

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.

The more time I spend in this passage, the more it opens up. There was much more here than I would have first thought. The process is much like how we looked at "**the good eye**" that Jesus mentioned earlier. We start with a vague understanding, but the more we look at the text, the clearer the meaning becomes.

Our text is so difficult because **judging** is referred to as both a good thing and a bad thing in scripture. And the **Greek words** are little help. The same word is referred to as good and bad. So we are told **not** to judge. We are told **to** judge. We must determine what **good judging** and **bad judging** both are. There are **far more clues** to the meaning in this text than I would have first guessed. Look at what **we know from the text** and what we have **looked at** already.

On the surface it looks like this might be saying that **all judging is bad judging**.

But we know that **not all judging is bad judging**. Scripture **commands us** to judge. This means we must determine what kind of judging we **should**, and **should not** do. Jesus here is focusing on the **bad kind**.

From the text we have these clues.

There is a kind of bad judging we can **avoid doing** in order that we can avoid having the bad judging **done to us** by God.

The bad judging is **not** something we want done to us. While we may be tempted to do it to others, we **do not** want it done to us.

Every human will face the **final judgment**, so this verse cannot mean we will avoid **that kind** of judging.

Whichever judgment we use will be the **same kind** of judgment used on us, **somehow in some way**. Both good and bad. So we should hope to receive the **good** kind and **avoid** the bad kind.

And it appears to have **degrees**. The **more we use it**, the more it is **used on us**.

The bad kind of judging looks at things **wrongly**. In our text it looks at the sins of **ourselves** and **others** wrongly. In the 1 Cor text on the Lord's supper it looks at **fellow believers** wrongly.

Hypocrisy is part of the wrong judging, where we use one standard to judge ourselves and another to judge someone else. The bad judging requires **pretending to be something that we are not**.

Through all of this, a very helpful question arises.

How do you hope to be judged? How is the way you **WANT** to be judged? These are the questions that gives us clarity to what good and bad judging are. How do **you** hope to be judged?

In our text it appears that Jesus is warning against an attitude of superiority, where **your** sin is a big deal but **mine** is not. **Your** sin needs dealt with but **mine** does not. Your sin is a verdict on your personhood but mine is not.

In the 1 Cor text it appears that people were judging some people as being **more important** than others, more worthy of consideration than others.

In both instances we see a **scale of value** placed on people. In our text the **judg-er** thinks he is superior to the **judg-ee**. In the 1 Cor text the people arriving early to the Lord's supper viewed themselves as **more important** than those who would come later. We see an arbitrary scale of value placed on fellow believers.

I believe this leads us directly to the answer to the question we are asking. We will find it in the answer to this question.

Where does a Christian receive His value?

When we answer this question, I think we will find the difference between **proper** and **improper** judging and will be able to use it in any situation.

Where does a Christian receive His value?

And the answer is so simple. You and I receive our value **in the Gospel**.

You and I receive our value **at the cross**. You and I did not **attain** our value.

We did not **merit** our value. We did not **earn** our value. We did not even have an **innate value** that God had to respond to. God was not enamored with our virtues so much that He died for us. He was not inspired by the wonderfulness that is us. That is not how scripture paints the picture.

No. We begin as **enemies** of God. Very few people have less value to you than your enemies. The **departure** of an enemy does you more good than their **existence**.

No. Our value was granted to us on the day that Christ died for us coupled with the day Christ brought us to Himself.

1 Corinthians 6:20 (ESV)

²⁰ for you were **bought** with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 7:23 (ESV)

²³ You were **bought** with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

Acts 20:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He **purchased** with His own blood.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the **redemption of the purchased possession**, to the praise of His glory.

Are you seeing what I am talking about?

I do not know what **intrinsic value** human beings have. We were made in the image of God so that is something. And God commands that we treat fellow human beings well, whether they love Him or hate Him. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. There must be some innate value. But it is hard to tell in scriptures where that begins and ends.

But we can **know for sure** that we were not saved by God because of anything good about us. The old testament example that makes this clear is when God told Hosea to marry a woman who either **had already**, or **was sure to in the future**, commit harlotry. After she committed adultery Hosea **placed a value on her** by the price he paid. Anyone looking on would have called him a fool. He placed value where there was none. And that is the picture God intended for us to see. This story is to help us to understand that **this is the kind of God we have**. He pays an astronomical price for people like us, people who have **already proven** that **we are not worth** the price He pays.

Now it is important for us to get this. What is the worth of every single born again Christian? What is the worth of every follower of Christ? We are worth the life of Christ. Why. Because we are innately that wonderful. No. We are worth the life of Christ because **that is the price He ascribed to us**. He, like Hosea, said I will **ascribe** and **pay this price** to buy back my bride. He ascribed to us a value we **could never**, and **will never** be able to deserve. And it is because of **that event** that all believers must now see all of life through the eyes of the Gospel. Because it is the Gospel that ascribed to us our value. I **did not** or **could not** earn it. You **did not** nor **could not** earn it.

And what is the lens of the Gospel?

Well, it certainly is not to skirt over sin, like so many quoters of Jesus words seem to think it is.

The **gospel**, in fact, lays out sin in all its **stark reality**. And praise God that it does. If we did not know we had this **moral cancer**, we would never be driven to the **blood bought cure**. No, the gospel lens lays out that we were all equally enemies of God. He saved no friends. We all equally deserved His condemnation for the **sin state we were in** and the **sins we did**. That is part of the gospel lens.

Then God initiated change. He made blind people see. He made dead people live. He **woke us up** to the reality of God.

Romans 8 says **And whom He foreknew He also predestined to conform to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn of many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called. Whom He called, these He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

We see that this salvation is all about **what God has decided to do** and is doing. The gospel lens sees all of salvation as being about the **glory of God**. It sees all of our efforts, all our successes and failures, in light of this bigger picture. It recognizes that every believer is saved by **the same grace** and due to **the same love**. The ground truly is level at the foot of the cross. We are all **equally indebted** to our Savior. The price He paid for each of us was **exactly the same**.

This gospel lens leads to a kind of judging that is **vastly different** than every other worldly method. In fact, it can look insane to the world. We might look at times like we are doing things for which there appears to be no selfish interest. And why would anyone do such a thing?

This gospel lens will cause such a thing.

The gospel looks at every other believer as being **just like we are**. We see **ourselves** through the gospel. We see **each other** through the gospel. We **judge ourselves** by the gospel. We **judge each other** through the gospel. In our 1 Cor text, where people were guilty of wrongly discerning, judging the body of Christ (fellow believers) this was true because they had **forgotten the gospel**. They had forgotten that Christ values them all the same. There is no room for entitlement. There is no room for lack of love and consideration. Why. Because Christ has placed a value on them. Christ loves them equally. And if we love Him, we will love them. That is the Gospel lens.

Then lets apply this to our text in Matt 7.

The gospel lens is not going to cause a person to be **hypocritical**. One cannot understand and believe the gospel without being **humbled**. There is nothing

pride inducing in the gospel. There is not a single Christian who has a single self induced virtue about them that caused God to choose them. The very definition of grace precludes that.

So through the gospel lens we judge ourselves. When we see sin in ourselves, the gospel compels us to call it what it is, confess it and ask forgiveness for it. That is how the gospel sees things.

When we see sins in others, the gospel compels us to be both humble and loving. We **want to help**. We want to be of **any service** to a fellow believer. But it is not because we are in any way **better**. The same exact price was ascribed by our Savior to each of us. So there is no need to establish or maintain any kind of superiority. In fact it is **fiction** to think any of us are higher up the food chain than the other. There is no food chain.

We may not be equally obedient. We may not be equally faithful. But we have all been assigned the same value. And we were all saved **from the same state of sin by the same grace**.

The hypocrisy of the helper in our text is what gives it all away. Why in the world would one feel the need to play act when you believe the Gospel. The only way that could happen is if you stray from the Gospel. I do not need to prove to you I am **less of a sinner** than you are. That is stupid. That is evil. It required Christ's blood to save me, just like it did you. Why in the world would I want to throw myself into this story, as if there is something **special** about me? As if there is something **superior** about me. The gospel isn't built around me. It is built around Christ. Flesh tempts us to **elevate self** all day long. So it is understandable. But it is foolish and evil.

Do you see where it says

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.

Do you see how removing the plank gives clarity of vision? I believe the plank that this man has is not just a **bigger sin** than the splinter. It is a **damning way of seeing**. It is a **departing from the gospel** and replacing it with a fleshly lens, a bad eye.

The plank is a **non gospel lens**. And Jesus is saying, before you will be of any use whatsoever to the Kingdom, that **sinful way of seeing things** has got to go. If you were **saved** by the Gospel, you must **live** by the Gospel. If you were **saved by grace** you must **minister by grace**. If God loved you and gave freely of Himself to meet your need, you must love others and give freely of yourself to **meet their need**. If you never **merited** your salvation, there is no need to pretend that you are **now worthy of it**. And if you never earned **your** salvation, there is no need to start acting like another person **can and should**.

Do you see what I mean?

When Jesus says Do not judge, He is basically saying, “never view anyone apart from the Gospel. Judge yourself by the gospel. Judge your brother by the Gospel.”

Then look at this.

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

What lens does God judge us through? Is it not the gospel? Does He not see that as the process that He used to **adopt us** and make us **His children**? Does He not regard us differently than our fellow worldlings because of this Gospel? Does He not **free us from condemnation** because of the Gospel. Does He not see us exactly as we are, just as we see ourselves through the Gospel?

So when we judge ourselves through the Gospel, we are using the same standard that God uses to judge us. And if we fail to judge ourselves properly, if we hang on to a sin, God will judge us according to that Gospel. He will treat us as a child **He is about to spank** instead of an **enemy** He is about to **annihilate**. But the spanking will be real. He will teach us a lesson if He must. He will show us what it is like to be **judged wrongly**. Remember what He did to our Corinthian brothers. They were sick and dying. If they were going to use non gospel judging on their brothers, God was going to withhold His gracious fellowship in their lives. They were going to pay for this way of living, this way of judging.

When we live by the gospel we **avoid** those disciplines. When we live by the gospel, we **receive** the grace that we also **extend**. When we extend grace to others God does not need to discipline like He did in the 1 Cor passage.

Now think about how the **world** judges, how the **world** assigns value. Look at how even our **flesh** assigns value. That is the wrong judging. Fleshly judging says you are more valuable if you are pretty, or smart, or talented, or rich, or are personable, or skilled, or useful, or you have greater personal benefit to me in any way. We ascribe an arbitrary scale and then respond accordingly.

Look at what Paul said.

2 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV)

¹² For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Do you see the point? They are striving for superiority, for status, for importance. This is not something the Gospel would ever cause. They were

judging with human standards, comparing one human to another as if there is anything good to be gained by that. That is totally non-gospel judging. Jesus was continually dealing with this **fleshly impulse** in his disciples.

Matthew 18:1-5 (NKJV)

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

They were always looking for the **top spot** and trying to prove that they **deserved** the top spot because they were **superior** to all others.

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,

3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

Christ intentionally chooses someone who **has no status** and would **assume they had no status** as his illustration. The child was probably the person in the audience who **least** thought he **deserved** a leadership position. And that exemplifies what seeing life through a Gospel lens will produce.

Here is another example.

Matthew 23:9-13 (NKJV)

9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

This is what Gospel thinking will produce. It is a logical by product. It isn't some great act of proudly working hard to be humble. No it is just opening your eyes and seeing through the reality of the Gospel. And if you exalt yourself with the wrong kind of judging, that same standard will be used against you to humble you. Just like Jesus said. He who exalts himself, makes himself superior, will be humbled.

And next comes the great contrast, the masters of the wrong kind of judging.

13 But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

The pharisees see it **all** wrongly, and as a result of their way of seeing they are **never able** to help someone remove their splinter. Their **beam** in their eye is deadly.

Let's look at another example.

We won't read the whole text but it is found in John 8.

We find the woman caught in adultery.

Now very clearly, these men viewed themselves as superior to this woman.

They viewed themselves as being much more **worth saving** than this sinful woman.

They judged her as worthy of condemnation. But they were hypocrites. They had a beam in their eyes and this woman had a splinter in comparison. Now naturally that is not how **they** saw things. But that is how **they were**.

So Jesus writes something in the dust. Almost certainly what He wrote **exposed** their hypocritical thinking. It showed them their improper judging. It showed them the beam in their eye. I think he was listing details of their sins that would have shown them He knew what they were keeping hidden. He knew their hypocrisy.

Jesus said this:

John 8:7 (NKJV)

7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

This is just another way of saying, **"Watch out or you will be judged by the same standard you are judging."**

The point he was making was Not that one should never tell a person that their behavior **was evil**. The point in the story is NEVER to make adultery perfectly acceptable and beyond any reproach or rebuke, something we cannot judge is evil, nor should we ever address it. No.

But these pharisees saw themselves as superior, thinking they did not deserve condemnation but she did.

And it is interesting that the oldest and wisest saw the point the quickest.

They saw that they needed to give up this witch hunt right now because they were proving themselves to be co-witches. They could not maintain a **rational argument** in this fight. They could not press their case without being convicted themselves.

So they left.

And Jesus said to the woman- "Never let anyone tell you what is right and what is wrong for you. They do not have that right to tell you what is right or wrong for you. You have your own truth that is right for you and you need to go by it."

No that is what our wacky world thinks and that is what they try to wrench out of Jesus's words. But they are wrong.

Jesus said

John 8:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

Jesus judges her sin. He calls what she was doing SIN. It was **not ok**. And she needed to change. She could not keep doing what she was doing. Adultery is sin. There is no other truth than the word of God and when we speak the word of God we are speaking the truth. The truth judges between right and wrong. And that is necessary.

Jesus was withholding **condemnation**. But He was **not withholding judging**. He was withholding His final judgment and giving this woman a chance to get her sins forgiven. He withheld condemnation so she could experience grace. She was getting a second chance. We do not know if she cashed in on it or if she continued to sin. But Jesus gave her **a chance** to respond to the Gospel. Now it is revealing to see what He says in chapter 8 verses 14-16

John 8:14-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.**

¹⁵ **You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.**

¹⁶ **And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.**

Do you see the problem with the Pharisees judging?

You judge **according to the flesh**.

You use the **wrong authority** and the **wrong standard**.

You see it through the lens of flesh, not through the gospel.

That is your big problem Mr. Pharisee. You got the technical sin verdict correct. And you wanted to pronounce her condemnation right then and there. But you would not apply that same standard to yourself. You wanted to see this woman's sin as damnable, but you wanted to see yours differently. You did not want to apply the same standard to you because, after all, your flaw is **tiny** compared to **this woman**.

Had you seen this woman through the eyes of the Gospel, you would have said, I understand what she is doing because I do similar things. Maybe my sin is not as **notorious**. Maybe it will not do as much **situational damage**. But it is the same kind of stuff. It is equally damnable. It is equally evil.

So the gospel lens says, please let me help you. Please stop doing what you are doing. You are harming yourself and dishonoring Christ. If you saw what

you are doing clearly, from the light of eternity, you would not want to be doing this thing.

How do I know this is true? Because **I am like you**. I am saved by the same **kind** and **volume** of Grace that **you need to be saved by**.

That is judging through the lens of the Gospel. That is the **right kind** of judging.

Next week we are going to look at Galatians 2. Your assignment is to read it this week in light of Matt 7. I think you will see what I see.