

2x4s and Specks

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into Luke chapter 6, emphasizing the importance of self-reflection and addressing personal faults before judging others. It highlights the need to discern without being critical, focusing on facing our own issues first before helping others. The speaker stresses the significance of repentance, genuine change, and seeking deliverance through God's grace to be effective in guiding and supporting others in their struggles.

Scripture: Luke 6:37, Luke 6:41, 1 Corinthians 7:5, Psalms 51:10, Hebrews 4:15, 1 John 1:9, Isaiah 6:5, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Proverbs 3:5

Topics: "Self-Reflection", "Grace and Repentance"

Description

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Transcript

So if you can remember we're in Luke chapter 6, Luke chapter 6 and I'm going to take a little longer reading so we can get the context of where we've been and I think it's more than three months since we were last in this passage because I'd gone to Australia just before we closed down and then we closed down so I think it's probably fourteen weeks since I last preached to the congregation. And this is a new experience, it's fourteen weeks since I last preached to a congregation. For fourteen weeks I've been preaching well in Australia and then twelve weeks to a camera.

So it's good to see your faces, even though I can't see all of the faces, but good to see the faces. So Luke chapter 6 and verse 37. Luke chapter 6 verse 37 we're going to read through verse 45.

And obviously with the doors open we have to deal with the noise as well. Luke chapter 6 verse 37. Judge not and you shall not be judged.

Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you.

Good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you. And he spoke a parable to them.

Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. That's as far as we got last time. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

For a good tree does not bear bad fruit nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.

A good man out of the treasure of his heart, out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

So the passage begins, or this series of thoughts begins in verse 37, judge not. And those are verses that people really love to throw at Christians. So you know, I can be immoral, I can live my own sinful lifestyle, I can do whatever I want to do, who are you to judge me? Many Christians like to use that that phrase.

Clearly you'll see in the passage, the section that we closed on, he is speaking about judging. He's saying that you need to check the tree by its fruit. How do you know that the tree is good? Well you know it's good by the fruit.

So he's saying that there is judging. So are we to judge or are we not to judge? Well we are to judge but not be judgmental. So if you can just think that through for a moment.

We are to judge but not be judgmental. For the same, in the same way we can say that you must be discerning but not critical. And we say well those things are the same.

Well they're pretty close. The difference between discerning is that I understand the difference between right and wrong, between good and bad. The problem with critical is that everything is bad outside of myself.

The critical person doesn't find good in anything in anybody, or in any church, or in any other Christian. He's the only one who's right. He's the only one that's good.

This is what makes cults. Cults are made up of people who believe that they are the only ones who have the truth. Whether they are Jehovah's Witnesses or whether they are Christian cults of various kinds.

There are many so-called Orthodox churches that in fact are cults because they believe that they are the only ones who are right. Everybody else is wrong. That is being critical.

That is not being discerning. Unfortunately most Christians don't understand the difference between those two things. When we speak about being judgmental it's the same thing.

Being judgmental means that you're constantly judging others and looking down on others. In fact in the context of the passage, not judging yourself. Whereas at the same time clearly we must judge.

We must be careful what we hear. We must be careful what we watch. We need to be careful about who we associate with.

We need to be careful about what church we go to. Unfortunately again we have these two extremes. There are those who say well it's us four no more.

Let's close the door. We're the only ones who are right. And then on the other extreme there are those who say well I'm not going to go and I get these emails all the time.

Almost weekly I get an email from somebody saying well you know I live in such and such big city and I can't find there is not a single church in this city that that preaches the gospel. That is nonsense. There are good churches in every city.

There may be small towns that may not have such good churches because you have a choice of three and maybe all three of them are suspect. But you can you get the difference between being critical and discerning. Between being judging and being judgmental.

So let's have a look at the section that we deal with this morning. Verse 41. Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? We know this passage well.

I think this is one of the passages that many people even non-Christians know. So it's not a new one. But I want us to just think it through this morning.

How can you say to your brother, brother let me remove the speck that is in your eye when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye. Now Jesus is using a a comical thing here. I mean can you can you imagine a cartoon of somebody drawing a cartoon of a guy with a two by four sticking out of his eye and he's got a tweezers and he's wanting to take a little bit of dust out of somebody else's eye.

That's the picture that Jesus is drawing. And obviously it's ridiculous. How can you possibly remove a speck of dust out of somebody else's eye when you yourself have got a two by four in your eye and you can't see a single thing.

And that's the problem and Jesus calls that hypocrisy. And yet it is something that we we do so very very easily. It's a trap that we all fall in.

We have as human beings and unfortunately that carries over into Christianity. We have an amazing ability to see the fault in other people but not to see the fault in ourselves. It is the most difficult thing for any individual to be self-perceptive.

To see himself the way other people see him. To see himself the way that God sees him. And I think that the the answer really is to deal because Jesus doesn't say don't take the speck out of somebody else's eye.

He says first deal with a plank in your own eye. Now just think about that. If you have a two by four in your eye, are you going to and you obviously aware that you've got this two by four in your eye, are you going to really try and sort somebody else's speck out? No, the two by four should be worrying you so much that you don't have time to worry about somebody else's speck.

And you see there's where the problem is. The problem is not whether there's a speck in somebody else's eye. The problem is what is in my eye.

And when we begin to understand our own weaknesses, when we begin to see our own failures, it becomes very hard to judge others. The only way in which we can judge others, and please remember, I

don't think we're going to get there this morning, but the next section deals with checking the fruit. But how can I possibly sit in judgment of somebody else, and whether that person is another Christian or somebody in the family, how can I possibly sit in judgment of somebody else if I am aware of my own tremendous failure? And there's the key.

The key is not to not be discerning. The key is not to judge, but the key is to judge myself first. When I see myself the way I really am, then there is not much room to be judging others.

We've made reference many times to Isaiah chapter 6. It's one of my favorite passages because it is the passage that God used to pull me into the ministry when I was a young boy. A very, very powerful thing, and I can very clearly remember how that happened, but I'm not going to get into that. But in Isaiah chapter 1 through 5, Isaiah has a lot to say about the society in which he is living, and he is right.

He criticizes the government, and yes, the government is wrong. He criticizes the religious establishment, yes, the religious establishment is wrong. He criticizes the merchants and the capitalists, and yes, the capitalists are wrong.

And I'm not speaking now about our situation, I'm talking about his situation. Six times he says, woe to these, woe to them, woe to them, woe to them, and he is right about every one of those things. And yet, in chapter 6, he sees the Lord, and when he sees the Lord, he sees himself compared to the Lord.

And as he sees himself compared to the Lord, there is only one response, and you know what his response is. Woe is me, I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips. You see, he could see the faults of everybody else, and he was right about their faults.

But until he met the Lord, he could not see his own failure. And until he saw his own failure, and until God dealt with him, and remember, the coal touches his lips, because that's where his problem was. But God deals with his problem, and only now he becomes an effective mouthpiece, and he spends the next 60 chapters in the book speaking as a mouthpiece of God.

You see, we cannot speak into other people's lives until we have allowed God to deal with our lives. But God cannot deal with us until we are willing to face the facts, and that's exactly the problem. We don't like to face the facts, and I'm not judging you, we all have the same problem.

We don't like to see ourselves how we really are. I've told you before, I hate watching myself on video, because I see all the mistakes, all the things that I teach my students not to do, I do those things, like putting my hand in my pocket, like umming and ahing. But we must face ourselves, and as far as preachers are concerned, I encourage my students to watch themselves on video if they have access to video, or to listen to themselves recorded, so that they can learn by their own mistakes.

And yet as Christians, it's so hard for us to look at ourselves, and to see ourselves objectively, to see ourselves from someone else's point of view. I remember earlier in the same chapter, Jesus speaks about doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, seeing other people the way you want to be seen. When we first came to America, Inna and I used to go to a lot of yard sales because we needed stuff, and so we would buy furniture and household stuff, whatever we needed.

So we were living in the old church, and we didn't have anywhere else to go. And one of the things that I was constantly amazed at, was that in driving down the street and looking for yard sales, you find a sign, yard sale, but the sign is other side the turnoff. So now I've crossed past the turnoff, now there's a sign.

Where should the sign have been? Before the turnoff. Now what does that got to do with what we're saying? You see the guy who put the sign up, never thought about looking at it from the way somebody else would look at it. All he's concerned about is this arrow pointing down the side.

But he's not thinking and saying, well if somebody drives down the street and they want to go to my yard sale, where do they want to find the sign? They want to find it before they get to the street so they know how to turn at that street. But you see they didn't think about anybody else. They were just looking at their own idea, their own, what was comfortable for them.

And the same problem is that we have an amazing ability to see the wrong in other people, and yet we can't see it in ourselves. And I believe that one of the keys, one of the secrets to a blessed Christian life, to spiritual growth, is the ability to face the facts. The ability to face the facts.

Like Isaiah, Isaiah doesn't duck the issue and say, well Lord, you know, you want to see the other prophets out there. And was he right about that? Of course the other prophets were all saying peace, peace when there was no peace. But he looks at himself, and he says the problem has to be fixed here first, before it's going to be fixed out there.

I've spoken to you many times, and you're those who may remember 17 years, 16 and a half years when I first came to this church, the first message I preached was on David and Saul. What was the difference between David and Saul? Saul was a failure. David became one of the greatest men of God of all time, in spite of his failures.

What was the difference? Saul could not face his own failures. Saul could not look at himself and say, I have done the wrong thing. He sins, and he comes to the prophet, and he says, blessed are you Samuel, I've done everything God has told me to do.

And you know how the story goes. In fact, even before that, what he does is he raises a monument to himself of his great deed, when in fact he had been blatantly disobedient to the Lord. And because he couldn't repent, God tears the kingdom from him.

And we touched on that, I think, last week in the ribbons of blue. David, on the other hand, when Nathan comes to him, remember what David did was far worse than what Saul had ever done. And yet when Nathan comes to him, the prophet comes to him and says, you're the guy.

David repents. And we have his repentance recorded in Psalms 51. Absolute repentance.

He could have said, well, you know, it was Bathsheba, she, she, you know. Does that sound familiar? I wasn't me, it was the wife you gave me. I wasn't me, it was the snake.

Folks, we must be able to see the plank in our own eye. One of the things that I find incredibly frustrating in, in dealing with people, and I'm not just meaning you, I'm meaning people in general, is, is how often people will complain about other people, and, or about their kids. But when, in fact, they themselves are guilty of the same things.

Or their kids are guilty of the same things. You see, here's the, here's the amazing thing, is that we have a, a ability to see our faults clearly reflected in other people. And those things that most worry us, or irritate us about others, is often the very issues that we, we deal with.

How many times have we, have we seen preachers who make preaching against homosexuality, and of course we understand the whole issue of homosexuality, but preaching against homosexuality, the cornerstone of their ministry, when in fact in the closet, they themselves are homosexual. How many times have we come across preachers who style themselves as holiness preachers? And I know some people like to call me a holiness preacher. I don't call myself holiness preacher.

I preach the Word of God. But preachers who style themselves as holiness preachers, when back home they live the most immoral, ungodly lives that you can imagine. You see, it's easy to see the sin in other people, when in fact the, the sin lies right here.

And, and in fact, when, when in fact the, the sin is bigger here than it's there. I have a two-by-four, somebody else has a speck, and yet I can't deal with, I can't face the two-by-four, I can't realize, I can't see the two-by-four, but I can see the speck in somebody else's eye. Now what Jesus says is, he doesn't say, don't be critical, or discerning, but first remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

First remove the plank from your own eye. You see, here's the response that I've also come across. Someone says, you know, so-and-so does this and that.

And you say, well, you do the same thing. And I say, okay, well, I've, I've learned my lesson. I mustn't criticize.

No, that's not the lesson. The lesson is deal with your issue. Deal with your issue.

The point here is not to stop being discerning. The issue here is not to stop looking at what kind of fruit is on the trees. But the point is to deal with my own issues first, because that's what Jesus ends up with saying.

He says, then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye. Folk, it's only when we have dealt with our own issues that we're able to help others. It's only when we have dealt with our own issues that we are able to help others with those issues.

And in fact, not only does, not only does it allow us, because we now no longer have the two-by-four, but it qualifies us because we understand the problem. We understand how hard it is to deal with that issue, whatever that issue may be, whether it's immorality or pride or greed or anger or whatever it may be. It's only when I've been able to face my own issues and I've wrestled with them that I'm able to help others in their struggle and in their wrestling with their problems.

Now we don't suggest for one moment that Jesus had sinned. Of course he never sinned. And yet the Scripture says he was tempted in every point like as we are, yet without sin.

And what was the purpose of that temptation? To test him? No, it wasn't to test him. It was to qualify him as a faithful high priest who can be touched with the feelings of our weaknesses. And and in fact in that passage in in Hebrews he contrasts Jesus with the high priests of that time or the priests of that time.

The priests of that time could not put themselves in the people's shoes. They could preach to them, they could tell them what the Bible says or the Old Testament or the law says, they could tell them what they were supposed to do, but they had no sympathy for the struggles of the people. You remember Eli was, he wasn't too bad, he was he wasn't clearly not good because the Lord condemns him for a number of

issues.

He was a high priest, remember, right at the beginning of the kingdom of Israel. But his own sons were evil and wicked. He's able to judge others, but he's not able to judge his own family, his own household.

He tells the people of Israel not to sin, but his own sons who are priests are stealing from the people and abusing the woman who come to make sacrifices. See, he's able to judge others, but he can't judge himself. So God help us that we might be able to be victorious in our issues.

You see, you see here's the thing, it's not about us feeling bad. I've said this so many times, it's not about us feeling bad about our sins. And the purpose of our preaching, and when I'm preaching this way simply because that's what the text is, is not for us to feel bad and say, well, you know, I just don't make the grade.

The point is for me to repent, to change, to fix the things that need to be fixed. And so when we fix those things and we get victory over those things, we're in a place to be able to help others. And we're a high priest like the Lord Jesus who is touched with the feelings of the people and of those around us.

How can we minister to them with empathy? How can we minister truth to them? Because because all we end up doing is upholding the law, saying, well, you must, you must not. But we don't know how to get there ourselves, so how can we tell others how to get there? You know, this applies to so many areas of our lives. There is not an area of our lives that shouldn't come under the spotlight of the Word of God and of the Spirit of God.

Whether it be our thought life, whether it be our moral life, whether it be the way that we deal with finances, whether it be how we raise our family, how we relate to other people, how we relate to the government, the list goes on and on and on and on. It's easy to judge others. I'm on purpose not making statements about the political situation in our city and the rioting and the injustice and all the stuff that's going on.

There's not much that we can say about those things. But one of the things that is central to all of that is the inability to see our own issues. The inability to see our own issues.

To set our own house in order first. And when we set our own house in order, then we're in a position to begin to tell others what they need to be doing. And so there is an answer.

There is a solution. And the solution is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it's not just finding forgiveness.

And so again, there's a series of steps and I'm going to give them to you very, very quickly before I close. The first is seeing what I need to see. Seeing the two-by-four.

Seeing my issues. The second is facing those issues. You see, we can see things and choose not to see them.

There are many things that we are aware of in our own hearts and lives, but somehow we have an amazing ability to just escape them all the time. Just to somehow avoid them. Somehow just begin to think about something else.

Go somewhere else. Transfer the guilt to somebody else. Oh, but you know, that's my parents.

They raised me this way, whatever. Oh, but yeah, I'm not as bad as the next guy. No, we need to face the issues.

Facing the issues needs to bring remorse. Remember 1 Corinthians chapter 7. Remorse needs to lead to repentance. And remember, repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change of heart, which leads to a change of action.

That's the process. But until I begin to see the problem, I will never come to the solution. We thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us of all unrighteousness.

But remember that that verse says that as we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. We confess our sins. Now I'm not going to get into some kind of doctrine saying, well, he can only forgive the sins that we confess.

But there is an element of truth in that, although there's all sorts of other doctrinal problems attached to that as well. If you never confess, can you forgive? I'm leaving that question in your heart. But clearly what he is saying, what John is saying, is there's a need for confession.

There's a need for acknowledging. And when I acknowledge and I say, yes, Lord, there is cleansing. There is forgiveness.

But there is also deliverance. Now we've run out of time, but I do believe that God helps us. I don't believe that God gives deliverance to everybody who comes forward and we pray over you and now suddenly you delivered of whatever your problem was.

I think that that can happen, but I don't believe that that's the norm. But when I genuinely repent, God enables me to get victory in that area. But when there's no genuine repentance, what do I mean by no genuine? When I don't really want to change.

Yeah, Lord, I feel sorry about, you know, I'd like to be different, but I pretty much like to be the way I am. He's not going to help you. But if there's a crying out, in fact I read a story this week, and forgive me if I don't remember the peripheral details, but it was about this man who got saved and he was a vile man.

The other people in his village wouldn't even drink with him in the pub because he was so vile. He was so foul-mouthed. And as we'll see next week is that what comes out of the mouth is what's in the heart.

So that even his unsaved buddies didn't want to associate with him. That's how bad he was. And then he got saved, but he found that he was still foul-mouthed.

And then one day he, if I remember the story correctly, he was getting dressed for work, and he couldn't find his shirt. And he asked his wife, where's my bleeping shirt with a whole string of other stuff? And suddenly he heard himself. He heard what he had said.

And the story goes that he fell on his bed. I think this was in the Welsh Revival, but he fell on his bed and he cried out to God. He says, if I cannot even ask my wife for my shirt without cursing.

And he cried out and God met with him and changed him and changed his language. Yes, he had gotten saved, but he hadn't let go of this problem because he hadn't faced it. But the day he faced it and he called out to God, he says, I cannot change myself.

I cannot change my language. I've spoken this way all of my life. God met with him.

In fact, I do believe that God will meet with us and give us victory and help us to overcome in the areas that we need victory, if only we would face the plank that is in our own eye. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, that it is not just here to condemn us, but Lord, it is here to open our eyes, not just to our problem, but to the solutions and to the answer.

And so, Lord, I pray that you'd help us to, as Paul says in Corinthians, twice in Corinthians, let a man examine himself. Lord, help us to examine ourselves truly. Help us, Lord, to face the facts.

And Lord, help us not to feel bad about them, but Lord, to do something about them. Change those things that need to be changed, that we may be able to help others who find themselves in similar situations. And so, Lord, we pray now that you would go with us as we pass from one another, Lord.

We pray for your protection against the virus on each one here, Lord. We can't claim that, but Lord, we do ask for your help. We pray that you would protect us, Lord, individually and as a congregation.

We pray, Lord, for our city, and for the anger and the bitterness that is prevailing, and the looting and burning that's going on. Lord, I pray that you would soften hearts, that you'd bring men and women to a realization that there's only one answer, and that is Jesus Christ. We pray, Lord, for the police.

Lord, I pray especially for Eric. Lord, that they may be restrained, that they may not do foolish things that brings about condemnation. But Lord, that they may be wise, but also protect them physically.

And Lord, I pray that you'd protect them emotionally. I pray again, especially for Eric, Lord. I can't imagine the stuff that goes on in a man's mind and heart when he is facing other people face to face, and they're spitting at him, saying all sorts of terrible things.

How does a man deal with that? Lord, I pray for Eric, that he may find peace in you, that Lord, that he may not bring that home, that it may not change him from the man that he is, but Lord, that it may make him a better man. Lord, we pray for our nation. We pray, Lord, for the many problems that face us.

We pray, Lord, that as much as we were hoping that this weekend would be a new time of reopening stores and being able to go places again, and yet that's been taken. Lord, I pray for the store owners who for three months have lost their business and now may have lost everything as their business has been burnt down. Lord, I pray for those people.

Help them. Help them above all to find their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Lord, I pray for our church.

I pray, Lord, for those who cannot come on Sunday mornings because our numbers are limited and because of other concerns. Lord, I pray for those who are watching on the live stream. I pray, Lord, that you would help each one to be a doer of your word, and Lord, that we may indeed be lights in the dark world.

Lord, that we may not contribute to the darkness and to the anger and the bitterness, but Lord, that we may bring light into our society. I ask this in Jesus' name. And so, Lord, I pray that you'd go with us now.

Keep us and protect us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

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