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The Gospel According to Matthew

Judging, Specks, and Logs

July 1, 2018

Sermon Text: Matthew 7:1-5

Scripture Reading: Romans 2

Last time we heard very encouraging promises from Jesus concerning His provision for us and what our life priorities must be:

Mat 6:31-34 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (34) "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be

anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

The kingdom of God. Christ's rule, His people (as described in the beatitudes), enemies of His kingdom, His Land (the new heavens and earth), where all evil will be gone forever. Our real home and country. The kingdom is here now, but not in its completeness. But the kingdom of Christ is YOUR real home, your real nation, your true people. It is a real place in which every Christian has a fabulous inheritance. And we are headed there. Seek THAT kingdom. Live as the person you now are in Christ. Serve Him as King. Do not worry about the things the world is anxious for – Christ has promised to provide those things.

Now, all through this Sermon on the Mount we are seeing Jesus saying quite a lot about the **enemies** of His kingdom. Obviously he wants to confront and expose them, but he also wants us to be wise about who they are and what they are up to.

Mat 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'

Mat 6:2 "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Mat 6:5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Mat 6:16 "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Mat 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Mat 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the

kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' (23) And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Many people today who claim to be Christians would tell Jesus that he is too negative. Too judgmental. And then they would *quote His own words to Him!* "Judge not that you be not judged." I have seen this over and over again all these years I have been a pastor. "We like to hear positive things. Why do we have to talk so much about evil and wicked people? We just need to love everyone."

Well, I can tell you that it is impossible to preach and teach God's Word without spending considerable time on sin and evil and evil doers. Because the Bible, just like Jesus' own preaching here, is filled with these topics. Why? Because the enemy of Christ's kingdom is very active doing all he can to destroy Christ's people and keep those lost in darkness from seeing the light of Christ. So if anyone who claims to be a Christian is not really interested in learning about the wiles of Satan and his servants, such a person is a pretty poor soldier of the

cross.

Let's look then at Jesus' words here in Matthew 7. Listen to them:

Mat 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. (3) Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Alright then, we all know how, with nauseating frequency, verse 1 is quoted by ignorant or wicked people. Their purpose of course is to claim that no one has a right to make a judgment about another person. If, for instance, someone decides they are going to kill their baby with an abortion, no one, so it is said with Jesus' supposed authority, no one has any right to make a judgment about whether such evil is right or wrong.

In other words, the motto of the day is that "every man does what is right in his own eyes" and it is no one else's business.

Now, of course as you think this through, you find the typical double standard. Those who cry "Judge not!" are the very people who most vehemently lash out in angry judgment against others. "How dare you judge us. We are going to burn your house down!"

Jesus simply and obviously cannot be teaching here that we are never to make a judgment about someone. This can easily be proven:

1. Jesus Himself is making all kinds of judgments right in this very sermon, pointing to the "hypocrites" and calling their actions wicked sin.
2. Later in this same chapter, Jesus says "Beware of false prophets...you will recognize them by their fruits."
3. The Apostle Paul made judgments many times: "I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing." And then he goes on to tell us to judge – "Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge. God judges those outside. Purge the evil person from among you."

Therefore when Jesus says here "Judge not, that you be not judged," it is impossible that his meaning is "never made any kind of judgment about another person or their behavior."

Jesus, rather, is addressing the hypocrites. The scribes and the Pharisees. We know this is what he called them – hypocrites. And that is what he calls them here in verse 5 – “you hypocrite.” In their hypocrisy they *condemned* others (“condemn” is the nuance of “judge” here) while practicing wickedness themselves. Jesus will describe their sin later in this same Gospel-

Mat 23:25-28 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. (26) You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. (27) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. (28) So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Consider verse 2 again:

Mat 7:1-2 "Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

The hypocrite, in other words, who

dishes out condemnation upon others will find Himself, when he stands before God, *condemned*. We have already seen this in Jesus' words back in chapter 5-

Mat 5:25-26 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. (26) Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

That is to say, the accuser is the Law. The hypocrites will be condemned by Moses, the very Law they claimed would justify them:

Joh 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

The hypocrites judged and condemned others, supposedly by the Law, but in fact the Law condemned them, as Jesus proved to them. Paul said the same thing:

Rom 2:17-24 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God (18) and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; (19) and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who

are in darkness, (20) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth-- (21) you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? (22) You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? (23) You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. (24) For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

These very same kinds of people are all around us today in the visible church. Pharisees. They judge and condemn others, putting on a show in front of everyone with their supposed holiness. But in fact their hearts are evil and behind doors, out of view, they do all kinds of wickedness.

Jesus uses this illustration to show us more clearly what He means:

Mat 7:3-5 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Hypocrites are blind to their own sin. Furthermore, they cannot clearly see sin at all. More often than not what they accuse others of is a false accusation. Certainly we see many examples of this in the Gospels-

Mat 12:1-2 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. (2) But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

Now this is vital for every real Christian to understand with absolute clarity- *counterfeits, hypocrites, wolves in sheep's clothing, always accuse Christ's people of sin.* They even quote Scripture to supposedly support their accusations. *You must not believe their accusations!* Rather, do this:

Mat 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Over the years I have met MANY of these hypocrites and have seen them in action doing their reviling, accusing, and condemning. EVERY one of them wore the disguise of "godliness" that

Jesus warns us about. These are the ones Jesus is commanding to stop condemning others.

Now, let's think about this for a moment. What does Jesus tell them to do? Here it is:

Mat 7:5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

What is He saying? Simply this: *you must see your own sin. You must see your gross hypocrisy and repent of it.*

I saw an example of this recently. It was the case of wicked parents who prided themselves in their saintliness. Yet they accused and abused one of their children all the years he was growing up so that now as a young adult he is very damaged. Someone told the parents – “you know, I think that YOU are the real problem here, not this young man.” Would they hear of it? Of course not. Like typical hypocrite Pharisees, it is never their wrongdoing.

Therefore understand this clearly. When Jesus says –

Mat 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

...He is addressing the religious

hypocrite who condemns and abuses others, all the while having a corrupt, wicked heart and engaging in all kinds of evil himself. Jesus is telling such people, STOP IT!!!

Finally, look at this curious statement:

Mat 7:6 "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

I suggest to you that the scribes and Pharisees were in the crowd Jesus was preaching to, probably grouped together near Him. And as we have seen He has just been directly addressing them: “hypocrites!”

At this point, verse 6, I conclude that Jesus turned his gaze from the hypocrites back to His disciples and spoke these words to *them*. What did He mean? Let me paraphrase what I think he was telling them, and us –

Do not waste your time on hypocrites like this. Don't spend your energies trying to show them truth and change them because they are savage animals who will only revile and attack you.

Jesus practiced this very thing Himself:

Mat 15:12-14 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the

Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" (13) He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. (14) Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

things you say and they will turn and attack you. Kindness, you see, is seen by such evil ones as weakness, and they will be very quick to exploit it to your harm.

Therefore, be wise and carefully heed Jesus' words.

In my early years as a pastor, I spent waaaaay too much time trying to "convert" dogs and pigs. That is to say, I assumed that these hypocrite, reviling, Pharisee types who were in the churches I pastured, were Christians but were just "difficult" people. Not so. They were savage wolves in sheep's clothing.

How do you deal with them correctly? First, you see them for what they are, and then you speak to them just as Jesus spoke to these hypocrites here in the Sermon on the Mount – *STOP IT!* Cease reviling. Stop condemning. Your sin is far bigger and more wicked than the specks you are picking on.

What will happen? They will leave, or they will gain a following and make you leave. But either way, you have seen clearly and effected justice.

One more vital point: Do you understand that if you try to give God's Word to such evil people, if you give them what is holy, if you keep treating them as if they were real Christians, *they will trample upon the*