

CRITICAL JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1-5

INTRODUCTION, V. 1

"Judge not" - this major section of the Sermon on the Mount is given up to judgment. Perhaps the entire chapter has something to say about judgment in different ways. We are getting the description of the Christian man and his character. Then we are going to be shown now his relationship in the world to his neighbors. If we were going to be questioned as to whether or not we are going to live after death and that we should have to face God in judgment, we would undoubtedly say "Yes". We live from hour to hour as though we do not care very much about the future. We are not prepared for the final judgment, but we render judgment day by day.

This chapter begins with the deliberate pronouncement, "Judge not." What does our Lord mean when he says, "Judge not." Don't judge. To answer this question is (not to seek the dictionary) or merely to look up the word "judge." This cannot satisfy us at this point. It has many different meanings, and we should know exactly what it means. And the critical judgment which he ~~is~~ is going to discuss will come to us with a definition through illustrations, and he will try to interpret for us what this means. For if I do not exercise some



judgment, how will I know the difference or how to discriminate between the dog and the swine or either between the false prophet which may come in sheep's clothing and as a raving wolf.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits." And now how can I test the fruit?

The scripture is going to give us some intelligent understanding about this matter of judgment.

~~There~~ There was a day when even in the church judgment was meted out among the members. A person might be excluded ~~from~~ from the communion table, or a person may be put out of the church membership, the church family, ~~but~~ <sup>what</sup> we would call excommunicated. There was also judgment rendered concerning doctrines and the question of false prophets. Now, we are supposed to ~~prevent~~ <sup>detect</sup> the false doctrines and the false prophets, as Galatians says, "But though we are an angel from heaven preaching <sup>another</sup> yet a gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." That is a clear pronouncement.

First Corinthians 15, Paul talks about certain people who were denying the resurrection of Christ, and he expresses judgment toward them. But how is a man going to know how to judge a ~~heretic~~ heretic by his views when a man will say he is a Christian, but he does not care what he believes. Then we have to go on to the epistles of John who told us about false teachers, about anti-Christs, that w



these were to be avoided and also rejected. If a man comes to you who does not hold the true doctrine, you must not even receive him in your house nor to bid God-speed or to provide him money to carry on the preaching of his false doctrine. The modern idea today however is in direct contradiction to the scripture.

If then it does not mean that we are to not exert some critical judgment or discriminating judgment, what does it mean? "Judge not." He is not telling us that we are not going to make <sup>some</sup> the assessments that we are going to make, but I think he is going to help us to see that we are to avoid the (condemning type) of judgment, the tendency to condemn people. The Christian life must always be in balance to keep up with truth.

You remember Jesus spoke about the Pharisees who boasted of their prayer on the street corner, but he commended the man, the publican, but the ~~parish~~ problem with the Pharisee was that he had a condemning attitude toward the publican which did wrong.

I think this is the problem that we <sup>have</sup> had in the church for years. He is that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone. And how guilty we are in this respect, and sometimes we have made havoc of the church of God because we have not followed the plain subject and way of our Lord. The best way to treat a ~~wound~~ wound is not to just ignore it or is not to just give it some superficial



treatment, but the right treatment is to cleanse it, to purify it, to try to make it healthy again, and very seldom do we ever do this with a critical judgment or attitude.

Judge not, he says in the introduction of this section. This has to do with our spirit, the spirit of condemning. I think it is kind of a ~~xxx~~ self-righteous spirit in which self is always at the back of it. We have a feeling that we are all right while others are not, and this critical ~~xxx~~ censoring type of spirit expresses itself in all sorts of content.

Now we know that there are judges in our courts to judge criminals. They have judges to judge for contests, flower shows, horse shows, dog shows, cow shows, but this is not the kind of judgment that Jesus is talking about here in this passage. ~~xxxx~~ He is talking about the self-appointed judges, for truly we judge each day. When you buy a hat or buy an item at the store, you make a judgment. But Jesus is going to uncover the danger of judgment here, this is critical.

I want us now to turn to some of the reasons for not judging in a condemning critical way. Now Jesus gives us some very simple, down to earth reasons in this passage of scripture. And I hope to give them to you as I tried to discover them for my own well-being.

I. Judging is (risky business) ✓/

V. 2 You remember he said in V. 1 you are not to judge that you be not judged. It is very ~~rk~~ risky business, and in this second verse, he tells us "for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." The tendency which we have to be critical and ~~xxx~~ unfortunately he says is going to come back to us. We delight in ~~xxx~~ these ~~xxxxxxx~~ criticisms for their own sake, we enjoy them, and we like to (find fault) and indeed we hope we can find fault with something. So now this is a matter of which is very (bad business), Jesus said. Diagnosing, making a judgment, is two different things. So this is what he is prohibiting here. The kind of critical condemning type of judgment in which a person feels he has a license to criticize the imperfections of the people around him. And he thinks that he has all the latitude to do it, but this verse of scripture makes no exception. I doubt really that V. 2 here has ever become a real part of many Christians. We just gloss over this verse like some of the others. We feel if we have stayed out of serious moral trouble, raised a family, and been pretty good folks, then in the judgment Day everything is going to be so wonderful, and we'll be greeted and ushered into a two-story mansion in the center of the Eternal City that looks over the river of life where those trees grow that are for the healing of the nations.



Now it may not be this way. Judgment Day is going to be a stunning  
experience for a great many people who have refused to read the fine print.

There may be some Baptists in that crowd to whom God will say, "Depart  
from me, I never knew you. You never did get the point of discipleship at all.  
 You never did show any kind of charity toward ~~x~~ others."

V. 2 There is no recourse but to suppose that V. 2 means that a person who  
has been critical and uncharitable all of his life will be judged by God in the  
 same spirit in which he has judged. I suggest you read this verse of ~~xxx~~  
~~xxx~~ scripture for yourself and see if you can find any other meaning. Now the  
 full ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ consequences of fault-finding do not always await eternity.  
 There is a grim justice that punishes this diabolical habit. Those that pour out  
 their bitterness, ~~xxx~~ bitterness will engulf them. If you live by the lash of  
 the tongue and the poison of the tongue will disease your soul. And you will  
 wither and people will withdraw from you and leave you in your acid bitterness.  
 Jesus says, now don't make a habit of this. Don't adopt the habit of passing  
judgment and using this kind of judgment because it might be used on you. You  
 remember you've heard the illustration of the man who lives in a glass house  
 should not - do what? Should not throw stones. Now don't use that as someone  
 else has applied it to you because you judge then it's going to come back to you.

If you deal out a dirty deal to someone, the thing that you deal is going to come back to you. If you don't really think ~~xx~~ that those things ought to be applied to you, then you ought not to apply them to somebody else. Don't you use the same sort of principles. They will really be used on you if you use it on them. Thus, we have one of the reasons for not doing this kind of thing. It's risky business. You are ~~x~~ going to heap upon yourself.

✓ II. Retribution in Kind V. 2

Now, I have touched on this in the previous point, but we need to emphasize the matter of retribution of kind as given in this second verse. If we ever know the feeling of being ~~xr~~ rather pleased, we hear something rather unpleasant about another, well that really is the wrong spirit. <sup>If</sup> We are jealous and envious and somebody has made a mistake and immediately we take pleasure in it, we ought to be careful. ~~x~~ If we show that we are ready to make judgments when the matter is of no concern to us at all, how much time do we spend ~~xxxx~~ in expressing our opinions about people who really have no direct dealings with us? They are nothing to us. But we experience a malicious pleasure in doing so.

We put prejudice in the place of principle. We are to judge in terms of ~~xxxxxxx~~ principle. But the tendency we have is to take personalities and put them



in the place of principles.

We habitually express our opinions without knowledge of the facts.

Now we have no right to ~~do~~ do this, and this is the spirit that Jesus is condemning here.

Some people never take time to understand the circumstances, and is never ready to excuse, is never ready to exercise mercy.

You remember when Jesus ~~is~~ sent messengers to the village of the Samaritans to make ready for his arrival, and they would not receive them, James and John said this, "Lord, will thou at this time command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them?" That's it. They wanted to destroy those Samaritans, but Jesus rebuked them. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And that is why this critical judgment is such a painful subject. It brings back retribution upon us. We need to feel ~~our~~ our own sinfulness and ugliness in the matter of sin. This is very practical and very personal. There are those who would have us to believe that we do not judge other people if you dislike other people judging you. You will be paid back in the same form. Of course that is true and perfectly right. ~~There are no~~ There are no sensitive people who are more ~~sensitive~~ to criticism than those who are ~~is~~ always criticizing others. They dislike it and complain when it happens to them, but they never seem



to remember this when they do it with respect ~~to~~ to others. The kind of person who is always criticizing is criticized in turn. He does not appreciate and will not be appreciated by others. Now this is partly what this means, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Now, remember these words are considering are addressed to believers, not to unbelievers. ~~xxxx~~ These people were the same people to whom the beatitudes had been spoken.

I think in scripture there are going to be about three kinds of judgment. We who are evangelical people believe that first of all there is the judgment which is final and ~~xxx~~ eternal, which determines a man's status of his standing before God. This is the great separation of the Christian from the Non-Christian, the sheep from the goats.

The second ~~is~~ judgment is a judgment was God's children. As Paul says in I Cor. 11 when he was talking about the communion service, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and the blood of Jesus, but let a man examine himself and so let ~~xxx~~ him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord.

If we have wrongs in our lives, we are guilty of sin and wrong living, we are going to be punished by him. So it is very wrong for the Christian to trip lightly through life and believing that because he believes in the Lord Jesus

Christ he is not going to receive any more kind of judgments, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and ~~xxx~~ scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. In a sense, a man ought to be more frightened if nothing ever ~~xxxxxx~~ goes wrong with him in this world than if things do go wrong because when the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. He is going to bring his children into perfection. He is going to discipline them, and this is going to be a type of judgment. Now, the third type of judgment is that of rewards that God's people are going to receive at the judgment seat of Christ. Every man's work will be made manifest and the day will declare it whether it be precious stone, wood, hay, stubble, it will be judged. In II Cor. 5 the judgment is clearly not only for ministers, ~~x~~ but for all, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may ~~xxxx~~ receive the things done in his body according ~~xxxxxx~~ to that he hath done whether it be good or bad. Knowing ~~xxxxxxxx~~ therefore says Paul the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Christian believers, let us realize that we will have to appear the judgment seat of Christ for that which we have done in the body. We are not given all the details in scripture about this judgment.

Hence, the ~~x~~ retribution.

To continue our reasons for ~~xx~~ not judging, first we have said it is risky business, second we have said that we are in danger of retribution in kind.



### ✓ III. Human judgment is bad, V. 3

The scripture says that "Why beholdest thou the mote in thou brother's eye, but considerist not the beam in thine own eye." Here is an indication that human judgment is always weak. Because first of all it may be done with prejudice. One's own opinion. The ~~xxx~~ Pharisee says, "I thank thee that I am not this other." In other words, "Pardon me while I adjust my halo." We are perfect people and we are perfect individuals.

It is bad because it is (uncalled for). Many people do this just to be doing something.

It is bad because often ~~ix~~ it is to (sidetrack) our own sins. We ~~xxxx~~ blame it on the other fellow. I Kings 18:17. Ahab said to Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

Fourth, it is bad because it is (one-sided). We know ~~the~~ <sup>only</sup> one side of the story. And yet we'll tell that one side.

Fifth, it is (childish). It is ~~ix~~ like saying, "I am going to take my dolls and go home." People in the church, they get down on the church, or on the preacher or on the program, and of course it is rather childish in the way that they criticize things.

I remember reading once about a husband and wife who were awful critical



of each other. And so the situation had gotten to the point that when they came to the breakfast table they were not speaking to each other. And the father would say, "Jimmy, tell your mother to pass me the bacon."

Now I remember Dr. Hirschel Hobbs <sup>attending</sup> once telling about a dinner given in honor of a noble Christian layman, and among the tributes paid to the layman was the fact that he had never been heard to criticize a pastor, and those who knew him best said, they had never heard him speak critically of anyone. Would that this might be said of ~~xxx~~ each of us. Unfortunately for most of us it is not true. There are those that seem to feel that their role in life is to set the rest of the world straight. Some people are so busy pointing out the faults of others until they can ~~scarcely~~ scarcely see their own. And they judge everyone but themselves. Why beholdest thou the mote, Jesus said. The scene which Jesus described might well ~~have~~ been the plot for a comic opera. There are two men. One has a splinter or a ~~small~~ small chip in his own eye. The other man is trying to remove it but he is unable to do so, because there is a protruding large log sticking out of his eye. And this really appears to be ridiculous. And he proposes to come to rescue this little speck.

Now, we might give the man credit for his good intentions. But that is really not the point of what Jesus is saying. Jesus is saying that his efforts are



like a fat man peddling a reducing compound. <sup>His Gospel</sup> Speech is his own worst advertisement of his product.

Did you know that the most unlovely Christian is the one who is forever criticizing someone or something? And usually that is about all he does. Just has the critical judgment to make on every matter.

In the sixth place, human judgment is bad because it is blind usually. It is not ~~xxx~~ able to see through and to understand, and is very destructive because it is blind. Those men that day that brought the woman who had been taken an adulterer, Jesus did not excuse her act, but he told her to go and sin no more. He didn't stand there with his critical judgment. But he asked men to examine themselves. And as a boy I learned on a farm that you cannot put a bridle on a horse by beating him over the head with it. You can't catch him that way. And many Christians whose only testimony for Christ is a critical attitude for ~~to~~ others drives unchurched and lost ~~xxx~~ people ~~xxx~~ away from Christ ~~xxx~~ instead of drawing them to Him. Now this does not mean we are talking about ignoring sin. But here is something simply about the law of sowing and reaping. You sow in mercy for other people, you are going to reap it. Many people judge Jesus, and they still judge him. Now if you ~~xxx~~ really want to show a man what Jesus can do for you, then let him see what Jesus has done for you that your life might



be winsome. If your life is one of carping criticism of others, well if that is what happens to a man when he becomes a Christian, the lost man will say, "Excuse me, but I just don't care for that kind of a life."

An old minister in England was seated in the churchyard one day on a tombstone. One of the officers of the church came by and told him that there had been very ~~few~~ few conversions, and that he ought to resign and quit preaching. As the old pastor sat there on the tombstone, a boy came by that he talked with. God soon called the old preacher ~~home~~ home, he died. But what about that boy that was saved in the church that year? He became a cobbler, and he fashioned a world of leather, and on the map he pointed his customers to a pagan land. And this Christian layman became the father of modern missions, because that boy was William Carey. And Carey went out to India. The question is, could it be the old preacher had been a failure? Was that a proper estimation of his ministry in that church?

#### ✓ IV. Human (judgment widens the gulf), V. 4

Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye and behold a beam is in thine own eye, Jesus said. Now Jesus was pointing out that you can't make life over again by your critical judgments. And it is so easy for a person to forget that he is judging a real person. They feel that they ~~xxxxxxx~~ themselves are different. They think that they have ~~xx~~ certain characteristics of piety and conceit. For example,



they forget, some church workers forget, that the policeman is a real person.

He's glad when ~~xx~~ he takes off his uniform and becomes a real person. Some Christians forget that school teachers are real persons and that they long to escape all the critical judgments that some parents and people put upon them.

The bus driver is a real person. He may never be on time. The sales girl may have a bad temper, but she's a real person. The elevator man or operator may always be going to wrong direction for you. The merchant the storekeeper, the service station man. Let us remember all these people are real people. And they

are ~~xx~~ just like you are. And when you pre-label them with your judgments, you ~~xxxx~~ hinder your good relations with them, and you obscure the fact that you are a Christian, and you widen the ~~xx~~ gulf of fellowship with them. You really can't make life over with this sort of attitude, and this sort of judgment Jesus

is saying to his disciples. He is pointing out how to deal with the erring ones.

Those ~~xx~~ who do make mistakes, and this is a very delicate operation. A beam would be a huge piece of timber. A mote would be a very small twig or bit of straw.

And Jesus says your hand is all too clumsy to perform this operation.

Someone in the history book was telling about plates that were handed down 200 years. There is a picture representing the mote and the beam. A man with a spiked log sticking into his eye trying hard to pick a ~~xx~~ teeny grain out of



day at the table would find a little help, and it might help some people today.

You remember the prodigal son's brother. He was so critical. And on the other hand, the father was willing to forgive. But this hypocrite, he wasn't willing to forgive anything.

Remember, you widen the gulf if you are a church leader, and you are always criticizing ~~xxxxxx~~ somebody else. Remember, you are making a gulf. You just can't work in such an attitude under certain conditions. You must first rid this thing out of your own life. Get this sin out of your own life, the sin of the flesh, the beam in your own eye. Remove that piece of trash, and then you will be able to get close enough to your own brother to help him. What you say and what you are, they are two different things. You say one thing and do another thing, then you cancel all of it and build a gulf between you. Identify yourself with the problems and the needs of ~~x~~ others, and then you will be able to help men.

The more a person is at peace with himself, the more he is at peace with others. The better a person feels toward himself, the more charitable he is with others. He represses the self-hate which is at the bottom of most of his criticism. Jesus once said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself ." And most of the time critical people are ~~xxxxxxx~~ insecure. They are desperate in their desire to be loved, and yet in this overbearing critical thing, ~~xxx~~ they build a gulf and they cannot find that



Someone told about an ancient illustration in which a man took his habits and his sins, his own faults in a big bag and carried them in front. But he took the faults of his neighbor and his ~~xxxx~~ fellowx man and ~~xx~~ put them on his back. But the man with critical judgment is the man who takes his neighbors faults and puts them in front where he can see them all the time, and he puts ~~x~~ his own faults in a bag out of sight and out of view on his back. Judging others widens the gulf, and Christian love ought to be a bridge. Now your criticism will not really be helpful to the fellowship and the goodwill in the church or in the life of a brother.

Suppose Jesus had started off judging Zaccheus and accusing him for overcharging the people in his taxation program. Instead of that, Jesus won his friendship. He never would have won that man if he had ~~xxxxxx~~ started off with a critical judgment. The thief on the cross was not criticized, but was pointed in the right direction.

✓ V. Human (judgment is unfair) V. 5

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam in thine own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly the problem in the other man's life. Our judgments of others is likely to be unfair, and (rarely do we use the facts.) The way to break the habit of fault-finding is to remember that people who seem to be falling far short of what we think we ought to do may be laboring under difficulties about ~~x~~ which we do not know. That's why he says in a sarcastic way almost, you pull out this



beam out of your own eye. You're incapable of helping the other person. And finally he condemns us as hypocrites.

The fact of the ~~xxx~~ matter is that we are not really concerned about helping this other person. We are only interested in condemning him. We pretend to have a great interest, and we seem to be very distressed at finding this blemish in his life. As a matter of fact, we are really glad to discover it. It is hypocrisy. One person goes to another ~~with~~ would-be ~~xxxxxxx~~ friend. "It is a shame so-and-so has a defect." No, says Jesus, if you really want to help other people, first notice that beam in your own eye. You really want to help other people? If you want to help ~~in~~ them get rid of their ~~xxxx~~ blemishes and their faults, first realize that your attitude and your ~~in~~ spirit are wrong. That's number one. Examine your attitude toward other people. And this is the procedure and it is a very difficult operation. You know the eye is very sensitive. You touch it with a finger it closes up. It has sympathy. You can transfer all of this into the spiritual realm. Now you are going to handle the soul. You are going to touch the most ~~xxxx~~ sensitive thing in a man. How can we get the little mote out? You should be sympathetic. Find it in another far from condemning, you ~~ought~~ ought to be ~~xxxx~~ weeping. You ought to be ~~in~~ full of sympathy. Full of compassion if you really want to help this other brother.



✓ A man with a little girl, the child was crying and this greatly provoked the man across the aisle. The irritated man said to the father, "Can't you do something with that child?" Why don't you give the child to her mother?" ❌ The father replied, "I'm sorry, sir, but I can't. The child's mother is in the baggage car in a casket."

✓ Wesley one time met a man who contributed to a project which he was interested in, but he thought the offering was very small, so Wesley lost his temper and criticized this man for the poverty of his gift. But the man looked Wesley right in the eye and said, "I know a man who at the week's beginning goes to the market and buys a few cents worth of parsnips. He takes them home to boil in water, and all that week he has parsnips for his meat and the water for this drink and meat and ❌ drink alike cost him a few cents each week."

"Who is this man?" asked Wesley. "I am" was the reply. And as incredible though it may sound, Wesley comments on this in his diary. He says this he constantly did although he then had an adequate income in order that he might pay the debts he had ~~contracted~~ contracted before he knew God. And ❌ this was the man that I had thought to be covetous. Let us judge not, for we are judged hasty and unfair by the very judgment we make of others.

✓ I read about a cruise on - that was a luxury cruise, and a young girl



enjoyed the dinner and ice cream pudding each night which was served in a new form. One night the ice cream was in the model of a ship. The next night like a statue. The next night it was very ordinary, and the spoiled girl complained to the ~~captain~~ captain that the chef was getting slack. She did not know that a radio message had been received that this man who was chef, his wife was very ill. And on the night that the ice cream was very ordinary, she had died. ~~xxxx~~ Judge <sup>not</sup> lest ye be/judged because your judgment is unfair. We so hurt others not because we mean to be cruel but because we utter judgments without knowledge. Day after day we judge people. We say he is cantankerous, he is cross, he is mean, he is conceited, he is awkward, and we do not see behind the wall of sorrow and disappointment. We cannot help passing judgment upon people sometimes.

Dr. Alexander White used to say, before uttering judgment ask yourself three questions: Is it true? Is it necessary? and Is it kind? Quite often we forget these three things about judging. We must remember if you really had another person's interest at heart, you would not continue the type of judgment quite often that you make of him.

Now in conclusion, let me remind you that there is God's judgment.

Rev. 20:10. Now when God comes to judge us we hope that he will think about us



the best that he can. I am sure that he knows the worst, and I'm sure he knows our secret sins. And I am sure he knows exactly what they are.

God will probably take off some of the labels which folks have put on us, and he'll write on some ~~new~~ new labels and we will probably look like new people from the standards by which some critical judgment has been passed upon us.

In V. 6 he says