**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 2-13-2022
Judging Others**

God is so amazing, isn’t He? He just outdoes Himself all the time, in my book. And He is steadfast and faithful through all the ups and downs of life. He is worthy of our complete truth.

And there are so many times when I know that He is directing my steps and guiding my path.

For example, this week I was struggling to plan out how to begin this message and then Leah asked me to watch a couple of videos with her on her phone. And wouldn’t you know, this video was all about one of the things that I wanted to mention from this Scripture that we will be looking at. And if that wasn’t enough, later that day I heard on the radio a short message from Max Lucado, which was also about this same Scripture.

In all of this, I sensed the Lord not only helping me in preparing this message, but also affirming that He is with me always. I trust that the Lord is at work in each of our lives in countless ways similar to that as well. And so we are to stand in awe of Him.

Both of these videos I watched with Leah were short films – perhaps about 10 minutes long. In the first video, there were two women that were featured. These women were beginning a business partnership and were looking for an investor. But one of them was criticizing the other because she was going to go to a thrift store to look for an outfit to wear for when they would be meeting with the possible investor.

The other woman ignored the criticism and went ahead and bought a nice used outfit to wear.

And wouldn’t you know, the person that was interviewing them had actually donated this outfit to the thrift store and she commends the one woman for her frugalness and decides to invest in this new company.

The second video has a similar theme. In it, a mechanic tries to rip off a woman at the repair shop, just because he thought that she knew nothing about cars. But, little did he know, she happened to be the daughter of the owner of the repair shop and she knew quite a lot about cars. And in the end, he ends up being relieved of his duties after her father finds out that he wanted to get her to buy a whole new engine for $5,000 when all she needed was a spark plug.

Both of these stories illustrated what Jesus had in mind as we continue Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

Today’s passage is found in Matthew 7:1-6

“**Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.**

**3“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? 4How 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? 5You 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.**

**6“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”**

Verse 1 of this passage is perhaps the most well-known as well as quite possibly most misunderstood verse in the entire Bible. Again, Jesus says, **“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”**

But what does Jesus mean by these words. Is Jesus teaching that His followers should not say that anything is wrong? Is he saying that there are no wrong answers? Is He advocating that each person should have their own truth – that just because something is true for someone does not mean that it is true for me? The answer to all of these questions is “no.” And we will get more into that in a moment.

But what did Jesus actually mean? When Jesus states “Do not judge, or you too will be judged,” He is speaking about being judgmental or presumptuous. The critical woman in the first video, looking down on her partner for going to a thrift store and the shop worker in the second video who was trying to rip off the woman because he assumed she knew nothing about cars --- both of these videos illustrating what Jesus is saying not to do.

They were being presumptuous. They were being judgmental.

They judged by appearances. They were quick to make assumptions. In verse 5, Jesus is saying that when people do this, they are being hypocrites. You may recall that just a few verses earlier, Jesus was critical of many of the religious leaders because they were so focused on looking good in the eyes of people. And they looked down on others who they saw as less them themselves.

Jesus is telling this crowd that when any of them act in judgmental ways, they put themselves in that same camp.

Jesus strongly condemns this attitude. He does not want His followers to be quick to condemn others and to be constantly fault-finding in other people.

This is a big deal to God.

Jesus wanted His followers to avoid this attitude like the plague.

But does Jesus never want His people to judge anything? Clearly, even from the rest of the passage, the answer is no.

Let us consider again verses 4-5.

**4How 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? 5You 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.**

Jesus is saying that people need to take a good hard look at themselves before trying to correct others. If Jesus’ followers are correcting others when they are doing things more seriously wrong themselves, then they reveal themselves to be a hypocrite – an actor.

But Jesus does want His followers to help one another. They just need to make sure that they’ve removed any planks first.

And then, with gentleness and love, they can offer guidance and correction.

Clearly, Jesus is teaching that speaking correction towards others should be done with caution and in humility.

And from an ultimate sense, only God Himself is the sovereign judge of us. We must keep that in mind as we speak humbly truth in love to others.

But again, Jesus is not saying that His people are to never say that anything is right or wrong or good or bad.

In fact, in the very next verse, verse 6, Jesus states the following:

**Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.**

Who are these dogs and pigs that Jesus is speaking about? Dogs were basically a wild animal in 1st century Palestine.

One of my former professors from my seminary, Dr. Dave Dorsey, was spending time in Israel in the 1980’s or 90’s. And Dosey wondered off one day from the group he was with and suddenly there was this pack of wild dogs near him. He seriously thought that they may kill him and he just prayed for God to protect him and in God’s grace they just passed by him.

Pigs to the Jewish people were an unclean animal.

In verse 6, Jesus is using dogs and pigs to describe people. He is not seeking to be insulting or demeaning towards others, but He is simply saying that some people are clearly adversarial to the gospel. The message of the Kingdom of God is a joke to them and they have revealed themselves to be against the good news of Jesus.

Jesus is basically telling this crowd to not waste their time sharing the gospel to those that are clearly in opposition to it, to those that try to mock it, so to speak.

Jesus expected them to judge whether someone fits into this category. It is not being presumptuous or judgmental.

Jesus is implying that if people would be dogs or pigs, the best thing to do is to pray for them, because they would be ready with guns blazing ready to stand against the truth. Pray for their spiritual eyes to be opened to their need for God’s grace.

**So friends, how are we to put into practice these important words of Jesus?**

First, we are to remember that we as followers of Christ are not called to be judgmental or presumptuous. We are to be the most humble and gentle people on this planet. Sometimes Christians are not always known for these things, but this is what we are called to be as followers of Christ.

Second, we are to always look at ourselves before seeking to correct others. We do not want to be trying to remove specks when we have planks in our eyes.

But, Jesus expects us to try to help others. We must do it with love and gentleness and grace, but He does want His followers to gently help one another in their spiritual walk.

And third and finally, Jesus wants His church to be discerning. Some people are ready to have conversations about the Kingdom of God (the ground has been plowed already, so to speak). While others, are currently hard ground and we are called to plow the ground through prayer that they would be prepared eventually to receive the good news.

To do all these things well, we need God’s Word in us and God’s Spirit leading and empowering us.

There is a saying that one of my mentors, Ned Green, once taught me. And it goes like this:

“If you have the Word without the Spirit, you dry up.”

“If you have the Spirit without the Word, you blow up.”

“But if you have the Word and the Spirit, you grow up.”

As we continue to grow up in our faith and our walk with Christ, may we be enabled to live out this teaching of Jesus more fully each day.

Let’s pray…

Resources:

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

D.A. Carson – Matthew Commentary – chs. 1-12

Leon Morris – Matthew Commentary