

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 25

by Zac Poonen

We should not judge others because we don't know the full story and we don't know the motives of men's hearts, but we are commanded to judge with righteous judgment within our circle of responsibility.

Duration: 25:01

Scripture: Isaiah 11:3, Matthew 7:1, Luke 15:30, John 7:24, John 8:15, 1 Corinthians 4:5, Hebrews 9:27, 1 Peter 4:15-17

Topics: "Righteous Judgment", "Self Reflection"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of refraining from judging others, emphasizing the need to focus on self-reflection and righteous judgment within our spheres of responsibility. It highlights Jesus' teachings on not condemning others, the dangers of passing premature judgments, and the significance of waiting for God's timing to reveal the full truth about individuals. The sermon also explores the reasons behind Jesus' command not to judge, pointing out the hidden aspects of people's lives, motives, and the necessity of avoiding hypocrisy in our assessments.

Transcript

We continue our study today on all that Jesus taught, seeking to complete the Great Commission, Matthew 28, verse 20, going to all nations and make disciples, and teach them to do all that I commanded you. And we've been looking at the things that Jesus taught and commanded, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. We looked at nine right attitudes first, and the wrong attitudes beginning in chapter 5, verse 21.

And now we come to the ninth and the last wrong attitude that Jesus spoke about, and that is in chapter 7 and verse 6. So let me review the nine wrong attitudes. First of all, the nine right attitudes are the beatitudes mentioned in chapter 5, verse 3 to 12. The nine wrong attitudes are, first of all, anger, and then sinful sexual desire, then lying or telling lies, revenge, hatred, seeking the honor of men, love of money, and anxiety.

And now we come to the ninth wrong attitude. Again, like many of the other wrong attitudes, which people don't even think is wrong, judging and condemning other people. Condemning other people.

Do not judge or condemn others, lest you be judged and condemned yourself. Matthew 7, verse 1. For in the way you judge, you will be judged, and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold the log is in your own eye.

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly, to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Now this is a very, very common practice, unfortunately, among Christians. To judge people, to look down on them, and to despise them, to consider yourself better than them, when most of the time you don't even know everything about them.

There's a reason why we are told not to judge others. And if we understand the reason behind it, it is easier to obey that command. Here Jesus gives us the command.

But you remember, Jesus said in John 16, there are many other things I want to say to you, which you cannot bear now, but when the Holy Spirit has come, the Spirit of Truth, He will explain the truth to you. And so when the Holy Spirit came, He explained through the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 4, why we should not judge others. That Jesus did not explain in John chapter 7. That came under the category of things He could not explain to them then.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, Jesus, the Holy Spirit tells us, through the Apostle Paul, and these are the things Jesus could not explain to His disciples when He was on earth. 1 Corinthians 4, He says, in verse 5, Do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait. Now those of us who got a tremendous lust, and I call it a lust, a strong desire, to judge other people, the Holy Spirit is saying, I'll give you that opportunity, but just wait.

Don't judge right now. That's all I'm saying. You can judge, but hang on.

Wait until the right time. Wait until the Lord, when He comes, will bring to light the full story. You see, the reason why we're not allowed to judge others is because we don't know the full story.

Think of the number of days and months sometimes a high court judge takes to listen to both sides of an argument, evaluate the whole thing before he writes his 500 page judgment. If they take so much trouble to investigate fully before arriving at a conclusion, how can we come to a conclusion so quickly? Do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will bring to light. What will He bring to light? First of all, He will bring to light the things hidden in the darkness.

And then secondly, He will bring to light the motives of men's hearts. Now those are two areas which we know nothing about. When you look at another person, you do not know what he is doing in secret.

Most of us do not know, for example, how a person behaves with his wife at home. Or how she behaves with her husband. How they speak to each other.

They may speak so nicely and lovingly in public, but they may not be speaking to each other like that at home. And you may think them to be a very loving couple. They may not be that at all.

They may be fighting and quarreling with each other every day at home. So, your assessment is completely wrong. And vice versa too.

You may look at a very quiet type of person and you think that he is pretty useless. He is not doing anything for God. And yet, in secret, he may be doing ten times more for God than you are.

Only thing, he doesn't make a big show of it. The things hidden in darkness, we do not know. The things that are in private.

There are certain other areas of darkness too. Which, even if you live with a person, you won't know. A wife can live with her husband for 50 years and still not know whether he loves money or not.

Externally, it may appear as if he doesn't love money. But deep down in his heart, he may be loving money. God will expose it in the final day.

A husband and a wife may not know whether any of them have got a bitterness in their heart against somebody. Against a relative or a neighbor. It can be very carefully hidden in nice language.

And yet, in the darkness, in the darkness of their heart, which we cannot see, there may be bitterness. We can't very often make out whether there is pride in someone's heart. A person may appear to be very humble.

Wait till God exposes the darkness as well. What's hidden in darkness. And the second thing, is God is going to reveal in that day the motives of men's hearts.

That means the reason with which a person did something. For example, you hear a man preach a wonderful message and you may not know why he did that. He may have done that for money.

He may be preaching for money. Or he may be preaching for honor. Or he may be preaching to show that he is better than somebody else.

There is always this tendency in even the best of our actions to do it to the wrong motives. So he says, that's another reason why you shouldn't judge. You can listen to a man praying and say, oh, he is just trying to seek honor.

He may not be seeking honor at all. He may be praying to the best of his ability to God and you judge him. So we have such a tendency to judge people in areas we know nothing about.

We don't know their motives and because of the evil of our own Adamic nature we always attribute the worst possible motive to people. And so, when we judge a person we are just really showing the condition of our own heart like it says in the book of Proverbs as in water, a man's face, a man sees his own face or like in a mirror, a man sees his own face. So the heart of man to man meaning that what you imagine you find in that person's heart a bad motive is only an indication of the wrong attitudes you have in your own heart.

As in water, face answers to face. So a man, so the heart of man to man. You imagine that man can't possibly be doing that with a good motive.

It must be with a bad motive because I myself would only do such a thing with a bad motive. You are revealing your own heart. So it's very foolish to judge other people and let me say this from many years of observation that even if you know a person very intimately even living with that person you still know only 10% of his life.

I want to say to every husband and wife who have known each other for 50 years you know only 10% of your husband 10% of your wife 90% like the bottom part of an iceberg or the lower part of an ice cube in water lies hidden. It's unknown to you. There are depths there which you know nothing about.

You may know more than other people but there are still hidden depths you know nothing about. And if you see a person only occasionally maybe you work with him in an office or you see him in church every Sunday for 25 years you still know only 1% of his life. Yeah, the persons you meet regularly at church and in your office you know only 1% of their life.

That's why when one day you hear that they have been in some horrible sin you are shocked. You say, hey I thought I knew him for 10 years. No you didn't.

You saw 1% of his life. What would you think of a teacher who in a question paper with 100 questions short one line answer questions evaluated just the answer to the first question and decided to mark the whole paper on the basis of the answer to the first question. If the first question was wrong the teacher gives zero even though 99 questions may have been right.

Or the first question was right and the teacher gives 100% even though the other 99 questions were wrong. What would you think of such a teacher? Such a teacher should be sacked from the school. Thrown out.

How can a teacher evaluate a whole 100 question paper answer paper on the basis of the answer to the first question? But that is exactly what people do when they judge others. You know 1% of his life and you have evaluated him. You say he is like this or he is not like this.

The Bible says wait. Don't go on passing judgment before the time. That's the reason why we should not judge because we will be judging wrongly.

And we have a tendency to judge people with wrong motives. The other thing I want to mention about judgment is found in Hebrews chapter 9. It says in It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment. So, when does God judge people? When does almighty God, creator of this universe judge people? According to this verse after they die.

Once to die and after this judgment. So God judges people after they die. When do you judge people? What's the answer to that question? You judge people long before they die.

Why does God wait till a person dies before he judges? He may be an evil person but God says I have hope for him maybe he will change. And so he waits. Think if God had judged the dying thief on the cross who went to paradise before he died.

Even a few minutes before or a few hours before he died. That would have been terrible. He was deserving to go to paradise finally but he is judged and sentenced to hell.

God waited till he died and took him to paradise. So God waits until a person dies before he judges him. Man is impatient and judges people long before they die.

This is the foolishness of man. He doesn't know all the facts. He doesn't know 99% of the person's private life, inner life.

He doesn't know how much that person has struggled, etc. How much that person has prayed. But he judges him.

No high court judge, serious high court judge would ever judge with such little evidence. If he knows only 1% of the case he'd say listen I need more evidence before I can pass a judgment until then I will suspend

judgment. And that's what every Christian should say.

Think of the story of the prodigal son. In the story of the prodigal son we read about the elder son. He was very upset when he saw the father rejoicing over the return of the prodigal son.

And when the father goes out and asks him why he hasn't come in. See what he says. In Luke 15 and verse 30.

This son of yours, he doesn't even call him this brother of mine. He tells the father this son of yours, the despising way in which he speaks. He has devoured your wealth with prostitutes.

How did he know that? How did he imagine that his younger brother was going around with prostitutes? Did somebody come and report that to him? Not at all. He assumed this man, this younger brother of mine must have been spending money on prostitutes. It may not have been true at all.

He may have been drinking or wasting his money in foolish ways but perhaps not on prostitutes. But when you have a wrong attitude like this older brother you can always imagine the worst about the other person. And whenever you imagine the worst about somebody else you can recognize that the problem is with you more than with the other person.

The other person may sit with his father at the dining table and enjoy the fatted cow and you may be outside the house. See what we see there is the story of the prodigal son is a story where the elder son is inside at the end of the story the younger son is inside the house and the elder son is outside the house because he is judging people. So make sure you don't end up outside the father's house because you are judging people with insufficient information.

The safest thing to do is not to judge. Do not judge. And he says even if you are judging what are you judging? A little speck that's what he said.

What is this log that is in a person's eye? You can't have a physical log inside your eye but Jesus exaggerates to show how grievous your sin is compared to his. Ok maybe he did something terribly wrong but your unloving attitude towards that person is a log compared to his sin which is only like a speck. Even that is only a speck compared to your unloving attitude towards him which is like a log.

And so the Lord says get rid of your unloving attitude towards that person. It's your unloving attitude towards that person that makes you constantly want to find fault with that person. Whatever that person does you put a wrong motive to it.

That person can not do anything good. The person is evil in your eyes and you don't see your unloving attitude towards that person. So what does he say? Imagine a man who's got very poor eyesight.

Would you go to that person to pull something out of your eye? Would you go to such an eye doctor who's blind almost because he's got cataract and a lot of problems with his eyes? How in the world can he look into your eyes and remove a little speck from there? I wouldn't want to go because you can't see properly. You'll damage his eyes. But the Lord says you hypocrite see your unloving attitude.

Every person who has an unloving attitude towards another and judges that person is a hypocrite according to Matthew 7 verse 5. First get rid of this unloving attitude and then you will see clearly. Then that brother himself may come to you and say brother could you please take this speck out of my eye?

When you come to that type of situation. Further something more about judgment.

Jesus said in John chapter 8 verse 15 You people judge according to the flesh. I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge my judgment will be absolutely true because I am not alone in this but I am he who sent me.

Jesus walked in such that I am in such intimate fellowship with the father who knows all things that if I do pass a judgment it will be absolutely right because I am in complete fellowship with the mind of the father. You and I are not in such perfect fellowship with the mind of the father. We have to humbly admit that.

So then how in the world can we pass a judgment? But even Jesus who was in such perfect fellowship carnal way of assessing that and you judge that person I am not judging anyone. What a fantastic verse. Can you follow the example of Jesus who was in such perfect fellowship with the father and who still said I'm not judging anyone.

The more we are out of fellowship with God the more we judge other people. He said I'm not judging anyone. This is immediately after the story of the Pharisees judging that woman caught in adultery and Jesus setting her free.

In the previous chapter John chapter 7 he speaks about how we are to judge. We are not to live in this world without any opinion like zombies floating around this world. No, God doesn't want us to be opinionless people.

Paul had an opinion about the Corinthians. He said you are carnal. He had an opinion about the Galatians.

He said you Galatians have been bewitched and you are foolish. So he had an opinion. So we need to understand discernment we must have.

Suspicion of others we should not have. Suspicion. Do not judge but judge.

Have you read a verse like that? Do not judge but judge. We are commanded to judge and here's the balance in John 7 verse 24. Do not judge according to appearance but judge with righteous judgment.

That means don't judge by what you see or hear. You need to judge righteously. In Isaiah chapter 11 we are told that that's how Jesus would judge.

It says in Isaiah chapter 11 when the spirit of God is upon Jesus. He will delight in the fear of the Lord and one mark of fearing God is this Isaiah 11 3. He will not judge by what he sees or what he hears but with righteousness. We get a lot of information from our eyes and our ears.

It says don't judge on the basis of that. Listen see but reserve judgment. Say Lord I've seen something I've heard something I don't know whether this is the truth.

I want to wait on you. That's how Jesus did it. He would never judge by what his eyes saw or his ears heard because he wanted to listen to the father.

It's a very good example for us to follow. Never to judge by outward appearance but judge with righteousness have a righteous opinion. And who whom do we have to judge.

We have to judge the people who are within our circle. For example if you're a father and your children are quarreling with each other you can't turn around to them and say no I'm not going to judge because the Bible says don't judge. You have authority over that circle of your children.

You have to judge and sort out that problem between them. If you're an elder in a church you have to discern the situation and sort out problems between husbands and wives or between brother and brother. The Apostle Paul once gave a man over to Satan we read in 1 Corinthians 5. As one who had authority over that church he passed a judgment.

That's right. And that was after waiting upon God to know what to do. So it's in the circle in which we have responsibility that we are to judge.

You don't have to judge what's happening in another person's church. You don't have any responsibility there. You don't have to judge another person's children because you're not their parents but your own children yes.

So the principle of judgment is see if that person is within your circle. For example if you're a boss having people working under you in your factory. If they have a problem you have to pass a judgment because you've got authority over them.

But in spheres where you don't have authority the answer is mind your own business. Wonderful word. Mind your own business.

Let none of you suffer Peter says as a busy body in other people's matters. 1 Peter 4.15 For many years I had this little sentence written in front of my table. The happiest people in the world are those who never judge others but judge themselves constantly.

I got that from 1 Peter 4.17. In the household of God we judge ourselves first. And verse 15 we don't judge other people. We don't become a busy body in other people's matters but we judge ourselves first.

The mark of a true household of God is it comprises of people who are not busy bodies in other people's matters but who judge themselves first. And such are the happiest people in the whole world. I'm thankful that I kept that before my mind for a long time and I've urged people I say if you want to live a godly life take this decision that you will judge yourself.

And the people who are God has put under your authority but nobody else. And I believe you can live a wonderful life. And so this is the ninth wrong attitude that Jesus warned us.

About finally in Matthew chapter 7. Very important word for us to follow and I hope you understood the balance here of where to judge and where not to judge. Whom to judge and not whom not to and how to judge. May God help us.

Let us pray. Our heavenly father as we bow before you again in this very important area give us wisdom to tread cautiously and wisely as we walk through this world and especially with our fellow believers we humbly ask in Jesus name Amen.

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