

Study of Matthew

January 1, 2023

Discussion Question: Are you overly critical of others? What are those trigger points for judging people unfairly?

Matthew 7:1 – 6

This morning we come to a word from Jesus that has caused a lot of disagreement, trouble, and outright hostility among friends.

In Matthew 5 we see Jesus protesting the teachings of scribes and pharisee...you've heard it said, but I say. Matthew 6 is dealing with the corrupted ideas of great disciplines in the faith; giving, prayer, fasting and forgiveness & seeking first the Kingdom of God. But Matthew 7 seems to point to the dangers we face once we begin to walk in as mature believers. We are tempted to think of ourselves more highly than we ought.

JUDGING: This is one of the most misused and misunderstood phrases in all the Bible.

1. Differences in Judging

To try to use a blanket statement about never judging would be a violation of scripture.

Right judging:

Judging to determine where there is wrong, where sin has occurred and it demands a response.

Matthew 7:16-20

Wrong judging:

Making an eternal judgement about someone.

Only God can judge a person's eternal relationship with HIM.

2. Duty of Judging

When Jesus is accused of breaking the law by healing on the Sabbath HE says to the religious leaders, John 7:24 *"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."* [ESV]

God gives man the right and the responsibility to judge things on earth that are right and wrong.

Deuteronomy 1:16-17

If you say you can't judge on earth, as to right and wrong, then you could never tell your child when they are wrong; but that's insanity; you could never tell someone who violates another that they are wrong; again, that's insanity and reduces a society to chaos and anarchy.

Sadly, among fallen people someone must judge between disagreeing parties.

1 Tim 5:20 *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”* [KJV]

Listen to what Jesus says: Luke 17:1 – 4

3. Danger of Judging

The context here in Chapter 7 makes it clear that Jesus condemns an attitude that looks unfavorably on the character and actions of others and leads to pronouncing unjust and unloving judgement. We could call this a critical spirit...one that is very critical of others but lacks the spiritual debt to examine themselves

2 Corinthians 13:5 *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates (unjust, disqualified, wicked)?”* [KJV]

There is a great danger in always seeing other’s sin and faults and never seeing your own. Jesus calls that person a hypocrite.

Jesus gives a short parable or a visual description of the hypocrite...**an actor; a pretender; assume the name of another**

I personally believe that the judgement that Jesus’ is speaking of here has nothing to do with civil law but rather with how HIS disciples treat each other. **NOTE:** how can you say to your brother...

It’s a sad day when God says to one who is a disciple, you hypocrite...you pretender...you have just used My name. Yes, civil law should be done with justice and mercy. But we are called to a higher standard; we are to speak the truth in love, rebuke but always show mercy as those who have received mercy.

4. Degree of Judging

There are limits of our judging.

The 19th Century Theologian Charles Ellicot says:

- a. Judge no man unless it be a duty to do so.
- b. As far as may be, judge the offence, and not the offender.
- c. Confine your judgment to the earthly side of faults, and leave their relation to God, to Him who sees the heart.
- d. Never judge at all without remembering your own sinfulness, and the ignorance and infirmities which may extenuate the sinfulness of others.

Jesus is very clear in Matthew 18 that we are to confront, correct then either restore or remove offender from fellowship. But the Christian can’t live in a world where there are a set of rules for you and another for me... Jesus calls us to a consistency when it comes to dealing with all issues and it begins first in our own lives.

This is holy living and these holy things can’t be entrusted to dogs and swine...can’t be given to those who oppose and abuse the teachings of Jesus...we can’t entrust these truths to those who would trample them.