

February 7-Genesis 38

It is much easier to judge others than to judge ourselves. This is a truth that is simple and yet incredibly difficult to remember. Our faults and struggles, often times, do not seem nearly as obvious as those of the people around us. We see an example of this truth in the account of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38.

Tamar had been married to a few of Judah's sons who had passed away and so Judah promised her that she could marry his youngest son when he became of age. The problem was that he didn't really intend on fulfilling that promise and so Tamar (to make a long story short) decided to trick Judah into lying with her and he did so without even knowing who she was. She ended up taking his staff as evidence that he had been with her. Judah had no idea that it was actually him who had slept with Tamar when a short while later, Judah was informed that she was pregnant. What happens next should caution each of us, Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned" (v. 24).

His standards for Tamar were very high were they not? He looked at her sin and said that she was no longer worthy of even living. She was to be burned because of what she had done. Now, Tamar might have figured this would happen so she decided to inform Judah just who's baby she was carrying prior to her death. She sent back his staff and informed Judah that the staff belonged to the father of the baby! Notice what Judah's response was when he realized what had happened, "then Judah identified them and said, 'She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.'" You see, not only had Judah committed the same sin she did, he also committed another in lying to her about her future husband. The lesson here is very straightforward. We must make sure that our lives are holy and honorable before the Lord and before we correct or rebuke other people. It is MUCH easier to see other people's faults and shortcomings than it is to see our own. We need to ask God to make us aware of our own struggles; the result may very well be similar to what happened to Judah. We may very well begin to see how unrighteous we are and how similar we are to those around us.

Christ warned us about judging others before we took an honest inventory of our own lives saying "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?" (Matthew 7:3). It is important to note that Christ is not saying that we should not label sin as sin. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul is very clear that it is our responsibility as brothers and sisters in Christ to call out the evil that is among us. However, the principle in Matthew 7 still stands. Our first responsibility before others and before the Lord is to live a holy and blameless life. If we are not in the business of evaluating our own fruit, we have no business in evaluating the fruit of a brother. We must take a good hard look at ourselves and our own lives before we go about correcting others. Of course, we evaluate our own lives with the beautiful hope that because of the forgiveness we have received in Christ we can know that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The grace offered to us through Christ should give us the strength we need to honestly evaluate our own lives. Let us then assess ourselves knowing that God will be faithful to forgive us in the areas in which we fall short. Seek first to live a lifestyle that is pleasing to God and represents His power to transform lives in front of others!