

The Law and the Prophets

by Paris Reidhead

Christians should not judge others unjustly, but rather focus on their own hearts and lives, and seek to be right with God.

Duration: 40:04

Scripture: Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 7:1-6, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 7:21

Topics: "Law"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not judging others, as we will be judged in the same way. He uses the analogy of a speck in someone else's eye versus a beam in our own eye to illustrate the hypocrisy of judging others while ignoring our own faults. The preacher urges the church to minister to one another as God has commanded, and to reject those who reject the ministry of the church. He concludes by calling for self-reflection and repentance, asking for forgiveness for any failures. The sermon is based on the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 7:1-5.

Transcript

Will you turn please to our text of the morning, Matthew 7, verses 1 through 12. I shall read it and trust that in the reading of it, you shall realize that the Lord is bringing to us not four disconnected thoughts, but one testimony concluding with a statement used as the title for the message, This is the Law and the Prophets. Try to see the unity in the scripture as I read.

Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye meet it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote, the sliver that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam, if you please, the two by four that is in thine own eye? 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? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. 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.

Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. For what man is there of you? Whom, if his son ask bread, shall he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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 to them that ask him? Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets. In Matthew the fifth chapter, that portion we call the Beatitudes, our Lord describes the individual that has experienced the change of heart and life that he will bring.

In other words, the Beatitudes are a description of the regenerate heart. We see the attitude of that regenerate one toward the law. We see the attitude of that regenerate one toward pious service of praying and fasting and almsgiving.

We have seen the attitude of the Christian toward money and toward his own personal life, economic and social life. Now we see the attitude of the Christian, the regenerate heart, toward his fellows and toward the law. The entire portion from Matthew 5, 21 on through the conclusion of the seventh chapter is actually an exposition of the statement that the Lord Jesus made, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And you can see in this first statement, judge not that ye be not judged, the Pharisee, as he was presented by Christ down in the temple with his robes wrapped about him in complacency and egotism and self-satisfaction, as he says, thank God I am not like other men are. In this you have the judging that he has done, and especially when he says, and certainly not like this publican over here. And our Lord is pointing out to these that represent it, the ultimate achievement of, shall I say, religiosity, the Pharisees.

Our Lord is pointing out that his people are not to be compared with those that the hearers on the hillside on this particular morning have come to think of as the paragon of righteousness, namely the Pharisees. He said, my people, those that have experienced the life that I have come to bring, are not to be measured by these standards. There's an entirely different standard that you'll have to use.

Now, essentially, what Christ is saying here is this. Those that have partaken of my life, those that have experienced this new life that I am bringing that will cause them to be a different kind, a member of a different species, namely the Christian as we would use the term now, do not judge others. This is what he's saying.

And it's not that if they do, then they have simply evidence that they aren't mine. Now, notice this word judge. It's used in various ways in the scripture.

One place it's used in this fashion, weigh carefully, consider carefully, and then form a judicious opinion based on the evidence. Now, this is a proper thing. It's to be done by you continuously.

Certainly, the Lord is not saying that you should not weigh carefully and consider carefully various things that are presented to you, various doctrines, various teachings, and individuals that would bring such doctrines and teachings. Not at all. Then there is another way that the word judge is used properly, means to infer or to draw a conclusion, an obvious conclusion, one that is self-evident, one that doesn't require anything other than just honesty of heart.

Doesn't require divine illumination, just honesty. Then there is the other word judge, the way it's used, which means to regard or account something that is, again, self-evident. And finally, it's used to condemn.

And that's the sense in which the text is employed. Judge not, condemn not. Well, if you realize that there are different ways in which the word can be used and ought to be used, then you're not going to make this word to mean that you will never hereafter weigh carefully or infer or regard.

But what it does mean is that you will not condemn unjustly and improperly. Now, there are four different kinds of judging. First, there's an ecclesiastical judging that is being done constantly and, I think, properly.

Preaching is a judging in which the one that stands before you, whoever he may be, opens the word of God and says, the scripture doesn't mean this for this reason. And it's not to be understood in this way for these reasons. But this is what it is to be understood to be saying.

This is what it means. Now, of course, this is being done continuously. I suppose a major portion of preaching is to be used, a major portion of the time is to be used in telling people what it doesn't mean.

Only when you have some means of comparison and measurement can you actually find out what the scripture does mean. Then there's admonishing. This is a proper task.

This is ecclesiastical judging where you admonish a company of hearers, whether it be from the pulpit or someone do it in one of the open services where all contribute. There is a proper admonishing. Rebuking is part of the ministry.

Paul said to young Titus, reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and godliness. The Christian heart, the redeemed heart is happy at the rebuke. Easy to be entreated is the one that has the wisdom that is from above.

Reproof also is needed, is to be one of the functions of the elders, not just the pastor in the sense in which in a congregation such as ours, I would be the one, but any of the elders at any time seeing something that they consider to be improper are spiritually bound by their charge from the Lord to speak to that at the time that it is said. And it could be that it should happen to you on some occasion. If you love and love the Lord Jesus Christ, then you would suffer that you would receive it gladly and knowing that it did come from one who was charged by the Lord for it.

So there is a proper use of the word discerning of the word, a regarding or an accounting of the word is applying here and not there. And this will recognize the civil judgment. We certainly wouldn't apply this scripture and say that we're to do away with the courts.

We recognize that it's imperative that society be governed by law and that there be men charged with the responsibility of enforcing that law. And as we pray for those that protect the peace, the police force and those that watch over our security, we ought to pray for the judges and those that administer justice in our courts. And we, because this too involves us in a very real way, the time may come when we shall stand for some reason before one of them.

It behooves us to have been concerned about it. As we pray for Kings, we also ought to pray for all that are participating in government. And this civil judging is one of the functions that's expected in society.

And it's one of the ministries that God has ordained, one of those civic graces and blessings that we're to receive with gratitude. Then there is also private judging. There's a proper private judging.

It ought to be done in the manner in which we have read. If you sense and know that something is amiss and you feel that you are responsible to do, speak about it, then you ought to go to that person in love and speak to the person directly. And this is a scriptural, this is enjoined in the word of God.

But then there is unlawful private judging. That's the kind that's condemned here. This unlawful private judging, which is speaking to another about someone that's not present to profit from what is being said.

This is exceedingly dangerous. It's something that God has strictly condemned. He puts it in the category of whispering and backbiting, which he switched two things, he said, cause one to be worthy of death.

Then there is something else. This is the presumption to no motives. Now, I suppose there is nothing that is a greater sense of or gives greater evidence of the depravity of the heart than for someone to presume to say the reason that this was done was because that is condemned, clearly condemned.

No one that puts on shoes in the morning and leaves footprints in the sand as he walks has the right ever to say about anyone. The reason he did this was because it implies omniscience. There is only one person that knows why anybody did anything and that is God.

We are charged with the responsibility of discerning whether the act be kind or cruel, right or wrong. But we owe it, of course, to find out the facts and the information before we are to assign to whether it is or whether it isn't. How many times it is that someone has performed a ministry where there's been, as the scripture says, reproving, rebuking, or exhorting.

The person has not suffered it, they've rejected it, and then they've gone and reported it in complete and total distortion, utterly misrepresenting what's been said. Now, the scriptures condemn this, but it is condemned above all else, the assigning of a motive. No one but God can do that.

And oh, how wrong all of us have been, undoubtedly, when we have, by what we've said, suggested that we know why. You don't know why. Only God knows why.

And consequently, this has been condemned. Then, of course, to speak to someone about another and not to speak in the presence of the person involved is pure hypocrisy. Unquestionably, it's hypocritical, and it's just, and it's to be judged in this way.

And because the individual involved has no opportunity, either for information to be given to correct the misconception, or for profit, or in any wise to have that which would make the occasion one of value. And thus, the Spirit of God has done it. Now, I suppose there is absolutely nothing that has caused greater harm and havoc than for judging.

And this is the thing, I think I have a quotation here from Dr. Simpson that's appropriate. You may wonder, perhaps, why your sickness is not healed. Dr. Simpson says, or why your spirit is not filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost, or your life not blessed and prosperous.

It may be that some dart which you have flung with angry voice, or tossed during an idle hour of thoughtless gossip, is pursuing you on its way as it describes the circle which always brings every shaft of bitterness and every idle and evil word back to its source. The evil influence of tale bearing has permeated every stratum of society from the palace to the slum, and it rears its ugly head in the church, as many Christians have known by painful experience. The tongue of the gossip has destroyed empires and cast down mighty men, ruined lives, blighted homes, broken hearts, sundered friendships have been caused by idle chatter.

Too late people learned that harm has been wrought by giving too ready an ear to rumor. Nothing is more needed in the world today than the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ that will scorn to speak evil of

another when no good purpose can possibly accomplish. The flower of Christian character will never bloom in an atmosphere of slander and detraction.

Dr. Simpson was absolutely right. Now the person that does this, the judges, the way in which the scripture is condemned, and persists in doing it, and will not repent of doing it, will not cease doing it, says Jesus Christ, gives evidence that he's never been regenerated, never been born again. That's the purpose of this, to distinguish between phariseeism of which he said, except your righteousness exceed, you shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven and genuine Christianity.

If you've been born of God, I do not say for a moment that you and I together may not on occasions be drawn aside in this as in anything else, because it's motivated by the pressure to secure status. And long as we have that appetite for status, we'll be subject to the temptation of securing it in this way, judging, because you know that if you can condemn something in another, you can make yourself to that degree better than the one whom you condemn. And this is the unconscious motivation for it, the insatiable desire for status.

As long as you have that appetite, you'll be subject to temptation here. But the difference between the child of God and the child of the devil is the child of God hates sin, he hates sin because of what it does to God, because of what it is. And the Lord Jesus Christ is saying, my people don't do this, my people don't do this.

There may be those that profess to be my people that do, but my people don't. But then again, it comes to the church. And when you find the church working corporately, when you find the church working in its two or its three that represent the church and it speaks, then it is fulfilling the responsibility that the Lord has said.

And when people refuse to hear the church, they are to be considered as pagans, anathema to be excluded from the fellowship. There is no question but what God has put into the authority of the church, this authority for discipline. And this is to be considered when the church acts corporately as that which the Lord is sovereignly ordained.

When a hundred years ago the church forfeited its right to discipline, it also forfeited the possibility of blessing. The only possible way the church can come back to the grounds where God can bless it is for the church ever and always to accept and exercise the responsibility of ministering as God has commanded it to minister. And such individuals as reject the ministry of the church are to be considered by that church as the pagan and the heathen and to have no place in it.

This is to be something of what he says here. The private, unjust, unlawful judging he condemns as being an evidence of unregeneracy if it has persisted him. Now he said judge not, that's the first thing.

Second thing he says is judge, judge yourselves. Verses three to five, why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Oh how wilt thou say to thy brother let me pull out the, oh I love this, the sliver in thine own eye and behold a four by four is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite first cast out the beam out of thine own eye thou shall see clearly.

What's he saying? He's saying the people that I've regenerated, the people that have been born of me, the people that have partaken of my life, these people are far more concerned about themselves than they are anybody else. The ones they're interested in are themselves. Their heart's concern is not to find what's

wrong with everybody else.

They are somewhat of the stamp of Bobby Burns who said there's so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us that it behooves none of us to talk about the rest of us. And their heart concern is that they be right with God. They're a thousand times more concerned and what to someone else might be a little sliver, a piece of straw, that's what the word mote means.

Someone else say well this is nothing to the individual that has it, it's to him a beam. In other words that flaw in character in the Christian heart that someone else would say why this is of no consequence to the child of God because he wants to please God is far worse than anything in anyone else's life. Judge yourself that you be not judged.

For when you are judged you are chastened of the Lord that you should not be condemned with the world. And our Lord Jesus is saying here my people aren't going around looking for what's wrong with everybody else. They aren't trying to find fault with everybody they meet.

They aren't looking for the one they can condemn. They have so much that burdens them and so much that concerns them and so much they want to be that they just can't do it. They've got to get right, be right.

And when you find someone that's going around pulling out here, pulling slivers there, and pulling the other, he says if they persist in this and refuse to make their own heart need the great concern of their life, not partaking of my life, the child of God may do it. For there's no sin of which we're not capable of falling. But the child of God that does this is the one that's going to see it for what it is and deal with it.

Hypocrites or unregenerate professors see all that's wrong with others but not themselves. Oh this gives place to the devil. The scripture says give no place to the devil.

But it does for it allows him to control. And when that happens there is a gate opened for a censorious demon and a censorious spirit and a railing spirit to come in and corrupt and poison the life. And it becomes terrifyingly dangerous.

Oh how much concern there ought to be in your heart. Am I what God wants me to be? This is what he says. My people's great concern is to be.

They want to be what they ought to be. Judge yourselves. They're judging because they want to be.

Are you a child of God in this particular? Do you give evidence? Satan is the accuser of the brethren. And he is saying my people aren't going around trying to accuse and find fault and criticize. My people are finding fault with themselves and criticizing themselves and they're bringing their own heart need to the cross and to Christ because they want to be.

This is what he's saying. Again we come to the next. Verse 6. Judge not first then judge yourselves and finally he says judge the unregenerate.

Give not that which is holy to the dogs neither cast your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.

I don't know where it happened but somewhere along the aisle way we got the idea that if anybody could quote John 3 16 said he believed it he could call him a Christian regardless how he lived what he did what his attitudes were take him in say well fine brother but there's more to it than that well all the missionaries

here will bear out the fact that on the mission field one of our big jobs is being fruit inspectors because we don't believe everybody talking about heaven's going there and we never know quite why someone professes to be saved we know they can keep up a pretense for a little while we know that after a little time however that their intention to behave as they think Christians ought to behave and to act for that's what they're doing is going to give way we'll find out what

they are and we don't want the church to be ruined on the mission field so almost invariably on every field we say now it's fine we're glad you're here but you become a catechumen you become a an inquiry you just stay here and for a year six months or a year or two years we'll deal with that person before we'll baptize them and bring them into the church you know the the door out can be no higher than the door in and the only way you can keep the church pure is to have it on that level and so on the mission field we're exceedingly careful about that lest we should be guilty of giving pearls to that which is holy to the dogs and the pearls to swine so he is saying that there is the necessity of discerning if the church is to be what it should be he said to my people are going to have the

ability to discern and the church corporately is going to do it that's why we ask everyone that comes into the membership of this church to meet with the elders because we believe god has invested in them the responsibility of making absolutely certain that those that are presented for fellowship have bible evidence of regeneration and the lord jesus has this as his purpose a pure and a holy and a righteous purpose and one that he intends to have established he says in matthew 7 20 by their fruit she shall know them a corrupt tree will not bring good fruit and a good tree will not produce corrupt fruit by their fruit she shall know them if anyone is partaken of christ it's just as much a miracle just as much a miracle to have christ come in and change your life so that you produce

heavenly fruit as it is to take an oak tree and get peaches off of it it's a complete change of nature and so he said those my people those that have partaken were dogs perhaps once and behaved swinishly living to please themselves but because i've done something to them their new creations now he said you distinguish between those who are and those who aren't and so at the same time that he says judge not improperly with an unlawful private judgment he says judge yourselves and then he says strive to discern between those and those who are not but then finally he comes to this and we close with it remember you are to do unto others and as you would have others do unto you do unto others as you would have god do unto you forgive others as you would have for god forgive you do you know

that every time we pray the lord's prayer we're making a contract with god forgive us our trespasses in just exactly the same manner and degree that i forgive those who've trespassed against me this is a very serious thing and one we should understand well because we measure to ourself that forgiveness you read you heard read and read about the man who owed the tremendous debt over a million dollars in the calculation or so it would seem according to some and he came and said i can't pay it back allow me time and the good man said it's all right we'll just write it off and then he went out and found someone that owed him a hundred pence a dollar using our terminology and he took him by the throat and he shook him and then he put him in prison had him beaten and our lord says you've been

forgiven much forgiven a mountain of guilt a million dollars worth of sin if you please in the analogy you came to your heavenly father you had no means of paying nothing to offer you stood before him condemned and all you could offer to him was your guilt you stood there with nothing and he forgave you and he cleansed you and he pardoned you now here's someone that's hurt your feelings someone that's grieved you someone that's done something and what have you done you've taken them by the neck and

shaken them and hurt them and injured them said my people don't do that my people don't do that oh no said you go to the father and you ask and you keep on asking and you seek and you keep on seeking and you knock and you keep on knocking and it's open to you you have oh says he if you want god

to do this to you how tender hearted how forgiving you ought to be with one another how quick how quick to settle how quick to open how quick to break how quick to bend this is what he's saying if god can forgive you all that mountain of sin and then have you come to him again and again and say lord give me this and lord supply that and lord do this and lord bless and here you were a criminal and he pardoned that how much more can you with your brethren 70 times seven for we were the debtors with an incalculable debt that we could never pay the law condemned us but we came to him pleading our guiltiness and received grace grace and mercy and he pardoned us and then he transformed us and then by his spirit he would fulfill the law in us and through us that what we could not do what the law

could not do and that it was weak through the flesh god sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit so said he don't judge unlawfully and improperly you don't have omniscience you don't know what's in anyone's heart you don't know why they do what they do judge yourself deal with yourself deal with your own heart distinguish between the unregenerate those that are born again the unregenerate won't judge and they will judge won't judge us improperly they will judge themselves because they know that they came with a mountain of guilt and sin receive pardon they receive forgiveness received eternal life and they must continually return to the lord for pardon and

forgiveness and eternal life and they're going to do unto others as they'd have others do unto them this is the law and the prophets what is god's purpose in the law and the prophets to make us new creations and so he is saying this that my people have partaken of my nature not theirs it's mine let me ask you has god done this work in your heart has god shown you the enormity of the sin of improperly and unlawfully judging others their motives has god shown you the necessity of judging yourself and dealing with the things that grieved him has god shown you the enormity of your debt against him that he so freely forgave has god brought you to the place where you're prepared to do unto others you ask god to forgive forgive others you ask god to bless bless others you ask god to meet your

need needs of others this is what he's saying he's saying what i do is so totally different than the world not like the pharisees at all remember the pharisees were the fundamentalists of their day has god done this to you perhaps i'm speaking to some who drawn aside have fallen into the awful trap and snare laid by the devil and you have judged unjustly and unfairly deal with it as a sin maybe you have a cankerous and cantankerous tongue maybe you hurt and injure don't say it's my nature god sent his son to change our natures and he's doing it from grace to grace don't don't rest where we are oh dear heart this is the law and the prophets this is the revelation of god that he changes us from within and makes us over don't you want him to i'm asking for a minute of disciplined silence god

has spoken to all of our hearts let us hear him as he speaks shall we pray silently before the lord four questions have i judged others improperly there are motives that i could never know without have i spoken about people and rather than two people have i been one thing to their faces and another thing behind their back have i judged myself have i exposed my heart have i calculated how much god forgave me and what debtor i am to him have i been doing unto others as i want god and others to do unto me these four questions by the constants will you lead us in closing prayer dear lord thou has spoken to our hearts and we pray that thou will help us oh help us we pray thee that we might take to the depths of our souls and

our hearts thy word and profit by it and exemplify all that thou

would have us to be through the grace and through the enabling of the holy spirit forgive us wherein we've failed forgive us if we've been critical censorious if we've been if we've been guilty of judging one another god we pray that thou will forgive us and and help us oh help us because we want above all to show forth the love of christ and to do unto others as we would have them do unto us dear lord lift us above a low carnal standard and lift us up to where we can reveal thee and thy grace and love to a lost and perishing world help us we pray save us from ourselves and the things that would displease thee and give us oh god that divine enabling that will help us to fulfill thy precious word and these admonitions to our hearts we ask in thy name amen shall we stand and stand

reverently and quietly i would be derelict if i did not tell you and share with you the truth that we will never be the same after this morning we will either be broken before the lord if god has found in us that which must break or we will be harder toward the lord if god has spoken to your heart and you've seen yourself i entreat you to forget about your dinner and the day and your plans and to find a place of prayer and while i wait just quietly for another moment you that have felt god speak if you have and there be such slip out either to the front or to the rear and go into wilson chapel and kneel beside a chair make an altar a prayer and meet god you do it now while we wait before the benediction if you felt god speak remember you'll never be the same you slip out to the front or

to the rear there's doors into wilson chapel on either side and make your way to a place of prayer to say no if god has shown you in your life is to invite the discipline the chastening of the lord to say yes is to move toward blessing just slip out make your way to the side make your altar a prayer meet the lord oh god thou knowest this people thou knowest every heart and every heart need thou knowest the measure of light that thou shed abroad in our hearts by thy word in days past and today thou knowest our obligation and what thou will do oh father of jesus thou art seeking to get glory to thyself in these days but thou has said the broken and the contrite spirit i will not despise but thou will despise all others grant lord that we may break and stay broken go thou with us as we part

oh thou triune god thou whose name is holy would it dwell in the high and holy place within that is of a broken and a contrite spirit to revive the hearts of the broken to revive the spirits of the contrite ones go thou with us and deal with us according to our need and thy purpose for the church in jesus name amen

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