

Judge Not

Matthew 7:1-6

I know that while I was reading these 6 verses that most of you were thinking about how many times you have heard someone use the words found in the very first verse of this 7th chapter. It is, without a doubt, the most misinterpreted, misquoted, misunderstood, and mishandled verse in the Bible. Unbelievers quote it and ‘claim’ its words as viable reason for them to not be rebuked for wrongdoing and the same goes with believers. I know personally of a Pastor that had been caught having an affair with a church member and he took a rock and laid it on the pulpit and quoted two verses, said by Jesus, completely out of context. “Let he who is without sin among you cast the first stone.” Good verse, bad context. The second verse was this one, “Judge not that you be not judged.” Again, good verse, bad context. There have been many a parent who got a funny feeling about someone dating their child and they’ve said, “There’s something wrong with that young man. I don’t believe you need to see him anymore.” They are then met with the words, “You can’t judge him. You’re supposed to be a Christian.” Jesus is NOT instructing the crowd at Capernaum to abandon discernment. If He is, please explain to me how I’m supposed to know the spiritual difference between holiness and dogs, and pearls and swine in verse 6! How can we make that determination without discernment or making a judgment call? The answer is simple, you cannot. So, that means that Jesus is instructing the crowds on a completely different CONTEXT than what the world uses this verse for today. Today, we are going to look at Biblical, spiritual judgment (discernment) that gives us the ability to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But rest assured that when you discern or decide things based on the Scriptures, you’re going to be judged immediately yourself. When someone says, “You can’t judge me!”, aren’t they judging me? Asking for a friend.

I. WHAT IT SAYS

Vss. 1-2

(a) **Its Meaning**: The word ‘judge’ or ‘judged’ or ‘judgment’ in verse 2 means ‘to distinguish or decide’ in a more applicable, daily understanding. It also means ‘to try, to condemn, to punish’ in a more legal and punitive way. We must remember that here in Capernaum the crowd was made up of just regular Galileans (daily, applicable) AND the scribes and Pharisees (Legal).
Vs. 1

1. Okay, so when is it right to judge? That is what Jesus meant in the daily sense of the word. We make judgments every day...every day.

- The Bible tells us, as believers, that one day we will sit on thrones and judge angels and that we make judgments pertaining to life daily (1 Corinthians 6:3-4).
- The Bible tells us in Acts 17:10-11 that the Berean Christians were of a better spiritual heart than those of Thessalonica. How? They received God's Word with readiness of heart and examined the Scriptures daily to find out that what Paul and Silas had preached were true.
- Not too many Wednesdays ago we looked at 1 John 4:1 where John wrote to the Churches of Asia Minor to NOT believe every 'spirit' or doctrine that was brought to them. They were challenged to test, try, JUDGE those spirits, and ensure that what they were taught came from the Lord.
- In the world we make decisions on behalf of our family, our employer, our nation, and our community. Every day we make judgment calls. So, how can someone look at me and say, "You can't judge me! Only God can judge me!" Let's make a judgment on that right now...that is a wrong determination based on the evidence that was just presented.

a. You see, that's what judgment is. It is simply making decisions based on the evidence that you have.

(b) **Its Merit**: Look now at verse 2. It is really simple to understand. How you make those judgments will now be the standard by which you are judged. How you use judgment will be how judgment is used on you.

Vs. 2

1. Merit means quality. In the Christian movie "Courageous" there is a scene at the shooting range and there is a conversation between two deputies, one who is a believer and another who is an unbeliever. They talk about good judges and bad judges and as officers of the law, they have seen both. Like it says in verse 2, that is how that judge will be judged, by the quality of judgment or the lack thereof. Right judgment put things back into proper order and making things right again.

a. Sonny King

Galatians 6:1 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

II. WHAT IT WANTS

Vss. 3-5

(a) **Clarity of Vision**: In verse 3, Jesus is basically saying, “How can you see the sawdust in your ‘brother’s’ (neighbor, fellow Israelite) eye when you’re trying to look through eyes that have a board in them?” Vss. 3-4

1. This is the Lord’s condemnation of nit-picking, critical, petty, fault-finding, and sarcastic judgment where the object of the judgment can never ‘catch a break’. This kind of judgment facilitates,

- Discouragement
- Lack of worth
- Defeatism; why try

a. This was the attitude of the Pharisee that prayed at the altar about the faults of the tax collector and failed to see his own formidable foes of sin through the eyes of a Holy God.

Psalms 51:4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

1. I can personally relate to verse 4 in a big way. When I worked in the secular world, if you could get it in your eye, I’ve done it. I’ve had sawdust, glue, plastic laminate and pieces of metal all embedded in my eye. Sometimes a washing at an eyewash station would get it out (“Let me get that piece of sawdust right there for you.”) But there were other times the object was embedded deeper and only a doctor could get it out.

(b) **Clarity of Words & Action**: That brings us to the verse of proactivity; verse 5. Actor. Tough guy. You have a plank in your eye that must be ‘ejected’ (cast out) and it cannot wait any longer. Your vision has been affected. You don’t see well. You cannot help the guy with sawdust while the plank is still in your eye. You know what you need to do, now are you going to do it?

1. Here is where I have said time and time again that you must never forget what it was like to be lost...to be 'that' guy or 'that' girl. There was a time that we were ALL that guy or that girl.

2. No matter what, there are moral absolutes of right and wrong in life just like Sonny King called balls and strikes in that rec league game. In football and basketball, they are called fouls. It's okay to call fouls. It's okay to call balls and strikes. But how Sonny presented those calls was what made the coaches and the players, and the fans accept what he said and what he did in a positive way. He didn't make the calls to hurt the girls. He made the calls to help them.

a. One of the first lessons that I learned in telling someone about Jesus was that I needed to be careful when I called someone 'a sinner'. When I quoted Romans 3:23 and said, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" I immediately had to 'get in the boat' with them. I would say, "I am a sinner", not "I WAS a sinner" but "I AM a sinner." The only difference between me and them is grace.

b. Jesus is saying that when you judge, have some grace with you.

Colossians 4:6 *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

1. Listen to what Paul said about himself.

1 Timothy 1:15 *...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

Conclusion: In closing, look at verse 6. "Don't give what's sacred to dogs and don't cast pearls before the swine." There will be those people who will reject your help and your words of wisdom. They don't want to change. They don't want to do what is right. That's life. On Calvary there were two thieves crucified as well. One did what was right and the other one didn't. Jesus didn't beat the one who didn't with a constant barrage of harsh criticism and insults. Jesus let that man make his own choice. You do the same. All you can do is offer them words of wisdom, a look at the offering made for sin on the cross and then let them make a choice.