

Judging or Esteeming?

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming judgmental behavior and living a life of love, forgiveness, and self-examination.

Duration: 43:01

Scripture: Matthew 5:45, John 13:35, Romans 12:21, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:3, James 1:19

Topics: "Judging"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about a man who was critical of preachers and caused disruptions during church business meetings for 25 years. The preacher then recounts another incident where a man who was causing trouble during a business meeting suddenly dropped dead after the preacher prayed for it to stop. The preacher reflects on these stories and emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and humility. He also mentions the need for self-reflection and asks his own daughters for forgiveness for not being a good father and Christian. The sermon highlights the consequences of being critical and the power of prayer and forgiveness.

Transcript

As you know, there's a tremendous breakdown in the, even in the Christian family in North America today. We constantly talk with parents whose children are raised in a Christian home and a good church and Christian environment, are far away from God, and we're often asked the little question, why? What's going wrong? Can't we trust God for our children? Yes, we can, we can, but there are reasons why our children stray from God. Sometimes people say, how many children do you have? And I tell them, 17.

And they try to be polite, they don't, they try to, you know, not to look shocked when I say 17. And they smile and say, oh, that's, that's nice. But I know what they're thinking.

Yes, I have five children and twelve grandchildren, and that makes 17, doesn't it? Right. And you know, all but one of the 17, I think, are walking with God, and we thank God for that. But what goes wrong, and I want to deal with one aspect only of what goes wrong tonight, and that is the fact that oftentimes we Christian parents are critical and judgmental when it comes to pastors and Sunday school teachers and officers and deacons and elders and neighbors and friends and relatives, and we spend a lot of our time just tearing people apart.

And you know what happens to our kids? They finally figure it out, dad and mom aren't really Bible Christians at all. And they just give up. How can our children listen to the pastor when the parents criticize the pastor? You just destroy the effectiveness of the pastor, the Christian worker, whoever, maybe have a special speaker in or something, and you get home and you tear them apart and the kids and all that.

Maybe your son or daughter was greatly impressed in the meeting that night, and then you blow it all away. And that's often what we do. Now the Bible is very, very clear about this particular problem.

It's not ambiguous in any way. It's extremely clear as to how we Christian people are to behave. To the men it says you're not to be double-tongued, like the devil is, he is a forked tongue.

To the women it says you're not to be slanderers, and the Greek word here is diabolos, which is the word from which we get the word devil. Slanderer, accuser. We're not to be this kind of person.

Now Satan wants us to be that kind of person because it serves his purposes well, but God does not want us to be that kind of person, because of what happens when we are this way. So the Bible is very clear, as you know in Matthew 7, the Lord Jesus Christ said, Judge not that you be not judged, and then he warned us that with the measure of judgment that we give, we will get in return. With what measure you meet, it shall be measured to you again.

If you're critical of others, others will be critical of you. You'll get it back exactly as you give it, is what Christ said. So don't complain if others are criticizing you, if you are a critical person yourself.

I don't know anything at all about you people, nobody's told me anything good or bad. And if you love God, you're my brother, you're my sister, I love you too. And I'm not assuming anything.

But I haven't been in the ministry for 45 years without learning some things. One thing I learned is that the average Christian is critical, sometimes extremely critical. And it grieves the Spirit of God and sometimes destroys our children.

So Jesus said, Judge not that you be not judged. Then just in case some people might try to get around this, Paul says, Judge nothing. Did you hear that? Judge nothing before the time.

And when is the time for judging? He says, until the Lord come. Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart. Then what? When Jesus comes back and it's judgment time and he judges, then what? Now Paul's talking about judging Christians in the context.

He says, and then shall every man have praise of God. Will you listen? The weakest Christian, God will find something to praise. Judge nothing.

Judge nothing before the time. Someday we Christians are going to judge angels, the Bible says, and we're going to judge the world. But that's not now.

So judge nothing before the time. Then to clinch it, another text in Romans 14, Paul says, let us not therefore judge one another anymore. In other words, we've been doing that, you've been doing that, stop doing it, let's not do it anymore.

Let us not therefore judge one another anymore, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Don't be a stumbling block. That's the thing we should be

judging.

To put it differently, I should be judging myself. To make sure that my life is not a stumbling block or an occasion to fall to some other person. So really when you put these three texts together, there's no way around it, there's no way under it, there's no way over it.

Judge nothing, judge not, let us not therefore judge one another anymore. Why? Because the Bible says the Lord is judge himself. And Jephthah described the Lord as the Lord the judge.

He didn't say the Lord a judge, which would leave the door open for us to fill up what he can't do. But the Lord the judge. And didn't Abraham say, shall not the judge of all the earth do right? The judge, not a judge.

Can I ask you a question? What right have you got to try and do God's business? What right have I got to try and do God's business? And there probably isn't a person in this room, I'm sure there isn't a person in this room that hasn't at some time judged some other person. Maybe in your mind, maybe with your mouth, maybe in other ways. That's God's business from start to finish.

Don't get involved in God's business, don't try and do the job that only God can do. Here's the problem you see, when we judge someone else, we don't have all the facts. We don't know all the pressure that person is under.

Maybe there's a reason why they blew their top and said or did what they said or did. Maybe we don't know a thing about it. I read something in an Indian publication in Canada and they said, don't criticize your fellow man until you've walked three miles in his moccasins.

That's good advice. Only God knows the, and it says God will make manifest the counsels of the heart. Only God has all the facts.

And that's why God alone is the judge, so don't try and do God's work. Then, the Bible makes it very clear that one of the reasons why we judge other people is because we're not doing well in the Christian life ourselves. When Nathan told David that little story, you know, about a man who came to visit a wealthy man, and this wealthy man, instead of killing one of his beef, he went and stole from a poor man who only had one little lamb, and he killed that and cooked it for his guest.

When David heard that, he just thundered. The man that does this is worthy to die. He's a son of death.

And Nathan says, Thou art the man. That's what you did. And Paul puts it very clearly, like in Romans 2, when he says, Therefore thou art inexcusable, that is, without excuse, O man, whosoever you are that judges.

For wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you that judge do the same things. Did you hear it? You that judge do the same things. Why are some of us so apt to judge? Because we're making a flop of our Christian life, our walk with God, and it does our heart good somehow, in a very bad sense, to be able to look at someone else and say, Well, I'm doing better than they're doing.

Sam Jones of Southern Methodist Evangelist will put it this way. He said, When a Christian wants to justify living at a low level, he finds some Christian that's at a lower level than he is, and lays him on the floor, and lays down along side him, and says, Look, you guys, I'm as tall as he is. But we're supposed to, like

Paul said, God said through Paul, They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise, and if you're not wise, you're a fool.

So don't compare or measure yourself by other Christians. I just want to emphasize this point here, people, because the Bible emphasizes the fact that you and a judge are doing exactly the same things. And the reason why we have this eagle eye to see where other people are failing is because we're failing ourselves.

And it's made us very sensitive in our spirit. We can see all these other people failing because we know we're failing ourselves. Are you a real red-hot Christian? You pray three hours a day? You spend two hours a day reading the Bible? You try and win people to Christ? You give away beyond the tithe to the work of God? Are you a hot Christian? If you're not, why are you criticizing other people? So somebody says, You don't know the kind of a woman I married.

Well, why did you marry her? Were you that stupid? You know, I mean, people say that sometimes. Oh, if I just married a different... One guy said, Bill, I made one mistake. I married this woman.

Is God going to penalize me the rest of my life? A man came to me in meetings one time. You know what he said? He said, I'm married to a witch. I thought he meant she was involved in witchcraft.

He didn't mean that at all. He makes it a witch-like nature. But you know what happened? We prayed together.

I said, Brother, would you ask the Lord to search your heart and show you what you look like? Forget about your wife now. And ask God to show you what you look like to Him. And he struggled with that.

It was hard. People, it's hard to get honest, even with God. It's hard to ask God to show you what you look like to Him.

It's hard to ask God to come by His Spirit. Search me, oh God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

And see if there'd be any wicked way in my sister. No. See if there'd be any wicked way in me.

That's hard to do. But he did it. And when he began to confess his own problems and sins, dear people, there was everything bottled up inside him.

He was committing adultery on a regular basis. His wife wasn't doing that. He was worse than his wife, whom he called a witch.

Finally he met God. He got his life cleaned up. This was a men's meeting which started at 7 o'clock in the morning.

And we were still going until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. God was working in a powerful way. And he said to me, Now Bill, you've got to come home and talk to my wife.

So, we got in the car and went home. She told me later on when I saw him sitting in the car with my husband, I was scared. I figured something's happened to my husband.

I wonder what. He came in the door like this, you know. Grabbed his wife.

Hugged her. They cried on each other's shoulders. They got everything straightened out.

And do you know what he did? He set out two chairs. They had two adopted girls, 8 years of age. They were just angels.

I mean, they looked just like angels. I don't know where they got them. But anyway, they were great looking kids.

He's sitting down here. And he sat here. And his wife and I sat around the corner in the kitchen watching.

You know what he did? With tears running down his face, he asked his daughters to forgive him. Because he'd been such a poor daddy to them. Such a poor Christian.

Somebody sitting here says, Boy, I'd never do that. There's people in this room that have done that, whom I happen to personally know. But he did that.

And they forgave their daddy. And then his wife turned to me and she said, I don't know what's happened to him, but I wish it would happen to me. I said, OK, get on your knees.

So we get on our knees. And you know the first thing she said when she started to pray? She said, Dear Lord, you know what a witch I've been. So he wasn't so wrong.

But it's not, you know. That's for God to say. That's not for you to say.

And so we criticize our wife. Or we criticize our husband. And we grieve the Spirit of God.

And the devil laughs his head off because he knows what that will do to your kids. You know. Bill Ohr, the singing postman, he wrote a book.

We may have some copies on the table. I'm not sure if we have. If I could change my mom and dad.

He gives them postcard-sized blank cards which they fill in. They don't put their names on. But they fill in what they'd like to see changed in their mom and dad.

And this book, each page is a facsimile of one of those cards. And you know, Bill, let me read some of those cards. I don't know if the ones I'm mentioning, I will mention, are in that book or not.

But one said this. It said, My dad's always bragging about his old moose head hanging on the wall, but he never brags about me. And kids would say, I'm scared because mom and dad fight all the time.

They're so nice in church, I wish they'd be nice at home. You know, things like this. Those little people, those little people.

You know what Jesus Christ said about offending one of those little ones who believe in me? He said, It would be better for you to have a millstone tied around your neck and you'd be drowned in the depths of the sea than that you're guilty of offending one of these little ones who believe in me. And sometimes it's our own kids we're offending by our attitudes. All right, so we're pointing out at this point that we've seen in others the things that are wrong in ourselves.

And so the person that's always judgmental, if you can write it down in letters of gold, he or she is failing in the Christian life. And that's why they're so critical. It makes them feel better to criticize someone else.

And that's why they do it. Then when you criticize, you know what you're really doing? You're doing the devil's dirty work because he's the accuser of the brethren. Remember Revelation 12? It calls him the accuser of the brethren.

I heard about a Christian worker. He was in a certain church and the pastor said, Now, I just want to put a little bug in your ear. Be careful what you say.

You're going to this house for dinner. Be careful what you say because they are inclined to be quite judgmental. Be very careful.

So he was forewarned. So they're eating whatever they're eating and they kept up this running conversation around the table, running down this Christian worker, running down that Christian, criticizing this person, going on and on and on. They couldn't get him sucked in.

He paid no attention. He just kept eating. And finally they mentioned a Christian worker that he happened to know and they knew that he knew him and they said something very derogatory about him.

And then he said, What do you think about it? He said, Well, I'll tell you what I think about what's going on around this table. The Bible says the devil is the accuser of the brethren and I don't like doing his dirty work for him. Well, you can imagine the temperature went down to 20 degrees below zero.

The strong northwest wind blowing, you know. But when I heard that, I thought to myself, Well, praise the Lord. That's exactly what needs to be said in some of these situations.

But dear people, sometimes we're so bitter, so bitter because of what's happened in life. Your husband left you, you're bitter about it. You can't forgive him.

You can't forgive maybe the gal that took him away. You have to forgive. You have to forgive.

I had to counsel with a woman when she was 12 years old, her father started to rape her. He was a drunken fellow and he had seven or eight drunken buddies and sometimes this gang of men, they raped her, they gang raped her. And that went on from the time she was 12 until she was 18.

She was so bitter towards all men. When I had to deal with her, she was just spitting fire. But it was consuming her, it was destroying her.

She was a Christian, but she couldn't forgive. But God's grace that night was sufficient so she was able to forgive. What a transformation from the time that she walked into the counseling room until she walked out.

A difference that only God Almighty could make. But see, by criticizing others, then we are doing Satan's business. Do you remember how Satan so subtly criticized Job to God? Does Job fear God for nothing, he said? He's just serving you for what he can get out of you, see.

And if the devil can find a mouth he can speak that through so much the better, especially if it's a Christian mouth. He loves to find Christians he can speak through. One of the churches in Western Ontario at the time of the revival, there was a man in this church, he'd been a member of the church for 22 years, and in 22 years he'd refused all offices.

They'd asked him to be a deacon, they'd asked him to be this and that. He would never accept an office, but he would never give a reason why. Well, revival came to that church.

And you know what happened? He got revived. Then he told the church why he'd never accepted an office for 22 years or whatever it was. He said, I always reckoned I was the official opposition in the church.

And no matter what item of business came up he opposed it. Right or wrong, he opposed it. 22 years.

He shot down three preachers in a row. One of them left the ministry because of him, see. You talk about the devil's fire in a Christian heart.

Terrible. I say to myself, was he really saved? I can't say as to that. The Lord knows them that are his.

But the Bible does say let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. And he wasn't doing that. But thank God the Lord got through to him finally.

You know what happened to a friend of mine? He moved to Vancouver from Winnipeg and a member of a big church in Vancouver finally. And he finally got involved. He was on the board and he got to their first business meeting.

He looked forward very much to that, but he didn't look forward to it after he got there. The business started. All of a sudden the fellow got to his feet, a big heavy set fellow, and began to ramp and rage like a child, and pout and all the rest, and shout and threaten.

And pretty soon the whole meeting was in uproar and people were crying. And some people went home and the pastor asked them all to get on their knees and have a time of prayer and so they did and they went home. He asked somebody, how long has this been going on? They said, well, 25 years.

Every time you have a business meeting this guy's on his feet criticizing other people, running everything down, running the church and the program and everything else down. Second business meeting, two months later, whatever, the same thing happened. You know what my friend did? He said, Bill, I was so disturbed.

I said, Lord, don't let it ever happen again. And there was a thud and the guy was lying dead on the floor. My friend said, Bill, I shook for a week.

I didn't expect God would do it that way. But sometimes God has to do it that way because some people will not learn. They don't realize what they're doing.

And I know you can say, preacher, you don't know what I've gone through. I don't have to know what you've gone through. I've heard everything I can possibly hear.

You couldn't tell me anything that would shock me. I've heard it all. And so your trials and tribulations are no different than mine.

They may be a little different in some respects, but the Bible says there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. So, dear people, we have to learn to commit it all to God, to love people no matter what they say, what they think, what they do. Love them anyway.

The Bible says be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. Somebody criticizes you, say something good about them. That's the way to handle it.

You have to say, join your heart. If you do this, you really will. You'll be amazed.

Why didn't I do this before? All right. Then it panders to my pride to be able to criticize someone else. We've hinted at that already, but in Luke chapter 7, when this woman of the street came into the house, into the Pharisee's house, and she began to weep over Jesus' feet and to wash them with her hair and her tears and everything, and Simon said within himself, if this man was really a prophet, he would know who and what manner of woman it is that touches him because she's a sinner.

I wouldn't be surprised if Simon had slept with that woman. That's how he knew she was a sinner. I wouldn't be surprised at all.

But he was judging, you see, in his mind. He didn't say anything, but he was judging up here, and sometimes we judge up here. Did you know, and I have no time to develop this tonight, but did you know that in the Bible thoughts are words to God? Thoughts are words to God.

You might as well speak it if you're thinking it because thoughts are words to God. And Jesus read Simon's mind. He said, Simon, I have something to say unto you.

And he said, Master, say on. And he talked. It came out this way.

To whom little is forgiven, the same loves a little. To whom much is forgiven, the same loves much. Her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much.

She showed her love for Jesus Christ, and she was forgiven. But Simon the Pharisee, boy, he had a hard time with that because he thought he was pretty good. Now, if you judge others, the Bible says you're really sitting in judgment on the Word of God.

Would you dare do that? Would you dare to judge the Word of God? But every time you judge someone else, you're judging the Word of God. Why do I say that? Because it says that in the book of James. Speak not evil one of another, brethren, for he that speaks evil of his brother and judges his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law.

What does he mean? He means this. God's law says judge not. You go ahead and judge.

Now you're guilty of sitting in judgment on the Word of God. You're saying, I know better than God. I have a perfect right to judge.

God says, no, you don't have. And you think you do have. So you're sitting in judgment on the Word of God.

That's what it says. Then it's a denial of the gospel. Shakespeare said, Judge nobody for we are sinners all.

Part of the gospel is this, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That includes you, doesn't it? Do you confess you've sinned? Then what right do I have as a sinner to sit in judgment on someone else for sinning? You wouldn't want to have your sins, you know, up on the screen here, would you? I wouldn't want mine. It's a denial of the gospel.

I'm speaking as if I'm one of those few people who have not sinned. Yeah, I don't suppose anybody in this room would ever dare to say, I have not sinned. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, it says.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. We are sinners all. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

There is none righteous, no not one. And what we really need in our churches, dear people, is a baptism of the love of God. See, that's what Moody said, not long before he died, he said, brethren, preaching, speaking to Christian workers, he said, brethren, hold the churches to love because this is where we have gone wrong.

Sometimes I just walk out of a conversation because of the turn it's taken. And sometimes if I don't watch it, I find myself doing it. And I always bitterly repent.

And I catch myself doing that. You know, you can damn people with faint praise, you know. You can say, she's a great Christian, but.

Or, he's a great Christian, but. And someone said only Billy goes, but. You know.

And so we have ways of denigrating other people, of running other people down, and, you know. Some people can't stand. You know, one of the things in India that really bothered me was the way that if I was to say something good about some pastor or Christian worker, there was bound to be somebody standing there saying, well, Brother Bill, you don't know the whole story.

See. I heard it everywhere I went in India. And I realized it was a real problem.

Maybe that's one of the basic reasons why in India, the gospel is not making the progress that it should. India grows by 17 million people every year. She now has almost 800 million people stuck in an area you could put in Western Canada, if you please, where we only have 5.5 million people living.

800 million people. Less than 1% are born again. Your country, I think 30% profess to be born again.

In ours, it's only 6. But in India, it's less than 1. Maybe that's the reason. Nobody can admit that somebody else is doing something great, something good. And sometimes if I do something, and someone does it better, I can't be happier with that.

It makes me very unhappy. And we act like children sometimes, don't we? If someone can do something better than you can learn from them, thank God for them. People, it's so hard to live with bitterness in your heart.

It's terrible. It kills you. You can't enjoy anything.

And it's so beautiful to live with the love of God in your heart. So beautiful to live that way. Then another verse in James says that we're not to grudge.

Grudge not one against another, brethren. Behold, the judge, the judge, is standing at the door. You may find God knocking at your door someday after you've been judging others.

Remember, thou art inexcusable, whosoever you are, the judge is for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself for you the judge do the same things. There it is again. There it is again.

All right, let's get past that for a minute and think of something on the more positive side. What should I do then? Well, first of all, the Bible says be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. Do you know what that verse is really saying, dear people? It's saying the Holy Spirit foresaw that Christian would sin against Christian.

So don't think it strange that some Christian has sinned against you, but be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. One of the greatest blessings I ever got was just to study the life of George Whitefield and to see this tremendous spirit of forgiveness he had. He was so popular, you know, that you could hear his voice a mile away.

Benjamin Franklin tested him on the Boston Commons and stood at a distance of a measured mile and heard the first words of the opening sentence clearly before the man was even warmed up. And when other preachers were struggling to find 50 people to listen to him, they'd have 20,000 out in the open air. George Whitefield would have.

Sometimes more. At Campbell Slang Scotland, the crowd they said may have been 100,000 people. And so he was criticized.

Oh, he was maligned. And all the lying stories were spread about him all over the country. Do you know how he handled it? If he heard of some preacher that had criticized him, he would go to him.

He wouldn't mention the criticism. He'd put his hands on his shoulders, look him in the eyes and say, My brother, I love you so much. I would like to pray for you.

Can I pray with you? And he'd come and gently push him down on his knees and kneel with him and pray for him. And scores and scores of bitter enemies became fast friends to George Whitefield in exactly this way. And there's one classic example that some of you may or may not have heard of was some New England preachers got their heads together and they issued a manifesto which was published in the leading New England newspaper of the day which was probably the largest newspaper in the United States of America at the time.

And they published a list, 17 of George Whitefield's faults. And somebody came running in with this newspaper and said, George, George, look, look! And he looks. Oh, George Whitefield's fault.

That's me, you know. So he starts reading. George Whitefield's a very proud person.

Oh, they're right, they're right. God knows how proud I've been. But I've been asking God to forgive me and God has been helping me.

And he reads on. George Whitefield's very critical. Oh, God knows how critical I've been and I've had to ask people's forgiveness but I think I have a measure of victory over that now but maybe not entirely.

They're right. George Whitefield goes by human impressions. Oh, God knows how I've done that and I've done some very stupid things and made some very stupid claims by going by human impressions and thinking, was God speaking? These men are right.

He went down the whole list. And he said to his friend, these men know me. They're absolutely right.

I'm guilty of all these things they said. But then he said this, but you know what? There's some things about me they don't even know. Some of my sins they don't even know.

Obviously, the list is not complete. So he completed the list and mailed it to one of these preachers and said, the next time you publish the list make sure it's complete. Could you do that? That's how you handle it, people.

That's how you handle it. Kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. It's on that basis that the appeal for forgiveness always comes to the Christian.

God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. You forgive others now. Indeed, we're warned if we don't forgive God will not forgive us.

Any bitterness in your heart, deal with it tonight. This could be the greatest weekend of your life. But it may not be.

But if we'll deal with things as God speaks to our heart, whatever it is, forget about the messenger and think of the Lord in his word. All right. Kind, tender-hearted.

And the Bible says we ought to forbear one another in love. That means we're to be patient with our brother and sister and realize that they're under pressures. And we live in a very hostile environment as Christians.

Satan is the God of this world. And so, don't be hasty with your brother or your sister. Give them some breathing room.

Forbearing one another in love, it says. Then, the Bible says we are to esteem, let each esteem other better than themselves. I've often said to people that this is the acid test of a fully committed life.

If you can't do that, if you can't esteem other people better than yourself, you're probably not fully committed yet. At least there's something wrong, there's a breakdown somewhere, because if you ever get to see your own heart, you won't have any trouble esteeming other people better than yourself. Then people say, but Bill, I have to be honest.

How in the world can I esteem so-and-so to be better than myself when I know he isn't? Do you ever feel that way? I guess most of us have. But God didn't say esteem them better than yourself providing you're sure they are better. He doesn't say that.

Let each esteem other better than themselves. Preachers, if you hear somebody preach and they make a few flubs, you know, in their grammar or their English or something, don't go home saying, I could have done a better job. Go home thanking God he preached the gospel, he preached the word of God.

Because God could tie you up so you'll make a fool of yourself. I know a fellow who was always criticizing preachers and then the pastor went away and he was asked to bring the message. He didn't know why they ever paid a preacher because, you know, it's such a simple thing to get up there and preach.

Nothing to that. Snap your fingers, you know. Well, it was his turn.

And he found it wasn't so easy. He spent hours and hours preparing a sermon and he didn't know how to do it. Anyway, he finally got a message done and it was a sheaf of notes about ten pages, you know.

They were all marked. Anyway, he starts up in the platform and he was, you know, he was getting so scared he couldn't make his feet go where they should go. You know, he said his feet began to stutter, you

know.

Anyway, he got to the top step and he tripped and fell flat on his face on the floor and the papers went in all directions and the crowd roared with laughter and he got to his face totally reddened to his feet and he picked up these papers. Now they're upside down and backwards and the whole thing. He gets all ten together.

They're just a total mess. He gets to the pulpit. You know, he tried to sit them on the pulpit.

He missed the pulpit. And the congregation got laughing. It was so bad he just had to give up.

But he said afterwards, the Lord did that to me because I was so critical of preachers. I thought it was so easy. It's not so easy, you know.

Okay, forbearing one another in love, being patient in love, forgiving, tender-hearted, kind, kind. Then it says, loving, you're taught of God to love one another. You're never taught of God to hate.

Satan will teach you how to hate. God will teach you how to love. Beloved, John said, 1 John 4, 7. Beloved, and the word beloved means divinely loved ones.

That Christian you criticize, that, you know, or whoever it is, if it's a Christian, he's a divinely loved person, one of God's children. He may not be doing too well in the Christian life, but he's one of God's children if he's born again. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God.

And everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. He that loves not knows not God, for God is love. He that loves not knows not God, for God is love.

And in your home, your church, whatever it is, you'll need, we all need baptisms of love to learn how to love the way God loves. Jesus said, Be you therefore perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect. Have you ever studied that in Matthew 5 and Luke 6? How in the world can I be perfect? God knows better than that.

I can't be perfect. But look at the context. What was he talking about? Dear people, he was talking about perfection in love.

In love. How do I know that? Because of what he said. Here's an illustration.

He talked about his heavenly Father sending rain on the field of the wicked man as well as in the field of the just man and causing his sun to shine in the field of the sinner as well as on the field of the Christian. Now if you and I had our hands in the taps, certain people wouldn't get a drop of rain on their fields, right? The sun would never shine on their crops. We'd show them what's right and what's wrong, you know.

That's not how God operates. A man might be a very wicked farmer, a very wicked person, a farmer, and God may give him a bumper crop. The Bible says, Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged.

Why, a very wicked man may live to be a hundred years old. He may blaspheme God every day he lives and live to be a hundred and five. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set on them to do evil.

But though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it should be well with them that fear God. Don't read it wrong. That's really what we're saying here.

And the Bible says, Pray one for another, confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that you might be healed, that is restored. Oh boy, Christians don't do that anymore. Just down in the Schofield Memorial Church in Dallas, Texas this last week, and we had an afterglow in the last meeting Sunday night.

It was interesting to have people getting up and confessing, I've got a hard heart. Oh, I've got a hard heart. Please pray for me.

Or I can't forgive other people. Please pray for me. And coming in and kneeling in a chair.

People say, Wow, no man, that frightens me. That scares me, man. But in James 5 it says, Confess your faults one to another, and then pray one for another.

You know, I looked at word fault up in the Greek language. You know what the word is? It's a normal New Testament word for sin. It says, Confess your sins one to another.

Literally, in the Greek language it says, one to others. And then pray one for another. We need to have this kind of love and trust in each other, mutual trust and so on, and love, that we can do things like this.

Instead of criticizing, loving. And oh, you'll feel a thousand times better for it. So when Jesus said, Be perfect like your Father who is in heaven is perfect, he meant to be perfect in love.

To love the unlovely. To love the person that criticizes you. To do something for them.

You know, a lady came to me for counseling one time, and she was twenty-eight years old. She said, Ladies don't usually tell you their age. Now, of course, once they get past thirty-five.

But anyway, her husband was the same age, and she said, We fight all the time. He's not a Christian. I am.

He's an alcoholic. And she said, He beats me up. He beats the children up.

I've gone to many counselors. They've all told me the same thing. Leave him or boot him out.

She said, What do you say? I said, Well, you can't do that. She said, Why can't I? I said, Well, Paul said, If you're a Christian woman and your husband's not a Christian and he's pleased to dwell with you, you're not to leave him. Where's that? So I showed her.

Oh, well, how can I survive? I said, Isn't God with you? Jeremiah said, The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one. You can trust God to take care of your husband. Well, she said, How do I handle it? He's so abusive with language and sometimes with his fists.

How do I handle it? I said, You love him to death. I said, The worse he gets, the more love you pour on him. You know what she said? I'll do it.

I'll try. But you've got to pray for me. I was back there two years later, and this lady came tearing up when I travel around so much and meet with so many people.

I didn't remember her, you know. And she said, Don't you remember you? We constantly... Oh, yeah. I said, What happened? She said, You know what? It was hard.

Those first few months I didn't think I'd ever make it. He was so abusive. And then I noticed a change as I kept on loving him.

He began to change. And she said, He became a Christian. And she said, You know what? He's not only a Christian, he's the hottest Christian in the church.

So, do not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. She could have walked out of him. Everybody would have said, You did the right thing.

He was no good. I know a Christian woman who walked out on her husband. You know what he did? He took a pistol and blew his brains out.

Because his wife was his last hope. As long as his wife thought he had a chance to change, he had some hope. But when his wife walked out on him, he figured, Well, I guess I'm hopeless.

There's no hope for me. So he just blew his brains out. She failed her husband, you see.

She might not admit it, but she really did. All right. I hope, I hope you sense that I love you.

And I hope you sense that all our team loves you. That's why we're here. I guess in some ways we'd rather be home.

My wife is not well. She's been very sick lately with arthritic attacks and so on. But we're here because we love you.

We want to help you. And I trust you understand that.

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