

7:1-6

Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, "Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye;" and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote (or the speck, or the dust speck) out of thy brother's eye. 6. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Now, if you have a Bible like I have, you have one of those symbols that means "new paragraph" at the beginning of verse 6. That's pretty good of them to tell us what Jesus didn't. Jesus didn't say, "All right, new paragraph here." So all of a sudden, we start realizing that verse 6 really does belong with verse 5, and eventually there's a time when you quit helping people with that stuff in their eye. Why? Because, "they turn again and rend you," the end of verse 6. They hurt you with how you're trying to help them.

7:7-12

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11. If ye then, being evil, He starts out calling them hypocrites in verse 5 and then He calls them evil in verse 11. Jesus has a way of speaking with people.

know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? It is interesting that on the heels of "judging righteously" (7:1-5) we are to also exercise discernment (7:6), and then pray. It is fitting, is it not, that since we are about to then have the ability to make discernments in the verses that follow (7:15-20), that our prayers should be for discernment.

We have to have discernment. Discernment is the ability to look at two things, and not necessarily good versus evil, but sometimes good versus better. In this context I think you're going to find we need discernment as sound judgment, judging the right course, good from evil, holy from common, seeing outward appearances versus discerning the inward reality, and understanding the significance of events. As a matter of fact, 1 Chronicles 12, it talks about the men of Issachar who had understanding of the times. And that's what we need. We need the ability to understand what's going on around us and a desire for God to help us with prayer.

But Matthew 7 is not about say nothing, do nothing, be nothing, because you don't want to be accused of judging. No, Matthew 7 verses 1 through 5 says, "If you're going to judge, understand you will be judged with that same measure. So be careful when you judge." Because when you're extra critical people will probably notice when you do things wrong. After all, we did talk about it, chapter 5 verses 10 through 12, that the peacemakers are blessed, and then those who are persecuted for righteousness sake are blessed.

Newly born believers that have the Holy Spirit in them can decide between good and evil. I mean, hopefully you can tell when you're walking around with shorts bumping up against your rear-end, that that's probably not good. That's a new believer's issue. That's small stuff. The hard stuff is, "I have a choice between two very good choices. What do I do?"

Now, you're supposed to being some sort of fruit discerner. "Don't judge, don't ever judge, don't ever judge, stop judging." Well then how do you deal with the fact that Jesus said you're supposed to spot people that are wrong and inspect their fruit? That means there's some judgments taking place. I am making a judgment. It is simply not honest, or pragmatic in the slightest, to say we don't judge. To say, "You shouldn't judge," is actually a self-defeating statement because you're making a judgment saying that "judging is wrong."

All of a sudden, contextually, we are required to believe that it is a particular prayer for a particular need. Also, look at the very first word of verse 12.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things. The truth is, the reason I don't have much faith in God is because I feel like most of the time I'm a lousy dad. There are times when I know my shortcomings as a dad and it keeps me from praying because I superimpose my character as a father on God. And I assume that He is the father that I am. I don't do what I can for my kids and so God must be a rotten dad like I am. No, Jesus reassures us and says, "You know how to give, but the Father, He gives." What a thrill. What a thrill that on a bad dad my Father's perfect character to put my silliness in a shadow. Now that is not an excuse. I told you, it reflects my selfishness. I take what I know is wrong about me, and I suppose it's true about God. God's actions are weighed against my ability.

7:12

Therefore What is the point of this if it's a brand new thought starting in verse 12? What's the point of it? "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened to you. Oh by the way, treat others as you want to be treated." Whoa, no way! "Therefore" doesn't make any sense, in that Bible of yours if verse 12 is a brand new thought. It's pointing back to how you judge people. Flow of thought requires that the "therefore" of verse 12 goes back to pulling the mote out of your eye, the beam out of your eyes. Now, do you want others to do that for you when they judge you? I do. Ok, if you want that, then pray for discernment on how to clean out your own eye. Flow of context.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: If we're always quick about making judgments for people, what we're doing is breaking what is known as The Golden Rule, in verse 12. In other words, I'm making a judgment without asking for discernment. The discernment goes two ways, "Lord, please show me what I need to pull out of my own eye. Lord, please show me how I can help this person with their miniscule speck." Jesus says the right perspective is, "I probably have the beam and they probably have the speck." You all with me? Proper perspective says that I assume I'm the worst one. I suspect myself first and so I'm looking in the mirror and I'm saying, "There's got to be something about me I'm missing, so before I get super critical here I better pull the beam out of my eye." And the only way to do that, apparently, is by praying. Verses 7 through 11.

Why do I need wisdom to judge properly a false prophet (7:14-15)? Because there's going to be times when I'm going to feel pretty close to them and it's going to feel good what they're saying. Why do I need discernment? I can think of two reasons. Our failures cause us to be extra merciful. In a way, we get discernment and we're tempted because we're like, "Oh man, I used to do that. I don't know if I want to make them feel bad because I know that I could probably be really close to doing that myself." And here's what we kind of say sometimes, "If not for the grace of God that would be me, there go I." And sometimes that keeps us from doing the right thing. Now it is true that we should be merciful. I mean right here in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 verse 7,

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

So there is, no doubt, again, a place between the ditches. Showing nothing but mercy: "Ah, don't worry about it. I don't want to say anything to you because God knows I used to be in that sin, and I don't want to offend you," and over here, "I used to be in that sin and I don't want you in that sin, so get out of that sin." Somewhere in the middle there's this thing of, "Man, I know how hard it can be to give that up."

But what we learn from the book of Matthew is that it is the character of Christ to "save His people from their sins." So we're agents of Christ, helping people to be saved from their sins.