



Sermon:

## You Be The Judge

*"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."* Matthew 7:1-2

Two things are clear here. First, we are not to judge; and if we do judge, we will be judged and will receive the same amount of judgment that we give out. I believe Jesus was warning us to be careful how we judge. There is a right kind of judging and a wrong kind of judging.

An example would be waiting in a doctor's office. Your appointment was for 2 pm, but it's now 2:30 and you're still waiting. Making a judgment of the fact that the doctor was late is fine. It's obvious. But to say something like: "He has no consideration for his patients" or "He only cares about making the big bucks" is the wrong kind of judging. It may even be true, but Jesus warns us to be careful not to make that kind of judgment. This is the condemning kind of judging. Judging the situation for what it is is one thing; judging the motives why someone did what they did is quite another and should be avoided.

Why would Jesus warn us against this kind of judgment? For us. It's to protect us from receiving this same kind of judgment from others. Rather than looking at God as someone who just wants to be a control freak by telling us what to do, we should understand that whatever He tells us to do or warns us against, is for our own good. God is Good!

*"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"* (vs. 3)

Mote - a tiny piece of anything

Beam - A thick piece of wood, metal, concrete

The universal interpretation of this verse is that we should not judge someone for their small sin when we have a bigger sin in our life. Yet, James 2:10 says: *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* So to God, a sin is a sin. The consequences of each sin may be different according to the circumstances and how many people may be affected, but to God, there are no levels of sin. So I do not see this Scripture meaning a small sin verses a big sin.

I believe that the mote can be a sin, but the beam is the judgment we hold toward the person who sinned. This means that judging their sin is actually worse than the sin they committed.

Let's read this same passage in the Message Bible: *"Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults - unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see the smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor."* The smudge verses the sneer!

Judging is vocalizing WHAT they did and WHY they did it. It seems too easy to look down on someone who has done wrong and start judging. The reason we do this is because it makes us feel better about ourselves. We think things like: We would never do such a thing! Let's remember 1st Corinthians 10:12 which says: *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* No one is totally above getting it right. That's why there's Grace for all of us. Thank God. So rather than looking down on someone, we should pray for a revelation of God's grace to be poured out on them so they can see the goodness of God which can't help but change their minds about their behavior in the first place!

Verse 3 uses the word, "Behold." The original Greek word for behold is blepo which has many meanings. It first means to see. We are able to see what this person has done. It's plain; it's clear. It's the right kind of judging. But look how this meaning progresses: Behold means to gaze. So we moved from seeing it to now gazing upon it; we are now thinking more than just a few minutes on what this person has done. Behold means to contemplate or reflect deeply. Now our thoughts become more intense. Behold means to weigh carefully; to examine. Our mind is now entrenched in what this person did. We are now examining the entire situation as well as the character of that person. The ultimate progression of the word behold is to compare. We are now comparing this person to ourselves. "How could they?" "I would never!"

Joyce Meyer said it best: "We see others through a magnifying glass, but we see ourselves through rose-colored glasses! True.

Verse 4 says: *"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother..."* We are now going to begin to minister to this person. *"Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"* (The eye does not mean a physical eye; it's the eyes of our mind...our thinking. This is obvious since where there is sin, there is a need for repentance, which means a change of thinking.)

So this verse is clearly asking how we could possibly help someone do away with their sin while we are in judgment of them at the same time. We can't! Let's look at 1st Peter 5:2-3: *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*

We are to teach and minister to others, watching over them with care, not because we are forced to, but because we sincerely want the best for them. There should be no thought of gaining something for ourselves in the process. We are not to oversee them with force by being demanding, but should be gentle examples to them. I ask you, how can anyone minister this way while holding a judgmental attitude toward the person? It can't happen.

Verse 5 says: *“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”*

How can we do this? How do we cast this judgmental attitude out so we can truly minister to others? Verse 7 gives us part of the answer: *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”*

Although this verse can be applied to every area of life, if we keep this verse in its context, I believe it is still talking about judgment. Asking could mean to check with God to see if you’re in the right kind of judgment or the wrong kind of judgment. Be willing to hear the truth.

We are told to seek or look for what we don’t know about ourselves, like the root of our judgmental attitude. And when we knock, the door opens which, I believe is the revelation we receive which will cause us to be able to overcome judgment. Verses 8-11 promise that God will answer when we ask, seek and knock.

Verse 12 seems to be the bookend which started in Verse 2: *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...”* If you don’t want to be judged, then don’t judge. Treat others the way you want to be treated. If you don’t want people to gossip about you, then don’t gossip about others. If, when you fail, you want people to be understanding and compassionate, then treat others that way. It’s really that simple.

Two things I practice daily: One is to learn how to forgive the one I may be judging. I get in touch with Christ and realize how much I have been forgiven and then I see that same forgiveness toward that person.

I also train myself to see others through the eyes of God. His love is so great for them that He died for them. He is never mad at them. He is their cheerleader, always encouraging them to move forward in Him. He is longsuffering toward them and looks at them only through the eyes of His Son, Jesus. He sees them righteous, whole, complete, forgiven, and the list goes on. He treats them the exact way He treats everyone. The same mercy He extends to one, He extends to all. So who are we to hold judgment?

YOU be the judge ... of yourself. Acts 20:28 says to keep watch over ourselves and all the flock of which we are overseers. We need to check ourselves and rightly judge ourselves first to make sure we are free from the wrong kind of judging and then we can properly minister to others with great results! Amen.