

Happy on my own Log
Matthew 7:1-5

Picture of Sea of Galilee - The Mount of Beatitudes, on the northern shore of Galilee, creates a natural amphitheater that projects sound. It's the perfect place to speak to a large crowd.

(Next year in Israel, I'll ask several people to read this Sermon on the Mount as we sit there in shade of palm trees. If we don't get run off by the mean nun)

In chapter 7, Jesus turns his attention to the way we treat each other and then our relationship to God.

This particular passage is the most famous Bible passage in America; albeit, misunderstood.

"Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log 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.

First: The Point of the Beatitudes – Blessing

Blessed = Makarios = happy

John 20:20b - *Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*

Glad = kairo = glad, well, thriving

God intends for us to experience life as he has given us life. The way we treat each other is an expression of that life.

The question, "*How does God treat me?*" is answered with the question, "*How do I treat others?*"

This calls into question:

- 1 – Have I experienced God's grace? – Salvation
- 2 – How have I experienced God's grace? – Interpretation

God wants us to be happy, glad, well and thriving. We cannot do that, if we are intrusive in the lives of others.

Second: What Jesus is Not Saying

Leo Tolstoy – *“Undoubtedly, Jesus here condemns all human inventions of courts of justice.”*

- a) He is not complaining about Israel’s judicial system

He is not speaking to judges or attorneys but to his disciples

The emphasis here is on familial relationships and not the court system

- b) He is not saying we never form an opinion about someone or something.
- c) He is not asking us to suspend our critical faculties
- d) He is not saying we can’t form an estimation of a person’s spiritual wellbeing

6 - *Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.*

This verse assumes we can make essential judgements between people who are sincere about the gospel versus those who are obstinately opposed to it

Matthew 22:15-18 - *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words.¹⁶ And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances.¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites?”*

Third: What Jesus is Saying

- a) Jesus is condemning hyper-criticalness.

A.B. Bruce – *“Censoriousness is a cheap way of feeling morally superior.”*

Hyper criticalness = judging quickly, harshly, unfairly or destructively

He is condemning criticism intended to tear down instead of building up

We must avoid saying what is untrue, what is unloving, and what is unnecessary.

Matthew Henry - *“Pass no sentence which you cannot in faith, ask God to confirm.”*

b) Jesus is encouraging self-reflection. 2

For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

This single verse should stop the vast majority of criticism of one another

Jesus is not saying we should not judge. He is saying that we should invest our time in self-reflection and self-judgement

Luke 6:31b - ...*as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.*

We ought to be so busy about our own lives – fulfilling our own obligations, searching our own hearts, that we don't have time or opportunity to invest in criticizing others

c) Jesus is also encouraging a right relationship to him and others. 2

For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

What is the judgement? What is the measurement? It is God's.

We may not set ourselves up as the judge over God's people. We are simply brothers and sisters in Christ. We don't make the rules. We may have opinions, but we may not impose our opinions as law on the rest of the Lord's people. We must always evaluate truth and error in light of His authority, the authority of the Scripture in this case, and not on the basis of our opinions.

There is a difference between scriptural principles and our personal preferences. We cannot judge one another on the basis of our individually erected standards. We should not sit in the seat of judgment on others.

John Stott - *"Jesus does not tell us here, to cease to be men by suspending our critical powers, which help distinguish us from the animals. But He tells us here to renounce our presumptuous ambition to be God, by setting ourselves up as judge and lawmaker."*

T - Matthew 23:1-12 - *Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ² "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³ so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.*

Jesus is encouraging fair judgement.

Luke 6:32-34 - *If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.*

We most often judge on the basis of perspective or relationship. I judge less harshly if I agree with you or if I like you or you like me.

When we have a theological, philosophical, practical disagreement with another person, our disagreement quickly becomes personal. It moves from the “This is not right” stage to “You’re not right stage” in which everything a person does is suspect. We see only wrong or evil in another person and emanating from a person.

We must be careful not to evaluate or criticize unlovingly, unmercifully or with harmful intent. Each of these lacks the expression of grace we have experienced. Or, perhaps it is that we haven’t experienced grace as we should.

We are the greatest hinderance to fair judgment. Why? Because we have our own logs in our eyes.

d) Jesus is asking us to judge ourselves first and most critically. 3-4

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye?

This is exaggerated hyperbole. Yes, Jesus is showing us how ridiculous we are in our judgements.

ILL – If you are going to get something out of someone’s eye, you have to get very close to them. But, if you have a beam coming out of your own eye

- You cannot get close to others
- You cannot really see what is going on in someone else’s eye

Are we to make judgements? Surely. Are we to correct one another? Surely. But we are not supposed to have fault-finding spirits.

Grace received = grace extended

Forgiveness received = forgiveness extended

Luke 6:37 - *Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven...*

IMP: Jesus views the wrong of someone else's life as a speck. Jesus views the wrong of our lives as a beam/log. We should do the same.

Jesus has already broached this subject earlier in this sermon

Matthew 6:15 - *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Charles Hodge - *"No man can be severe in his judgment who feels that the mild eyes of Christ are fixed upon him."*

Think of Peter in that courtyard.

- Could Peter have issued a harsh rebuke to the disciples who also fled the Lord Jesus in His hour of need?
- He himself had known the eyes of Christ on Him in the middle of his defection. Peter knew his heart and the Lord gently restored him.
- The Lord also changed Peter's heart and made him patient with those who had faults themselves. (Read 1 & 2 Peter)
- No person can be severe in his judgment of others who feels that mild eyes of Christ or fixed upon him.
- The gospel of grace changes our hearts and enables us to bear with the faults of others.
- Not to be complacent about them. Not to ignore them. Not to be cowardly and refuse to rebuke those things as good brothers and sisters, but certainly to be patient with them and not to deal with them more harshly than we would with our own selves.

Conclusion:

- 1 – Examine ourselves
- 2 – Live lives of repentance
- 3 – Have a broken heart for others
- 4 – Correct to protect and build up

John Chrysostom - *"Correct your brother, not as a foe, nor as an adversary, exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines. Yes, and even more, as a loving brother anxious to restore and rescue."*

What is the end? Jesus loves us so much that his intent in this charge is our own happiness and wellness.

Community Groups:

- 1 – How was your week?
- 2 – What was its joys?
- 3 – What was its sorrows?
- 4 – Read the text
- 5 – Why might this be the most popular verse in America?
- 6 – How have you experienced someone saying, “You shouldn’t judge.”
- 7 – What is the point of Jesus’s beatitudes?
- 8 – What is Jesus NOT saying in these verses? What textual evidence do we have?
- 9 – What is he saying in these verses?
- 10 – How are we supposed to judge?
- 11 – How do these verses encourage self-reflection?
- 12 – How does our experience of God’s grace/forgiveness determine how we treat others?
- 13 – How does a beam in our own eye keep us from properly judging the speck in someone else’s eye?
- 14 – How did Peter’s failure at Caiaphas’s house prepare him for interacting with others?
- 15 – How might these verses help us to live joyfully and well?