

Judging and Being Judged

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 7:1-5

Our society, as a whole, has rejected the idea that we can identify anyone's chosen behavior as wrong. This has led to numerous practices being accepted that were once largely looked down upon. Now, the only thing that is condemned by many is the "intolerance" and "bigotry" that identifies sin as sin. However, Jesus' point in this passage is different from the point that many people try to make from it. This passage and others talk about judging and being judged. Let's consider what the Bible says about it.

The Context of Jesus' Words

- Some want this to mean that it is wrong to make any kind of judgment at all – yet what Jesus was actually condemning was judging others hypocritically
- We need to look to ourselves first – examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5); make necessary corrections
- Then we will see clearly to be able to help others – this is spiritual maturity and puts us in a position to be able to help (Galatians 6:1); helping others necessarily requires us to "judge" them to be in sin, otherwise we could never correct them
- Jesus' point – get your heart right so you can see clearly to help others get right with the Lord

Two Standards of Judgment

- When we pass judgment upon others, we will be using one of two standards – of the world or of God
- Judgment of the world – "according to the flesh" (John 8:15); this judgment led the Jews to reject Jesus (John 8:12-13); rooted in assumption/bias, not truth
- Judgment of God – "righteous judgment" (John 7:24); Jesus said we MUST do this; this judgment would lead people to accept Jesus (John 7:15, 20); this is about determining what is true/right
- We should not make judgments based upon what we THINK, but upon what is RIGHT

Judgment and Mercy

- There is another factor to consider in passing judgment (James 2:13) – we are to judge based upon what is RIGHT, but we are also to show MERCY
- We will be judged by God (James 2:12) – by the standard of His word (cf. James 1:25; John 12:48); therefore, we have no right to judge/condemn someone based upon a human standard (Matthew 15:1-9)

- Also, if we do not show mercy, we will not be shown mercy (cf. Matthew 6:14-15; 5:7) – this does not mean we are to be tolerant of sin/error (Ephesians 5:11); rather, assume the best of others instead of being quick to condemn; don't rush to judgment based upon appearances (James 2:1), but see people as God sees them (Acts 10:34)

God's Judgment of Us

- In all of this, we need to remember that God will judge us (James 2:12) – He is “full of compassion and is merciful” (James 5:11); however, He will also pass judgment (James 5:12)
- If we sin, we are not without hope – we can make correction and be reconciled to Him (2 Peter 3:9)
- But if we continue in sin, God will hold us accountable (2 Peter 3:10) – we will receive the punishment we deserve (Hebrews 10:26-29)

Conclusion

- We are all in need of God's mercy – as He has extended it to us, we should do the same to others
- We'll still be judged by God's standard – we must conform to it and encourage others to do the same