

Judge Not?

Matthew 7:1-6

Intro

In years passed, people who were confronted with their wrong doing would often respond with the words, “**Only God can judge me**”...

- In our current culture, people are more likely to say, “**Who are you to judge me? No one can judge me.**”

Now, both of these responses are interesting in different ways...

When it comes to those who say, “**Only God can judge me**” — they are *correct* — *sort of...*

- *It is true that only God can judge them in the ultimate sense...*

You see, if that person is a **believer** then he or she will appear before Christ at His Judgment Seat where He will evaluate their faithfulness to what He called them to do...

And because this is such an important topic and it has application to each of our lives as believers, let's turn to turn to a few places...

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 (NKJV)

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and

another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Next, please turn to...

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Next we turn to...

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 (NKJV)

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Now please turn to...

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So, we understand that the Judgment Seat of Christ will be the ultimate performance review for each and every believer...

- And it is absolutely true that the Lord Jesus and *only* the Lord Jesus is qualified to judge in this way...

I am not qualified to judge your ultimate faithfulness to your calling and *you* are not qualified to judge your ultimate faithfulness to your calling...

- With that said, what about those people who are not believers — those who refuse to place their trust in the God of the Bible?...

What about when they say “*Only God can judge me*” or “*No one can judge me*”?...

Let's address the "No one can judge me" response first...

Saying "No one can judge me" is simply false because human beings experience judgment throughout their lives...

- From the time we were very young, our parents *judged our behavior...*

As we continued to grow older, we went to school where teachers *judged our progress* by grading the assignments we completed...

- Classmates *judged* whether or not we were friend material...

Coaches *judged our athletic ability...*

- When we turned 16, a state official *judged* our worthiness to receive a driver's license...

Time moved on and the person that we were romantically interested in *judged* whether or not we were worthy of their affection...

- That time we got pulled over for speeding, the law enforcement officer *judged* whether or not we should get a ticket...

When we were seeking a job, our prospective employer *judged* whether or not we would be a good fit for that workplace....

And on and on it goes — everyone who has consciousness judges and is judged in many different ways...

So, the person who says “No one can judge me” is simply wrong...

But the person who has rejected Christ and says “Only God can judge me” is correct in a manner of speaking...

Because only God can issue the final judgment — only God can ultimately judge a person for his or her sins...

To remind ourselves of this truth, please turn to...

Revelation 20:11-15 (NKJV)

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

[*misconception that people are punished in Hell because of a lack of belief in God / not true / they are punished because their works are evil and through unbelief they have rejected the only one who can bring forgiveness for those evil works...]

So, as we consider the theme of judgment that is our subject today, it is clear that judgment is a part of life — we have been judging and being judged for all of our lives...

And judgment for the believer will culminate at *the Judgment Seat of Christ* when we stand before Him and He judges our faithfulness to His calling on our lives...

- For the person who refuses to turn to Christ, the Great White Throne Judgment awaits where that person will be judged for their sins and will enter into an eternity that is devoid of any good thing...

Now, I realize that these are incredibly heavy topics but they set the stage for us to understand what the Lord Jesus *is* and *isn't* talking about as we move into Matthew 7 this morning...

So, please turn to the passage that we will be studying...

Matthew 7:1-6 (NKJV)

1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Let's move into our first section...

1) Wrong Attitude (vs 1-2)

1 "Judge not,

Now, as we have already seen, judgment cannot always be bad because God Himself judges...

Genesis 18:25 (NKJV)

"...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

As we think about it, we understand that it is *impossible to live life without judging* — every decision that we make is a form of *judging* between different options...

And the Lord Jesus Himself commands proper judgment in...

John 7:24 (NKJV)

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

*With all of this in mind, what in the world does the Lord Jesus mean when He says, "**Judge not**"?...*

Well, in context, I believe that the Lord Jesus is speaking about a **wrong attitude** in judgment — I believe He is speaking of having a *critical, fault-finding spirit...*

- [ex. people who find fault in everything — constantly criticizing...]

For some examples of this wrong attitude in judgment, we will look at a few passages — let's begin by turning to...

Matthew 26:6-13 (NKJV)

6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,

7 a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.

8 But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste?”

9 For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.”

10 But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.

11 For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.

12 For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.

13 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

Next we turn to...

Romans 14:10-13 (NKJV)

10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written:

**“As I live, says the LORD,
Every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall confess to God.”**

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.

Now please turn to...

James 4:11-12 (NKJV)

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

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

So, as we turn back to Matthew 7 we understand that the Lord Jesus is commanding us to abandon *self-righteous, fault-finding, critical-spirit judging...*

This sort of judging that the Lord Jesus is prohibiting is sinful because it is done with the goal of *lifting us up as we put others down...*

This sort of self-righteous judging is *not about loving our neighbor as ourselves* — it is about showing that we are *better than our neighbor...*

And as we look at Matthew 7:1-2 together we see that self-righteous judgment is not a good long-term strategy...

“Judge not, that you be not judged.

2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

This is a radical teaching — the Lord Jesus is informing us that *we get to choose the way that we will be judged...*

- *And we make this choice by how we judge others...*

Some Rabbis that God has two measures — ***justice*** and ***mercy*** — and from that the Lord Jesus is teaching here, it seems that we get to choose which one of these we will be measured by...

And that choice is made by which measure — justice or mercy — that we use to measure others...

Matthew 5:7 (NKJV)

**“Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.”**

James 4:6 (NKJV)

**"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."**

*With this in mind, as we move into our second section we will see that being merciful **does not mean that we ignore sin** — but it does mean that we must have the...*

2) Proper Priority (vs 3-5)

3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

Now, it is important that we realize that the Lord Jesus is a comical picture to make an important point...

speck — *something very small, like a piece of sawdust...*

plank — *a piece of heavy timber such as a beam used in roof construction...*

- [expand on the comical image — the damage you would do to the person you were trying to help if you had plank in your eye...]

And, unfortunately, this is exactly what is happening, spiritually speaking, when we judge with a self-righteous, fault-finding, critical spirit...

We have a plank in our own eye — we have sin that has not been dealt with in our own lives...

- And instead of repenting and dealing with our own issues, we seek to make ourselves feel better by going around and pointing out the sin of other people...

And we do much damage in the process...

Now, as we move into vs 4-5 we see that the Lord Jesus gives us clear instructions on how to deal with this sort of situation...

4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Here the Lord Jesus gives us the ***proper priority*** — ***we are always to deal with our own sin first...***

So, before I seek to aid anyone with the speck that they have in their eye, I must first remove the plank from my own eye...

- This means that I must repent of any known sin in my own life before I can aid others in their struggle with sin...

[ex. you don't need to be operating on other people if you are in need of medical attention...]

But how can we get the plank out of our own eye?...

- ***By reading and obeying the instructions found in the Bible...***
- ***By praying and repenting of any known sin...***
- ***By listening to godly teachers who help you see what is wrong...***
- ***By being in close communion with believers beyond your immediate family...***

Proverbs 18:1 (NKJV)

**A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire;
He rages against all wise judgment.**

You see, as we diligently remove the planks from our own eyes, we will see clearly and be in a position to help others with the specks in their eyes...

And I know of no better instruction in this area of speck removal than what we find as we turn to...

Galatians 6:1 (NKJV)

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

- [expand on each element...]

There is no way to do this with a plank in your eye — but you can do it if you remove the plank first — that is always the ***proper priority***...

This brings us to our final section...

3) Wise Discernment (vs 6)

6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Now, commentators cannot seem to agree on exactly what the Lord Jesus is saying here so I am going to leave it to you study this further if you want to explore the differing opinions...

With that said, the *application* that I take from this verse is that we must use **wise discernment** when seeking to share difficult truths with others...

- As the Lord Jesus instructed, we are to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves...

We should be responsive to the Holy Spirit as He leads us...

- ***The Holy Spirit is able to help us understand when we should speak and when we should not to speak...***
- ***The Holy Spirit is able to help us understand who we should challenge and who we should leave unchallenged...***

I believe the heart of what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7:6 is found in...

Proverbs 9:8 (NKJV)

**Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.**

- [ex. Book of Acts — disciples are constantly adjusting to changing conditions — when to stay and when to go / when to speak or when not to speak...]

Conclusion

We will stop here for today and Lord-willing continue on in Mathew 7 next week...

- But before we move into our time of communion, I want to leave you with three applications taken from our study...*

1) Beware of a wrong attitude when judging others — if your judgment stems from self-righteousness, from fault-finding or from a critical spirit then it is improper judgment...

2) Always maintain the proper priority in judgment — remove the plank from your own eye before you attempt to remove the speck from your neighbor's eye...

3) Use wise discernment as you seek to challenge others — submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as He leads you to do His will...