

Sermon on the Mount

Lesson #17

“Kingdom Responsibilities”

Do Not Judge Part I

Matthew 7:1-5

Scripture: Matthew 5:20 *“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Introduction:

Dodie Gadiant, a schoolteacher for thirteen years, decided to travel across America and see the sights she had taught about. Traveling alone in a truck with camper in tow, she launched out. One afternoon rounding a curve on I-5 near Sacramento in rush-hour traffic, a water pump blew on her truck. She was tired, exasperated, scared, and alone. In spite of the traffic jam she caused, no one seemed interested in helping.

"Leaning up against the trailer, she prayed, 'Please God, send me an angel . . . preferably one with mechanical experience.' Within four minutes, a huge Harley drove up, ridden by an enormous man sporting long, black hair, a beard and tattooed arms. With an incredible air of confidence, he jumped off and, without even glancing at Dodie, went to work on the truck. Within another few minutes, he flagged down a larger truck, attached a tow chain to the frame of the disabled Chevy, and whisked the whole 56-foot rig off the freeway onto a side street, where he calmly continued to work on the water pump.

The intimidated schoolteacher was too dumbfounded to talk. Especially when she read the paralyzing words on the back of his leather jacket: 'Hell's Angels -- California'. As he finished the task, she finally got up the courage to say, "Thanks so much," and carry on a brief conversation. Noticing her surprise at the whole ordeal, he looked her straight in the eye and mumbled, "Don't judge a book by its cover. You may not know who you're talking to." With that, he smiled, closed the hood of the truck, and straddled his Harley. With a wave, he was gone as fast as he had appeared.

From the newsletter *OUR AMERICA*.

Transitional Statement:

Church, in John 7:24 Jesus warns us of wrongful judgment of others and He points out that often times our judgments comes from external evaluations which most of the time is lacking in pertinent facts and end up completely wrong.

Jesus is pointing out the very thing under discussion here in the Sermon on the Mount, that we should not judge as the world judges.

I. Matthew 7:1 Jesus begins by saying “*Do not judge...*”

- A. The first thing to note is that this is a command....not a suggestion
 - 1. And is placed in the imperative sense.....it is a must.
 - 2. It is the first of kingdom responsibilities that Jesus will discuss....no accident !
 - a. Perhaps the first because maybe there is no greater kingdom hindrance than a Christian who looks down their nose at other people.

- B. Before we get to far in this discussion we must understand the overall context of the Sermon on the Mount.
 - 1. The sermon on the mount is set against the backdrop of not seeking righteousness (right standing with God) like the Scribes and the Pharisees. Matthew 5:20
 - 2. So how did the Scribes and Pharisees seek righteousness? By exact, perfect Law keeping.
 - a. They bought into the idea that if you simply obeyed the rules that was more than enough and God would think that you were great.
 - 1) So their whole mindset became about how people measured up to the Law....instead of the New Testament understanding of grace through faith, instead of understanding desire and devotion, and instead of given one thought to the transformation of heart that God calls us to.
 - 3. But by the time of Christ, the Scribes and Pharisees fancied themselves as agents of God’s judgment.
 - a. Which, lead to thinking that God needed help to catch every infraction
 - 4. Since perfection in law keeping was their only way to be right with God, judging each other was seen as vital.
 - a. But it grew arrogance and self righteousness
 - 5. This context is very important !

- C. So how are we to understand Jesus’ words “*Do not judge*”
 - 1. Judge in its basic form, from a Greek bible dictionary, means to separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil.
 - a. So is Jesus saying: “hey guys I don’t want you to distinguish between good and bad?”
 - 1) Absolutely not ! ...Hebrews 5:14

- b. Is Jesus saying: I want you to only be concerned with yourselves and don't worry about holding each other accountable?"

- 1) Absolutely not !Matthew 18:15-17

- 2. Commentators and scholars alike have great difficulty defining this word "judge" and have often times missed the meaning of Jesus' words here because they were too busy trying to define one word and simply neglected the context.

- a. So I wondered if any definition could be found that would more closely fit the overall context of what Jesus was saying, so I turned to etymology (a study of words).

- b. And with little effort in the TDNT by Kittel, I found the most basic meaning of the word in New Testament times.

- 1) To sift for Justice

- a) You know like archeologist putting dirt on their screens and shaking the sand through till they find pay dirt.

- 3. With this in mind, I think Jesus is saying that we don't need to go digging for dirt in other peoples lives.

- a. We don't have to Press everyone around us through a screen to find their every little fault.

- b. We are not meant to be the scales of justice

- 1) Determining other peoples value

- 2) So they can get what is coming to them

- 4. This is among the most basic of kingdom responsibilities, to leave the sifting to God.

- a. To let Him set things straight and to understand that it is His kingdom and not ours.

- b. And to not try to press others through our view of righteousness

- 5. Oh but, the weak man feels the need to put others in their place

- a. Always worried about set things straight.Like Martha in Luke 10:40 upset because Mary wasn't helping serve. But Jesus points out that her judgment was wrong.

- 1) Martha like many of us had sifted Mary without all the facts.

D. Continuing with verse 1... do not judge ...***“so that you will not be judged”***

1. Here it seems that Jesus is saying that if you insist on sifting other people...that is, pressing them through the screens of justice ...God will sift you.
 - a. And the things that show up in your life that aren't suppose to be there, He will hold you accountable for.
 - b. How sad it is to note that there are still people today that want to cling to this ideology that justice should be swift and merciless.
 - 1) Failing to realize that if you live by the OT Law you will be judged by it.
2. But the sweetness of this passage for the kingdom servant, is that we can escape judgment
 - a. Jesus made it possible on the cross of Calvary.
 - b. That if we walk in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all unrighteousness ...1 John 1:7
 - c. John 5:24 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*
 - 1) At the final judgment we will simply hear....enter in my good and faithful servant
3. The OT was a system of judgments, where violators were condemned at the first infraction, but the NT is of grace, forgiveness and mercy.
 - a. It is a system where we ask God to forgive those who have sinned against us even when they continue to rage on like enemies.
 - b. It is a system of such love that we should be willing to stand in the place of an enemy to save them.
 - c. It is a system where pardon is the continual plea.

E. Verse 2 puts a capstone on the discussion by saying: ***“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”***

1. Ultimately our mindset about otherswill determine what mindset God has about us.
2. And the second part of this verse should never escape our immediate understanding. The standard.....That is the way we measure others....will be used to measure us.

- a. If we are forgiving, sweet, gentle and caring...God will be that way toward us.
- b. But if we are strict and harsh...God will show us how it is really done.

II. Now Jesus explains that kingdom servants need to first take a look at their own faults.

Verse 3 says: "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"

- A. That is, why can you see what others need and can't see what you need?
- B. Why don't you notice your own faults?
- C. You know to see other peoples faults and not see your own, takes a very specific effort, and is very intentional.
 - 1. Usually looking at others faultsis merely an attempt to take the focus off ourselves.
 - a. And at its root is generally fear.
 - b. Fear of people finding out ...just who we really are.
 - 1) Fear that we won't be accepted or that we won't be valued.
 - 2. James 1:23-25 talks about a person who looks in the mirror but refuses to make changes as compared to a kingdom servant that looks into God's word and adjusts himself accordingly.
- D. Church, self examination is a daily thing for kingdom servants.
- E. When we see and understand more fully our own failings, the need for grace and mercy through Jesus are more fully realized and shown to others.

IV. Now Jesus turns to the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees

Verse 4 " Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

- A. Here Jesus points to our effectiveness in helping others walk with God.
 - 1. He points out that if we are not willing to own up to and address our own problems, then we have absolutely no influence to help others.
 - 2. Not only do we not have influence but we can actually become a spiritual distraction to them.

B. The confession of our weaknesses, that we are suppose to be engaged in (James 5:16), actually presents spiritual opportunity for ourselves and those around us to draw nearer to God.

1. You see when we are busy working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we don't have time to be the judgmental busy bodies worrying about everyone else.

Conclusion:

We live in a world where we like to watch people get slammed who have it coming. We like to see people get what they deserve like on Judge Judy and the other thousand judicial shows. When we see a car pulled over for speeding we scoff that they should have known better.

And sadly enough sometimes we bring this thinking to Christianity. But Church, Kingdom thinking should be just the opposite. Our plea should be for God to spare people from what they deserve.