

Let Mercy Triumph Over Judgment

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the dangers of self-righteousness, judgmental attitudes, and legalism among believers. It highlights the importance of mercy, humility, and refraining from judging others. The speaker urges listeners to focus on encouraging and being merciful to one another, rather than looking down on or condemning fellow believers. The message stresses the significance of watching over one's heart, controlling speech, and avoiding gossip and spreading false information. It concludes with a powerful reminder to seek the lowest place, following the example of Jesus who did not judge but showed mercy.

Scripture: James 3:1, Hebrews 6:1, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Psalm 139:23, Matthew 7:1, James 2:13, John 8:15, Matthew 20:12

Topics: "Self-Righteousness", "Mercy and Humility"

Description

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Transcript

There is a tendency among many believers and more among those who have advanced somewhat in their Christian life, like many of you and many of us in NCCF, because we know a little more than others or we have understood certain portions of scripture better than other people. And we have heard explanations from godly people and that's come into our minds and we understand it and we feel we are ready to explain it to others. Here is a word that all of us, especially need to, all who are like that, need to listen to James chapter 3, verse 1. It's a very important verse that James wrote very early.

It's one of the first books of the New Testament written and he saw in his time this danger among believers. He says, let not my brethren, he's speaking to believers, let not many of you become teachers because you will receive a stricter judgment from God. We all stumble in many ways, but if a man does not stumble in his speech, he's a perfect man able to bridle the whole body as well.

We preach in the church that we must press on to perfection. And I'll tell you something, we all talk about it, but the persons who are really serious about pressing on to perfection will take verse 2 here very

carefully, seriously. They'll be careful in their speech.

If you want to be perfect, my brother, sister, start with your tongue. Start with your speech, the way you speak to your wife at home, the way you speak to your husband, the way you speak to your children. To rebuke your children is perfectly all right.

Correct them is okay, but let it be in a Christlike way, the way you speak to people in your office. If you're serious about pressing on to perfection, which is the goal of the Christian life, Hebrews 6.1, let us press on to perfection. Begin with your speech, your tongue.

That's very, very important. And then one area where we need to be careful in our tongue is don't imagine that you're a teacher of God's word when God has not given you that gift. Don't imagine that you're a doctor when all you've done is looked up the internet and read certain things.

You can go to the internet and get all types of understanding of medicine. It does not make you a doctor. You don't understand all the different aspects of how the human body is affected.

And it'd be very dangerous if you go around giving opinions to people who are sick. I mean, you can say from your own experience, I had this and this helped me. That's okay.

But don't try to give your opinion in areas where you are not gifted. The Bible says that the Lord has appointed some as teachers, not all. It says in Ephesians chapter four, that Jesus, after he ascended up into heaven, Ephesians four, it says in verse 4.10, he ascended to heaven.

And then from heaven, verse 11, he appointed some as apostles. Those are not the apostles he appointed on earth, those 12. Those are all appointed on the earth.

They were a special category. They're the foundation of the church as we read in Revelation. But these are apostles he appointed from heaven, like Paul and many others.

I think Timothy was an apostle too. And from heaven, he appointed some people as prophets, Ephesians 4.11, and some people as evangelists, and some people as shepherds, and some people as teachers. So you can't be an apostle just because you feel like being one.

And you can't even being an evangelist, you can give the gospel to everybody, but evangelist is a special gift. And the same way teachers, and it says, don't try to teach when you're not a teacher. Share your testimony, pass a video on to somebody which blessed you, but don't become a teacher because you'll cause confusion.

And all these conspiracy theories that go, that are spread by Christians. I mean, I know there are non-Christians who spread it, forget about them. I'm talking about Christians who get all types of opinions, not only on vaccines, but on so many other things.

They are trying to fulfill a function they were never gifted for. They were not teachers. God, Jesus from heaven did not appoint them as teachers, but they go around imagining they are just because they attended church and heard a few messages here and there, and heard something on the internet, and it appealed to their mind.

Without being gifted by God, they try to usurp a ministry they were never called for. It's a very serious thing to take on a ministry that God never called you to. And many people don't realize that.

It says in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, very clear, 1 Corinthians 12, 29, God has appointed first apostles, verse 28, 1 Corinthians 12, 28. God has appointed first apostles, secondly prophets, then teachers. Then he says in verse 29, all are not apostles, are they? No.

All are not prophets. No. All are not teachers.

All do not work miracles. So if we keep this in mind, we will not be spreading things we read from here, a little bit of information here, a little bit information there. We have to be very, very careful.

And also that we don't go around judging others and passing gossip. That's another thing that's very common among even believers. It could be even in CFC believers, people becoming gossips.

That means they read something about somebody or hear something about some believer, and then they go around saying, have you heard this about this person? Be very careful. Maybe you hear something about some preacher. You don't even know that preacher.

You heard about him or you read something about him on the internet. And then you go around spreading saying, hey, have you heard this about this preacher? What do you gain by saying that? Instead of spreading all that gossip, why not share the gospel? Why not share something positive? Why not share something that will encourage that person instead of appearing to be one who's very well-versed in the news and saying, this is how that believer did. And this is what that preacher did and all types of things.

And one year later, you discover it was also false report that it was not really true. Then what do you do? You already spread that gossip to about 40, 50 people. Do you go to all those 40, 50 people and tell them, hey, I want to withdraw what I said one year ago because I now discovered it was not true.

You don't do that. You have ruined somebody's reputation and you're supposed to be a child of God. Be not many teachers.

Recognize your limitation. It says in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 13 about widows, young people, young women who, you know, their husbands died and they became widows. Paul says it's better they get married again.

Otherwise, verse 13, 1 Timothy 5, 13, they learn to be idle because they don't have any children at home or the children are gone to school. They sit at home. They're no husband and they don't know what to do.

They're wandering around. That can also happen to a wife. Children are in school.

Husband is at work. He's got nothing to do. And verse 13, they learn to be idle and then they go on from house to house.

This is talking of course, pre-pandemic days, going from house to house and not merely idle, but they become gossips, speaking about all types of things and busybodies, talking about things which are not even proper to mention. Okay. Now here's talking about foolish young women.

Are there young men like that or older men like that? There was supposed to be an older man. You should have some wisdom, at least for the years that you've lived on this earth. Are you one of those who is a gossip or a busybody and other people's affairs have got nothing to do with you and information that you've never verified? You just read something.

There are 101 things on the internet that are false. Don't believe everything. If you go to the internet, you'll find hundreds of people who say they've gone to heaven and come back.

Are you going to believe that and propagate that rubbish? In the internets, there are hundreds of people who say they went to hell and came back. Are you going to propagate all that rubbish? There are people, Christians I know who go around doing that. Keep out of all this.

Gossips and busybodies talking about things not proper to mention. And who are these people? These are people who have not even studied the Bible sufficiently. They spend more time on the internet than in the Bible.

How in the world will they ever become spiritual? Man shall not live by the internet, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Have you read? I want to ask all of you who've been a believer at least for four or five years. Have you read every word in the Bible? Let me ask you that first of all.

If not, let me urge you to cut down seriously the amount of time you spend on the internet and concentrate on the Bible. Man shall not live by all these other things, but by every single word that proceeds from the mouth of God. I thank God that when I was young, there was no internet and I wasn't even tempted therefore.

And I concentrated this first seven years of my Christian life, I concentrated on studying the Bible. And my first Bible is full of notes here and there, all over it. And I got to know the scriptures and that's helped me throughout my 62 years of being a Christian.

I want to encourage you, if you want to concentrate on studying something, study the scriptures and don't be interested in information about other people, especially bad information that does not help you in any way. And don't go around spreading that to gain a reputation that I'm the one who's got latest information on this subject. We have some ladies like that in Bangalore who go around, they're specializing that.

They want a reputation. We have the latest information on this. Where did they get it from? Some internet site.

So the Bible says, let me show you this verse in Proverbs in chapter 4. A good verse for all of us to keep in mind always. You know, Proverbs, even though it's an Old Testament book, I feel it's the closest to a New Covenant book in the Old Testament. Because there are many things.

God gives grace to the humble and he opposes the proud. That's in James and Peter. But you see a hint of that in Proverbs 3.34. He gives grace.

Grace is a word which is almost never found in the Old Testament. But here it is in Proverbs 3.34. Proverbs is the closest, as I said, to the New Covenant in the Old Testament books. There are wonderful words in Proverbs when he speaks about the wife in Proverbs 31.

That's pure New Covenant teaching. There's not that type of emphasis generally in the Old Covenant. Okay, here's another very good one.

Proverbs 4 and 23. Watch over your heart with all diligence, because from it flow all the springs of life. Do you know where all the springs of life, good or bad, spring from? The heart.

Watch over your heart. You know, when we talk about anger, anger is not in your tongue. If you control your tongue, that you never get angry with people.

Don't think you have overcome anger. Don't fool yourself. No.

Anger is not in the tongue. There are Hindus who practice a thing called yoga. And I know a brother who came to CFC in India who said, I've conquered anger before I ever became a Christian.

They taught us in yoga to control our tongue. But anger is not in the tongue. It says in Ecclesiastes chapter 7. Ecclesiastes chapter 7 has some wise things written in Ecclesiastes by Solomon.

Verse 9, the last part. Anger dwells in the heart of a fool, in the bosom of a fool. That's where anger is.

It comes from there. Like we read in Proverbs, watch over your heart. But all issues of life, good or bad, start there.

So anger is not in your tongue. You can control your tongue and just be a good yogi, a good Hindu practitioner of yoga, not a Christian at all. When Jesus removes anger from our life, he doesn't remove it from our tongue.

He removes it from the heart so it doesn't come through the tongue. If you control your tongue and the anger is still in your heart against somebody, my brother, sister, don't fool yourself that you've overcome anger. You're just practicing yoga.

That's not Christianity. Jesus deals with the root of the problem. John the Baptist said that Jesus has come with an axe to the root, Matthew chapter 3, not with a pair of scissors to cut out the fruit.

An axe to the root and the root is in the heart. So Jesus also spoke about that in Matthew's gospel chapter 12. Turn with me there because when you think about gossip and spreading all these things, remember that it all begins in the heart.

Matthew 12 and verse 35, the good man brings out of his good treasure what is good. That's in the heart. And the evil man, from his evil treasure, what is evil? Now look at the previous verse, verse 34, the last part.

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. Whenever you speak something, it is an indication of what is in your heart. Always.

The thing you speak about most is an indication of what fills your heart. What you like to go and talk to other people about. If your heart is filled with love for Jesus Christ, that's what you will talk to people about.

If your heart is filled with a forgiving, gracious spirit, that'll come out in your tongue. The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. Don't say, I accidentally said that to my wife.

No, you didn't. That was in your heart. Don't say, accidentally got upset with my husband.

No. You have worked up something in your heart over a period of time against your husband or wife and it bothered you so much and after some you couldn't keep it in. Like the thing boiling over, it boiled out of your mouth.

But don't think that, okay, tomorrow onwards I'll control my tongue. It doesn't solve the problem. Watch over your heart.

So this matter of judging others also, I want to go on from there. You know, it says about, Jesus told us very carefully, judge not that you be not judged, Matthew 7, 1 and 2, because the standard with which you, Matthew 7, verse 2, remember this in the day of judgment, you remember this word that I spoke to you today. Take care of it now.

The standard you use, Matthew 7, verse 2, to judge other people today will be the same standard with which God will judge you in the final day. Were you merciful to others? Blessed are the merciful, Matthew 5. They shall obtain mercy in the day of judgment. Do you want to get mercy from the Lord in the day of judgment? Read Matthew 5. Blessed are the merciful.

They are the only ones who are going to get, obtain mercy in the day of judgment. And I'll tell you something, you and I need a tremendous amount of mercy in the final day. And the way to get it is to be merciful now to all the people around you.

Be merciful to your husband, to your wife, when they don't do things the way you think they should. Be merciful, be merciful, be merciful to your children. Don't be so, you need to be strict, but don't be so hard on them.

Be merciful to people around you who work for you. Be strict, but be merciful, because blessed, and the Amplified Bible says, happy and to be envied. You want to envy somebody, envy the man who's merciful, because one day he's going to get a lot of mercy from God.

But the opposite of that, it says in James 2, verse 13, James 2, verse 13, judgment from God, James 2, verse 13, judgment from God in the final day will be without any mercy to the one who has shown no mercy to other people. Let's talk for a moment, everyone. Look back over the last one week or the last one month.

You don't have to look back the last 10 years. Ask yourself, when you came across people who did something wrong, maybe in your own home or somewhere, did you allow for the possibility, well, we all make mistakes, but let's not be so hard on that, or are you one of those strict Pharisees who's immediately hard, like the Pharisees said, why don't your disciples wash their hands before they eat their food? Oh dear, is there some NCCF believer who talks like that? In the final day, judgment will be without any mercy to those who have shown no mercy to others. Please take my words seriously, my dear brothers and sisters.

I'm trying to save you and make it easy for you in the day of judgment. Judgment will be merciless, but if you are merciful to others in the final day, God's mercy, verse 13, James 2, verse 13, will triumph over his judgment of you. I want mercy.

I want to be merciful to others, just as God has been merciful to me. I never deserved to be a child of God, not at all. I never deserved to be called to preach God's word, far from it.

I'll never forget till the end of my life that God didn't pick a man who was worthy to be saved or to preach his truth or to explain the new covenant. He picked someone who was most unworthy. Then why did he do it? Pure, 100% mercy.

I want to be like that to others. In all their dealings with me, I want to be strict when they do something wrong in the church. That's not my business.

It's the church I have to protect. I mean, if I see money changers in the temple, people trying to make money in the name of religion or trying to exploit others, I want to be exactly like Jesus was. The meek and gentle Jesus took a whip, and I'm ready to take a whip in my tongue where I see such people exploiting God's people or trying to make money or advantage or taking advantage of others.

The same hands that washed the disciples' feet also took a whip to chase people out. That's the balance that is in Jesus' life, grace and truth. You must be ready to wash.

You don't have to take a whip if God hasn't called you to be a prophet or a teacher. No, you just keep washing people's feet. That's good enough for you.

But where God calls a person to be a prophet, he has to take the whip as well in addition to washing people's feet. So, it says here about the Pharisees in Mark chapter 3. It all is related to this business of looking at other people and wondering whether they should do this or they should do that. Should they take the vaccine or not? Actually, I couldn't care less.

It says in Mark's gospel in chapter 3, Jesus entered into a synagogue, verse 1, and a man was there with a withered hand. And listen to this, and the Pharisees were watching him. What were they watching him to see? To find something to criticize.

He spoke about the tongue. I want to ask you about your eyes. Here he's talking about the eyes.

How do you watch people? Men have a problem with looking with lust. Women may not have lust problem unless they're abnormal. But there's another problem that women can have with their eyes, just like men also, to watch, to find something wrong in the other person.

Something wrong in the way that person's dresses or something wrong in the way that person does something else. Sharp eyes. The Bible speaks about, in second Peter 2, about people whose eyes are full of adultery.

But it also speaks in Proverbs chapter 6 about those whose eyes are proud. Women don't have eyes full of adultery unless they are prostitutes. But they can have proud eyes, like it says in Proverbs chapter 6. Proud eyes that are always watching, looking around to see what's wrong in this person in the church and in that person in the church.

And has that sister fully covered her head? Because that's what we follow, the rule that we follow here. Is that what you're watching on Sunday mornings? Be careful. They were watching him to see what is he going to do? Is he going to heal on the Sabbath day so that they might accuse him? Now, today it may not be healing on the Sabbath day.

And those words be written about you, brother, sister. You were watching somebody to find there's something you can accuse in that person. Eliminate that from your life 100% today.

Eliminate it. Leave that job to the prophets. Leave that job to the elders.

They watch over people. The Bible says that in Hebrews 13, 17, that elders watch over people. They have to do it, but you don't have to do it.

It says they watched to see so that they could accuse. How does Jesus look at such people then and now? If you're like that, I'll tell you how Jesus looks at you today. Verse 5, he looked at them with anger.

Do you believe that the Lord who's in the midst of our church can look at somebody sitting here today with anger? I believe it with all my heart. He can look at that person with mercy, or he can look at somebody with anger. Yes, even a brother or sister sitting in the NCCF.

Jesus is in the midst and he can look at you with anger because of the hardness, verse 5, of your heart against somebody. You forget how merciful God has been to you. Think back to the sins you committed in your unconverted days, which God has mercifully covered and not exposed to anybody in NCCF.

People in NCCF think you've been a saint from the day you were born, when you know very well the rotten sins that you committed in your unconverted days, and even after you were converted. The Lord has mercifully blotted it out, and not only from his record, but even hidden it from everybody in the church. They don't know anything of the terrible things you did before you came to the light.

Be merciful. Don't let the Lord be angry at the hardness of your heart. It says in Jeremiah 5, it's an interesting verse here, Jeremiah chapter 5 and verse, Jeremiah 5, verse 26.

The Lord says, wicked men are found among my people. We're not talking about unbelievers. Wicked men are found among my people.

They are watching like fowlers, lying in wait. They set a trap to catch men. The Lord saw it then, and he sees it today.

He says such wicked men and wicked women are sitting in the midst of the church, watching like people want to catch a bird in a trap to catch people. Ah, this person did something wrong. That person did something wrong.

The Bible says our calling in Hebrews 3.13 is to encourage one another daily, lest people fall into sin. I've often given a tour to my fellow elders in India and other places, and even other believers. Don't ever try to correct somebody if you have never encouraged him at any time.

So before you correct somebody, just ask yourself two questions. Maybe that person is wrong, a hundred percent wrong. And maybe he respects you enough that you can go and tell him where he's wrong.

But before you do that, ask yourself two questions. Have I ever encouraged him when I saw something good in him? Don't say there's no good in him. There is good in every single person sitting in NCCF.

If you haven't seen it, it's a certain amount of blindness in your own eyes. But have you ever encouraged a person? How much do you encourage your own children? Some of you are very quick to find fault with something your children did. But when was the last time you encouraged your children? Encouragement, I say, is the board on which you can write with a chalk words of correction.

In the schools in India, they have blackboards, and the teacher uses a chalk to write on it. If there is no blackboard and she uses a chalk and just write in thin air, nobody can see it. So encouragement is the blackboard.

Then if you write a word of correction, the words are clear and people will read it and they can get the message. But if you've never encouraged or prayed for someone, even your wife or husband, aren't we

supposed to encourage our marriage partners? Hebrews 3.13, encourage one another daily. Have you read that verse? Encourage one another once a year? No.

Once in a month? No. Hebrews 3.13 is clear. Daily.

Okay, tell me, which believer in NCCF do you see daily? Even your co-workers, you don't see daily, you don't see them on Sundays. Tell me one person you see daily. That's the one who lives in your own home.

So the only place you can actually obey that verse is with the people in your own home. Encourage one another daily. Then you have a blackboard where even a small word of correction will be taken and they won't be offended.

So don't be like these followers that we read in Jeremiah 5. Very often this is the mark of a person who thinks he's very holy. The Pharisees were self-righteous. They did not realize what a lot of nakedness there was in their life.

The righteousness of Christ clothes us completely. Our self-righteousness. Can you tell me a picture of self-righteousness? I'll give you a picture of self-righteousness.

The fig leaves with which Adam covered himself and Eve covered herself. Now fig leaves, figs are about pretty big leaves compared to the leaves of other trees. So they picked out that, but how much of their body could they cover? A couple of fig leaves.

And when a person goes around with these fig leaves of righteousness, thinking he's very holy because he's got one or two areas, one or two sinful areas covered up, or maybe he has overcome in one or two areas, but the rest of his body is all naked. And with these fig leaves of self-righteousness, they go around judging others. Jesus, the Lord, took off those fig leaves from Adam and Eve and threw it away and said, I'll give you an animal skin that covers your whole body properly.

And that's the first incidence in the Bible of an animal being killed for Adam and Eve's sin in the garden of Eden itself. And God taking that skin, picture of the righteousness of Christ and putting it on Adam and Eve. That's written way in the beginning.

Get rid of your self-righteousness. Get rid of your fig leaves. They don't cover you.

And the Pharisees never understood it. And that's what makes us, you know, judge others because we think we ourselves are covered pretty well. We're not.

Remember what Jesus said in Luke chapter 12, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. You know what leaven is? Like yeast, you put it in a bowl of flour and it swells up. It makes the bread huge.

And that's what leaven does. It makes you look so spiritual. Actually, you're just religious.

It's just a lot of hot air. That leaven inside tends to puff up that lump of wheat or flour. He said, beware of this type of leaven that makes you look so spiritual.

It's all hollow inside. Hypocrisy. That's the thing that Jesus warned his disciples about.

So be very careful about this, my brothers. When you look at Jesus' own life, one perfect man that walked on this earth. If there was anybody who had a right to judge others, it was Jesus.

But you read about Jesus saying this in John chapter 8. I wonder whether we need to hear this word ourselves. John 8 verse 15. Please read it.

John 8 verse 15. This is what he said to the Pharisees. In verse 13, he was talking to the Pharisees.

You judge according to the flesh. I am not judging anyone. Imagine the one perfect man who walked on this earth says, I don't judge anybody.

Wow. Where are we compared to that? Especially those of us who say, I want to be like Jesus. I might not be like Jesus here.

I do not judge anyone. His life exposed sin, left, right, and center. His words exposed sin, left, right, and center.

He was the light that exposed darkness everywhere, even the hidden corridors of darkness in people's lives. People got convicted. And if you walk like Jesus, I tell you, your words and your life will convict people.

You feel convicted. And you'll be able to say, I won't judge anybody. Turn to the earlier part of that chapter, John 8, and you'll see why.

The Pharisees came to him, verse 4, having caught a woman in adultery in the very act. I don't know how in the world they caught that. And they knew the law.

Moses said that such women must be stoned to death. Now, they did not know, the Pharisees did not know that the Jesus who was sitting there on the ground is the same Jesus who 1,500 years earlier from heaven gave Moses that law. The law that a woman who commits adultery in Israel must be stoned to death.

That's the man who was sitting there on the ground, scribbling. They didn't know that. Jesus knew it.

He knew the law better than them. He gave it to the path, Moses from heaven. He was not ignorant.

They didn't have to tell him about it. And then he had every right to obey the law which he himself gave. And he said, you're right.

He who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone. That's another word every one of us needs to hear. Every one of us, all the time.

He who is without sin, throw the first stone. Well, I can see there that one by one, beginning verse 9 with the oldest words, they went away. Why didn't somebody pretend? I thought of that.

Why didn't somebody there pretend, no, my life is clean, I can throw a stone. He knew that Jesus who saw through him would expose all his sins in public. And he was scared of that.

Jesus seems to know what people even think. There are many instances in the gospels where it said Jesus knew what they thought and he answered that thought before they spoke it. And these guys knew that.

If I pretend I have no sin, Jesus will expose me first of all. So they quietly left him. What did Jesus say? He who is without sin, let him throw the first stone.

Finally, after everybody left, there was one person left without sin who was qualified to throw the stone. And Jesus had made that, he gave a command from heaven, stone those who commit adultery. Now he's given a second command from earth.

The one who is without sin can throw the first stone. He qualifies. He can pick up a stone.

But Jesus never picks up stones. He didn't come here to throw stones. Pharisees throw stones.

Many Christians throw stones at others. But Jesus never picks up stones. Do you do that, brother, sister? Do you have any stones in your hand? Do you pick up stones? Ask yourself.

Maybe today you are convicted about it. I hope one month from now you remember what you heard. I hope one year from now you'll remember what you heard today.

I hope 10 years from now you'll remember what you heard today. Because sometimes we hear something and we take it seriously, but it doesn't seem to last. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And if ever you hear a word in the church, which is a word from the mouth of God, you better keep that as a treasure and remind yourself of it every day. Jesus has no stones to throw at anybody. And what does he teach there? What did this woman do? Committed adultery, terrible sin.

And Jesus proves here that this legalistic attitude is worse than adultery. Legalism is worse than adultery. Judging others and throwing stones at others is worse than adultery.

Because Jesus let this woman go. Has no one condemned you? No. Well, I don't condemn you.

I have no stone to throw at you, woman. Just don't go and do this again. I say, Lord, have mercy on us.

Please give us that attitude. As we look around at failing brothers and sisters, some of them struggling to live a godly life, but we don't know the pressures they are living under. Maybe I don't face those pressures they are facing.

And in a moment of weakness, they did or said something, Lord, let me be merciful. Let mercy characterize my life. Let me never have any stones in my hand.

Let me not be a gossip going around talking this, this, this, this, this about people who, and afterwards I hear the truth about it and I have to take back those words. Let's be very, very, very careful in all these things, dear brothers and sisters. You know, the thing is, whenever a person, we don't realize this, you know, Pharisees were trying to find fault with others.

They were trying to show they were superior. We're not like this woman caught in adultery. We're not like these other people who don't keep the law.

They were always looking down on other people saying these people don't keep the law. We're not like them. We're different.

Yeah. That's a warning for all of us to be very, very careful. Let me read one word in closing.

You remember the story of the laborers in Matthew 20. Man went out early morning at six o'clock and hired laborers and said, go and work and I'll give you a one denarius for the day's work. And then he went out.

That's at six o'clock in the morning. And then he went out at nine o'clock and he went out at noon took about two people and even at three o'clock in the afternoon, he got people to come and work always promising one denarius. And then at five o'clock in the evening, when there's only one hour left to work, he got some people and he didn't promise them denarius.

He just said, I'll give you whatever is right. That's enough. And they accepted that they never made a contract.

And finally, we read that those people who did not make a contract, they're the ones who get rewarded first. And I'll tell you, you discover one thing in heaven. The people who are legalistic are always last in the line.

The people who said, Lord, we're not serving you for reward. We don't want a denarius or any such thing. We just love you.

And we want to live for you and serve you. We are always up in front. And what is the complaint of the people who came at first? They listen to this.

This is the problem with that complaint in with the problem with those people. Matthew chapter 20, it's a very important word to remember phrase in the middle of Matthew 20 verse 12. You have made these people equal to us.

Uh huh. How can you make these people equal to us? We came here at six in the morning. We joined NCCF years before these people came.

How in the world can you make them equal to us? We were believers long, long before these people became believers. How can you make them equal to us? This guy was converted last year or last month. How can he be equal to me? Do you have that attitude towards them? What do you call a junior believer from junior believer? It's not senior like you who came at six o'clock in the morning.

Be careful, brothers and sisters. This tendency towards phariseeism and legalism and seniority and all this garbage is in every child of Adam. It's part of the flesh.

You can live down on your wife like that. I was a believer before you. I know more of the Lord than you.

How can you be equal to me? No one can be equal to me. Be careful of that. Even if you hide it, it can be there inside you.

Deal with it in the heart. Lord, give me the lowest place. And if that low place is too high for me, make one lower still, way down at the foot of the cross.

Let me be there. Help me, Lord, to walk as you walked who said, I judge no one. May God help us.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/oUkdHeRJcbU.mp4>

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