

Matthew 7 The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Judge means to condemn or harsh judgment, with a bitter and fault finding spirit. It does not mean form an opinion. We should not count wrong motives or put the worst construction on the words and actions of others.

1. Judge not, that you be not judged. The term “judge” is used in more than one sense, but Christ’s meaning is plain. 1. He does not prohibit the civil judgment of the courts upon evil doers, for this is approved throughout the whole Bible. 2. He does not prohibit the judgment of the church, through its officers, upon those who walk disorderly, for both he and the apostles have enjoined this. 3. He does not forbid those private judgments that we are compelled to form the wrong-doers, for he himself tells us that we are to judge men by their fruits. (See verses 15–20.) What he designs to prohibit is rash, uncharitable judgments, a fault-finding spirit, a disposition to condemn without examination of charges.

John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Romans 2:1-13 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2:2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his

deeds: 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God. 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Romans 14:3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

James 4:11-12 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Our own standard of judging others will be applied to us. God so arranges that men will pay back each other in his own coin by those who make unreasonable and harsh judgements.

2. With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged. Not by men, but by God. He takes note of the unkind, harsh, censorious spirit, and deals with the man according to his own spirit. There is declared here a great principle that runs through the moral government of God: *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Mat 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Behold us means to stare at and observe. It may be so small it takes very starrng to see it. Beam is a great fault and Jesus shows how morally grotesque the conduct of the fault finder is when he himself is characterized by some greater fault. Such fault finders always have the greatest of all fault by lacking love and sympathy for others.

It is common for us to minimize our own faults and magnify the faults of others.

3. Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye? The Lord uses a figure to show the absurdity of judging severely the faults of others, while we have greater ones. The term translated "mote" means a little splinter, while the beam is something very large.

Mat 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

4, 5. Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye. The man who finds fault with another for sin, while he is more guilty, is a hypocrite. A great many are very zealous to convert the world, who are themselves unconverted.

Mat 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

The meats offered at the alter were holy reserved for the priest and regarded as particularly sacred.

6. Give not that which is holy unto dogs. The dog was regarded an unclean animal by the Jewish law. They probably represent snarling, scoffing opposers. The characteristic of dogs is brutality. To try to instill holy things into such low, unclean, and sordid brutal minds is useless.

Neither cast pearls before swine. The swine were also unclean. The swine would not appreciate pearls, and were just as ferocious as ever. So, too, there are men so dull, imbruted and senseless, as to reject the pearls of truth. It is our duty to help and to try to save others, but we must use common sense.

Jesus is cautioning his disciples to learn the true value of sacred things, and not misuse or abuse them by giving them to those incapable of appreciating them.

The church and all that belongs to are sacred and must not be used for unholy purposes. Some people are so worldly and their hearts so hard, they will not hear the truth and only provoke their anger.

Mat 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

7, 8. Ask, ... seek, ... knock. The terms are here used with reference to prayer, and these constitute a climax. Ask implies a simple petition. Seek indicates an earnest search. Knock shows perseverance in spite of hindrances. The three represent earnest prayer. For every one that

asketh receiveth, etc. Every one of the class concerning whom the Savior speaks. That class is those who can say, "Our Father in heaven; Hallowed be thy name; Thy will be done."

Mat 7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

9, 10. If his son asks bread, will he give him a stone? The assurance of an answer to prayer is based on the fact that God is our Father. He treats his children as a good and wise earthly parent would. No kind parent would mock his child by answering his cry for bread with stones. Bread and fish were the chief articles of food of the Galilean peasant.

Mat 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

11. If ye, then, being evil. Men who have the natural affection of parents, even though sinful men, will not do such things. Whoever believes that the term Father, as applied to God, is more than a figure of speech, must believe in prayer. Give good gifts. Luke 11:13, in the parallel passage, says, instead of "good gifts," "the Holy Spirit," as though this is heaven's greatest blessing.

Mat 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. This principle forms the basis that God's people should have to each other and a fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God and the Church of Christ. It is an expression of God's wisdom guiding us, it is positive and not negative, and was coined by him who taught all righteousness. Other teachers had expressed the golden rule in a negative way, but Jesus expressed it clearly in a positive way.

12. Whatsoever ... do ye even so to them. This does not imply that we are always to do to others as they wish, but what we would like to have done to ourselves if we were placed in their condition and they in ours. We might injure them by complying with their foolish wishes. A maxim similar to the Golden Rule is found in the teachings of various sages; Socrates among the Greeks, Buddha and Confucius among the Orientals, and Hillel among the Jews. But the other teachers do not come up to Christ's standard. Their maxim is negative and passive. They say: "Do not do to others what you would not have done to you." It is a rule of *not* doing, rather than of *doing*.

Mat 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate. The leading thought of the whole discourse is the kingdom of heaven and its conditions. Hence, when the Lord says, "Enter ye in," he means into the kingdom of heaven. Nearly every town in Palestine is surrounded by walls and is entered by gates. The principal ones are wide, with double doors, closed with locks and fastened with iron bars. The "strait gates" are in retired corners, are narrow, and are only opened to those who knock.

Mat 7:14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

14. For strait is the gate. What is it, Augustine asks, that makes this gate so strait to us? It is not that it is *strait*, or narrow, in itself, but that we want to take in our pride, our self-will, our darling sins. Few there be that find it. It has been to be sought. The reason that men do not find it is not because it is hard to find, but because they prefer to walk in the broad way.

Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

15. Beware of false prophets. The word prophet, as used in the Scriptures, means anyone who teaches authoritatively the will of God. A false prophet is one who is a false teacher. Christ refers to the scribes and Pharisees. Come to you in sheep's clothing. While appearing as harmless as sheep they are wolves.

Mat 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. This common figure is wonderfully expressive. Not leaves (professions), or appearance, are the proper tests of the life that is in the tree, but the fruit it bears. We are to test men and every institution by this principle. Grapes of thorns. Two of the most highly valued fruits of Palestine are grapes and figs. Nothing is more common than thorns and thistles. Geike says that it is the land of thorns and thorny plants. Good fruit cannot be expected on such evil stocks.

Mat 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

17, 18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. The Lord points to the uniform law of nature.

Every tree bears after its kind. As is the tree, so is the fruit. The same principle holds good in the moral world. A good man will show forth good deeds, while a bad man will bear fruit according to his nature.

Mat 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

19, 20. Every tree, ... is hewn down, and cast into the fire. The test of good and bad trees, good and bad men, good and bad systems, has been presented. Now the figure is carried farther to show their destiny. The Savior states a principle that seems to run through the

whole government of God. Whatever is useless and evil shall finally be swept away.

Mat 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom. The Lord has shown that the entrance into the kingdom is through the “strait gate.” He now shows more particularly what is needed to enter. Certain ones are described who cannot enter in. “Not everyone” implies that some who say, “Lord, Lord,” etc., shall enter in. Those enter who do the will of my Father. No one can be a citizen of the kingdom who does not obey the King.

Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

22. Many will say to me in that day. The great day of the Lord. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? The Lord chooses out of the greatest class of non-doers to show that all such will fail of entrance. They have omitted the one thing needful, a faithful obedience.

Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

23. I never knew you. “I never knew you” must be accepted in its deeper signification of “recognizing the disciples.” Augustine says that for Christ to say, “I never knew you,” is only another way of saying, “You never knew me.” Depart, ... ye that work iniquity. In spite of all their professions they had been evil doers. Their religion expended itself in professions and prayers. Hence, in “that day” they are commanded to depart. What it is to so depart we may learn from

Matt. 25:41. It is evident from this passage that many are self-deceived.

Mat 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

24. Every one that heareth these sayings of mine. The words that he has spoken in this discourse, and all his teachings. I will liken him unto a wise man. The wise man, with wise forethought, has built on a firm foundation. In a country with a rainy season and heavy floods this was essential. The man who "hears and does" Christ's words is building upon the rock (Matt. 16:16).

Mat 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

25. The rain descended ... and it fell not. Palestine is a country of torrents and sands. This verse gives a picture of the sudden violent storms and sweeping floods which are so common during the rainy season. The house founded upon the rock could not be undermined and destroyed, but would stand firm. So, says the Lord, shall it be with those who hear and obey. "They shall stand in the judgment" (Psa. 1:5).

Mat 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

26. Heareth these sayings ... and doeth them not. The hearer who obeys not is likened to the foolish man who built his house on the sand. Every one knows how transitory and shifting is a sandy foundation. Whole towns on the Missouri or lower Mississippi have been undermined and gone into the vortex because they were built upon the sand. So will fall the disobedient.

Mat 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

27. Great was the fall of it. The Lord describes the thoughtfulness of the builder on the sand, the storm and the utter destruction. There is an awful solemnity about this close to the wonderful sermon.

Mat 7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

28. The people were astonished at his doctrine. At his teaching. No wonder they were astonished. The whole world still wonders as it studies this sermon.

Mat 7:29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

29. As having authority. He spoke, not as a man, with human doubts and limitations, but as one who was omniscient. He came from God, and spoke as one divine; not as a human, hesitating, halting, limping expounders like the scribes, the interpreters of the Scriptures.

On what are you building, my brother,

Your hopes of an eternal home?

Is it loose, shifting sand, or the firm, solid rock,

You are trusting for the ages to come?

Hearing and *doing*, we build on the Rock;

Hearing alone, we build on the sand;

Both will be tried by the storm and the flood;

Only the rock the trial will stand.

Sources for this sermon : KJV Bible, B.W. Johnson People's New Testament Commentary & Clarks Commentary