

Sermon On The Mount Part 10

Judging Others

Matthew 7:1-6,12

Memory Verses: Matthew 7:12

MANUSCRIPTS

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

If you were to poll the greater population of this area and asked them what some of their biggest questions were about how to live life in general, what do you think they would say? Do you think they would have questions about sex? Probably. Do you think they would have questions about forgiveness? Most likely. Do you think they would have questions about finances, anger, justice, vengeance, reconciliation, laws, rules, attitudes, making a difference, serving, loving, giving? I would think so. And I think that is exactly why Jesus gave us the sermon on the mount. Because he wanted to answer as many of our questions as possible and to give us clear direction for this life. If people say the Bible doesn't give us answers they are obviously not reading this Bible or they simply don't like the answers it gives. The sermon on the mount, and the word of God, have all the answers that we could ever need, and more.

Today we are going to be looking at another precise topic which many of you may have had some issues with in the past or may be struggling with today. That issue is judging others. What does it mean to judge someone? Should Christians judge anyone? If so, how? These are complicated matters indeed.

We've all felt unfairly judged at times haven't we? 6 years ago when our worship leader left our church I had to take over the music. I didn't want to change the style but because I played guitar and our former worship leader played the piano it felt very different. A lot of people attacked me, sent me hate mail, and told me that I was leading the church astray all because of this change which could not be avoided. Instead of having grace and mercy, they judged me as unrighteous and demanded my resignation. It almost destroyed our church before we had a chance to rebuild. Why do I mention this story? Because it illustrates the problem of judging others unrighteously which Jesus is addressing here. Jesus isn't telling us we can't judge others. In fact, in many places in the New Testament we are called to do exactly that. But **theres a difference in judging someone's motives based on selfish reasons and judging someone's actions and attitudes based on a love for that person and a desire to see them grow in Christ.** One says I don't like what you did regardless of why you did it and the other says I know you can be more like Christ if you try it this way instead. The bottom line is that Jesus isn't saying we shouldn't make critical determinations on each

other which would lead to discipleship, rather we shouldn't self-righteously, hastily, unmercifully, and prejudicially condemn others based on humans standards and human understanding. **When we judge others without love and discipleship as the motivating factors we bring judgement on ourselves.** Read with me in our main passage this morning; **Matthew 7:1-6 & verse 12.** There are three misjudgments we make when we judge others unrighteously; we misjudge God, we misjudge others, and we misjudge ourselves.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **When We Judge Others Unrighteously We Misjudge God's Authority.** **Verse 1** makes it clear that if we refrain from unrighteous judgment then we will be free from God's judgment. A couple things to note here real quick. First, God is the ultimate judge and his judgment is final. Our judgments can be and are often flawed. God's never is. Secondly, God deals two kinds of judgments; momentary and eternal. You could look at it like one's a misdemeanor and one's a felony. One has a transitory impact while one has a timeless impact. The momentary judgments are his everyday pronouncements of right and wrong. I just lied, is that wrong? What does God's Word say? Yes. So don't lie. Pretty simple right. We deal with these anytime our sins are confronted with the Bible. Eternal judgment is a little different. I'm sure you can figure this one out. This is the final assessment of our lives based upon one criteria; did we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior? The point is simple. **Only God can make a judgement on whether an unmistakable action is sinful, and we find that judgment in his Word.** And only God can pronounce eternal condemnation upon one's soul for not having dealt with that sin through the blood of His Son. God is the authority. You are not. You do not have the right to say whether me picking my nose is a sin or not. Only the Bible does. And just for your information... I haven't found that verse yet, so stop judging me. And you do not have the authority to pronounce final judgement on whether one should go to hell or not. Only God does. So stop telling people to go to hell; either by word or by deed.

Luke 6:37 adds a bit of context here as well. If we don't judge others unrighteously then God will not have to momentarily judge us as sinful. If we do not unrighteously condemn others as unworthy of salvation then God will not eternally condemn us. If we can find a way to forgive others mistakes instead of harshly judging them then God will surely forgive us of our mistakes. Stop playing God by pronouncing judgment. Let God be the authority on sin and salvation and join the rest of us under his mercy and grace. **When we judge others without love and discipleship as the motivating factors we bring judgement on ourselves.**

The second thing we need to see here this morning is... **When We**

Judge Others Unrighteously We Misjudge Them As Beneath Us.

Again, let's look at **Matthew 7:2**. Those who feel that they are qualified to judge the motives of others only do so because they see themselves as greater than those who they are judging. In reality they are no different because we are all human and thus on the same level before God. They have misjudged them as beneath themselves. This is not good for a couple of reasons. First, pride is the essential belief that you are greater or more worthy than someone else and thus the basis for all sin. Pride comes before the fall. Anyone who would put himself up as judge sets himself up for a fall. Secondly, Jesus tells us that God will return to us the same type of judgment we give to others. Why? As **John MacArthur** puts it "when we assume the role of final, omniscient judge, we imply that we are qualified to judge; that we know and understand all the facts, all the circumstances, and all the motives involved. Therefore, when we assert our right to judge, we will be judged by the standard of knowledge and wisdom we claim is ours. If we set ourselves up as a judge over others, we cannot plead ignorance of the law in reference to ourselves when God judges us. In essence God is saying, oh you thought you could handle the responsibility of judgment? Let's find out, shall we. Just know, anytime you judge someone unrighteously, it will boomerang back on to you in like form and with like force.

Luke 6:38, again, gives us some more details. Often we mistake this verse for the practice of giving to the needy, but in it's context we are talking about judgment and mercy. If you see others as less than and judge them then you will be given a measure of judgment that runs over into your lap. A giant judgmental mess. But if you see others as being on the same level as yourself, give them mercy and refuse to judge, then you will be given a big ole whopping of mercy and forgiveness from God. In a lot of ways, unrighteous judgment and merciful forgiveness are the exact opposites. Just as God tells us that he will forgive us when we forgive others, he also tells us that he will judge us mercifully when we judge others mercifully.

Mark 4:23-25 adds a little more context. Those who mercy, more mercy will be given, those who have not mercy, mercy will be taken away. It would be very scary to see God remove his mercy and forgiveness because of your judgmental attitude towards others. The point remains, we are all on the same level and none of us are in a position to unrighteously judge people's motives for the sake of condemning them. **When we judge others without love and discipleship as the motivating factors we bring judgement on ourselves.**

The last thing we need to see here is that... **When We Judge Others Unrighteously We Misjudge Ourselves As Righteous.** All of

these misjudgments stem from the same sinful mindset. When we misjudge God's authority we judge others as beneath us which leads to us misjudging ourselves as more righteous than we are. If I have been able to teach you one thing over the past six years it's this, none of us are righteous, no, not one. Isaiah says our righteousness compared to God is a filthy rag. If you think you are righteous, you're wrong, stop thinking it. **Matthew 7:3-5** gives us an example. Imagine you think you see some sin in your brother. You've got him now. Now he's really gonna pay. He's been caught red handed. All the while you have been living in habitual unrepentant sin with no cares in the world. His speck is nothing compared to your log. In fact, your log actually causes you to not be able to see clearly... your arrogance and judgmental attitude makes you blind.

Luke 6:39-42 says as much. You can't do anything to help someone else when you are blind to the truth of the matter. **Stop being self-righteous.** The very nature of self-righteousness is to justify self and condemn others. In so doing people play God, because they judge themselves on the basis of their unbelief. It trusts in self rather than God. It trusts in self to determine what is right and wrong and to determine who does what is right or wrong. **Self-righteousness only has love for itself and not those of whom it projects itself on. When we judge others without love and discipleship as the motivating factors we bring judgement on ourselves.**

Application

As we close let me just reiterate. I didn't have time to talk about good and righteous judgment among believers. But trust me, there is a place for us to judge one another in love. And love is the point. Love must be the motivating factor to judge righteously. What makes unrighteous judgment evil is it lacks mercy, grace, and forgiveness. It lacks love. What does love do? **Matthew 7:5-6, 12**. Love finds a balance. Love says, I will not judge people's motives and condemn them, rather if I judge it will be for discipleship. I will deal with my sin to deal with theirs. I will not cast judgment at people that will not have any good outcome for the kingdom. I will do unto others as I would want them to do to me. The Golden rule is about judgment and mercy more than anything else. Are you showing others the same mercy you want to be shown. Are you judging others the way you want to be judged?

Conclusion

John 13:31-35 is where I want to end this morning. This is what a healthy church looks like. A church that is slow to judge and quick to show grace. The question you should always ask before judging a brother or sister is, "is this out of love or not?"