

Introduction

Too many Christians go to church spending precious time to find fault, to gossip, and to criticize. It is very sad what Christians do to one-another... Dr. Warren Wiersbe in his book "Angry People", wrote, about an incident in the life of Joseph Parker, a great British preacher, illustrates this truth. He was preaching at the City Temple in London. After the service one of the listeners came up to him and said, 'Dr. Parker, you made a grammatical error in your sermon.' He then proceeded to point out the error to the pastor. Pastor Parker looked at the man and said, 'And what else did you get out of the message?'

If we are honest, we have to admit that we do not want to be around people like that, even though we are sometimes tempted to act like that ourselves. Critical people often view others through their own dirty glasses. Point illustrated, you know there was a guy who screamed and yelled at the gas pump attendant because he wasn't getting his windshield clean. Until his wife grabbed his glasses off his face, cleaned them and shove them back on. All clear now! In reality these folks are looking at others through the prism of their own corrupt hearts. Someone once said the more I get to know the human race the more I love my dog. People can make our life difficult because they are very critical and have a judgmental spirit.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help. Fault-finding is not difficult. Critics talk much and do little that is constructive. Years ago, Theodore Roosevelt noted, "It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred with dust and sweat and blood; . . . and who, . . . if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

We live in a crude world and dealing with criticism adds to that stressful environment. It seems today people have judging others down to a science. Often people will criticize you to cover up for faults in their own lives. If we are honest we become critical at times too. Somewhere along the way, we have forgotten that judging others with a critical spirit is disobeying the Lord. All too often we are the salt of the earth, all right---rubbed right into the wounds and eyes of others. Sometimes when confronted by someone else's mistakes, we leap to judge them forgetting the mandate of our Lord.

So, when Jesus addressed this issue on the Sermon on the Mount, He was dealing with something that all of us confront. Any time a person, man or woman, invents a system of morality, they then become the judge that sits on the throne of that system and determines whether anybody else qualifies. Is that not 'wokism' and that's exactly what happened today and here in the Pharisees' case.

They became judgmental of other people. They condemned and criticized. They were

hypercritical. They were unmerciful and forgiving, unkind, lacking grace, in their constant, disparaging criticism of everybody who didn't come up to their own standard.

We confront it in others but we must confront it in ourselves as well. Having a negative, critical, judgmental attitude is everywhere - even in us and I do see it happening in our own church. I don't want to believe it is on purpose but maybe the world's ways are creeping in.

I Jesus Rebukes a condemning spirit – MT. 7:1

1. Some have taken the Lord's admonition concerning judging to mean that we are not to engage in any form of discernment or evaluation of others. In other words, this line of thinking says that we cannot conclude that a person's behavior or lifestyle is wrong, and that they are wrong for engaging in it. The emphasis today seems to be on tolerance and acceptance. We are told that to be tolerant and accepting is to accept any lifestyle and any act without any biblical evaluation. We're talking about the ugly, self-righteous, judgmental, critical spirit of the Pharisees, and not only the Pharisees, but a lot of other folks had the same problem, and we fight it, as well, even today.

2. John 3:16 used to be one of the most quoted scriptures but not now, in our day it is Matthew 7:1. Those who would like to justify all manner of evil use this commandment to chasten anyone who would take a stand for righteousness. By comparing Scripture with Scripture it becomes obvious that the Lord's words in verse 1 are not to be taken as an endorsement of immoral tolerance and politically correct speech.

It was right to make a man well on the Sabbath, as Jesus did in John 5:8-9. However, the self-righteous Pharisees judged Jesus with a critical spirit. Jesus rebuked them; teaching that we do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. They needed to judge with righteous judgment instead judging by appearances.

3. So what is the meaning of verse 1? What is the Lord rebuking in these verses? It is judgment which falls into different four categories.

1. Intrusive- Intruding into the affairs of others and making judgments in matters that do not pertain to us is strictly forbidden in the Scriptures.

2. Presumptuous - Judging rashly occurs when we treat mere suspicions or rumors as though they were fact. We judge presumptuously when we assume to know the motives of another. That relates both evil deeds and good deeds.

3. Unmerciful - to prejudge and condemn without mercy.

4. Hypocritical- judging other by a standard you yourself don't apply.

Jesus spoke to this kind of criticism in verse 2: **For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again...**

The way you judge will become the way you will be judged. --- Galatians. 6:7

Application:

Do you judge the motive of others? Let say a dear lady in the church is like Dorcas and she knits the most beautiful scarfs for folks in need... but you cast a judgment on her motive and prorogate that she is doing that to show off her talent. If you were that lady how would you feel? How would any of us feel if we were judged for our service as being disingenuous?

Before passing judgment on anyone, we would do well to fully investigate the matter and make sure our judgment is based on established fact. The only way it is right and godly to go to a brother to mention the sawdust in his own eye is after we have first gone before the Lord to confess and purge the log from our own.

Listen we will be judged by the same standards with which we judge others. If we hold others to an exceptionally high standard of morality, yet we ourselves live by a lower standard, we will be judged, not by the standard we live by, but by the standard we expect others to live by. There is a far worse judgment with which we are to be judged than that of man. There is the judgment which will issue forth by Christ." --- **Matthew 12: 36-37**

II. Jesus rebukes a hypocritical spirit.(3-5)

A. One significant change in the Greek text from verses 1&2 to verses 3-5 is that Jesus addresses two different audiences. All his commands in verses 1 and 2 are spoken to "you all," the second person plural, or the large audience as a whole. But his words in verses 3-5 are spoken to "you personally," the second person singular.

1. Notice the word "beholdest". The Greek word is blepo, to see, perceive, regard, or discern. It indicates that the person who is judging is definitely on the lookout for something to see or to criticize. One who is engaged in very close and strict scrutiny could only see a speck in the eye of another. I like how a modern translation states this: How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye?

2. A "mote" is a "dry twig" while a "beam" is a "stick of timber." The point is easily enough understood. We are so quick to catch even the smallest fault in our brother, while at the same time we overlook a much greater fault in ourselves. In these verses, the Lord is telling us in so many words that in reality, we are unable to rightly judge another person because we cannot even rightly judge ourselves. If we could rightly judge ourselves, why do we have a "stick of timber" protruding from our eye? I like how this is stated in a modern translation:

3. The apostle Paul indicated in **Romans 12:2-3** that we are not to think of ourselves too highly. Rather, we are "to think soberly." When we fail to follow these instructions and begin finding fault with others, we are actually passing judgment on ourselves. **A good cure then for a critical spirit is an honest look at yourself and not at others.**

Conclusion:

Where do you see yourself in this passage? Are you being pelted by unfair criticism as you are serving Christ? I know some of you have wrongfully...**If so, keep on serving Christ keep on going and God will reward your efforts.** --- **Matthew 25:31-40**