

DO NOT JUDGE

Matthew 7:1-5

Theme of Matthew: “Behold your King is coming to you” (Zech.9:9-11; Mt.21:4-5)

Theme of the Sermon on the Mount: Life Styles of the Rich and Famous

I. DO NOT JUDGE (Matthew 7:1a; Luke 6:37-42; John 7:24; Romans 14:4; James 4:11; 5:9)

- A. The kind of judgment Jesus forbids is hypercritical, disparaging, censorious, or faultfinding remarks or thoughts.
- B. The Pharisees are good examples of judges – they were always finding fault with Jesus or His disciples (Matthew 9:11; 15:1-2; 22:15-17; Luke 7:36-39; 15:1-2; 20:20).
 1. “Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath” (Mt.12:2).
 2. “And they questioned Jesus, asking, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’—so that they might accuse Him” (Mt.12:10).

II. THE ROOT PROBLEM OF “JUDGMENTALISM” IS LACK OF LOVE (Matthew 7:12//Luke 6:31; cf. Leviticus 19:15-18; Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:35-40; Galatians 5:14; James 4:11-12)

- A. Of all the New Testament letters, James has the most in common with the Sermon on the Mount. This is ironic because Martin Luther did not like the book of James, but he loved the Sermon on the Mount!

“No NT document is more influenced by the teaching of Jesus than James” (Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James* p.27). “Indeed, there are at least ten statements in James that are strongly reminiscent of the Sermon [on the Mount] (Compare James 1:2 with Matt. 5:11–12; James 1:4 with Matt. 5:48; James 1:5 and 4:3 with Matt. 7:7; James 1:22 with Matt. 7:26; James 2:13 with Matt. 6:15; James 3:12 with Matt. 7:16; James 3:18 with Matt. 5:9; James 4:11–12 and 5:9 with Matt. 7:1; James 5:2 with Matt. 6:19; James 5:12 with Matt. 5:34–37)” (John V. Dahms, “Lead us not into Temptation” *JETS* 17:220).

James 4:11-12

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? (NASB95)

1. Speech that does not proceed out of a heart of love, mercy, and compassion is the language of the devil (**James 3:15**; cf. Psalm 15:13; 50:20; 101:5; Prov.16:28; 26:20).
2. Speaking in tongues guided by the Holy Spirit will be speech that is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy (**James 3:17**).
3. When you speak disdainfully or judgmentally about another, you are breaking the Law of God, “He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law.” (**James 4:11**)

Why is “judgmental” speech against the law? Why are we judging the law when we are judging others?

B. Neither James nor Jesus forbids biblical discernment (Matthew 7:6,15-16; 23).

1. “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6).
2. “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).
3. “You will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16).

III. TO JUDGE OTHERS IS TO CALL DOWN GOD’S JUDGMENT UPON YOURSELF (Matthew 7:2//Luke 6:38; James 2:13; cf. Proverbs 21:13; Matthew 18:35; Luke 16:25)

A. We all would be much more reluctant to judge others if we knew that our turn was coming up to be judged by God (Matthew 7:2).

For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13).

B. The Good News is that if we speak about others charitably, God will use that standard to judge us! (Luke 6:37-38)

1. Speaking charitably is not the same as flattery (Job 32:21,22; Psalm 5:9; 12:2-3; Prov.7:5; Romans 16:18).
2. Speaking in love can include correction, discipline, admonishment, rebuke, and sometimes even excommunication (Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; 1 Corinthians 5 and 6).

“There is nothing that so utterly condemns us as the Sermon on the Mount; there is nothing so utterly impossible, so terrifying, and so full of doctrine. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that, were it not that I knew the doctrine of justification by faith only, I would never look at the Sermon on the Mount, because it is a Sermon before which we all stand completely naked and altogether without hope. Far from being something practical that we can take up and put into practice, it is of all teaching the most impossible if we are left to ourselves” (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* p.160).

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Are there areas of your life are you judging others (spouse, children, people in the church)? Pray that God would forgive you for any areas in which you have been hypercritical or hypocritical in your judgments. Pray that the Lord would help you to grow in mercy and love.

What did Jesus mean when He said, “Do not judge”? Is Jesus forbidding all forms of judgment such as discernment?

How is being judgmental speaking against the Law of God and a judging the law of God? Hint: the summary of God’s law is _ _ _ _.

What is the “filter” through which we are to look at others? Hint: it’s the summary of God’s law!

What is the good news about God judging us with the same standard by which we judge others?

[W]hen I say that I am “for Jesus”, I do not mean to imply in any way that I have converted to Christianity or that I now believe Jesus to be a god. What I do mean is that I have come to have a great deal of respect for the teachings of Jesus. My respect for Jesus is not based on the Cross, but rather on the **Mount**--not on His death and supposed resurrection, but on **His teachings as exemplified by the Sermon on the Mount**. (Ken Schei, President of Atheists for Jesus, <http://www.atheists-for-jesus.com/about.htm>; site accessed on 5/1/2004).

In ancient Persia a certain corrupt judge who accepted a bribe to render a false verdict was ordered executed by king Cambyses. The judge's skin was then used to cover the judgment seat. Subsequent judges were forced to render their judgments while sitting on that chair, as a reminder of the consequences of perverting justice. (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* [Mt 7:2]).

Sarah was the church gossip and self appointed supervisor of church morals. She kept sticking her nose into other peoples business. She made a mistake, however, when she accused George, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his pickup truck parked in front of the towns only bar one afternoon. She commented to George and the others that every one seeing it there would know he was an alcoholic. George a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just walked away. He said nothing. Later that evening, George, quietly parked his pickup truck in front of Sara's house.....AND he left it there all night.