

"Relating to our Fellowman"

Part 3

Matthew 7:1-12

Introduction: For the past several weeks we have been looking at **Matthew 7:1-12**. In this passage Jesus is dealing again with the false teaching of the religious leaders of His day. The religious leaders were self righteous people who had developed their own set of standards. They used their own set of standards as a microscope to examine everyone who was not a part of their circle. The result was judging and criticism. They were criticizing everyone who did not live as they lived. They had set themselves in the seat of a judge and they believed they had enough understanding to judge all who fell short of their standards.

This "poison of the Pharisees" is also evident in the lives of many believers today. There are people today who formulate their own set of standards. They then use their standards as a microscope to examine all others and when others do not measure up they become very critical and judgmental. That very attitude is sin and that is what Jesus is addressing in **Matthew 7:1a** when He said, "Judge not". That statement could also be translated, "Stop criticizing!".

Notice Matthew 7:1-6

In these verses Jesus has given to us 3 reasons why we are not to be judgmental and critical.

1. We must not judge because we are not God.

Notice Matthew 7:1b

Within this verse there is a reminder that we are not God and because we are not God we do not have the understanding to be the judge of others. But there is something far deeper here that we looked at last week. To place ourselves in the position of a judge of others is an attempt to seize the authority from God. This sin comes straight from Satan and when we play the part of the judge we are living in direct rebellion against God. This can be seen in the desire of Satan.

Isaiah 14:12-14

¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

¹³ For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

*¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High.***

2. We must not judge because it will bring upon us a greater judgment.

Notice Matthew 7:2

Last week we looked at the seriousness of this verse and what it is that Jesus is saying here. He is **not** saying that if we are judgmental and critical we will receive the same treatment from our fellow man, although that could be one of the consequences.

What Jesus is saying here is that when we usurp the authority of God we then will be held to a higher level of accountability on the day when we stand before God. In other words to attempt to seize the position

Wednesday October 16, 2013

of God is to claim to have the light and the understanding to be the judge and to claim to have that light and understanding is to sign up for a higher degree of judgment from God. Let me show you what James says about being accountable for the Truth we have.

James 3:1

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

I want you to notice the words of Matthew Henry on this verse.

*"These words do not forbid doing what we can to direct and instruct others in the way of their duty or to reprove them in a Christian way for what is amiss; but we must not affect to speak and act as those who are continually assuming the chair, we must not prescribe to one another, so as to make our own sentiments a standard by which to try all others, because God gives various gifts to men, and expects from each according to that measure of light which he gives. "Therefore by not many **masters'** (or **teachers,** as some read it); "do not give yourselves the air of teachers, imposers, and judges, but rather speak with the humility and spirit of learners; do not censure one another, as if all must be brought to your standard.' This is enforced by two reasons. 1. Those who thus set up for judges and censurers **shall receive the greater condemnation.** Our judging others will but make our own judgment the more strict and severe. Those who are curious to spy out the faults of others, and arrogant in passing censures upon them, may expect that God will be as extreme in marking what they say and do amiss."*

Wednesday October 16, 2013

As I told you last week that to sit in the chair of judgment is to sign up for a higher degree of judgment when we stand before God one day.

Notice the words one man spoke on this text;

"To judge wrongly is to play God. And it is a serious thing. Because you will be biased and you will be bribed by your own self-righteousness, by your own pride, by your own ego. And you can't judge righteous judgment, because you don't have all the facts."

Notice the history which was recorded about a judge in Persia;

"In Persia once, there was a judge and this particular judge was bribed. And so he rendered a wrong verdict, for money. Cambyses was the Persian king. And he heard what happened. And so he ordered the judge to be executed. And after the judge was executed, he ordered his soldiers to skin him. Strip off all his skin. He took all of the skin of that judge, and with it, he covered a chair. And on that chair sat every judge from then on who judged in that court in Persia."

That would be a great reminder to judge based truly on the facts!

Now last week I told you that as we approach this text we need to understand that it can be divided into 2 parts. It is dealing with our relations to other people and in **Matthew 7:1-6** we are told what **not** to do. Then in **Matthew 7:7-12** we are told what **to** do. So this section can be divided into a positive and a negative.

I. What not to do.

Part 3

Matthew 7:1-6

Wednesday October 16, 2013

Now Jesus will give to us the 3rd reason why we are not to be judgmental and critical.

3. We must not judge because when we do we give to others the wrong view of God and the wrong view of ourselves.

Let me just remind you that as believers we are live in a way that others see Jesus in us.

2 Corinthians 4:10-11

¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

¹¹ For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

With that thought in mind let us notice the verses.

Notice Matthew 7:3-5

There is so much within these verses which we need to consider. The entire picture which Jesus paints with His words here is almost like that of a cartoon.

Let us start by looking closely at some of the wording in these verses.

First of all I think we need to look at the word "**brother**".

It is used in all 3 of these verses and it could refer to our fellow man in general but I believe it refers to our fellow believer. Christians are far more critical of their fellow Christians than they are of people of the world. We know the people of the world will not live up to our standards because they do not have the ability. But it is our fellow

Wednesday October 16, 2013

believer that we judge with our own standards and we then criticize when he or she falls short. It is not the unsaved but it is the person who calls themselves a Christian that we place under the microscope.

So with the judgment and criticism being pointed toward our fellow believer here is something I believe we need to stop and think about. That judgmental attitude and criticism is meant to harm or to wound and to wound a fellow believer is to wound Jesus Himself.

1 Corinthians 12:25-27

²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

²⁷ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

I have underlined the end of verse 25 just as a reminder that we are to care for one another not wound one another. There is no place for criticism within the church. There is plenty of criticism focused toward the church from the outside world.

To be a critic and judgmental of our fellow believers is to join sides with Satan.

Revelation 12:10

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night

Wednesday October 16, 2013

The second point we need to consider within these verses are the words "mote" and "beam".

Notice Matthew 7:3-5

Mote - This refers to a tiny straw or piece of wool that might possibly fly into the eye. The point is this would be something rather small but at the same time it would be very painful.

Beam - This refers to a beam that would be used to build a wall. If we were to compare the "mote" with the "beam" it would be like one man having a small splinter in his eye and another man having a 2 x 4 protruding from his eye. That is why I said it is like Jesus was drawing a cartoon with His words.

Now here is what I notice when I look at the meaning of the words within these verses; in order to see a speck of wood in my brother's eye or a speck of straw I would need to be watching him very closely. If someone walks past me with a piece of wool or straw in their eye I will not normally notice unless I am focusing completely upon them. Do you see the picture within this thought?

The person who is judgmental and critical is someone who is always watching closely for someone else to make a mistake so they can use their critiquing "skills". They are a person who places others under a microscope at all times looking for any kind of fault they can find in their Christian walk and the microscope they are looking through is their own set of standards which they have set up.

The third point we need to consider here is that we cannot help our own brother with his or her fault until we take care of the fault which we have in our life.

Notice Matthew 7:5

When I look at this verse I see right away that Jesus does want me to help my brother to get free from the "splinter" which is in his eye but I also see that until I get the "timber" out of mine own eye I cannot help him.

Let us take a moment and think about something here that will truly help us understand this verse. What does the "mote" and the "beam" represent in this text? They both represent sin but we need to go deeper here. When I read this verse I immediately understand that one of these sins is more serious than the other. We can say that the "splinter" can be any sin that is found in the life of a believer which is holding him or her back. But what is the sin which is pictured as a "beam"? I believe we need to keep in mind the context here to grasp this. Jesus is speaking against the self righteousness and the critical and judgmental spirit of the Pharisees in this passage. Therefore, the "beam" would be the sin of being critical and judgmental.

Think about this for a moment. Is it not the person who is critical and judgmental who sees nothing wrong in his or her life but sees everything that is wrong in someone else's life?

Notice Matthew 7:3-5 again.

This is a picture of a man with a 2x4 sticking out of his eye and he walks up to a man with a splinter in his eye and tries to pull it out. The man trying to get the splinter is not even aware that he has a 2x4 in his own eye!

Now let me go deeper with the thought here:

Wednesday October 16, 2013

When a person is controlled by a critical and judgmental spirit they have no desire to help others but have only a desire to tear others down so as to build themselves up (in their own mind). In this text Jesus says that is a very serious offence and until that critical and judgmental spirit is dealt with you can be of no help to your fellow believer.

Now I also want to address why the critical and judgmental spirit in a believer is considered to be worse than any other sin. The reason is because when a believer possesses that spirit he or she is playing the part of God and he or she then gives to those who are watching the wrong picture of God.

God is not critical and judgmental but the very opposite is true; God is long suffering and merciful.

Exodus 34:6-7

⁶ And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,

Let's get back to the thought again. To be judgmental and critical also gives to others a distorted view of ourselves. If we are always sitting around finding fault in everyone else then we are (with our practice) telling others, "I have reached the highest spiritual peak there is and there is nothing more to deal with in my own life. Therefore, I will use the rest of my time to help you get to where I am." That is completely

Wednesday October 16, 2013

ridiculous because there is not one person in here who does not have something in their life that does not need attention.

Conclusion:

There is a thought here that all of us need to carry home tonight. To sit in the seat of the Judge is a very serious offence for it gives to others the wrong picture of God and the wrong picture of me.

In order to help my brother or sister get free from a besetting sin I first must look at my life in the light of God's Word. If there is something in my life that needs to be addressed then that must come first then I can be used of God to help my fellow believer. In order to help the body of Christ we must come down from the seat of judgment and walk along side of our fellow believers.