**Calvary Fellowship 6.19.2022 Matthew 7:1-12 “Being a Little Judgey”**

* **So I need to start by telling U a tale of 2 flight attendants on a flight to Pittsburgh - I was invited to be the keynote speaker at this conference**
* So I flew to Pittsburgh & American Airlines upgraded me to 1st class - why? B/c God loves me just a little bit more than everyone else
* So I get on the plane & I’m getting my gear ready - which are my iPad & my headphones so I can watch a new Star Wars Documentary on the flight
* But as I’m getting myself situated, I lose my phone - and as I’m looking for my phone, they tell everyone to get in their seats b/c we’re ready to take off
* *A friend of mine is a couple of rows back (not in 1st class) & he says, “I’ll call your phone on Facetime. When he does that, my daughter Mia answers.”*
* *Then I remember that Mia has my old iPad & it was the same Apple ID & her iPad gets all of my messages & phone calls*
* *So she answers & my buddy says, “Your dad lost his phone on the plane & I was calling it to help him find it.”*
* *Then Mia starts talking to me says, “Dad, why did U lose your phone. U need your phone to communicate w/ us while you’re out of town.”*
* *I said, “Woman, the last thing I need is U yelling at me.”*
* So I take my entire duffle bag apart & I’m looking under the seat to see if it fell
* The plane is delayed b/c I can’t find my phone - so I’m not making any friends
* But while I was looking for my phone, the flight attendant was so nice to me
* She knew I was frantically looking for my phone & I was apologizing for delaying the plane & she was saying, “Don’t worry baby. You’re good.”
* I said, “Thank U. And I’m even ok w/ U calling me baby.”
* I was in Pittsburgh for about 14 hours. I got in at midnight - spoke 4 times at this conference & was back on a plane at 4pm so I could be back for Sun. services
* **My flight home from Pittsburgh was very different - the flight attendant was no joke - she yelled at all of the passengers**
* She told everyone to put their phones on airplane mode & then she got on the intercom & starting calling people out - “I see U texting. Stop it now” & slammed the phone -Then she told everyone w/ a Samsung Galaxy & to get off the plane
* Then she started yelling at everyone for taking off their seat belts & she looks at me for affirmation b/c I’m sitting up front & I just nodded & smile
* And no 1 asked her for anything on a 3 hour flight
* Here’s the challenge w/ both scenarios - we think these are the only 2 options
* We’re either slamming the phone down like a sociopath or we’re letting everything go like it’s no big deal even if it disrupts 100’s of other people
* Non-Believers have a tendency to push Christians into the “It’s ok baby” corner b/c they think we should never criticize, compare, or confront anyone
* The problem is, too many Christians are yelling into the phone telling people to get off the plane - So what are we supposed to do?
* I don’t believe the goal is to be on either side of the aisle - Jesus is going to teach us how to fly on a totally different plane altogether
* **We’ve been in this teaching series called “the Story” where we are working out way verse by verse through the Gospel of Matthew**
* The reason we’re calling it The Story is b/c we are convinced that if learn His story it will change yours
* And we are working our way through Jesus’ most famous sermon - The Sermon on the Mount
* Please understand - b/c of the slow nature by which we take the rich words of Jesus, we can think that Jesus was saying random things
* That’s not the case - Jesus is talking about what it means to be human in God’s world & each section builds on the 1 before
* He talks about being happy - then he talks about happy people influencing the world like salt & light - then he talks about living higher than the law requires
* Now He gets into our spiritual disciplines & the motivations behind them
* Then he talks about why we worry & how it robs us of the freedom that we find in walking w/ God & now He starts bringing it to a close
* **And in this section, He talks about judging - why talk about that here?**
* B/c if U do what Jesus says, your life is going to look pretty good - your life is going to change in radical ways & things will get better
* And the natural tendency will be to look on at those who don’t have their lives together & judge what we think is lack of commitment or faith
* Jesus is going to teach us another way - a better way to deal w/ this in our own hearts & lives…

**———(v. 1-2)———**

**#1 - I Need to Understand the Boomerang Effect of Judging**

* **This section contains 1 of the most popular verses that non-Christians love to share whenever a Christian has an opinion about anything**
* “Hey, Jesus said ‘Don’t judge.’ ‘Let him who is w/o sin cast the 1st stone.”
* When people say, “Didn’t Jesus say not to judge?” They have no idea what Jesus means - they think it means approve of everything anyone does - it's not
* Everyone loves to quote Matthew 7:1 & think that’s Jesus’ only thoughts on this subject - it’s not - He had plenty to say about judging
* “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)
* So Jesus says don’t judge in 1 place & yes to judge in another place
* It’s almost like there’s something else going or some other piece of information that we need to really understand this
* **We misunderstand Jesus’ words b/c there are 2 different words for judge**
* (Gr.) “krino” = to judge unto condemnation/ (Gr.) diakrino = judge for identification - Jesus says here, “Stop ‘krino-ing’ or condemning people.”
* Why? B/c when U condemn people, this is the same measure people will have towards U - And this is the problem we all have
* **Now, here’s another thing U need to know: the leading rabbis in Jesus’ time, had a teaching, that God had 2 measures that He used to judge**
* 1 was a measure of justice & the other was a measure of mercy
* So Jesus is drawing on that & saying, “Do U think it’s more beneficial to U to be merciful or judgmental?” - b/c God is going to use that same measure on U
* And by the way, just b/c you’re merciful doesn’t mean U approve of everything someone does - mercy seeks God's best for them & isn’t hoping for judgment
* Jesus had a way of ACCEPTING people, not the lifestyle/ LOVING the person, but not the action - Even the enemies of Jesus recognized that
* Our problem w/ this passage is that our culture is so fragile it can’t handle it
* In our culture if U disagree w/ someone on anything, U are now mortal enemies
* B/c for a culture that values tolerance so highly, they have zero tolerable for anyone who disagrees w/ them - And this is a sign of a weak argument
* B/c let me tell U how people have grown in perspective & knowledge since the beginning of time - they’ve been around people w/ different views
* And hearing an opposing view has either caused a person to change or it has strengthened their own view b/c their position stood up against scrutiny
* **A couple months ago, I was making lunch for my family & I realized I had made lunch 4 everyone except me - so I decided to make a grilled cheese**
* As I’m getting ready to put the bread on the pan & I casually say to my wife, “Hey, does that look ok?” As I point to a spot on my bread
* That’s when my wife started screaming & said, “U are not eating that. That’s mold! Step away! Don’t even breathe it in. I thought she was going to tackle me like a secret service member protecting the president
* But I said to her, “How dare U judge me & my life choices. Didn’t Jesus say not to judge. U should support me & love me, no matter what!” - no! I was grateful
* Why? B/c someone loved me enough to identify my actions as unhealthy
* When Jesus spoke to the woman caught in adultery - sometimes we miss what He said to her that is so important to this conversation
* “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” (John 8:10-11)
* Jesus doesn’t condemn her, but He does correct her - He doesn’t say, “OK. It’s all good. YOLO baby. Go for it & have a good time.”
* Instead, He said, “I’m not condemning U, but the road you’re on isn’t good. So move on from this ordeal & live differently.”
* Here’s the point - this is never a license to be a jerk - but it is a responsibility to speak the truth in a way that people can receive it
* “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” (Ephesians 4:15)
* Notice what Paul says - when we speak the truth in love, we all grow
* The hearer grows b/c they’ve heard the truth in a way that they can receive it & we grow b/c we’re walking like Jesus - truthful & compassionate

**———(v. 3-6)———**

**#2 - I Need to Deal with My Own Issues First**

* **Now I love this passage b/c this is Jesus inserting some humor into His message & I like to follow that example**
* But He’s showing the absurdity of judging other people w/ a great illustration
* To update the language, He says, “You’re judging your brother b/c he has a speck of sawdust in his eye but U have a 2x4 coming out of your eye.”
* He says, “Get rid of the 2x4 & then you’ll be able to help someone else.”
* Note this - Jesus isn’t saying, “Never have an opinion. Don’t tell anyone that what they’re doing is wrong. Just smile & say everything is ok baby.”
* He’s saying, deal w/ your own issues & then help someone else out - don’t just talk about them & complain about them & act superior to them
* **My family & I were at Disney about 11 years ago & after giving my son a bath, putting on his pj’s & brushing his teeth, I let him hold his toothbrush**
* I was carrying him & looked away for a moment & Xander stabbed me in the eye w/ his toothbrush - the good news was that my eye smelled minty fresh
* The bad news was, whole next day I couldn’t see out of my eye
* Even though I couldn’t see, I still tried to drive w/ 1 eye - I know most of U don’t drive, but that doesn’t work - that’s why U don’t see many pirates on the road
* I found my lack of vision messed w/ my depth perception & I couldn’t tell how close a car was - which led to some interesting adventures on the highway
* Now I get it - that’s why Jonny Depp was married to that crazy woman - he was wearing an eye patch for all those pirate movies & wasn’t seeing clearly
* **But Jesus is giving us an illustration - that if U have something in your eye, U can’t see anything - now imagine a 2x4 in your eye**
* And imagine how expensive that is w/ the cost of lumber these days
* But Jesus is saying, “If the littlest piece of dust can impair your vision, make sure U don’t have a 2x4 that keeping U from seeing anything
* And we do that sometimes - U get into an argument w/ your spouse & if they say the wrong thing, we freak out & say they’re insensitive & hurtful
* If we say the wrong thing, we start talking about “Come on. That’s not what I meant. Why can’t U assume good will when I say something?”
* Then Jesus says something that is so strong & harsh that we skip over it & tell ourselves that He must be talking about other people - 1 word: “Hypocrite!”
* If U want to know what Jesus’ definition of hypocrisy is, it’s when we are say more concerned about pointing out someone else’s problem than fixing ours
* Hypocrisy is when we see what’s wrong w/ everyone else but we don’t see what’s wrong w/ ourselves
* And here’s the problem - this kind of hypocrisy destroys relationships
* “The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.” (Proverbs 11:9)
* The point that Jesus is making is that we need to deal w/ our own issues & then we can be a real help to others - but that takes humility
* In this culture, mirrors existed but they weren’t as common as they are now
* So to get something out of your eye, U needed help & U needed to get really close to someone to see what was in their eye & that takes trust
* **B/c there’s something wonderful that happens when U deal w/ your own issues - It makes U so compassionate to another person who’s struggling**
* And compassion can be felt - when someone is compassionate towards U, you’re willing to listen b/c they know what you’re experiencing
* **But what if they won’t listen - well, that’s why Jesus talked about in verse 6 - he says, “If they won’t listen, then don’t waste your energy as longer”**
* It’s not to make people change - I tell people this all the time - I say, “Remember the words of John the Baptist: I am not the Christ”
* U aren’t everyone’s Savior - Jesus is - so we point people to Him & if they aren’t interested, then I’ll still love U, but I’m not carrying the weight of the world & trying to be someone else’s Messiah - but I’m not Him
* But here’s the thing we all need to be aware of - at some point, all of us have been the dogs - at some point, we’ve all either rejected or ignored God’s truths
* “Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.” (Galatians 6:1)
* Our perspective on someone else’s sawdust changes when we acknowledge that we have struggled w/ the same thing or the equivalent to that thing
* So we walk humbly, seeking to help as we deal w/ our own issues, but if they aren’t interested, then we see the as a closed door for now & move on

**———(v. 7-12)———**

**#3 - I Need to Recognize God’s Faithful Character**

* **In the original Greek language, the passage literally reads, “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking”**
* The idea is that this asking isn’t a 1 time thing - it’s a consistent & persistent attitude where U aren’t wavering on what you’re asking of God
* **When Christmas time comes around, my kids are asking for everything under the sun & I let them b/c asking doesn’t cost me anything**
* But I’m also waiting to hear them ask for something consistently & persistently so I know they’re serious about what they want
* **I remember as a kid wanting a bike for My birthday - it’s all I talked about**
* It was a Shwinn dirt bike - my dad bought me a 10-speed - I’m thinking, “What do I look like, Lance Armstrong?”
* I destroyed the 10 speed w/in 2 weeks b/c I was using it was a dirt bike, jumping off ramps & doing tricks & riding dirt trails
* So I show my dad the destroyed bike & say, “This wouldn’t have happened if U had gotten me the dirt bike.” - so I set a goal of Christmas to raise the money
* All I talked about was the bike - I had a bike catalog that I’d show my family that had a picture of the bike & how much it cost
* This is not a joke - I talked about this bike so much from October until early December that my uncle told my dad, “If U don’t buy him that bike I’m never coming over here again b/c that kid is driving me crazy.”
* That was a fine line for me - it was either Christmas Day or Judgment day
* Our challenge is when we pray but we don’t wait for God to work
* **There’s something that happens to us when we persevere in prayer**
* When we pray about something for an extended period of time, God has a way of molding our will into His will
* U start out praying about something & it’s about what U want, but over time God works in your heart & your prayer begins to change
* B/c prayer doesn’t God - in reality, prayer changes me
* It aligns my heart w/ God’s heart & when my heart aligns w/ God’s heart & I pray according to His will, He answers
* **And this is the challenge of prayer - do we really believe He will answer?**
* That’s why Jesus compares us as dad w/ the Father as a dad
* Our God is a loving Father & when He delays it doesn’t mean that He’s playing hard to get - it means He’s deepening our commitment & growing us
* He hasn’t forgotten U - He’s working behind the scenes & He’s working on U to get U ready for the breakthrough that He’s going to bring in your life
* B/c He wants to bless U - He simply wants U to be able to handle the blessing once U receive it
* **That’s why this section ended w/ the golden rule - please understand that this rule isn’t living inside a vacuum**
* He says “Therefore” & that connects this idea w/ the idea of God’s goodness that’s likened to that of a Father’s love
* He says, “If this is what your heavenly Father is like - giving good gifts to His kids, we should treat people the way we want to be treated.”
* **Here’s why connecting these verses & keeping them in context matters**
* B/c how U view God will determine how U treat people
* If U view God as a wrathful deity who is looking for U to get out of line so He can smite U, then U will probably treat people the same way
* But if U believe God is a loving Father who gives good gifts to His kids, then you’ll probably treat people that way instead
* **A guy named A.W. Tozer wrote a book that was required reading when I was in college - the book is called, “The Knowledge of the Holy”**
* In it he writes, “What U think about when U think about God is the most important thing about U.” - why?
* B/c everything else in your life will emerge from the answer to that question
* This is why Jesus asks the question, “Do U believe if U ask for bread that God will give U stone?” - Some of us, if we’re being honest, would say yes
* Listen - that belief is at the root of how U treat people - if you’re judging them, if you’re unloving, if you’re unkind - what U believe about God is at the root
* **And nothing in your life will change until U deal w/ this issue - bc at the root of it there’s a belief that I prayed for a good thing & I didn’t get it**
* I asked for bread & God gave me a stone
* But here’s what we’re missing - what if we’re not asking for bread & we don’t realize it - what if we’re asking for a stone or a serpent & we don’t realize it?
* It’s all a matter of trust - we have a limited perspective & we can’t see beyond our own experiences & wisdom
* **Listen - the plans of God for your life are greater than the plans U have for yourself - when you’re in the waiting room of life, it doesn’t feel like that**
* However, it doesn’t make it any less true - his plans are better
* There is something about the process of asking, seeking & knocking that draws us to the place of knowing to ask for the right thing
* **When I was in college, I was a deliver guy at night so I could go to school during the day**
* There were a few times where I’d get a delivery & I’d get to the house & I’d knock & no 1 would answer
* Then I’d take a 2nd look at the address & realize I was at the wrong house
* I’d hop in my car, get to the right place & the door would be opened
* **Here’s the point - sometimes we’re simply knocking on the wrong doors**
* And God is too good to give us anything less than what we really need
* Why? B/c He loves U - b/c He’s a loving heavenly Father who desires to bless U & transform U into the likeness of Jesus
* And He loves U enough to be willing to be misunderstood by U in the moment
* B/c the plans that He has for U are too good to even let us spoil them…