sermon on the Mount, it is important for us to remember to put His teaching in context and to see to it that it does not conflict with the rest of the body of Scripture. For our LORD Himself has said,

*“Don’t think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”* **Matthew 5:17**

So, as badly as a corrupt society may long to take His words on judging in **Matthew 7** and use them as an excuse to live as they please without anyone having the right to point out their transgression, they are sadly mistaken. **God is still holy**, and He has called His people not only to be holy, but to expose the wickedness in this world. Period. It is impossible to genuinely love others, and not warn them of the coming judgment, for without holiness no one will see The LORD (**Hebrews 12:14**).

So, exactly what **does** Jesus mean, when He tells us that we are not to judge others? A careful study of the entire passage, rather than the *eisegesis* of a single verse to use for one’s own justification, will help us to find the actual truth. We must be careful when jumping around picking the verses we like and choosing to ignore the context in which they were given. For it is in this, that many false prophets have had a field day in deceiving the unwary.

God is the ultimate judge of this earth, and He has promised that His church will one day also assist in this judgment.

*If any of you has a dispute against another, how dare you take it to court before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Or don’t you know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the trivial cases? Don’t you know that we will judge angels — how much more (the) matters of this life?* **1 Corinthians 6:1-3**

Now you won't hear the "don't judge me crowd" ever quoting this verse, I can promise you that! So just how is it that we reconcile the verses in Matthew with all the other verses regarding judgment in the rest of the Scriptures you might ask? Well, first we need to understand, Jesus' audience when He gave the Sermon On The Mount. And also we need to understand that as was most everything else in this great message, The LORD was speaking on "*matters of the heart*" for it is your heart that reveals your true motives. So when we pass judgment we very much need to examine our motives for doing so. Judging the actions of others, the way that God intended for us to do will require the proper *motive*, *morals*, and *mindset*. Please allow me to explain.

### **Motive (vs. 1-2)**

***Do not judge, so that you won't be judged. For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use.*** **Matthew 7:1-2**

Make no mistake, the Sermon On The Mount's main message is the examination of the heart, searching out the inner motives that drive us all. So to understand it completely is to know the audience. The Pharisees in Jesus day wanted everyone to believe that they were God's favorite, the ultimate in religious observation and piety. They wore long flowing robes and were constantly looking down their self-righteous noses at the common people of the land, whom they thought were not of their class. And in so doing they heaped burden after burden of ridiculous rules upon the people's shoulders that no one (including themselves) was able to bear. Therefore, Jesus warned them all:

***...unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.*** **Matthew 5:20b**

And since He was addressing mainly the self-righteous, along with those that had been trampled underfoot by them, He issued a warning, "***Do not judge, so that you won't be judged.***" He was letting all those self-righteous leaders know that they would be held to just as high a standard as the the people they had so harshly judged themselves! It was a warning that went largely unheeded by the ones who needed to hear it most. God does not delight in those who choose to set themselves up as greater than others. In fact, this kind of thinking flies in the face of all the commandments of Scripture, which can be summed up by loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself (**Mark 12:30-31**).

This, however, does ***not*** mean that as Christians we are to never notice the sins of others! Some false teachers have actually tried to claim this as The LORD'S intent here. But a careful reading of the following verses by any reasonably sane person will reveal that there are some judgments that need to occur in order to fully obey the commands of this passage.

So, how is it then, that we are supposed to judge according to Jesus? Again, the answer lies in the motive. Are we judging to condemn, or are we judging to correct? For you see, if your motive is love, then you most certainly have the right to try and correct someone who is being devoured by their own sin. Listen to the words of Paul to the Galatian Church.

***Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*** **Galatians 6:1-2**

Simply put, when we are placed in a position that we must pass judgment, we are to do so out of love, gentleness, and concern, rather than judging to condemn. None of us have the authority to determine if someone is to spend an eternity in hell. **That is up to God.** But we must certainly warn

them that hell is where they are headed if they do not repent. To fail to warn someone of the impending danger they are in is the equivalent of watching someone in a burning building and doing nothing to help them, even though you have the power to do so. And to realize that someone is in danger most certainly requires, dare I say it... making a *judgment* call!

So, *do not judge, lest ye be judged* doesn't mean we are never to make a judgment. It means we had better examine our motives when we judge, for God knows what is in our hearts when we do so. And He will judge us accordingly. Love requires us to make judgments in order to lift up the fallen. But elevating our own status out of some self-righteous pride, at the expense of others, will never be pleasing to God; for we are nothing more than wretched sinners ourselves, who have received His great mercy and grace. He delivered us from sin, because He loved us. We are to go and do likewise. This doesn't, by any stretch, mean that we are to put our heads in the sand like an ostrich when we see others falling into disgrace. Love requires us to act in *righteous judgment*. Once again, it is all about our *motive*.

### **Morals (vs. 3-5)**

**Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye but don't notice the beam of wood in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the splinter out of your eye,' and look, there's a beam of wood in your own eye? Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's eye.** **Matthew 7:3-5**

First of all, let me say that there should be no question as to whether or not our God has a sense of humor. For the illustration The LORD gives here is nothing short of hilarious. He describes someone with a *sawmill log* (literal translation) stuck in his eye, all the while trying to assist someone with a tiny splinter in theirs. The imagery is incredibly effective in making the point. Simply put, you cannot assist someone with their shortcomings, when you have far more problems than they. This was a direct shot at the Pharisees, who claimed to have a lock on God's favor and put on a pretty impressive display for everyone to see. But they were merely white-washed tombs full of dead men's bones (not my description, but Christ's (**Matthew 23:27**)).

Remember the Scripture we saw earlier in Galatians in reference to helping others overcome sin? Paul clearly commands those who would offer help to be "*spiritual*". In other words, they have gotten the saw mill logs out of their own eyes, so they can see better to help others! Here is the point of it all: You cannot help someone onto the narrow path that leads to heaven unless you are walking that very same path. Your heart has to be cleansed, before you can step up to help someone else.

Now, all of us are sinners, it's in our DNA, but there is a difference between the occasional stumble and the habitual sinner. None of us this side of heaven are going to be perfect, but we must certainly strive to be morally pure. If you, yourself have not been delivered from the grip of sin, then how on earth will you ever be able to help anyone else get free? When Christ is LORD of a person's heart, then their heart is made clean. They repent of sin and have an inward desire to please God. Remember the words of Jesus:

**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

**Matthew 5:8**

So, if you're planning to judge the behavior of others, best to make sure your own moral compass is intact. There are tons of people in this world who think they are qualified to give advice. In fact, some of the most un-godly people are the most trusted of advisors in this world. May I offer a word of caution here: If you are a Believer, do NOT seek guidance from any non-believer. I see this all the time; people who claim to follow Christ seeking out the counsel of lost psychiatrists or greedy business investors. I will be honest here. *Why would anyone, who has his heart and mind set on the coming kingdom of Christ, be the least bit interested in the wisdom of a world that is destined to perish?*

To sum up this point of Christ's sermon, He is instructing those who would judge the sins of others to get themselves straight with God before they do. It isn't that we have been commanded not to

judge, we simply have been commanded to do so with the proper motive, as well as the proper moral integrity. I have always struggled with my weight. And will probably always continue to do so until The LORD calls me home. When someone offers me advice on how to lose weight, I want it to be someone who used to be fat and has found the way to being healthy. I don't want to hear from the perpetual skinny people, or the people who are heavier than I am. I am looking for counsel from someone who's been where I am and has overcome!

The same principal is true for spiritual guidance. Listen to someone who was once enslaved in the darkness of sin and has since been delivered by the power of a risen Christ; for they know exactly how to point you in the right direction. One of my favorite passages of Scripture can be found in **2 Kings Chapter 7**. The city of Samaria in Israel was being besieged by the King of Aram. His forces had strangled the city's food supply until the people inside the city were forced to eat the droppings of birds and the disgusting remnants of donkey's decaying carcasses (**2 Kings 6:25**). God spoke through the prophet Elisha that He (God) would deliver these people from the Arameans.

Outside the city walls were four lepers, who could not enter the city, for they were considered unclean. They too were starving and decided to go into the Aramean encampments in the hopes that the soldiers there might feed them, before executing them. That's how desperate they were! Upon their arrival, they discovered that God had put such a terror in the invaders camp that they had fled in the night, leaving everything, including their food provision behind them. Needless to say, the lepers had a feast. That is until they were conscience stricken, to think of how they could feast while so many inside the city were starving. So they returned to the city wall, the very city that had cast them out, and told the people of the great stores of food left behind by the enemy. In short, these four lepers saved the city by telling them where to find food.

Every Believer should take note of this story, and always remember that we too, like those lepers, are, thanks to God's grace and mercy, just beggars who tell other beggars where to find bread. Namely, the Bread of Life. So, if you are going to judge someone's sin, make sure you have been forgiven from your own and know exactly where to lead them to be forgiven. Then bring them to Jesus!

### **Mindset (vs. 6)**

***Don't give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs. or they will trample them under their feet. turn. and tear you to pieces.*** **Matthew 7:6**

This verse simply means that we are not to waste our time trying to convince people, who are beyond convincing, of God's truth. Jesus refers to these "unreachable's" as "*dogs and pigs*" which in Judaism were considered the most unclean of the animals. No self-respecting Jew would ever have a dog as a pet, nor a swine as a food source. It just wasn't done in those days. So, how are we to determine just who falls into these categories in order to avoid them? Answer: By making a "judgment" of their character.

So much for those who make the argument that we aren't ever supposed to judge! One thing every Believer must bear in mind is that **lost people act like lost people**. We do not judge them for this. We try to persuade them to repentance. But those who claim to be Christians should know better! They do not have the excuse of not knowing right from wrong. And they must be held to a higher standard than the world.

The child of God, who has been regenerated by The Spirit, should have within themselves no small measure of discernment in order to know with whom we can offer Biblical correction, and whom we are to avoid. In Jewish law, there were sacrifices that were consecrated to God and placed upon the altar. The meat from some of these sacrifices was designated for the priests to share. And if it were to be a "*thanksgiving offering*", then a portion of it was also eaten by the parishioner, who brought the sacrifice. Never in a million years would a priest of the Most High God ever consider taking some of the consecrated meat and offering it to a *dog*! The same is true spiritually, of the things we have in Christ Jesus, that we have been given by The Spirit. We have been consecrated as living sacrifices (**Romans**

**12**), and as such, we are not to associate with those who insist on wallowing in the mud pit of sin and degradation (pigs). Jesus warns us that such people will only trample His truth and in turn attack those who deliver the message.

In other words, as Believers, we are supposed to have our minds set on kingdom priorities in order to determine who is worthy to receive God's message, and who is not. Jesus Himself gave us a method to follow in the event such a person infiltrates the church (**Matthew 18:15-17**). Open sin is not to be tolerated within the family of God. We must correct it, if we can, or eradicate the transgressor, if we cannot. And this requires discernment. God's Word plainly tells us to:

**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.** **1 John 4:1**

And again, in order to "test the spirits" of people, you must use your discernment in order to make a righteous judgment! One of the biggest problems with the church today is that it is way too focused on winning the so-called "culture war", and far less concerned with winning lost souls, or even pursuing its own internal holiness!

Church discipline is a necessary procedure in order to cleanse the body of Christ from open sin. For such sin is a cancer within the church, and if left unchecked, it will spread throughout the entire body. It is a difficult thing to expel someone from the fellowship and should only be done as a last resort for those who refuse to repent and obey the commands of Scripture. But there are times when it must be done in order to purify the church. And to carry out such strong church discipline, we must use our discernment in order to execute a proper judgment. As Paul wrote to the dysfunctional church in Corinth:

**I wrote you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy and swindlers or idolators; otherwise you would have to leave the world. But actually, I wrote you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister and is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside (the church)? God judges the outsiders. Remove the evil person from among you.** **1 Corinthians 5:9-13**

And there it is in black and white. When a person claims the Name of Jesus, then that person is held to the highest of standards, not only by Christ Himself, but by His Church. So we are not to judge the world, but rather we are to warn them of the coming judgment in order to persuade them to repentance. For judging and condemning the world is God's responsibility, and His alone. But we are most certainly commanded to make judgments within the body of Christ. Or as The Apostle Peter would say....

**For the time has come for judgement to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?** **1 Peter 4:17**

**Truth!!!**