

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount Sermon Series

Sermon 25

Do Not Judge

Matthew 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. ² "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵ "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Do not judge"? Some people think Jesus was saying that we should let people do whatever they want without comment or resistance of any type. They think that if someone else is committing sin, it is none of our business. However the rest of scripture does not bear that out. Let us look at some examples.

Leviticus 19:17 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

If someone is sinning, it is not good to let that continue.

1 Corinthians 5:1-7 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles -- that a man has his father's wife! ² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. ⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? ¹³ But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Someone in the church committed a terrible sin. Paul said to disfellowship that person from the church? Why? If sin is permitted to continue, it will destroy that person and it will have a

morally corrupting influence on the rest of the believers. The believers had to judge the situation and discipline the offending party.

1 Corinthians 6:1-4 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? ⁴ If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?

We must judge matters in the church in this world. So what did Jesus mean when He said, "Do not judge?"

When people try to earn salvation by doing good deeds, they see that they are not really keeping the law. So they make rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. These are man-made laws and not God's laws. By doing this, their minds are turned away from God and they are focused on themselves. Love dies out of the heart. With this, love dies out for other human beings.

A system of human rules and regulations for righteousness leads people to judge those who don't meet the standard they set up. An atmosphere of selfish and sharp criticism stifles mercy and love. People become self-centered judges and spies.

Have you seen this type of behavior in religious people? They do not come out of their religious meetings humble and with a sense of their own weakness in moral issues. They are not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They came out filled with spiritual pride. They think, "Myself, my feelings, my knowledge, my ways." Their own accomplishments become the standard by which they judge others. They criticize and condemn.

They judge people in matters that are between the soul and God. Jesus was referring to this spirit and practice when He said, "Judge not, that you be not judged." Do not set yourself up as a standard. Do not make your opinions, your understanding of duty and your interpretations of Scripture a criterion for others and in your heart condemn them if they do not come up to your ideal. Do not criticize others, guessing as to their motives and passing judgment upon them.

Christ is the only standard of character. He alone is sinless. We cannot set our own behavior as the standard of righteousness. God has given the work of judgment to Jesus (John 5:22). We cannot read the motives of the heart. Therefore if we judge people's motives, we are putting ourselves in Jesus' place.

Matthew 7:3-5 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵ "Hypocrite!

First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

It is impossible that we won't see faults in others. We will see them. Some people become very zealous to point out these faults. Because they lack love in their hearts, they make a big deal out of something small. They are harsh and do not have a soft and courteous spirit. They hurt people. Jesus condemns a critical and censorious spirit. But it usually doesn't stop there.

When people have an accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with simply pointing out some fault they think they see in others. When milder means fail to make others do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to force. Just as far as they can, they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right. This is what the Jews did in the days of Christ. This is what the church has done in history whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. When the church loses the power of love, it looks to governments to enforce its dogmas and execute her decrees. This is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution from the days of Abel to our own time.

Do you see religious laws set up by people in our day to be enforced by the government? Do you see them persecuting people to make them obey? What is the reason for that persecution? They have no love in their hearts as a motivating force. Satan is the author of forced religion. God uses love and love alone as a motivating force.

Do you enjoy criticizing and finding faults in others? Do you like to point their faults out to them? If so, what is your real motivation? Are you trying to earn salvation by your good works? If so, your mind is focused on yourself and you will soon set up your own opinions as a standard.

But when you see the infinite grace that God has shown you by giving Jesus to die on a cross for your sins, your thoughts will be toward Him. You will appreciate God's love and forgiveness toward you and you will want to show that love and forbearance to others. You will seek to cover people's faults, not expose them.

Let a spirit of grace exist in our church. A spirit of petty criticism will kill the warmth and love that should characterize our church. And when discipline is necessary, let it be done for the motivation to save that person, not simply to punish.

May the grace and love of Christ be in our church.