

TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader / Opening Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#453 Love Lifted Me
#450 Give Me the Bible

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#350 When My Love to Christ Grows Weak

Communion Devotional by: Zach Arthur
Lord’s Supper and Contribution

#469 Faith Is the Victory
Sermon: “Faith Submits”
James 4:1-12

#912 Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary
#778 Be With Me Lord
Closing Prayer by: Walden David

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet today.
All small groups will meet at the building at 5:00
p.m.. If you have signed up and not been con-
tacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Apr. 30, 2023

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

Judge Not?

Those of you who are in our small groups program will recall that we studied judging others this past week. That is a good topic to discuss in this space, too, as we consider the daily problems we struggle with. Jesus famously warns, *Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you (Matt 7:1-2)*. And James tells us, *Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge (James 4:11)*.

The problem, though, is that sometimes judging is forbidden, as in these two passages. But sometimes, it is encouraged! In fact, even in the immediate context of Jesus’ well-known command, it is clear there are cases where proper judgement must be made. If you go down just a few verses in the Sermon on the Mount, he says, *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 (Matt 7:6)*. That evidently implies the exercise of judgement to distinguish the “dogs” from the “hogs.” How else can we know when not to give dogs what is holy? How can we know when not to cast pearls before swine? **Matthew 7:15-20** implies we must make judgments in determining who is a false teacher, as we will discern them by their fruits. Jesus even tells us to judge with righteous judgment! **(John 7:24)** So it is certain that judging is used in more than one sense in NT. The question is, what sort of judgment is forbidden?

Let’s begin with what sort of judgment isn’t forbidden. We have already mentioned identifying false teachers. We could add the judgment of the church on wayward members **(1 Cor 5:1-13; 2 Thess 3:6)**, as well as recognizing and disapproving the fault of others **(Gal 6:1)**. And we all must make individual judgments of evil **(Matt 7:6)**. Sometimes our preaching needs to draw those hard lines, in fact, as Paul instructed Timothy to *reprove and rebuke (2 Tim 4:2)*.

So what kind of judging is forbidden here? In this passage, Jesus is speaking about destructive criticism, about self-righteous, loveless, hypercritical judgment. It is judgment that proceeds from insufficient information; from trying to see the worst in others; from trying to exalt ourselves. We might use the word “faultfinding” to describe it: looking for the worst in others and, inevitably, finding it. The problem is not judging per se, but being judgmental.

What causes that sort of spirit? It could be from our struggle with our own sins. Maybe we are just trying to divert attention from ourselves, like Judas feigning concern for the poor because he held the moneybag **(Jn 12:5, 6)**. Or maybe it is an effort to justify ourselves and soothe our conscience. If we find fault in others, then it looks like we’re not so bad after all. But so often, we judge in others what we are guilty of ourselves! *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. (Rom 2:1)*

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Kelly McCain is in the VA Hospital in Egypt, TX.

Jerry Mast will have 2 stents put in on Tuesday.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stiflemire, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthia Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, May 1st at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, May 2nd at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be meeting at Hartz Chicken Buffet on Tuesday, May 9th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

<u>Elders</u>	<u>Deacons</u>	<u>Minister</u>
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

It could be with the intent to build us up by tearing others down. This was the fault of the Pharisee who looked down on the tax collector in **Luke 18:9-14**. Or, closely related, perhaps it is done out of envy of others. Envy seeks to get rid of its object; in the ultimate sense, we think of Saul pursuing David to kill him, or Haman building a gallows on which to hang Mordecai. While we might not go to that extreme, we can still hurt and wound others; harsh, malicious, unfounded judgments are a good way to do it

Whatever the reason, the harsh judge is worse than his victim. The critic has a beam in his eye compared to a speck (**Matt 7:3**). That word “beam” denotes a very big piece of wood, like a floor joist or a ceiling rafter; I always picture a railroad tie. A “speck” or a “mote” is just a small bit of chaff. We are talking a log protruding from your eye, while you try to get sawdust out of someone else’s. And so that unjust judge is called a hypocrite (**Matt 7:5**).

There are several reasons why this is unjust. For one thing, we never really know the facts of a case; we are not omniscient. Closely related to that, we only see the outward, not the inward. Furthermore, it is impossible for us to be truly impartial in our judgments; we all approach any question with our own biases and preconceptions. But above all else, it is because the right to judge is God’s, not ours: he knows all facts; he sees the inward person; he is impartial. That is why he is the just judge. And our judgment, then, infringes on his prerogative, calling the law itself into question, as James says.

So how do we overcome judgmentalism? Some practical points emerge naturally from what we have said. Remember that our judgments are so often wrong: Samuel wrongly assumed Eliab was to be anointed as king based on his appearance (**1 Sam 16**), and Nathaniel wondered if anything good could come from Nazareth (**Jn 1:46**).

We should practice love. *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things* (**1 Cor 13:7**). It’s hard to be judgmental with that sort of love for others. One way to do that is to live out the golden rule (**Matt 7:12**). We certainly want others to give us the benefit of the doubt! Don’t they deserve the same?

We must look for the good in others. The faultfinder is always looking for the worst; what a difference if we looked for the best! Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor, a murderer; but God saw his potential as his chosen vessel. We serve a God of limitless possibilities! We should emulate him here.

We ought to engage in some self-examination. *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!* (**2 Cor 13:5**) We will not go speck hunting if we discover our beam. We need to use a mirror, not a microscope

Finally, we must remember that judgment will come to us all. Inevitably, we will be judged by God, and that will be based on the same sort of judgment we render. I want God to be merciful, not nit-picky. Don’t you?

Bryant Perkins

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

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