

MATTERS OF JUDGMENT

Sermon by Mark S. Aites
(Sermon Idea Borrowed)

TEXT: MATTHEW 7:1-5; (JOHN 7:24)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The text from the Sermon on the Mount deals with how we treat others, and how we ourselves want to be treated.
2. It is an unfortunate reality that at times, even among the most seasoned veterans of the cross, a hasty type of judgment is displayed.
 - 1) This judgment is one that is harsh, self-righteous, and unloving; and can be classified as a fault-finding spirit.
 - 2) Such a spirit can be serious consequences (**Gal. 6:7**).
3. It should be noted that **Matt. 7:1-5** is also one of the most misunderstood texts of the New Testament, as many try to apply the concept of “*judge not*” universally.
 - 1) Judging means, “to distinguish, to decide, to censure and condemn.”
 - 2) Every day each of us makes countless judgments, and so we must realize that there are certain areas where Matthew 7 cannot be applied.
4. **Matt. 7:1-5** cannot be applied to the judicial system.
 - 1) **Rom. 13:2,4**
 - 2) Paul informs us that the government is ordained of God, and is there to make the necessary judgments for our society to function and to deal with those who oppose what is right.
5. **Matt. 7:1-5** cannot be applied to matters in which we form an opinion (**Matt. 7:6; 10:14; Acts 13:46**).
6. **Matt. 7:1-5** cannot be applied to false teachers and false doctrine (**Matt. 7:16; Rom. 16:17**).
7. **Matt. 7:1-5** cannot be applied to church discipline (**1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6**).
8. **Matt. 7:1-5** cannot be applied to preaching against sin (**1 Tim. 5:20**).
9. We understand that there are certain areas where it is not wrong to make judgments, and areas where it is wrong; so the challenge before us is to, “*judge righteous judgment*” (**John 7:24**).

DISCUSSION:

I. THE REMARK.

“*Judge not, that ye be not judged*” (**Matt. 7:1**).

- A. The judgment which should **not** be found among Christians is that which is hasty in nature; that which is based upon half-truths, hear say, or rumors.
 1. Of the seven things which God hates, is a “*An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations...*” (**Prov. 6:18**).
 2. **James 1:19-20**.
 3. Sometimes we say: “Don’t be quick to jump to conclusions.”
 - 1) This is referred to in scripture as “*evil surmisings*” (**1 Tim. 6:4**).
 - 2) This means to put the worst possible interpretation on the actions and words of other people.
- B. The judging which is clearly forbidden addresses one’s attitude.

1. We need to avoid a self-righteous spirit; a feeling of superiority (Note **1 Pet. 5:5**).
2. We need to avoid being hypercritical, which is the very opposite of constructive criticism.
3. This is very important!: We need to avoid forming an opinion without knowing all of the facts!
4. We need to avoid assuming the motives of others (**1 Cor. 2:11**).
5. We should remember that even in a court of law there is no penalty until a motive is established.
6. We must avoid condemning the sinner instead of the sin; unless of course the sinner refuses to repent of his sins (**Luke 9:56**).
7. We also need to avoid judging others in order to justify ourselves.

II. THE RESULTS.

- A. **Matt. 7:2.**
- B. It has been mentioned that this kind of judgment brings on a boomerang affect.
 1. Brother Cox notes: "Judgment provokes judgment. It excites animosity and provokes retaliation. The judge will be judged, the critic will be criticized, the measurer will be measured. Life is action and reaction."
 2. Once again we see the principle of sowing and reaping (**cf. Gal. 6:7-8; James 2:13**).
- B. Consider a moment the parable of the talents (**Matt. 18:23-35**).
 1. The wicked servant pleaded for mercy and his debt was forgiven.
 2. But in this account the Lord reveals he treated his servants harshly even after he was forgiven.
 3. The Master learned of his cruelty, and held him accountable for it (note **Matt.18:35**).

III. THE REMOVAL.

- A. **Matt. 7:3-5**
- B. To better convey the importance of this lesson, Jesus illustrated His point by use of the mote or beam.
 1. Mote - a little speck or splinter.
 2. Beam - log, plank, rafter, or beam; even rendered as a wooden pole in one translation.
- B. The Lord draws a vivid picture pointing out that the sins of others are easier to see than our own.
 1. Those who find fault are blinded by the beam in their eyes; and their hearts are poisoned with malice and hatred as they seek the bad in others.
 2. Once King David was blinded to his fault, until Nathan the prophet had to say to him, "*Thou art the man*" (**2 Sam. 12:7**).
- C. The spirit of "mote finding" may make others feel righteous; but such a spirit is not pleasing to God (**cf. Titus 1:15**).

IV. THE RIGHT JUDGMENT BELONGS TO GOD.

- A. **James 4:12**
- B. Peter tells us that *“the righteous are scarcely saved”* (**1 Pet. 4:18**); so we must guard our attitudes.
- C. We are not qualified to judge as no one possesses the omniscience of God (**Psa. 139:6**).
- D. **Rom. 14:10**
- E. Harsh judgment of others brings out hypocrisy as we should all realize, *“There is none righteous, no, not one”* (**Rom. 3:10**).

V. THE REMEDY (PRESCRIPTION).

- A. The means for overcoming such a fault-finding spirit is to replace it with love (**1 Cor. 13:4-8a**).
- B. **Rom. 12:9; John 13:34-35**
- C. Further, in our remedy, we should be slow in judging others, and realize the greater obligation we have toward one another.
 - 1. Peter conveys that our love for one another is to be *“above all things”* (**1 Pet. 4:8**).
 - 2. Our love for one another should lead us to restore those who stumble in a humble spirit (**Gal. 6:1**).
 - 3. Our love for one another should cause us to bear our brother’s burden (**Gal. 6:2**).
 - 4. **Rom. 12:15**
 - 5. Our love for one another should cause us to be willing to forgive when a brother repents (**Matt. 18:21-22**).
 - 6. Our love will cause us to apply the golden rule (**Matt. 7:12**).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We must not be judges who judge with evil thoughts, but we must learn to *“judge righteous judgment.”*
- 2. We are here to help one another, not hurt one another!