

Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom

Judgment • Message 2

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Ask God to help you be honest with your own sin.
- Pray that you would have a gentle spirit in every conversation.
- Pray that Brookwood is a church that reflects the character of Jesus in every way.

Worship Psalm:

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Psalm 100:4 (NLT)

Scripture Reading:

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Matthew 7:1-6 (NIV)

A. Introduction

In the 2002 Winter Olympics, a figure skating judging scandal erupted when many believed the wrong team was awarded the gold medal. The problem wasn't that judges made a judgment. Judging is part of figure skating. The problem was that people believed the judgment had been

corrupted by bias and hidden motives. That's very close to what Jesus addresses in Matthew 7. He doesn't forbid all judgment. He forbids distorted judgment.

So, the question this passage presses on us is not, "Should Christians ever judge?" The question is: What kind of judgment reflects the heart of Jesus? Is it proud, hypocritical, and condemning? Or is it humble, repentant, discerning, and aimed at restoration?

Matthew 7:1–6 teaches us that before we help our brother with his speck, we must first let Jesus deal with the log in our own eye.

B. Judgment

1.) JUDGE yourself FIRST.

(Matthew 7:1-5. C/R: Galatians 6:1)

The point of this passage is not about ignoring the sin in someone else's life, but that we would ignore ours before correcting someone else.

The question we should be asking is not if we are to judge, but what type of judgment is Jesus condemning?

Jesus condemns self-righteous and hypocritical judgment.

"You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Matthew 7:5 (NIV)

Notice here that Jesus says, *First, take the plank out of your own eye*. Jesus is trying to illustrate that before we launch into judgments, we should start by examining ourselves.

Ill.: Sunday morning message. If you are someone who hears a message and immediately thinks, *Ooh, this person needs to hear this*.

Paul expressed this same idea. There might be a time to help your brother, but you should do it gently, with a humble spirit, and pay attention to your own heart.

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

Galatians 6:1 (NIV)

I also want to be clear that Jesus is not calling us into some sort of self-obsession or constantly hyper fixating on every jot and tittle. I do think that some in this room are constantly obsessing over every possible motive, hidden flaw, and internal inconsistency before I say anything at all.

But that is not what Jesus is saying. He doesn't say, *Pay attention to the log and inspect it*. He says to take it out. Then you will see clearly in order to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

The Bible's picture of self-examination is meant to move us towards God and repentance, not to paralyze us.

So Jesus says, before we judge others, we must come before God ourselves. Not trying to condemn ourselves, but as people asking the Lord to make us clean and allow us to carry out the call to be right judges.

Only people who have received mercy can understand how to correct with mercy.

2.) CORRECT others with HUMILITY.

(Matthew 7:3-5. C/R: Romans 12:2; 1 John 4:1)

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Matthew 7:3-5 (NIV)

Jesus is not saying, *Now that you've dealt with the log, leave your brother alone*. Jesus is not removing correction from the life of a Christian.

He isn't saying, *Never speak into another person's life*. He is saying, *Don't speak if you are blinded by your own hypocritical spirit, unrepentant sin or self-righteous pride*.

Jesus is saying that we should remove specks from our brothers' eyes. A speck might be small, but it is real. And real sin should be really addressed. It could be an attitude, a sinful pattern, a blind spot, or a harmful decision. But Jesus says you won't be able to see the speck clearly if you do not remove the log from your own eye first.

So humility in judgment matters. When we correct someone as Christians, we should do so understanding that we have received mercy from Jesus for our own issues of sin.

Ill.: I mean, let's take Jesus' illustration clearly. If someone has a speck in their eye from dust, or perhaps an eyelash, or even a small piece of metal, they are uncomfortable and they need help.

But imagine you rush towards them with dirty hands and pliers, explaining how helpful you are going to be. I'm not sure you'll be effective.

What we should do is wash our hands, get close, speak calmly, and ask if they would be willing to let us help them.

That is what the church should be doing in correction. People are carrying real wounds and shame. Their souls are tender, so when there is a speck, we shouldn't come in swinging; we should come in carefully and intentionally. Scalpels rather than chainsaws. Remember, chainsaws are used on logs, not on specks.

Now, some people hear Jesus say, *Judge not*, and think, *Well, it is not a Christian's place to judge*. But that is not what Jesus means. Later in this same chapter, Jesus says:

Beware of false prophets.

So the same Jesus who is saying to us, *Judge not*, also says, *Beware*. Christians must discern and make judgments. The question is: what are Christians to judge?

I want to give you a few areas that I think Christians are to clearly judge.

1. God's Will

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

As our minds are renewed, we should know the answers to these questions: Is this good? Is this going to please God? Will this help me or someone else to honor Jesus?

2. Bible Teachers

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.

1 John 4:1 (NLT)

Not everyone who claims to speak for God is speaking from God. Not every spiritual message is spiritually healthy for us. We should not receive every teacher, influencer, preacher, podcaster, doctor, author, Youtuber, or Tiktoker without testing them. But you'll hear more on this in the next few weeks.

3. Morality

We are called to make judgments about what is morally good and morally evil. Our culture would tell you that morality is personal and that nobody should tell anyone else how to live, but the Bible teaches that God has spoken and clearly told us what is good and what is evil. There are paths that lead to life and paths that lead to destruction.

So we must make judgments as Christians, but how should we do that? With humility, love, and clarity.

I think Jesus is the best example, duh, of how to do this well.

Jesus always told the truth, but He did not approach every person the same way. His judgments were always holy, but His approach wasn't identical. Jesus could tell the difference between a sinner with a broken spirit and the heart of a hardened hypocrite. He could tell the difference between the people who were confused, ashamed, someone who was self-righteous, and someone who was dangerous.

With the broken, Jesus was tender. In John 8, the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus. They used her shame to try and trap Jesus. Jesus does not minimize her sin, but he also doesn't join them in their condemnation.

Neither do I condemn you, Go now and leave your life of sin.

Grace and truth. Jesus didn't pile on. He offered mercy and forgiveness.

In Luke 7, Jesus is eating with Simon the Pharisee, and a sinful woman comes in weeping and washing Jesus' feet with her tears and anointing them. Simon sees her and silently judges the woman and Jesus.

Simon could see this woman's sin and her reputation, but he could not see his own pride. So Jesus told Simon a story to expose Simon to his own heart condition. Simon makes the judgment on his own heart by Jesus' question. Simon saw the speck, but he missed the log.

Jesus is not being reckless or losing His cool. He is confronting hardened hearts who are attempting to harm others through their own hypocritical standards of righteous living.

Jesus' sharpest words were for those who used their own self-righteousness to elevate themselves and crush others.

So Jesus didn't exercise a one-size-fits-all correction method. He was tender with those dealing with shame, patient with the confused, exposed the self-righteous, and sharply warned the hypocrite.

Jesus was moved by truth and love. Jesus wasn't showing off how wise His take was, and He never corrected out of pride or insecurity. His goal was to reconcile people with God.

So we should be asking some things before we correct someone:

Does this person need gentleness or some questions? Do they need a serious warning? Is this the right time? Can I do this with the right tone and attitude? Am I trying to restore them to God or just be right?

Jesus isn't removing correction from the Christian life; He is removing pride from correction. Let Jesus deal with you first, then go with clean hands and a pure heart toward your brothers and sisters.

3.) DISCERN what is HOLY.

(Matthew 7:6. C/R: 1 Kings 3:9; Proverbs 9:7-9; Hebrews 5:14)

"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."

Matthew 7:6 (NIV)

This is one of the more difficult verses in the Sermon on the Mount because, at first glance, this imagery is severe. Jesus isn't giving us permission to despise people and treat people as less than human. He is teaching us that holy, heavenly things must be handled with wisdom.

Jesus in verse 6 is completing His picture of righteous judgment. He said first that you shouldn't judge hypocritically; you should correct with humility in order to discern wisely. In order to obey Matthew 7:6, you must be able to discern the difference between what is holy and what is hostile.

Discernment is the Spirit-enabled, Bible-shaped ability to see reality from God's perspective, distinguish truth from error, good from evil, wisdom from foolishness, and then respond in a way that honors Christ.

Discernment is not being suspicious; it isn't cynicism or assuming the worst. Discernment is wisdom trained by Scripture, shaped by the Spirit, and governed by love.

Discernment can be cultivated and developed.

That is what Solomon asks for in 1 Kings 3:9.

"Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

1 Kings 3:9 (NLT)

He prayed for an understanding heart. Solomon knew that leadership needs more than just intelligence. It needs wisdom from God. He needs the ability to see clearly, judge rightly, and respond faithfully.

We need the same thing. We need to exercise discernment in what we listen to, what we celebrate, what we tolerate, what we confront, and what we walk away from.

He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, And he who reprovcs a wicked man gets insults for himself.

Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you.

Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning.

Proverbs 9:7-9 (NASB)

Discernment understands that every person receives correction differently. A wise person might be wounded at first by the correction, but eventually they receive it, and it provides healing. A scoffer despises correction and attacks the person that gives it.

So discernment pays attention to things like: Is this person teachable and open to correction? Are they honestly asking? Are they confused or hostile? Is this the moment to speak up or remain silent?

Discernment does not mean we say everything we know. But it does require us to think about what is the most faithful thing we can do in this moment.

The New Testament gives us a few words to help us understand discernment.

Greek Word	Question It Answers	Picture
διακρίνω (diakrinō)	"Can I tell the difference?"	Airport security scanner
δοκιμάζω (dokimazō)	"Have I tested it?"	Testing whether gold is real
αἴσθησις (aisthēsis)	"Do I perceive what honors God?"	A trained musician hearing subtle mistakes

3 Greek words for discernment:

Diakrinō – to distinguish, separate, or evaluate.

(dee-ah-kree-noh)

Can I tell the difference between these two things? Airport Security Scanner and Influencers. One is teaching and one is twisting.

Dokimazō – to test or approve after testing.

(doh-kih-mah-zoh)

Testing metals. Is this real gold? Testing authenticity. Have I tested it?

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Aisthēsis (eye - sthay – sis)– moral perception or spiritual sensitivity.

Do I perceive what honors God?

Skilled musicians. Wrong notes, timing is off, key changes, harmony issues. Experts notice things others miss because their senses have been trained.

Discernment is a muscle that is developed through our character growing as we spend time with Jesus and exercise the spiritual disciplines. Mature believers begin to notice what others miss, not because they are more suspicious of everything, but because their senses have been trained by Scripture, prayer, obedience, repentance, and time with Jesus.

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:14 (ESV)

We also must be careful: not everything that is called discernment is actually discernment. There are some things that are called discernment that I think should actually be called cynicism. Some things people say are discernment are just cynicism in a Jesus T-shirt.

These are not the same. Discernment pays careful attention intentionally. Cynicism paints everything with the same brush. Discernment wants truth. Cynicism wants to burn everything down. Discernment protects what is holy. Cynicism treats everything as dangerous, heretical, compromised, or fake.

Ill.: Some people think being mature is constantly finding what is wrong with every church, every pastor, every song, every ministry, every tradition, every theological difference, every style. But that isn't maturity; it is just a critical spirit with some Bible layered over the top.

We must judge carefully. What is true and false? What is good and evil? What is holy and profane? But there are some things that are merely preferences, styles, and methods and shouldn't be a battle. Christians can faithfully disagree on these things and still be brothers and sisters in Christ.

Not every difference is compromise, weakness, or heresy. Not every preference is a universal principle.

Discernment helps us know the difference.

Jesus calls us to discern what is holy. We are to honor Christ and try everything we can to restore others into right relationship with Christ and the church.

C. Close and Communion

As we close today we are going to take communion together.

We do not come to the Lord's table today pretending there isn't a log in our eye or people obsessed with everyone's specks. We aren't trying to prove that we are better than others. But we come as people that know we need mercy.

When we participate in communion, we are reminded that Jesus is the only one who has ever judged perfectly. He saw sin clearly, including ours. He sees hypocrisy, pride, hidden motives, and secret shame with crystal-clear precision. Yet, instead of condemnation, Jesus went to the cross to bear our sins in our place.

So before we correct or discern anyone else, we come here to allow the Lord to examine us.

Let's take a moment and ask the Spirit to show us where we have logs in our own eyes, and move toward God in repentance.

Take out your bread.

The bread reminds us that His body was broken for people with logs in their eyes.

Take out your cup.

The cup reminds us that Jesus' blood was poured out for people who have judged wrongly, spoken harshly, avoided speaking truth, or used truth without love or grace.

Jesus did not come to crush us, but to cleanse us. He came to restore us to Himself.

Only people who have received mercy can extend mercy.

Mercy has come to us through the person of Jesus.