

PP The Greatest Job on Earth-Love Makes Discipleship Work, Part 2!

Luke 6:36-42

11/15-16/2014

Illus A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. *"But I don't ask for justice,"* the mother explained. *"I plead for mercy."* *"But your son does not deserve mercy,"* Napoleon replied. *"Sir,"* the woman cried, *"it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for."* *"Well, then,"* the emperor said, *"I will have mercy."* And he spared the woman's son. Luis Palau, *Experiencing God's Forgiveness*, Multnomah Press, 1984.

PP 1-We must love *persuasively*

PP 2-We must love *mercifully*

***"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."* 6:36**

To get the full force of this command, we need to understand something about ourselves

We were not pretty good people who just needed a little help and God provided it

We were guilty of violating the sovereign King's laws, alienated from Him, choosing war on Him though we could never win

We were absolutely helpless in our sins, dead in them, ignorant of God's ways, living according to our fallen desires

The bad news of the gospel is that we all were hopelessly lost and doomed to eternal hell

PP *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved"* Ephesians 2:4-5

God gave us what we did not deserve, nor earn (*'dead'*), because of His great love for us!

Now listen again to the words of Christ teaching us to have a merciful love: ***"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned"* Luke 6:36-38**

Be full of this same mercy that God has...and do not judge others

There's a connection between being merciful and refusing to judge, they always go together

Judgmental people forget how bad they were and begin to believe God's mercy was deserved

When we get to that point, we then make people earn our mercy and it destroys love!

A disciple full of mercy, is a disciple short on condemnation and long on love!

But that doesn't mean Christians should never judge

PP Jesus said, *"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."* John 7:24

PP *It is the attitude of judgmentalism, not the act of judging that Jesus condemns in His disciples*

PP *"Judgments are opinions that we form only after we have made a serious effort to know the facts, and, for those of us who are Christians, only after we have consulted the moral teachings of Scripture and prayed for Spirit-informed discernment. Any lazy or biased fool can have opinions; making judgments is the hard work of responsible and compassionate people."*

Lewis Smedes

Judgmentalism is an attitude where we determine if a person has met a standard we have set

It allows us to be judge, jury and executioner for others, especially those who mistreat us

Now think with me for a moment about a judgmental attitude, for all of have experienced this

Just as judges sit above the one being judged, a judgmental person looks down at others, exactly where their pride yearned to be

And from that elevated perch, we deliberate mercilessly, as both judge and jury
 The sick, sinful, merciless part in us delights in handing out the sentence, which is why Jesus
 then commands us, ***“condemn not, and you will not be condemned”***

PP *‘condemn’* means pronounce the sentence on the one we just judged

PP But *the goal of redemptive judging is not condemnation, but repentance*

Any time we judge without doing what we can to bring about the person’s repentance, is
 merciless judgment

How can we bring about a person’s repentance, ***“forgive, and you will be forgiven”*** 6:37

The way we forgive can move a person to repent!

‘forgive’ here is a verb, and it doesn’t mean forgive as we think of forgive, it means pardoned
 To pardon is to dismiss, release or drop the charges, to let go of the person’s guilt!

I want you to remember what I’m about to teach you

We cannot love and stay bitter at the same time: we must have grace and mercy

PP *Grace* is God’s free gift displayed in His forgiveness of our sins given because *we are guilty*

PP *Mercy* is His free gift given because *we are miserable*

Be full of mercy, release people from guilt, for it will free our hearts to love, and it can move the
 one who offended us toward repentance

So Jesus says, ***“forgive, and you will be forgiven”*** 6:37

When we who have been pardoned so much, let go of another’s hurtful actions, dismissing
 their debt to us, it will ordinarily result in others doing the same for us

This is persuasive love, and even more so when we ***“give”*** generously

Prosperity theology has latched onto this as their favorite verse, but this is about giving mercy by
 cancelling a debt that someone incurred by sinning against us

His mercy is new every morning, overflowing toward us, and we are to give mercy the same way

***“give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running
 over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”***
 6:38

Grain merchants would sit on the ground, put his legs around a large basket, and fill it $\frac{3}{4}$ full,
 then shake it to settle the grain so each kernel fills the empty spaces

Then he fills it up to the top, flat all across and he shakes it again, after which he presses the
 grain down with both hands, then pours until it is heaped up in a cone, tapping the basket

He would sometimes take a rod and bore a vertical hole in the cone, pouring more grain in
 until it cannot run down anymore

That’s a full measure, that’s how generous our giving God is!

That is how God pours out His mercy on us, and it’s how we are to pardon others, and in the
 place of guilt we pour our generosity freely dismissing the charges against us!

Do not judge and condemn, but pardon everyone generously, and you will love so persuasively
 that people will want to know why you are different!

PP 3-We must love discerningly

The Jews called preaching *Charaz*, which means *stringing beads*

A Rabbi taught that a preacher never lingers on any topic, but instead, hold the attention by
 moving quickly from one topic to another

Yet there is a common thread holding the beads together in this sermon, and that is discipleship

PP If I were to define discipleship for you, it would be this: ***“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”*** **Colossians 1:28**

But there are two problems that often happen in making disciples

We often follow the wrong teachers, and we ourselves are often not becoming mature in Christ

Yet listen to Christ’s warning: ***“Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?”*** **Luke 6:39**

Is the one discipling you, and are you as you are discipling others, able to see truth clearly?

A disciple by definition means *a learner*, so who are you learning from, who is teaching you?

You will become like that person, so be careful and choose wisely

For, ***‘A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.’*** **6:40**

Not only will we be unable to grow beyond the level of our teacher, but we will be like our teacher

So who has come alongside you and begun to disciple you?

Do you know that the vast majority of Christians have no one who is discipling them?

Yet it is assumed by Jesus that not only is someone discipling you, but you are discipling someone else!

And to get our eyes seeing clearly, Jesus give us this wisdom: ***“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, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.”*** **6:41-42**

I am near-sighted, and badly so, coke-bottle lenses so, stumbling around blindly if my contacts fall out so

But spiritually, I’m farsighted and so are you, in fact, we were born with this condition

PP The Mayo clinic says farsightedness is a *“vision condition in which you can see distant objects clearly, but objects nearby may be blurry.”*

We all have a condition, to varying degrees, where we see the sins of others better than our own

Our own up close sins are blurry, indistinct, while others’ snap into sharp focus and clarity

And Jesus teaches us this with two words popular in the language of His day; ***‘speck’*** and ***‘log’***

PP A ***‘speck’*** was a tiny piece of chaff that gets in the eye, or a small splinter in the skin

PP But a ***‘log’*** was the main beam supporting the weight in one’s home

We need to get out of our lives those glaring faults that prevent us from accurately seeing the character of another person

PP Otherwise, Christ tells us, a person is a ***‘hypocrite’***, an actor, who, in order to change characters, just held up a different mask over the face

If we do not first deal with our sins, we will mercilessly judge others for theirs

Instead of judging another, disciple that person, which is made powerfully effective when done with love full of mercy

The goal being to help them become *'fully trained...like his teacher.'*

Teaching was done by imitation as much as anything else

PP *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."* **Hebrews 13:7**

The goal for a disciple was to become like his Rabbi, and then to help others do the same

My dad, who was a builder, once gave me a pattern, a piece of wood cut to an exact length, and told me to cut 20 or 30 more of them

I just had to keep using that original sample to make sure the rest were cut right

Jesus is saying, make sure you are being trained, being cut to Me, the original sample

The goal of discipleship is to make disciples who love like, act like, give mercy like Jesus!

We all need someone to help us to become mature in Christ, so we can help others do the same

It might help to look at this chart on the screen as I bring this sermon to a close

PP (Spiritual Formation Stages) Where are you are in your spiritual maturity?

Everyone begins life **spiritually dead** in sin, and in need of being reborn

Every new Christian begins as a **spiritual infant** and while some grow faster than others, no one bypasses this or any of the stages of growth

As an infant grows, he becomes a **spiritual child**, understanding basic parts of the faith but still marked by inconsistency, selfishness, rebelliousness

The majority of Christians get stuck here

We need someone coming to us and helping us grow, for it cannot happen in a solitary life

If a spiritual child continues to grow, then he matures into a **spiritual young adult**, eager to serve, their faith has become their own, passionate about God

Yet growth must press on so they become **spiritual parents**, reproducing and making disciples who can do the same, make disciples

Where are you in your spiritual growth?

Let me offer a few indicators of where you are in your spiritual maturity?

Beginning with **infants**, they lack biblical knowledge, find the Bible confusing, give little effort to learning, and are dependent on other Christians for their walk with Christ

Spiritual children are self-centered, idealistic and prideful, getting upset when the church makes a change, and opts out rather than participates

Young adults have become passionate about God and others, and get involved in serving, more interested in doing than growing in knowledge of God

Spiritual parents prioritize unity, are dependable, and intentionally reproduce disciples

If you find the world holds you powerfully, or Christians easily disappoint, you are a **spiritual infant**

If you find yourself easily offended by others or change, then you are a **spiritual child**

If you find yourself more service-minded than pursuing knowledge, you are a **young adult**

If you find yourself overwhelmed and bored during teaching, you are a **spiritual infant**

What **infants** need is a secure relationship with a mature believer, answers to their questions

What **children** need is a spiritual family to belong to, a life group, to learn who they are in Christ and how to live as a Christian

What **young adults** need is a place on the wall to serve, a spiritual parent who will guide and teach them, help in identifying their gifts

What **parents** need is someone to disciple, healthy relationships with co-laborers and a church family to serve

Christian, are you growing in Christ?

Who is helping you do that, and who are you helping to mature?

In order to make disciples who make disciples, we must love persuasively, mercifully,
discerningly!

You will find the greatest job on earth, making disciples, to be incredibly satisfying and
rewarding!

Amen

Pray