

Judge Not Lest You Be Judged

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the importance of refraining from hypocritical and harsh judgments towards others, emphasizing the need for self-reflection and humility in our assessments. It highlights the danger of pride and the significance of showing mercy and love in our interactions, recognizing our own need for grace and forgiveness before God's judgment seat.

Duration: 51:01

Scripture: Matthew 7:1, Romans 14:13, James 4:11, Galatians 6:3, Jeremiah 32:40, James 1:19

Topics: "Humility", "Mercy and Grace"

Description

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Transcript

Matthew chapter 7, I'm going to read the first five verses. Judge not that you be not judged, for with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there is a log 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, I will tell you this, you can find sermons that are largely or almost entirely taken up with what these words do not mean. Now I know, I know, between Matthew 7, 1 and John 3, 16, the lost world out there probably twists these passages more than just about any other portion of scripture. I recognize that.

And when a verse is wrongly used, is it appropriate to say it doesn't mean that? Of course that's appropriate. But I think, given the fact that when we get to the end of this chapter, it's really important that we hear and do, we don't want to just simply take up all of our time with what this doesn't mean. We really want to look at the heart and soul of what this actually does mean.

And so, just right here at the beginning, I will tell you what it obviously doesn't mean, but I'm only just going to spend a moment on this. Judge not. You see it.

Judge not. Do not judge. Or what? What's the consequence if you judge? You will be judged.

That's exactly right. Brethren, our Lord's prohibition here is clearly not a command to put discernment out the window. He's not telling us, quit being critical thinkers.

He's not telling us that. He's not commanding us to put away any kind of critical faculties. This is not an injunction to simply turn a blind eye to when there's sin in the church.

He's not saying, well, don't dare tell somebody I see sin in your life. He's not saying, don't tell somebody if you see a speck in their eye. Because you see clearly from the context, right? There's several things in the context here that ought to be very clear to us.

Look at verse 5. 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. You see that? Jesus is not telling us to cease at once to discern between what's true and what's not true, what's good and bad.

The very clear context here is He does want us to be able to discern and see and be able to say to a brother, brother, you do have a speck in your eye. We need to get to the proper place where we're able to do that. The Lord's using an analogy here.

The speck in your brother's eye, that's not good. That's something about their life that says it's not good to have a piece of dirt in your eye. And it's not good to have, in his analogy here, the idea is you've got something in your life, some kind of sin, some kind of fault, something that's backwards, something not good, seen clearly.

He's not talking about with the physical eye. He's talking about having discernment. That's what we're talking about.

When you see clearly in the spiritual realm, that means you have proper judgment. You have proper discernment. You are being a right critical thinker.

You're able to clearly analyze something. You've got insight. You've got spiritual wisdom with regards to this.

It means we're able to recognize spiritual specks. That's the idea. We have the ability to discern it, to make these judgments, to critically analyze.

And then there's this. Look at verse 6. Do not give dogs what is holy. Do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Let me ask you something. We're going to look at this next two weeks. Who's a pig? Let me ask you this.

Do you think he expects us to identify pigs? Well, if you're not supposed to cast your pearl before swine, does he expect you to figure out who's doggish and who's swinish? Yes. You need to be able to make those kind of judgments. He expects us to look at somebody and say, that is a spiritual pig.

Now we may not like that. We're going to look at that in two weeks. Brethren, I think, you know what? I think it's critical that we actually take these passages and implement them into our lives.

There is a place to no longer take the word of God to somebody. There is a time to stop. And he's expecting that we'll have the ability to figure out who those people are.

Again, in the context here, look at verse 15, Matthew 7, 15. See all this takes critical evaluation. You have to be able to measure people by a certain standard.

And you see it here in verse 15, beware of false prophets. And how are you going to know these false prophets? Well they come to you in sheep's clothing. Check that out.

So this means our spiritual judgment needs to be very refined because it's not just figure out who the false prophets are. It's you have to be able to see past their disguise. This takes extraordinary ability.

Inwardly they're ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Do you think he expects us to look at, now look, one of the ways that you can tell false teachers, look at their life.

They may say the right things and they may appear as sheep, but look at the fruit of their life. Look at how they handle money, look how they handle women, and those are very important areas to look at. This takes critical evaluation.

Brethren, we need to be more than just a little discerning. We need to know how to critically evaluate these things. We need to know how to test the spirits.

We need to know how to take this, because this is where we measure things by. We need to be able to take the word of God and we need to be able to measure what's happening in people's lives. We need to be able to look at people, know who's pigs, know who's false prophets among us.

The Apostle Paul said it this way, such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, so it's no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond with their deeds.

You know what? The Bible talks about false teachers, false prophets, false apostles, false Christ, and how are we going to discern them? You better be able to judge what's true and what's not. Enough with that. Now, what does this mean? Because that's obviously what Jesus is really after here.

What does this mean? What's the focus? I think it's important that you remember this about the Sermon on the Mount. Go back to chapter 5. When I began preaching on this, in fact the very first message, I emphasized that in all the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 5 verse 20 really sums up the very heart and soul of the Sermon on the Mount. If you're looking at any one verse that kind of gives you the feel for what the Lord is developing here, what's the thesis here? He says this, I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Your righteousness better exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus refers to these guys again throughout the Sermon, but you know what's interesting? You remember this, probably. Matthew chapter 23.

You remember Matthew chapter 23, Jesus condemns the scribes and the Pharisees. What do you call them over and over and over again? Hypocrites. You know what, as he develops this Sermon on the Mount, he gets to where he's not even calling them scribes and Pharisees anymore.

He just calls them hypocrites. You see this, look at verse 6-2. When you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do.

Or 6-5, when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. Or 6-16, when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. Brethren, if there's anything that describes, that characterizes the scribes and the Pharisees, it is hypocrisy.

And Jesus is condemning this. He says your righteousness better exceed this. We need to be people that bear out the beatitudes in our life, the poor in spirit.

Not this hypocrisy. There needs to be honesty about us, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, hypocrisy. And brethren, if we have eyes to see, when he comes over to chapter 7, he's dealing with the same thing again.

You see, the reality is that these scribes and these Pharisees were extremely judgmental. And you can see it in 7-5. He deals with hypocrisy.

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. He doesn't want us to be these hypocrites.

Hypocrisy is the very characteristic of these scribes and Pharisees, which you better have a righteousness that exceeds theirs. And by the way, the Sermon on the Mount is not speaking about imputed righteousness. We believe that.

We believe that by the obedience of one, many are made righteous. Definitely believe what Paul taught, what Isaiah taught. But listen, the whole of the Sermon on the Mount is about how we actually live.

It's about how we pray, how we give, how we fast, how we judge. And we're not to be these hypocrites. We're to exceed because that's what the grace of God does.

The grace of God will always lift us way beyond these hypocrite scribes, Pharisees. That's a reality. Hypocrisy.

Here's the question. When is judging hypocrisy? Let me ask this. What is hypocrisy? Let's go back and just think about that.

What is hypocrisy? Being an actor, pretending, appearing to be something that you're not. So when are our powers of discernment an expression of that? When are our powers of discernment an expression of seeking to be something we're not? We can use our Lord's own analogy. You have a speck in your eye.

You have a speck in your eye. I have a beam in my eye. Now, I have the ability, I have 20-20 vision.

I can march in your right there, so I'm going to use you in an example. I can see the speck in his eye. That's not true.

I can barely see your face, brother. You see, I don't wear my glasses up here because I can read this perfect. I just can't see beyond like the third row.

But say, okay, I got 20-20. I'm bragging on my ability to see. I see that speck in your eye, brother.

But what? I got a beam in my own eye. I mean, that speck right there jumps right out at me. And there truly is a speck there.

And I see it. Wow. I'm so discerning, aren't I? You see, that's my claim to fame.

Boy, I've got this discernment. I've got this guy figured out. But what's the hypocrisy? I can't figure me out.

And I've got something far bigger, far worse, far more glaring wrong in me. You see, I'm coming across as I'm very astute. I'm very perceptive, aware, insightful.

I have a very penetrating spiritual gaze here. So it's discern the slightest blemish in you. But when I look in the mirror, oh, I'm beautiful.

And see, that's not true. I'm a piece of lumber. That's what Jesus... That's the analogy Jesus is after here, much larger, but I'm oblivious to it.

There's the hypocrisy. The scribes and the Pharisees were... Have you ever noticed there's two accounts that I mean jump at me when it comes to the scribes and the Pharisees, hypocrisy in judging others. Listen to these.

You don't need to turn to them. They said to the blind man in John 9, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? He answered them. I've told you already, you would not listen.

Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciple? They reviled him saying, you're his disciple, but we're disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as far as this man, we do not know where he comes from. The man answered, why, this is an amazing thing.

You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone's a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. And then it's what they say next. This is one of the most glaring hypocritical judgments that you find anywhere in scripture that these men made.

They answered him, you were born in utter sin, and would you teach us? And they cast him out. I mean, you talk about hypocrisy. You were born in utter sin.

Have you ever read that and asked, well, how were they born? On the clouds in angels' wings? I mean, you know, and then there's this. There's John 7. The officers answered. You remember this whole account.

Why didn't you arrest him? And the officers said, no one ever spoke like this man. The Pharisees answered them. Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.

See this is judgment. This is the crowd. This is their own people.

These are Jews. But you know what? We're superior. You're all cursed because you're not like us.

Jesus looked at them and said, none of you keeps the law. I know it's saying those who don't know it. They're not saying those who don't do it.

They prided themselves in knowing. But Jesus, there's such hypocrisy. They can say that they knew it, and yet Jesus constantly said, have you never read? It was just a thrust of a knife right in the hypocritical bellies of these guys.

They believe they had all manner of spiritual perception. They could figure that you're altogether born in your sin. We're the authorities.

There's people that knows not the law. They're accursed. They were judging.

You see the kind of judgments they were making? No ability to discern themselves. And yet Jesus said, they're going to face the greater condemnation. They looked at the people like these people are accursed.

Jesus just says, you don't want to know who's most accursed, them. No ability to discern themselves. And then their most miserable assessments of spiritual judgment came with regards to Christ himself.

You remember what they called him? They said he had a demon, a Samaritan. I mean, they derogatorily call him a friend of tax collectors and sinners. As though what? He was being defiled by them.

He came eating and drinking as though what? He's a glutton and he's a drunk. They constantly, they accused him of breaking the Sabbath, and you know what he said? You know what he said? You hypocrites. Again, hypocrites.

Why? Why? Because he, he says, I made a man whole. I made this woman whole on the Sabbath. Don't you lead your animals to water, or if one fell in a well, you hypocrites.

See he, that's how these guys were. They couldn't see. You see, this is the problem with it all.

When you make judgments of somebody else, the reality is you're guilty of the same things. You've got the same problems. Brethren, this is a classic problem, not just with scribes and Pharisees.

This is a classic problem with mankind, with us, and you know it. We condemn in someone else what we allow in ourselves. Harsh judgments, censoriousness, wrong assumptions, quick conclusions.

You know how often we assume somebody else's motive when we don't know? We do that on a regular basis. I hope, I hope it's very much been killed in you since you've been converted. We abound in this, and Jesus wants this put to death in his people.

Brethren, I'm going to give you some examples. I already, I told you this story sometime back. Some of you probably weren't here and didn't hear this, but I think it's worth telling again.

I told the story about my mechanic situation. You remember, I found up here, Haywood area, I found this mechanic. He's a Honda mechanic.

It's what I had back in the States, and so I thought, oh, this is great. I don't have to take my car to the dealer. So call the guy up, need some work done, make an appointment, Thursday morning, nine o'clock, load up my bike because I'm going to take the car over, leave it, jump on my bike, ride home, get everything packed up, go over there.

I'm early even, hoping that he'll be there early. I can get that car dropped off to him, get home. I got things to do, and there I wait, and I wait, and I wait, and he doesn't come, and he doesn't come, and so finally I

go home.

Now, as I'm driving from Haywood back to my house, I'm having these thoughts. Now, this guy dropped the ball. This guy, I probably shouldn't use him anymore.

I'm having these thoughts because his vehicle was there. See, so I'm assuming his vehicle's here, which means he probably left it yesterday, which why would he leave his vehicle here when he went home yesterday? And why is he not here now? His vehicle's here, but I thought, he probably went out with some friends after work. They came and picked him up, and he went out, and he got drunk, and now he's at home in bed, and he's got no car, and he's not here, and he told me he'd be here, and this is really shoddy practice.

So I'm going home, and I'm thinking, I'm not calling him, and I may be done with this guy, and I'm home no more than like a half hour, and he calls, and I have him on the speakerphone, and he tells me that, well, he had a problem with his ex-partner, and they have a son between them, and his partner now has a new partner, and there was some kind of conflict there, and he, anyway, he told me, bring back your vehicle immediately, and I got off the phone with him, and I wasn't overly placated by all this. I just thought, that's bad, because he's got a phone. He could have called me.

He told me, well, my number was on a different phone, and you know, if I thought about that for a second, I carry two phones. I got my U.S. phone. I got my English phone, and that does happen to me, but I didn't give him the benefit of the doubt.

I thought that even if all he was saying was true, he still should have called me. I get off the phone. My wife comes in and says, oh, it just sounds like he's having a hard day.

You should take him some chocolates. Take him some chocolates. I'm thinking about where I should dump this guy, so I did.

We had some chocolate there, and I took it to him, and the guy was really affected by that. Jumped on my car right away. Got it done really fast.

Did a good job. Fixed what I didn't think he'd be able to fix, and brother and I bring this up. Now, look, I'm not bringing this up because I'm telling you you ought to use a shoddy mechanic.

Not at all. I'm bringing it up because I jumped to judgments on that. Now, still, I don't think everything about it, I think he could have had a bit of a better, you know, just approach to not being there when he said he would be there, but you know, we can begin to assume motives.

Brethren, the thing about this is every single one of us know what it is to hold someone else to a standard that we ourselves don't measure up to, and we do that, and I'm not saying we ought to pick a mechanic who does shoddy work. I'm not saying that. I'm not saying you should pick a mechanic who doesn't keep his word.

I'm just saying that to assume things as though we have this perfect discernment long before we had, isn't it? I mean, isn't that, and see, I'm condemning myself in this, but isn't that so like all of us? Why didn't I automatically assume that, well, he probably got COVID last night, and he's at home very sick. I should find out where he lives and make sure that he gets help, or why didn't I assume, oh, you know what? He's a mechanic, and somebody right when he was getting off work, they showed up here, and they whisked

him away because they had some emergency situation with their vehicle somewhere else, and he just, he wasn't able to make it back here today, and maybe he lost his phone. Why didn't I assume that? You can say, I don't know, brother.

Why didn't you? Well, I think for the reason a lot of times we speak about things as though we have perfect discernment long before we have the facts, and the thing is that the very thing that gets done to us, we've done to others, but isn't it amazing? The very same thing that you see somebody else do, especially when it's done to you, is you can get the magnifying glass out, you can see that thing perfectly, but when you do it to somebody else, you've got all sorts of excuses. You have your ways of minimizing it. Brethren, this is what our Lord is after.

He's after this hypocritical kind of judgment. The very thing you and I find fault with in others is the very thing you and I have been guilty of. And you know what Paul says to the Romans? Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges.

For in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself. Now I know this is not specifically speaking to Christians right in this passage. I mean, he's basically condemning the Gentile and the Jew in their natural state.

And hopefully we've been transformed so that these verses here in Matthew 7 are actually being implemented in our life to a great degree. But brethren, the lost world around us, they pass judgment on one another. And he said, you have no excuse.

You see, the very fact that you can see sin in others makes us without excuse. It means you have the ability to see. You have the ability to discern that.

And yet, the hypocrisy of it all. Every one of you who judges, for in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

Do you suppose, oh man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Let me give you another example. This one is theoretical. It's something I've made up, but it can be very real.

You walk into church. You walk past a sister. You greet her.

And she responds coldly. Isn't it amazing that oftentimes the default mechanism kicks in to judge harshly? She's being mean. And that comes to, look at that.

Look at her. I mean, she could have at least smiled. She could have acted like she cares.

She might have at least made a little bit of an effort here. And so what do we do? We come to these conclusions. We begin to draw our own rationale about what's going on inside her.

We begin to examine. We conjure up these motives. I know what the problem is.

She doesn't like me. She's never liked me. What's wrong with her? I wish she would think about others for once in her life.

It's no surprise she has problems with her husband. She's selfish. I wonder if she's even a Christian.

I'm not saying it always is that harsh. But you know, things can... What if we replay this? And it's like there's somebody and they greet you that way. And you actually take Paul to heart when he says, love bears all things and it believes all things and it hopes all things.

I mean, what if you rather think, oh, my sister must be going through a great trial. I mean, maybe there's pain. Maybe she's like me, I get migraines.

What if that's it? What if she just scolded her child? She's been spanking her child endlessly all week long. And she walks into the church building and there the child does the same thing. She's been spanking him all week for... She's exasperated.

She's out of gas. She feels like her husband isn't helping her. Brethren, maybe she's wrestling with something before the Lord.

I don't know how your walk is, but sometimes I'm not at peace with the Lord. You're wrestling, you're resisting. There are 10,000 reasons why a person may not be cheerful when you greet them.

And it may actually not have anything to do with you. Do you realize some people are shy? You know what? Sometimes people can fault other people for the way they respond to them when the fact is the person just doesn't simply have the personality faculties and the social skills to respond the way you think they ought to. And you know what? They may regret that more than anybody else.

I know. I watch my wife. My wife has social skills I don't have.

I wish I had them, but I don't. I mean, look, there are many reasons. And, or take this, somebody in the church, they break your confidence.

That kind of thing can happen. You share something with someone else that you expected to be confidential, and suddenly you find out that, oh no, it's rather public. And what happens? You immediately make this judgment.

Well, they went out and told people, I just can't trust. I can't trust them. And you know what? I can't trust anybody here.

I can't trust anyone in the church. I mean, look, even if it's the worst case scenario, and they did do that, they shared something that not, it just should not have been shared. I would just say this.

Have you never done that? Have you perfectly controlled your tongue and never said something you shouldn't have said? Have you done that? And you know what happens sometimes? You think, oh, there's nobody else that could have done that. I mean, the only person I shared this with was my wife and that guy. And then you actually investigate a little bit, and you find out it was your wife that made it public.

But see, you jumped to this conclusion. Brethren, these kinds of things happen. And what we, you know what? What if that guy over there did actually share it? But you know what? He shared it because he really, he cares about you, and he was seeking counsel from somebody else.

What if he really cares about you, and he shared it sincerely because he was looking for prayer for you? And I know sometimes we can say, we need to pray for so-and-so, and all that is is just a manifestation of gossip. It's a way to put a holy veneer on just speaking. But brethren, what we need to do is we need to think, how are we judging other people? And you know, this comes up again in Romans chapter 14.

You get somebody that observes a day, somebody that doesn't observe a day, somebody that eats meat, somebody that doesn't eat meat. Who are you to judge your brother? I mean, look, we stand or fall before the Lord. In these days, in these COVID days, we've got all sorts of things.

We've got, hey, there's all sorts of people running around that the vaccines are the mark of the beast. And I know in this country and in the U.S., you've got all sorts of people making judgments about whether you do this or don't do this. And oh, brethren, we need to be careful how we are judging each other.

Look, we need to be people of the word. We need to be people of spiritual judgment. We need to be people that can discern the spirits.

We need to be people that are able to critically analyze things. We need to be able to test good and bad, right and wrong. We need to be able to do that.

We need to be able to look at something and say, I don't believe that to do that is biblical. I don't believe it's right. But brethren, we've got all sorts of areas in our lives that we need to be gracious towards one another.

Do you realize what Jesus is saying here? He says, listen to what He says in verse 2, for with the judgment you pronounced, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. And I would not gloss over that.

You know the problem with a lot of the things that are said in the Sermon on the Mount? Like, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will not inherit the kingdom. Statements like that. Statements all the way through.

Unless you gouge out an eye, cut off hands. Why? Because if you don't, He says you'll go to hell. You know one of the problems with our understanding of, say, the doctrine of justification? You know what? We so often approach Scripture with this assumption.

I'm safe and therefore these warnings can't touch me. You don't want to read Scripture that way. You want to flip that thing around.

Because what Jesus is saying is that people that judge unrighteously and hypocritically, they're giving every evidence they're not justified. And He says this. You know that there are two categories of people.

They're the saved and the lost. But what you've got to be recognizing in all of this is what He's saying is those who are saved will respond to these kinds of warnings. You see, the wise man, he hears and he does.

And when that storm comes, the person that hears the Word of God and doesn't do it, oh brethren, you're deceiving your own self. That's what James says. Be very careful here.

With the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Brethren, when you're always finding fault with others, you're a very critical person.

Constantly finding fault. You may put on a good veneer here to walk out the door. When you're alone with your husband, alone with your wife, then your mouth rattles off.

Constantly critical, constantly fault finding, habitually putting others to a standard that you yourself don't hold. The Lord is saying your end is going to be this one. You're going to, in the end, be measured by your own ruler.

That's what He's saying. With the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged. In such a case, your righteousness has not exceeded that of the scribes and the Pharisees.

It's just like their righteousness. Do you see what this is teaching us? Brethren, the way you make these assumptions and judgments about one another, as you sit there judging others, you are the one who is truly being judged. You see, this says everything about you.

That's the issue. And you know how Scripture speaks. If one gives an answer before he hears, it's his folly and shame.

James says, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Brethren, one of our big problems is that we talk too much and we speak too soon. We make judgments before we have the facts.

We're quick to speak, slow to listen. It's all too common to have prophets in the church who think they have supernatural revelation about the motives of others. And we guess at these motives and assume our hunch is gospel truth.

Brethren, this is contrary to the very flavor of the way the Sermon on the Mount started. Blessed are the merciful. You want to be merciful in your judgments.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Do you realize what poor in spirit? See, you're going to be slow to judge other people critically when you recognize what you've done yourself. Very quick to realize, you know, if I find fault in them for this, I've done that before.

That doesn't mean that we don't have a responsibility to deal with these things. Brethren, there are only two categories. We have the lost.

We have the saved. The saved. Let me tell you what happens.

You know, you have a promise in the new covenant. God says this in Jeremiah 32, 40, I will make with them an everlasting covenant that I will not turn away from doing good to them. Now listen, and I will put the fear of me in their hearts that they may not turn from me.

Do you know what happens? Two categories, lost and saved. Unsaved, now they may have infiltrated the church because there's wheat and there's tares in the church. These are professing Christians oftentimes.

But what happens? They fearlessly judge and criticize and find faults, though they themselves do the same thing. But you know what happens to the true Christian? I'm not saying they're perfect in this, but God has put his fear in them. And so when they hear things like this, it actually becomes a truth what Christ says at the end.

They hear and they do. They recognize there's a fear in them. They don't want to displease the Lord in this area.

There's a fear of them that they don't want to be judged by that unkind, unmerciful standard. They don't want that. And so what happens? That spiritual dynamic kicks in.

The fear of God. Fear of me in their hearts. And they don't turn from me.

They don't turn from his ways. Brethren, one of the things that we want to recognize when we're evaluating anything about anybody else, do you know, or even the lost out in the world, I mean, do you realize what do I have that I've not received? Look, the truth is that even if there is a standard of righteousness in my life, and there needs to be, because our righteousness needs to exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, what do I have that I didn't receive? I mean, brethren, do you ever look at people and you recognize they're doing wicked things? Look, something rose in me to see that guy attacking Sonny yesterday. But, you know, at the end of the day, God's had mercy on me and not on that man, at least not savingly yet.

I mean, what makes us differ? What is it? I mean, can't we get to a place where we can judge with leniency? I mean, do you recognize we could think, I remember for the life of me, I could not remember where this came from, but I read a Lloyd-Jones sermon one time. Lloyd-Jones, he talked about just the assessment we make of other people. And he said, you don't know what kind of trial these people may be going through.

You don't know what they may have been exposed to growing up. You don't know they may not have had a father or a father that beat them, that kicked them, that did all sorts of, you don't know. They may have been exposed to pedophiles in their life when they're young.

No good standard, no good parents, no good example. We can look at people and we can recognize. And you know what? If it's even another Christian, I mean, there's nothing that any of us among this Christian group of people here, there's nothing that the other person does that you yourself haven't done, that you yourself haven't thought.

Brethren, people are often ignorant to the very things that you have been enlightened. We're talking about that voice of Christ. You've heard His voice.

They haven't. Brethren, we can curse the darkness, but we have to ask ourselves, which one of us don't need a Savior ourselves? I mean, if you have your act together, above and beyond someone else, is it because you're better? Is it because you're wiser? Is it because you're more righteous in and of yourself? Brethren, you know that's not the case. We can always say, there go I, aside from the grace of God.

And brethren, even in the church, do you recognize? You better be very careful because behind all of this is pride. And you know what? Even if you're a genuine Christian, you're making harsh judgments. You better be careful.

Galatians chapter six says, you better be careful because you know, God is in the business of resisting the proud. And He has a way of drawing back your hand. I often think of Pilgrim's Progress where Pilgrim is making gains on hopeful.

Is it hopeful? It may have been faithful. It may have been at the earlier part, but he sees Him and he's running up to Him. And he runs past Him.

And he kind of has this smirk on his face that he just outran his brother. And you know, the next thing that happens, he trips and he falls flat on his face. Be careful that you don't be smug.

Brethren, let those of us without sin be the first to throw the stone. Listen, James says this, humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you. Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

The one who speaks against a brother, judges his brother, judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. And you see what James is saying. In the end, when you go to judging other people harshly, hypocritically, wrongly, you see what you're really doing? You're standing in judgment of the law and of God Himself who said that you need to love one another.

If you judge the law, you're not a doer of the law, but a judge. There's only one law giver and judge, He who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? That is a question that I want to leave you all with.

Brethren, we do very well to ask ourselves that question. Who am I to judge them? Who am I to judge my neighbor? When it comes to any number of things, who am I? Brethren, I'll tell you this, if we're going to judge and we're going to see the speck in their eye, then we ought to be able to say this, I will tell you who I am to judge you. I see the speck in your eye.

Who am I to see that? I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian who has this book. I'm a Christian who has this book and I recognize, yes, I've had many logs in my own eye, but because we're supposed to care for one another, I'm trying to deal with those logs in my eye.

Maybe there's some I don't see, but who am I to judge my neighbor? I'm a Christian who is seeking out of love for your soul to point out the wrong and for the sake of the purity of the church. You see, we need to be able to answer this question because the truth is with the attitude we have, with the disposition we have, a lot of times when we judge, we're nobody to judge one another because we're doing it wrong. We're doing it like the hypocrites.

But brethren, we want to be able to answer that question and say, I'm pointing out that fault in them because I really do care. I'm pointing out that fault because I care about the purity of this church. Brethren, that's a reality and I am what I am by the grace of God and I realize that when I'm judging others, love covers a multitude of sin.

Who am I to judge another? That's right, I'm nobody. I'm a saved sinner. I'm a saved sinner who is headed towards the judgment seat of Christ and so are you.

And I think I can speak for every one of us here. We all have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ and we have to give an account for what we've done in this body. When we stand before that great grand size and all the offspring of Adam, all of his posterity are gathered together, not one is missing.

And your name is called and it's going to happen. I can speak for all of us. We want mercy.

We want to be judged based on the merits of Christ. Brethren, we want that. All of our secrets, you know what Scripture says, what was done in the dark is going to be brought out into the light.

What's been whispered is going to be shouted from the housetops. That's your life. That's everything you've done and everything you've thought, all that you are, all that you've done.

We want mercy. We want mercy. And Jesus is saying how you will be judged in that day can be connected back to how you judged one another now.

That's what He's teaching. Brethren, there's a connection here. Father, I pray that You would really do a work of grace in us to have us judge others.

Lord, I know I need help with that just as much as any of the brethren here. Help us to be charitable. Help us to be kind in our assessments.

Help us to be slow to speak, quick, quick, quick to listen, to not assume the worst, to assume the best. Help us, Lord, to be a discerning people, radically discerning. But to mix our discernment with loving one another more and more, having that love that covers a multitude of sins, having the discernment to see the sins, but also having the discernment to know when love ought to cover them.

And when for the sake of love, for the sake of the good of our brethren, for the sake of the good of the purity of this church, when we should indeed stand up and point out the speck or even the logs. Lord, help us to be a charitable people. Help us to judge according to this standard.

Help us to be people who really are aware of wanting to tremble at these words, to be people that hear and do, to be people that really are mindful every time we make an assessment of somebody else, to help us to be mindful of these words, that there really is a connection between how we judge one another and how we will be judged in that day. I pray for your help. Lord, help us.

Make this word powerful, living, alive in us. Cause it to resonate with us. Help us to be a people that aren't like James paints that picture of somebody that looks in the mirror and they forget who they are.

Lord, we want to be able to retain the word of God. Have it to be a lamp unto our feet as we walk through this life. Help us for Christ's sake.

Amen. You are dismissed. Amen.

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