

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 4 Sep 2022
Sermon Title : Parables of Jesus – Why Judge?
Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng
Text : Matthew 7:1-5

INTRODUCTION

We are going to have a series of a few sermons focusing on the Parables of Jesus, starting with one entitled “Why Judge?” today.

There are many ways we can make people feel alone and the quickest, harshest and most ruthless way to make someone feel alone is when we begin to judge, criticise, point fingers at or talk about them. The person will feel alone even if he/she is in a community and not physically alone.

God in His infinite wisdom and love for the humanity He created, saw how humanity had fallen to sin. And because there is a sin nature that affects us and the fallen world that shapes us, He knows that the fallen humanity whom He still loves has this inclination or propensity to judge, to look at one another and be very critical with one another. That is never His intention because His intention is for the Church to be a community that loves, encourages and corrects gently in an edifying way, not in a critical and judgmental way. And that is why when Jesus came down 2000 years ago, doing His earthly ministry, He preached this very short sermon of only 5 lines in our modern Bible starting off by saying these things: “DO NOT JUDGE” (Matthew 7:1-2)

Matthew 7:1 – “Do Not Judge”

- Jesus is not saying that we are not to form moral conclusions or discern what is right or wrong, good or bad – we are called to do that.
- But how we behave after we discern what is right or wrong is important.
- We should not judge, condemn and get acutely critical

Matthew 7:1-3 – Reasons for not judging

Some of us grew up learning that being late for church service is bad. It is bad because we want to honour our appointment with God. If we are meeting our bosses, we would not want to be late. So, we should not be late for church service when we are meeting with God. It is good that we have such convictions, and it is right. However, we are not to judge when others are late for service because we would not know the reasons the person has for being late. There may be good reasons for why they are delayed. As a

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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faith family we should just be genuinely thankful that everyone is making an effort to be in church, and then in love help them to also see the importance of honouring God by being on time if that is something that needs to be corrected.

- Jesus did not stop at saying 'do not judge' in verse 1. He gave the reason for commanding us not to judge: "So that you will not be judged."
- God would use our standard to judge us. The high level of criticism we use to judge others would be applied to us.

Matthew 7:4-5 – What we should do

Some of us might argue that it is fine to be judged by the standard we use because we believe and are confident that we would meet our own high standard, but Jesus reminds us of our tendency to see the faults of others but not be aware of our own faults. Jesus used the speck and beam to highlight the difference. The contrast between speck and beam is extreme – a speck is a very small dust from the wood while a beam is the largest wood used to support the whole building.

- Jesus wants us to stop looking for others' faults but to become self-aware through some deep reflection before God.

Jesus did not say it is wrong to remove the speck from someone else's eye because we are to help one another by gently correcting each other so we may grow in Christlikeness, just like iron sharpens iron. However, we cannot do a good job in removing the speck from others when there is a beam in our eye.

- We need to remove the beam in our own eye first before we help to remove the speck in another person's eye.

In verse 5, Jesus used a strong word on those who saw others' specks but not their own beam. He called them hypocrites - referring to Greek actors who wore a mask to live out or interpret a character through the mask. So, when we are living and saying something that is not truly inside us, we are hypocrites.

How to remove the beam from our eye?

- Do some self-reflection and look for our own faults.
- Run to God to confess our fault and thank Him for His forgiveness. This would help us recall how loving God is, forgiving us, graciously using us despite our beam, and transforming us gently.
- After receiving God's mercy and grace, we can then apply the same love and grace to others to help them be transformed gently.

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Instead of judge, we are called to love!

“If you judge people, you have no time to love them.”

- Mother Theresa

CONCLUSION

If anyone has been a recipient of critical judgment, let us fix our eyes on Jesus and seek His healing and understand that those who judged us are on their own journey to be like Christ. May we regularly self-reflect before God so we can be aware of our own faults and seek His forgiveness and be transformed.

While we are to form moral conclusions or discern what is right or wrong, good or bad, let us never judge critically but instead love, so we may help one another grow in Christlikeness through showing mercy and grace.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

- 2a. Since hearing the sermon, how have you been choosing to love instead of judging others?
- 2b. What challenges have you faced/will you face in choosing to love instead of judging others? How did/can you overcome these challenges?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Read Matthew 7:1-5 slowly and reflect.
 - a.
 - (i) Have you been judged by a brother or sister in Christ?
 - (ii) How did you feel and how did it affect your relationship with the person and with God?
 - b.
 - (i) Were there occasions when you thought you would be judged but instead received grace from a brother or sister in Christ?
 - (ii) How did you feel and how did it affect your relationship with the person and with God?

- 4a. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest propensity to judge and 10 the highest propensity to love instead of judge.
 - (i) What practical steps can you take to move yourself towards 10?
 - (ii) How can your small group help you to move towards 10?

- 4b. Using the same scale, rate your small group's propensity to judge or love when you come together as one?
 - (i) How can your group do better in judging less and loving more?

- 4c. Self-reflection before God is necessary for us to become self-aware so we can remove the beam in our eye.
 - (i) Do you self-reflect regularly?
 - (ii) What do you do with the awareness God brings to you?

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