

PP Twisted Scriptures: *Laying Down the Gavel*

Part 2-Matthew 7:1-6

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Illus About 2 weeks ago, Trey Pearson, the lead singer for the Christian Rock band Everyday Sunday, put his career on the line and publicly declared he was gay. 8 years married, with 2 kids, he and his supporting wife amicably divorced. Pearson said in an interview, *“There is absolutely no conflict with accepting who I am and following Jesus. God wants me to be healthy, authentic, whole, integrated and my truest self.”*

While I seriously disagree with Pearson’s statement, homosexuality isn’t our topic today

The bible only affirms marriage and sexual intimacy between a man and woman, and

consistently without deviation defines homosexual behavior as sin

Christians are to love and gently yet boldly share the truth with those who are gay

I have people in my life who self-identify as gay and I absolutely love them, and count them as my friends, but I speak the truth to them and they know where I stand

But the Trey Pearson article is not what interested me, it was the comment section

I knew that someone would affirm a biblically defined stance on homosexuality, and the verse we are looking at today would be quoted back

PP Someone did, and here is the response: *“[Someone] once said to me ‘Christians are a gentle bunch.’ They seem like more of a self-righteous bunch of judgmental creeps here... Whatever happened to ‘Judge not lest ye be judged?’”*

It’s ironic he decried judging while calling Christians ‘a bunch of judgmental creeps’

In our day of tolerance, to define rights and wrongs will earn you at times, an angry tirade and a direct quote of Christ, ***‘Judge not, that you be not judged’***

PP 1-What does it mean to ‘Judge not’?

The grammar of ***‘Judge not’*** means that the disciples of Christ must stop something that is continuous and ongoing...and perhaps we can level the field and admit that we all judge?

What goes through your mind when you see a person asleep downtown on a bench?

Or when you see someone overweight at a restaurant?

What do you think toward that parent whose little ones are acting up in public?

Or the Middle Eastern man with a turban on his head?

What are your private thoughts when you see that someone lives in a large home? Small home?

What are they toward the people who collect your trash on the curb?

Judging is rampant in middle and high school...how someone carries their books, clothes they wear, how they apply their make-up and on and on

But what does it mean to judge and is all judging wrong?

PP If we try and define the word ***‘judge’***, we would find it broadly means to *separate, choose, select or determine and has more than a dozen shades of meaning*

That is a lot of possible meaning, so context is crucial and not just the verses immediately surrounding, but the whole counsel of the Word of God

In **7:15**, Jesus tells us to ***‘recognize [false prophets] by their fruits’*** which involves judging

Romans 13:1 tells us God has instituted all governing authorities, who judge over us

PP Christians are told to judge the right people: ***“For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?”*** 1 Corinthians 5:12

PP Jesus said ***“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”*** John 7:24
 These and more show us that Jesus in Matthew 7:1 is commanding all judging to stop

What we aren't looking to do today is find the snappy comeback that will trump all arguments
 It is a critical spirit that must not be present in Christ-followers, a spirit of condemnation
 A hypercritical attitude in a person who thinks they know and live the standard of what is right,
 and have the right to hold others to it and punish them when they don't
 It is judgmentalism, and it's a cheap way to feel morally superior

PP 2-Why should we not have a judgmental attitude?

PP a) *There is a higher court than ourselves*

“Judge not, that you be not judged.” Matthew 7:1

Years ago, in college, I saw the movie, *The Goonies*...saw it a couple times and I really like it
 Years later, when we had children, I rented it wanting them to see it too
 We're watching the movie, but it didn't take long to notice what I didn't before...the profanity
 and inappropriate humor

Denise and I talked afterwards how amazing it was that we seemed not to notice it years ago
 There is an innocence and purity in children that makes the awareness of sin heightened, which
 is why someone with a sailor's mouth usually curtails most of it when around little kids
 Being in the presence of purity and holiness can curtail sin, Jesus is deeply showing this
 It is easy to forget that at every moment, we live in the full view of our Heavenly Father
 When we live conscious of the presence of God, we live differently
 Not only His presence, but that there is an accountability that the Christian has with God

PP ***“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak”*** Matthew 12:36

There is a Judge higher than us, Who holds accountable for everything, and one day we are
 going to meet God face to face, and that thought must determine and control our lives
 Christian, are you aware that there are two eternal judgments, *one of which* is the separation of
 believers from unbelievers, ***“the sheep from the goats”*** Matthew 25:32

PP Jesus will say to believers, ***“Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*** Matthew 25:34

PP To unbelievers He will say, ***“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*** Matthew 25:41

The *second judgment* is for believers only and they will appear before God not to be condemned,
 but commended for the works their faith produced

“Judge not, that you be not judged” tells us that judgmental believers, those who have a critical,
 condemning spirit, will lose a great many rewards in eternity

PP b) *We will be judged the way we judge*

Illus The Greek historian Herodotus wrote a book called Histories and tells a grim tale of a
 corrupt judge who was swayed by a bribe and gave a biased verdict. The judge was Sisamnes, a
 royal judge installed into that position by the Persian king, Cambysses. When the king
 discovered his judge's moral breach, he ordered him to be executed. Then he had the skin flayed

from the dead body and preserved; and with the skin he covered the seat of the chair on which judges sat in judgment. He then installed the executed judge's son to replace his father on the judge's seat with this statement: *"You will sit, to administer justice, upon the skin of your delinquent father: should any one incite you to do evil, remember his fate. Look down upon your father's skin, lest his fate befall you."*

***"For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."* Matthew 7:2**

A hypocritical spirit is evidence of the lack of grace

Jesus is speaking against His people judging motives which only God can know

Our judgment must be right, gracious and fair judgment, and *done in a way that we want us to judge us*

All of us tend to judge others by one standard and ourselves by another standard

We are far more gracious and generous and understanding with ourselves than others

Some Rabbis in Jesus' time taught that God had two measures that He used to judge people: a measure of justice and a measure of mercy

Can you imagine what it would be like if God were to judge us with justice, what we deserve?

How thankful we are for His measure of mercy, and that thankfulness should move us to use that same measure with others

***PP "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."* Matthew 5:7**

Two powerful reasons why we should stop being judgmental and hypocritical:

It directly affects our eternal reward, and second, gratitude for God's mercy should spill over in our attitudes toward others

We are about to learn what it means to 'Judge not', why it is important we stop it, and how we can live the right way in this area called judging

PP 3-What are the problems in judgmental people?

"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?" 7:3

A '**speck**' is a small piece of twig or chaff, commonly getting in the eye when threshing grain

Though small compared to a '**log**', it still bothers and affects the eye

The comparison Jesus gives is not between a small sin or fault and a large one, but between a serious sin or fault and a very critically serious one

'see the speck' is in the present tense, and what we have is a hypocritical, judgmental person continuing to carp on and point out small sins or faults in others but unable to see the large sins and faults in his or her own life

This, by the way, tells us there are degrees of sin, some are specks and some are logs, yet Christ died for them all

There are some problems that faultfinders and critics and judgmental people face

PP a) Judgmental people cannot see clearly

I read of a husband who thought his wife growing deaf, one evening he sat in a chair on the far side of the room. Unknowingly, with her back to him, he very quietly whispered, "Can you hear

me?” There was no response. Moving a little closer, he asked again, “Can you hear me now?” Still no reply. Quietly he edged closer and whispered the same words, but still no answer. Finally, right behind her chair, he said, “Can you hear me now?” With irritation in her voice she replied, “For the fourth time, yes!”

Jesus had just said that hypocritical, fault-finders *‘do not notice’* their own sins and faults. Now He explains that only after the log is removed, *‘then you will see clearly’*. Judgmental people are plagued with a blindness that they are unaware of. The sins of others seem so obvious, yet they are oblivious to their own.

PP b) *Judgmental people intrude before they are invited*

“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’” 7:4

How forward this is, and it is how judgmental people are as they feel they are the moral police. Judgmental people feel obligated to confront, to make sure everyone else sees what they see, which is rarely their own sins and shortcomings.

You have to get into a person’s space to see and help them get a speck out of their eye. Ask anyone who had an optometrist put a contact in their eyes how intrusive it feels, and how powerful is the desire to recoil and back away.

There is such wisdom in learning to wait and pray rather than invade into another’s life with correction, trusting God to make an awareness in that person they have a problem. Jesus is not saying to never point out another’s faults, but don’t make it your mission or practice.

PP c) *Judgmental people live a charade*

“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.” 7:5

PP A *‘hypocrite’* was a professional actor in that day who changed masks to change characters. It is the origin of our phrase, ‘Two-faced’, it is the man whom James said looks in a mirror, sees but doesn’t really see himself and walks away forgetting what he looks like.

The hypocrite does not see him or herself clearly and lives a life of duplicity.

You lose your temper; I have righteous anger, you’re a jerk; I’m having a bad day, You have a critical spirit; I just tell the truth, You gossip; I share prayer requests; You curse and swear; I let off steam; You’re pushy; I’m intensely goal-oriented.

Any of us can be a hypocrite, where we sanctify our sins while condemning others’.

And Jesus tells us we *‘must first take the log out of our own eye’*.

The way we do this is to look in the perfect mirror of God’s Word and confess and repent from what is revealed, and only then can we see.

The hypocrite lives an unexamined life, surface dwelling, only looking at behaviors, not the heart. David teaches us this as well as anyone in **Psalm 51**, where only after his confession and

PP repentance he prayed, *“Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.” 13*

We must have regular time where we invite God to examine us, to search us and show us what isn’t pleasing to Him, and I would recommend that be a weekly habit of devotion.

Let’s have less times of telling others what their sins are, and more time asking others if they are seeing things in us that need to be dealt with.

If you are asked to speak into someone's life, then do so keeping truth together with grace
Grace without truth tends to cement sinful habits in others, and truth without grace tends to harm the relationship

And this is the aim of Jesus, to build up not tear down our brother and sister, and that is the connection with verse 6, which seems to be oddly placed

“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.” **Matthew 7: 6**

It is important that we build each other up so we distinguish good from evil, to discern the counterfeit from the real

In the Jewish sacrificial system, an animal was offered to the Lord, and part of it was given to the priests, part was taken home for the family's food, and part was left on the altar for God That last part was declared ***‘holy’*** and it would have been unthinkable to throw it to the dogs A ***‘pearl’*** was a metaphor for the gospel message, and there are people so antagonistic and perverse that they want to destroy it

In this analogy, pigs cannot eat them so they spit them out and trample them into mud, and then turn around and attack the one bearing the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ

The point in both of these examples is that there is discernment and judging necessary and we must help each other by seeing clearly to help each other grow in our faith

PP “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**

Jesus is telling us in this passage that we must not have a hypercritical, judgmental attitude But to learn to judge fairly, aware that we are held accountable by God,

But when we come to someone who is antagonistic to the gospel, then it is not the argument that will win them to Christ, but a life that lives the truths of the gospel

A life of grace and love which refuses to be hypercritical, but lives pure and bright like Christ Church, let us stop being judgmental, regularly confessing and repenting of our own sins, big and small, so we can see clearly to help others, even if it means we can only be an example

Amen

Pray