



Fake News

Message Notes, April 8, 2018

Matthew 7: 1-5, 1 Corinthians 5: 9-13

Judge not that you be not judged (Matthew 7:1).

Does the Bible really say to never judge as Christians?

- Confusion in this is rooted in taking scripture out of context.
- People take snippets out to confirm their stand.

There is more to the Matthew passage than “judge not.” We must look at the larger context:

- The passage comes from the Sermon on the Mount – collective teaching at the very heart of how Jesus wants us to live as Christians.
- “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).
- The ministry of Jesus always ran into difficulties with the Pharisees. See Matthew 6:5, Matthew 23:15, Matthew 23:23, Matthew 23:27-28
- Jesus used the word “hypocrite” in relation to the Pharisees many times.
- When Jesus spoke the words “Judge not that you be not judged,” He had the Pharisees in mind.

Three things Jesus is *not* saying:

- We should not use our minds to discern what is right and wrong.
 - “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:14).
 - It is a sign of maturity when we can discern right from wrong.
- All behavior is personal and relative.
 - This is often the motive behind those who quote this message.
 - God’s word is full of moral absolutes.
 - The Ten Commandments are not the Ten Suggestions.
- We should never confront an individual who is living in sin.
 - “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:5).
 - There is an appropriate way to help remove “the speck from your brother’s eye.”
 - “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over” (Matthew 18:15).
 - “My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20).

What Jesus is saying

- Don't have a critical spirit.
 - The Greek word for judge can be taken in a positive sense (use your mind to discern) or a negative sense (loves to heap on criticism and condemnation on others).
 - Jesus definitely is saying to not judge in the negative sense of the word.
 - A critical spirit is usually rooted in pride and ego.
 - "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults – unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging" (Matthew 7:1 MSG).
- Don't be a hypocrite.
 - Jesus began this section by calling us to a higher standard.
 - Jesus is saying not to proclaim one thing with our mouths and live a different way.
 - We are called to authenticity, a humble spirit and grace.
- Don't love the law more than people.
 - He said, "Yes, and I can be even more explicit. You're hopeless, you religion scholars! You load people down with rules and regulations, nearly breaking their backs, but never lift even a finger to help" (Luke 11:46 MSG).
 - Do not care more about your standards than the people you are trying to reach and minister to.
 - Jesus spoke truth and grace, not condemnation.

"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked person from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

- Background – Paul planted the church in Corinth and then left them. He then received reports back that they were not living right.
- Paul is saying:
 - It is right to judge believers, but it is never our responsibility to judge unbelievers.
 - There is a double standard:
 - We should not expect those outside the body of Christ to live as Jesus said we should.
 - We should not expect those who don't know Jesus to have our values.
 - If we find someone lost in a state park we would not berate them for being lost. We would tell them the way out and walk with them if necessary. Why would we not have the same heart and mind for those who are spiritually lost?
 - For the lost, our aim is to point them to Jesus. For believers, our aim is not condemnation, but restoration.



- “Do you think that I like to see wicked people die?’ says the Sovereign Lord. ‘Of course not! I want them to turn from their wicked ways and live’” (Ezekiel 18:23 NLT)
- “If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent – not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him (2 Corinthians 2:5-8).
- “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

Replace the pictures we have in our minds of judges with a gavel looking stern or aloof with the picture of Jesus as He dealt with the woman condemned of sin in need of restoration: kneeling and writing in the sand, saying, “Neither do I condemn you.” After humbling accepting her, He then calls her to leave her past and sin no more.