

Series: John

Title: Judge Righteous Judgment

Text: John 7: 14-24

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John 7: 14: Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15: And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16: Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17: If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. 18: He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19: Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20: The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21: Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22: Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. 23: If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24: Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Our Lord said, "*Judge not according to the appearance.*" The Pharisees judged by appearance. It seems the Jewish rulers did not see Christ heal the impotent man nor did they know the man. The Jewish looked up one day and in the midst of the feast they saw a man carrying his bed mat on the sabbath day. Judging strictly by the letter and by appearance, they judged the man to be breaking the sabbath. The letter of the law says, "carry no burden on the sabbath day" (Jer 17:21). It applied to goods bought or sold. Perhaps it appeared to their natural sight that this man had purchased a bed mat or was about to sell it. The point is they judged by appearance, which includes judging by the natural eye and ear and the letter of the law.

Then when they heard it was this man, Jesus, who told the man to carry his bed on the sabbath, they judged by appearance once again. Judging by natural sight they saw Christ as only a man who they judged to have broken the sabbath, who also told another man to break the sabbath. When Christ declared that he and the Father work hitherto, declaring himself the Son of God and one with the Father, then they accused him of blaspheming God. They immediately went about to kill the Prince of life.

They had an inward motive. It was to justify themselves. Their carnal hearts, like all unregenerate sinners, was enmity against God. They desired to make themselves appear righteous before men by condemning others.

We see in the Pharisee's the sin committed by judging by appearance. Judging by appearance they judged the Lawgiver himself guilty. They judged he who is the Righteousness of the Law as a law breaker. He who is one with the Father they judged a blasphemer for declaring the truth to them.

When the apostle Paul was unregenerate he judged by appearance. He looked on the outward appearance of things. His confidence that he was saved was that he was "circumcised the eighth day...as touching the law, a Pharisee;...touching the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless" (Php 3: 5). Judging by appearance that is what we would have said of him, too. But after the Lord circumcised his heart inwardly by the Holy Spirit, God made Paul hear the

law condemn him. Then Paul judged righteous judgment. He said, “when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died” (Rm 7: 9).

Again, at the feast of tabernacles the Pharisee’s judged by appearance. About the third- or fourth-day Christ stood up in the temple and preached the gospel. Judging by appearance they saw only a man preaching in their temple at their feast when he had no authority from them to preach. They were not willing to come to him and learn of him.

Had they been able to judge righteous judgment they would have beheld the Word, who is God, made flesh teaching his own word. They would have beheld Christ who is the feast of tabernacles because he is God tabernacling among men; Christ is the feast; Christ is the righteous fulfillment of the feast and the fulfillment of all the law for his people. Christ is the one who makes his people whole and is our Sabbath rest.

Yet, due to their own unwillingness, Christ did not give them discernment that they might judge righteous judgment and be profited spiritually. They glorified themselves as judges rather than bow to Christ. So Christ said, “*Judge not by appearance, judge righteous judgment.*”

Proposition: We see three things involved when Christ makes his child judge righteous judgment

COME TO CHRIST

John 7: 17: If any man will do will of him that sent me, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. 18: He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Righteous judgment is produced in one who God has made willing to come to Christ, receive Christ’s word and bow to Christ as a little child. It is Christ who gives discernment in the heart by the Spirit to know his doctrine in truth. This is so any time a believer is made to judge righteous judgment. We first are made willing to come to Christ. He gets the glory. Christ is the Light who gives light on his word in our heart so that we know Christ’s doctrine in truth.

Psalms 119:130: The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

Proverbs 2:6: For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

This is why we are taught “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Pro 3: 5-6). When God makes his child judge righteous judgment it will be by first making us willing to come to Christ to be taught the scripture by the Spirit of God in spirit and in truth. Then we shall know the doctrine is of God. We will behold Christ’s word giving God all the glory. Whatever gives Christ the glory is what God makes his child willing to submit unto.

JUDGE OUR OWN SELVES

John 7: 19: Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20: The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

When God draws us to Christ to hear Christ's word effectually, the Lord our Righteousness will make us judge our own selves to be the sinner.

Christ declared in righteous judgment that none of the rulers kept the law. They were all guilty of murder in their heart right at that moment. The paradox of legalism is that judging and condemning others we condemn ourselves because we are guilty of the same things.

Therefore, the first thing Christ makes his redeemed know by speaking in power into the heart of his child is that we are guilty of breaking the whole law of God in ourselves. He makes us judge ourselves, "none of you keepeth the law." Our Master reminds his child that "There is none righteous no not one." "All flesh is grass", including our own. This is the first thing needed to judge righteous judgment. It is to judge one's own self to be the sinner.

The rulers were not willing and Christ did not give them discernment to make this righteous judgment about themselves. Therefore they kept using the letter of the law to condemn those who they deemed guilty by the appearance. No matter what they heard Christ declare they kept judging by appearance outwardly. They judged themselves righteous and judged Christ and his disciples lawbreakers.

The Pharisee's wanted judgment without mercy therefore Christ judged them the way they judged others. They condemned others, and doing so, they only condemned themselves because they were murdering Christ in the heart. But because their hearts had not been made willing, they would not and therefore could not see they were guilty. They would not and therefore could not confess their own sin. They would not and therefore could not justify the Lord when he declared that they, themselves, were guilty of never once keeping the law. Instead, of confessing their own sin, they turned the spotlight back on the Lord, accusing him of having a devil and denying they purposed to kill him. This is the lust of the sinful nature: deny and deflect!

Righteous Judgment begins at the house of God. The sinner born of the Spirit is the temple of God. Christ makes his child first judge our own selves. Doing so we know in spirit and in truth and confess to Christ concerning ourselves, "I am the sinner." One way Paul delighted in the law of God is it made him know his sin. So believers delight in the law of God in the inward man because when Christ makes the command come we are humbled as we are reminded we have not kept the law our own selves.

Ecclesiastes 7: 20: For there is not a just man on earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.

As the old preacher Thomas Bradbury pointed out not even a justified man, loved and accepted of his God doeth good and sinneth not in our own selves. In some things we offend all, and in all things we offend some.

God makes us judge righteous judgment first concerning our own selves. This is how he makes us meek and merciful. Remembering our own need and God's continual mercy for Christ's sake makes us not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal 6: 3). It was knowing his own sinfulness that made David pray,

Psalm 143: 1: «A Psalm of David.» Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness. 2: And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

John Gill wrote, “Though David is a servant—he knows he is an unprofitable servant: his nature, his heart, his thoughts, words, and actions, would not bear examining, nor stand the test of the holy law of God; nor was he able to answer the demands of divine justice in his own person; and therefore pleads for pardon and acceptance through Christ and his righteousness, and entreats that God would not proceed against him in a judicial way, now nor hereafter.”

So first the Lord draws us to Christ to be taught effectually in the heart. Secondly, the Lord makes us know our own sin and need of God’s mercy.

JUDGE CHRIST IS OUR ONLY RIGHTEOUSNESS

John 7: 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22: Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. 23: If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

The third thing the Lord does to make us judge righteous judgment is to make us judge that Christ is our only Righteousness. He reminds the believer what Christ has done for him and for his brethren.

It was not breaking the law to circumcise a male child at eight days old on the sabbath day. The Pharisee’s did it many times; Christ had healed a man one time on the sabbath day. They injured a child in one member of his body and they considered it keeping the law; Christ made an impotent man every whit whole—in body and spirit—on the sabbath day and they wanted to kill him for breaking the law.

Judging by appearance they did not judge righteous judgment concerning the spiritual meaning of circumcision nor the sabbath day. They could not spiritually discern that Christ is fulfillment of both, even the whole law. What Christ did to the impotent man—in not only healing his body but giving his spiritual life—is the fulfillment of the whole law. But they only saw laws to be kept or broken outwardly in the letter. Therefore, they judged themselves righteous and judged the righteous Lord Jesus a sinner.

What is typified in fleshly circumcision and the sabbath day? God circumcised Abraham in heart in regeneration giving him faith to believe God. That is spiritual circumcision (Rom 2: 28-29). Then God gave outward circumcision 15 years later as a token reminder that God circumcised his heart. It was a sign of the righteousness of faith Abraham was given by God’s grace even when he was yet uncircumcised in the flesh. The fleshly sign was only a reminder (Rom 4: 8-11). Circumcision is also what Christ did for his people on the cross when he put away the body of sin of all his elect. Christ is our Sabbath rest typified in the sabbath day. When the Spirit of God circumcises his child in the heart, he gives us faith in Christ and through faith Christ becomes our Sabbath rest, making us cease from works for acceptance with God.

Colossians 2: 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12: Buried

with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15: *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: 17: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Christ made the impotent man complete. By his work on the cross and by the Spirit of God Christ made the impotent man whole outwardly and inwardly. The Lord made him *every whit whole*. He circumcised him in heart bringing him to rest in Christ his Sabbath by faith.

When God draws us to Christ, make us judge righteous judgment, he makes the believer see that Christ has made him every whit whole and made his brethren every whit whole. If the Pharisees had known this they would not have judged Christ nor the man he made whole. They would have rejoiced and been merciful to their brethren.

Christ continually reminds us it is righteous for Christ to show us mercy because Christ honored his law for us and our brethren. God remembers our sin no more because Christ put away our sin when he circumcised us on the cross. There is therefore now no condemnation toward the believer personally nor toward our brethren who believe on Christ. Christ makes us discern it is righteous to love mercy even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us and does so daily. And that makes mercy rejoice against judgment.

Being taught of Christ, being reminded of our own sin and being reminded Christ is our only Righteousness makes the believer stricter in judging his own self and more lenient in mercy to his brethren.

We so often judge by appearance—by the seeing eye and the hearing ear. But God looks on the heart (Is 11: 1-5). We cannot see the heart; we cannot see when the Lord is working in the heart of our brethren. There is usually much we do not know or understand about the situation and about what God is instructing our brethren through it. We are very prone to make the wrong judgment if we judge by appearance.

But when we judge by appearance—which every believer is so prone to fall into—the Lord checks his child by these three things and makes us use righteous judgment by giving us spiritual discernment.

First, he makes us willing to go the Lord in faith and makes his child know his doctrine—not in the letter but in newness of spirit. This is how we are made to judge righteous judgment. We must be made to behold Christ in the shadows and types. He must continually renew us to see his glory not our own.

Secondly, Christ convicts our own heart, making us judge our own selves—“*you have never kept the law.*” If God entered into unbending judgment of the law with any man, none could stand. This is how Christ keeps us meek and lowly. This is how Christ makes us first behold the beam in our own eye.

Lastly, Christ makes us remember what great mercy God showed us in Christ. In mercy he came to us undone, ruined sinners and circumcised our heart, making us believe on Christ, thus making us every whit whole in Christ's righteousness. Therefore, through faith we rest

in Christ our Sabbath. The Spirit renews us to remember how God showers us with mercy continually because Christ satisfied his own justice for us. By this Christ humbles us from judging by appearance, makes us behold the beam in our own eye that we may use discernment and love mercy in dealing with others.

Then we use righteous judgment. If it be a brother fallen, we first speak of what Christ has done for his sinful, underserving people. The gospel is our one weapon always. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for therein is the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED** from faith to faith—Christ our Righteousness. Hearing of Christ laying down his life for us, humbles us in heart and makes reproof and admonition easier to be received for Christs' sake.

When God grants repentance to a brother and he asks mercy and forgiveness, we give it immediately even as God for Christ's sake forgives us. Christ said if a brother offends seven times in a day and seven times in a day he repents and asks forgiveness then forgive without limit. But for God's grace being offended that many times in one day would make us judge by appearance. We are so apt to doubt a brother's faith. If not for God's grace we would uproot the wheat of God's planting. This is why Christ admonishes never to even attempt to separate the wheat from the tares. This is why after teaching them to forgive seven times in a day the apostles asked the Lord to increase their faith.

By increasing our faith in Christ and continually reminding us of our own sin and God's mercy in Christ, righteous judgment knows we need mercy continually from God. We do not want the Lord to enter into judgment with us for no man living could stand. Thereby God makes us rejoice in mercy rather than judgment.

When the Pharisees rejected Christ and the man they had a motive for doing so. It was to justify themselves before men. That is generally at the heart when men accuse others. But Christ used righteous judgment and discerned this and Christ always does. When they rejected him and his disciples, it was the unrepentant and hard-hearted that Christ left alone. But even with them Christ continued to teach them the gospel. In the end he looked upon Jerusalem and said that he would have often gathered them as a hen gathers her chicks but they were not willing to come to him that they might be saved.

But God always turns his elect to Christ. Christ makes his own judge righteous judgment. He makes us receive one another without doubting and disputing. The love he puts in our hearts makes us forgive one another, cover sin in our brethren and endeavor to remember it no more even as God does us. We see the difference God's grace makes in Ham and his brothers. Ham did not love Noah, his father, nor his brothers. He exposed Noah's sin to his brothers putting a tremendous burden on them. And God cursed Ham because of it. But his brothers walked backwards, refusing to even look on their father's nakedness, and covered him. A believer may fail in this when at first he judges by appearance. But Christ will correct his own and make us willing to love one another this way. That is what love does.

Amen!