

## Matthew 7:1-6 (NKJV)

**1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.**

**2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.**

**3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?**

**4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye?**

**5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**

**6 Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.**

If I were going to name this sermon, it would be “Judging by the Gospel- Part 2”.

As I was studying proper and improper judging, I became more and more convinced that this is all about **the gospel**. Now there are different ways of saying that. You could say it is all about grace. But I needed confirmation that I was barking up the right tree because no one else was saying this. Most of them brushed over the passage **too easily** I thought. My thinking was that if I am barking up the right tree, scripture should make this obvious.

There should be passages that serve as **examples** where judging **not** done by the gospel is condemned and the answer to that situation is to judge **according to** the Gospel. I prayed that the Lord would show me if I was wrong or right and I started to read through the New Testament looking for an example.

It had to consist of **wrong judging** that was **counter** to the gospel. It had to be corrected by **proper judging** that **submits** to the gospel.

I started reading in Galatians. I got to chapter 2. And there it was. Exactly what I was looking for.

I took this as a tremendous affirmation that I was understanding Jesus’s words correctly. That is very helpful when we are studying scripture.

There are three major things in the passage that **came off the page** to me.

First we find that Peter was **judging wrongly**.

Second was that those following Peter were acting **hypocritically**.

And third, Paul said that the issue that Peter failed on was a failure to **properly apply the gospel**.

We are going to look at that this morning.

But keep in mind that the topic is **how to judge rightly and wrongly**. How to judge and how to **not** judge.

We are going to read the whole 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Galatians this morning. So please follow along in your Bibles.

Now remember that Paul was writing to the Galatians about a particular problem. Jewish false teachers were creeping in and adding to the Gospel. They were trying to make the Gentiles accept all of the instructions that were given to the Jews. But ultimately they were making salvation a combination of **faith plus works**.

So Paul begins by laying out a foundation of the gospel. The topic in the beginning of the text is the Gospel. He is checking out the Gospel he is preaching with the leaders of the church to make sure he had it straight, to make sure they were all on the same page.

Paul was making sure. For whatever reason he felt compelled to make sure he was presenting the gospel accurately.

Let's look.

### **Galatians 2:1-21 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.**

**<sup>2</sup> And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.**

So Paul had been preaching for a considerable amount of time. Odds are that everywhere he went he kept meeting resistance from these Judaizers. They would keep adding **additional requirements** to what it meant to be a believer. We do not know all of the things that were added. We know for sure that circumcision was one of the things. Food laws may have been another. Did it also include synagogue attendance? Jewish ceremonial rituals? Strict adherence to other things considered Jewish? We don't know.

But essentially the message was that if you want to be a **good Christian** you must become a **good Jew**.

Paul communicated to the church leadership that this is **NOT** the gospel he is preaching. And he must make sure that **they see it** the way **he sees it**. And by what Paul says next we can tell that they do.

**<sup>3</sup> Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.**

This is the affirmation that a Christian does not need to be a good Jew to be a faithful Christian. Paul had the church's leadership in agreement on this topic.

Titus did not need to be circumcised in order to follow Christ. Titus is the test case here.

**4 And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),**

I assume the “this occurred” is referring to Paul needing to affirm he had the gospel right. The false brethren were causing great trouble for Paul’s ministry. This is easy to understand because these people were **quoting scripture**. And there is a lot of Old Testament scripture that could be **wrongly applied** for this purpose. If we think we can just give a cursory read of scripture and that will settle all the issues, we are wrong. It sometimes takes a lot of work. And it is not always simple or self evident. We should know that much just by the study we have been doing of **Jesus’s** words. We often need to compare scripture with scripture to really know what is true.

**5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.**

Look at what Paul says here. If Paul had given in to the extraneous influence, he lets us know that it was **the gospel** that was at stake. If salvation ever becomes Grace **Plus** Something Else, it is no longer the gospel. It isn’t half gospel. It is NO gospel. Because the Gospel is by **grace** alone, by **faith** alone, by the **Word of God** alone. If Paul had given in, it would not have made the Gospel **weaker**. It would have **denied** the Gospel. He fought so that the true Gospel might continue in them.

**6 But from those who seemed to be something--whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man--for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me.** (This seems like a funny way to speak about other Apostles. Paul was obviously not impressed by their positions. They were just men like he was.)

**7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter**

**8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),**

**9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**

**10 *They desired* only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.**

This was the verdict. The church leadership affirmed Paul's understanding and presentation of the Gospel. That was huge. They basically told Paul, keep doing what you are doing because you are right. What you are doing is of God. But we are people, aren't we? And don't we find it hard sometimes to **keep fighting in ourselves to do the right things**? Don't we always know better than we do? Don't we sometimes just want to fall back into our comfort zone? Well that looks like what happens to Peter.

**11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;**

Now it would be difficult to say too much about this verse without at least using a synonym for the word "Judge". Paul looked at what Peter was doing. He evaluated what Peter was doing. He determined that Peter was in the wrong. His position was morally inferior. And Paul got in Peter's face about it. And he certainly offers no apology here for doing so. He does not apologize for judging Peter to be **in the wrong**. In fact Paul **justifies** his judging of Peter. Let's look for the basis. We are looking for something having to do with the Gospel.

**12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.**

**13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.**

So what is the issue here? Can't a Christian eat with whoever they want? Clearly their dinner partners are not the issue. The reason they withdrawing and separating from the **gentile Christians** is the problem. Peter was suddenly trying to act like a good Jew. He was placing the expectations of certain **influential Jews** above the **freedom** provided by Christ. He was trying to **impress** these Jews. He was trying **not to offend** these Jews. There was some kind of fear playing out here. And whatever the case, the fear got higher billing than the Gospel did. The fact that Christ had died to save both the Jewish Peter and these gentiles brothers was temporarily not as important as something else, some other standard.

So he allowed **some other priority** to cause Peter to separate himself from others who were saved by the Gospel, just like he was. He allowed another standard, another method of evaluating and judging to cause a divide between true saints. It made the Jews **MORE** important and the gentiles **LESS** important.

And as usually is the case, people follow the lead of their leaders. They follow example much more readily than they follow teaching. Often this is due to

trust. Sometimes we trust our leaders too much. We figure they are right about lots of things so they are probably right about this. That is a mistake. But it is a very common mistake.

Who would have thought that Peter would go the wrong direction? Who would have thought he would not see what he was doing? Well, he is still Peter after all. Christ did not make him an angel when He saved Peter. Now look at the word here. Peter was acting **hypocritically** and even **Barnabas**, the guy that was there when the gospel was agreed upon, the guy that tended to welcome **everyone** into the club, even he ended up being making their fellowship exclusive. You get the feel from this verse that it must have been a major movement if even Barnabas joined it. He was the least likely candidate for such a thing.

And it was **hypocrisy**. It was hypocrisy because Peter had **already** affirmed Paul's gospel. Peter had **already** said that Gentiles do not need to follow all the Jewish rules to be a card carrying Christian. He said that. But now when he meets some relational pressure, he abandons his principles. He says one thing. But he does another. He believes the gospel. But he play acts being a good Jew. That is hypocrisy and that is always what happens when people judge contrary to the gospel.

**14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"**

Paul challenges the hypocrisy. Paul challenges the wrong judging. And he is very clear.

Peter's problem was that he was not being **straightforward** about the truth of the gospel. Peter was not **deciding** by the gospel. He was not **judging** by the gospel. He was not looking at his **brothers** through the lens of the gospel. He was not looking at **himself** through the lens of the gospel. He was not instructing his **Jewish friends** through the lens of the Gospel. He was not being straightforward about the truth of the gospel. He was bending some things. He was hiding some things. Maybe he was ashamed of some things. Maybe Peter wanted some credit from these guys for **being one of them**, one of the stalwart Jews.

We need to remember that Peter was a fisherman. He had probably never had much respect from any of the Jewish leadership. It would be easy to see how seductive it would be if suddenly Peter is now being viewed as a religious expert. How seductive it would be if Peter is now being viewed as some kind of equal with some of these high influence Jews. He only needed to keep quiet

about a few things. He just needs to dodge a few topics and all will be good. He just needed to put some distance between himself and the gentile brothers. Peter was judging by the flesh. Peter was dodging the price of the gospel. We know that we cannot be too hard on our friend Peter. Peter is the “yelled at” kid. In crowds most people are doing the same wrongs, but there is always one kid that draws the attention. Peter is the kid that gets yelled at. And we think, it is better that he gets yelled at than us. We have all been guilty of dodging the price of judging by the gospel. We have all cut some corners for our advantage.

But Paul cuts to the chase.

What is this gospel?

What is it that we all share?

How should we see things according to the Gospel?

How would it look different than what Peter is doing?

**15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,**

**16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.**

How sweet is this truth. You and I are not Jews by nature. Suppose being Jewish was a requirement to salvation? We could never attain to that. We would be left out.

But Paul says “No” We being Jews, and keeping away from the notorious sins, keeping our lives clean externally, even we are only saved by **believing in Christ. Nothing else** is taken into account. Oh, obeying God’s commands in our lifestyles may have saved us a world of hurt and regret. But they contributed nothing to our salvation. What we did and did not do as religious people did not get our sins covered. They did not put us in right relationship to God. It was believing in Christ that turned the corner.

That is how we were justified. That is how we were made as if we never sinned. And we did not attain that by our **record**. We **received** it by **Christ’s record**. None of the **good things we did** or the **bad things we did not do** did anything to get us saved.

**17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!**

**18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

**19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.**

**20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ**

**lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

This false scale of keeping some kind of score is abolished by grace. What good thing **I did** that **you did not do**. What bad thing **I did not do** that **you did**. Those are irrelevant for our salvation. They might come into play with the counsel from God's word that you need. They are not irrelevant to **life**. But they are irrelevant to **salvation**.

We are in a state provided for us that is completely outside of us. It was Christ who was crucified, and I receive that by faith. And now I live by the power of the gospel. Everything that is important **about me** was **done to** me. It was **provided** for me. I have Christ living in me.

And now how do I live? How do I think about my life? How do I see it? How do I judge it? How do I discern it?

The life I live no longer has me at the center. I live by this steadfast belief that what Christ did **for me** is the center of my universe. It is the reason behind **everything** now. I live **by faith**. I live by **belief in the Son of God**. What **He says** is how I discern my world. It is how I judge all of life.

And who is this Christ.

This is the Christ who loved me.

The is the Christ who gave Himself for me.

And it is also the Christ who **loved** all my brothers and sisters in Christ.

And it is the Christ who **gave Himself** for all my brothers and sisters.

And it is the Christ who tells us to **love all our brothers** and sisters in Christ.

And it is the Christ who tells us to **lay down our lives** for our brothers and sisters.

We live by faith that has its focus outside of us.

This faith is not reliant upon what we did to save ourselves. It is not reliant upon how well we live up to an external standard. We are completely dependent upon Christ for our salvation and for anyone's salvation who is ever saved.

Paul is making the point that if we drift back at any point to allowing **our efforts** to in any way be the **source** of our salvation, we are falling into huge error. If we add our moral merit by our good behavior into our salvation, we are not displaying anything but sin. **For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

In other words, if we judge anything by any other standard than salvation through the work of Christ, there is nothing good in that. It is all bad. It is **bad** judging. It is **wrong** judging. It is **sinful** judging. It is the kind of judging that

God will judge. We will get a taste of our own medicine if we persist in what Jesus tells us.

And here is Paul's concluding statement.

**21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."**

Look at those words. **I do not set aside the grace of God**

Isn't that at the heart of all wrong judging? Isn't that at the heart of all wrong thinking?

When I look in the mirror, I should not **set aside** the grace of God. That person I see was saved by one thing. **Grace**. Not two things. Not grace and something else that impressed God. Not something good that earned something. Not some innate talent or determination or good decision making skills. No. That person in the mirror is a **perfect example** of how God saves a person despite their complete lack of merit. And nothing worthy of saving can be added before his salvation. And nothing afterward will ever merit the salvation he has already received.

My track record of what I did and what I did not do are all incidentals. Given different circumstances I may have performed much worse. Given different circumstances I may have performed much better. But none of it would count in my salvation. I was in a **state of sin** and my heart was in **rebellion** against God. It took a tornado of grace to blow me in the right direction. My salvation was all of grace. The Jon file had nothing in the plus column.

And when I look at you and you look at me, we should see the same thing. God was showing off His grace when He saved every one of us. It was all of a grace that we cannot for a moment set aside in our thinking.

Do we see each other that way? Do you see me as needing no more grace to save than you did? Do we all see each other as hopeless causes apart from Christ and wonderful miracles of Grace because of Christ. Do we see it all being about a grace that cannot be set aside in any of the moments we deal with each other?

I struggle to put this into words powerful enough to convey the importance of this. We probably all think, yes, I believe this.

But when I look at you and you look at me, with all of our failures and inconsistencies, do we continually see that **God's grace** is that thing we have in common? And do we think that no matter what, we cannot **set that aside** in our evaluations of each other? Even in our frustrations with each other. I cannot **set aside** the grace of God. Even when we keep failing. I cannot set aside the grace of God. Even when we do harm to each other intentionally or unintentionally. I cannot set aside the grace of God.



How about when your spouse is completely blind to their offenses? We **cannot set aside** the grace of God. How about when your needs are not met by another? We **cannot set aside** the grace of God. How about when you feel like you are carrying more than your fair share of the weight? We **cannot set aside** the grace of God. How about when our selfish flesh says, I want more than this. I must have my way and you must give it to me. Do you see what I mean when I say how important and difficult it is to **judge everything** by the gospel. Any time grace takes the back stage we have lost our focus. When our lens becomes a **lens of flesh**, we have departed the gospel view. When our desire is to make much of ourselves and to win approval and admiration and worship instead of trying to pass that on to Christ, when that happens our judging becomes bad.

We must judge by the gospel. We must judge by the grace God showed us. But in the end, we can't get too cocky. We cannot even be certain that even all our judgements according to the gospel are accurate.

Look what Paul says in 1 Corinthians.

He is being judged badly regarding his ministry. He has enemies trying to do him harm. And they are certainly not judging him by the right standards.

Paul says this one more thing about judging in 1 Cor:

**1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.**

**<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.**

**<sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.**

**<sup>4</sup> For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.**

**<sup>5</sup> Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.**

Here Paul is essentially saying, I am evaluating myself based on the Gospel. I am not really concerned about your judgment of me. This may be partly because he does not trust that the judging they are doing is according to the gospel. He knows that some are judging him wrongly.

But Paul goes on to say that the ultimate judgment of himself is not even in his hands. I am sure there are senses in which Paul does judge himself. But in the ultimate sense he realizes that even his best effort of judging is inadequate.

And the final verdict does not rest upon his judgment.

He is not aware of any sin he is currently doing. But that is not enough because we are all blind to lots of things.

What Paul is saying is don't allow yourself to think that your conclusion is final. Always leave room in your judging for God to pronounce the **final** judgment. Paul is not hesitant to judge right and wrong in his letters to the Corinthians. But even in all that He reserves the right for final judgment for God.

We must judge. We must **discern things** in the meantime. We must act in God's stead. But we must never think that God will submit to **our judgment**. It is we who must submit to His. And He is ultimately correct because He sees all the hidden things. He knows the heart of hearts.

So undoubtedly, even as we judge from the gospel, even as we do the best we know how to do, even if we are as sincere as the driven snow, we may get things wrong. So in humility we must always remain open to the final judge to get it right.

I had never noticed this before. But it is a spectacular truth.

**God's praise of you in the end will be completely accurate.** Maybe you are misunderstood. Maybe sometimes the good you do is spoken evil of. Maybe it is perceived wrongly. Maybe you seem to never get the benefit of the doubt because of how you come across. But it is **for you** to judge the counsels of your own heart, to know why you are doing what you are doing, why you have done what you have done. We have the power to **control the counsels of our hearts**. As they are used to judge according to the gospel, we can trust that God will **praise us accordingly**, even if **no one else ever does**.

And look at that just one more time before we close.

If you are a believer, be encouraged.

**each one's praise will come from God**

Maybe you fixate on your failures. Maybe you get absorbed with how far you fall short. Well allow this to play into your gospel lens. If you are a believer **you will receive praise from God**. Maybe you are in a spot where you cannot imagine that happening. But it will happen. All the sheep receive a "Well done my good and faithful servant." But I think we are destined for more than that. Somehow Christ will let us know that He appreciated all the places where we did the right thing sheerly because we love Him. It seems hard to imagine but one day we will receive praise from the one who is the continual focus of our praise. Doesn't that sound too good to be true. But there it is in black and white. **you will receive praise from God**

I hope God's word about judging finds its application for us this week as we live out our day to day lives. We need to see through the lens of the gospel.