

Do Not Judge.

Dave Rogers 06/02/11

It is so easy to pass judgment on people isn't it.

Someone may do something that we don't agree with, someone may behave in a way that we feel is inappropriate, someone may say something that causes offence.

How do we react? Do we cast judgment on those people, do we condemn them for their behaviour.

It is so easy to do....

Here we have Jesus continuing his sermon on the mount, where he has dealt with how to live right with God.

We have to relate to people, we can't live life without interacting with other people.

Jesus has already dealt with our biggest relationship issue, which is when people treat us wrongly and how we react to that injustice. Jesus words in the Sermon on the Mount help us know how to deal with people..

Anger and reconciliation (5:21-26 "go and be reconciled to them"), Loving your enemies (5:43-48 "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven".) and forgiveness (6:12, 14-15 "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins").

He now moves onto another major area where we can get into difficulties in our relationships.

Criticism..... Let's Read Jesus words....

Judging Others

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6 “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Being criticised, judged or condemned makes you feel terrible. However criticising someone else often makes you feel good. Why because it taps into our sense of superiority and holier than thou attitude. The same attitude that Jesus hated in the Pharisees

They would think, I’m an expert in the law and I can use that to judge others we’re good at discerning what’s going on and providing constructive criticism, in fact we see it as our duty to tell people when we think they are wrong.

Church, we need to be so careful not to be like the Pharisees. We wonder why the church has such a bad reputation. I believe this whole issue of judgmentalism is the biggest reason, people won’t and don’t engage with the church.

The worlds perception of the church is that it is full of intolerance, and hatred towards all kind of people, like homosexuals, people living together without being married, or doctors that carry out abortions and Muslims and the building of mosques. Etc.

The truth is people don’t tend to have an issue with Jesus, just the church and people who call themselves Christians!

And a lot of the time Christians ask for it.

We need to show an alternative to this. A church full of compassion, love and grace, a church that serves our communities wholeheartedly, a church where every follower of Jesus is a true disciple hearing his words, obeying them and making a difference around us. We want to be a church where people will be drawn to Jesus. He should be the unbelievers only stumbling block, but by moralism and legalism and religiosity people never even get to Jesus.

So with this in mind, Who can judge?

1 Cor 5: 11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³ God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

1. God is the only one who can truly Judge.

God is all knowing, and he alone knows the truth in our hearts.

He will ultimately Judge the whole world at the culmination of History, He will separate those who know him from those who don't. If you know him, he will say.... Not guilty, punishment paid. To those who don't know him he will say, I do not know you, your sin has to be paid for, guilty.

God is the only Judge of people status with him....

2. Followers of Jesus with each other.

If there are people in the church, claiming to be followers of Jesus, but living lives contrary to this, then we need to deal with this.

But how do we do it, Jesus says do not judge so that we will not be judged. Who here actually likes being Judged or criticised. We don't do we? So think about how other might feel when we judge or criticise them, do unto others as you would have them do to you.

An atmosphere of Judgmentalism creates an environment of secrecy and a fear of openness with our brothers and sisters, to whom we are accountable.

"Sin always undermines relationship" Matt Hosier

Galatians 6

Doing Good to All

1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load. 6 Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

So as followers of Jesus, within the church we need openness without a spirit of criticism where people can own up to sin and be helped to overcome it.

Romans 15: 1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves

Jesus is encouraging us to look at ourselves first, we need to be concerned with our own behaviour. If we are speaking from a place of integrity, then fine, we are called to help build others, challenge, admonish, so that our brothers and sisters may be presented to God mature in Christ.

3. Followers of Jesus and the world?

It is very clear from the words in 1 Corinthians that we are not to judge those outside the church.

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.

How can we?

Followers of Christ don't judge and condemn those in the world, those who don't know Jesus. Because we have not been condemned for our sin, how can we condemn the sin of others?

It is God's place to judge whether people deserve punishment. We are called to love.

We all fall short of God's glory. It is only by his grace that we can be forgiven.

Jesus says those without sin cast the first stone.

As I said earlier the church is to be a voice of compassion to a broken world. This doesn't mean we condone the actions of those who don't follow Jesus, it means we love people, and try not to be their stumbling block to meeting Jesus.

I'm sure we all remember the Pastor in the news last year who threatened to burn Qur'an's or the groups that consistently Judge and Condemn the actions people take in this world. We need to be a voice that helps to change the moral fibre of our society, but the only way this will truly happen is by people meeting Jesus. Please let's not stand in their way by being judgmental and condemning. Let us welcome people into our community and Let the Holy Spirit work in their lives.

Can I encourage you to read the Article by Matt Hosier in the latest Newfrontiers magazine, where he looks at how we can build churches that have a radical seriousness to sin, but at the same time a radical grace towards sinners. Sounds like a church we want to build!

So what about the plank and sawdust? Show picture

Whenever we see something in someone else whether they are Christians or not we miss the glaring things people see in us but don't tell us.

It is really important that we recognise we are work in progress, we haven't got it all sewn up and we live in the light of God's amazing grace.

A particular area this is important is in prayer ministry. Those who have a particular gift and are ministering in this area regularly need to make sure they are being prayed for themselves so that planks are removed!

How can we minister to others unless we are being ministered to ourselves?

Friends, can I ask how you are doing?

Are there any areas of your life that the Holy Spirit is pointing out to get sorted? We just need to respond, it is up to us to then ask someone to pray with us if necessary.

Please do not seek out faults in others....In your relationship with God he is not concerned about Joe Bloggs character and behaviour... he is concerned with your character and behaviour.

This is something I have learnt being married.

If there is a character flaw in me that Em does not like, she can tell me because we have a relationship, but she cannot change me. That is something I need to do with the Help of the Holy Spirit. Out of my love for Em and my relationship with God, I will change.. Hopefully to be more like Jesus and a better husband..

Dogs and Pigs....

Jesus finishes in verse 6 with a bit about dogs and pigs... what... that's what I thought..

He has gone to great lengths about not judging, then he says.

Do not give dogs what is sacred;
Do not throw your pearls to pigs.
If you do, they may trample them under their feet,
and turn and tear you to pieces.

A pearl is a precious thing, it symbolises the kingdom of God. Followers of Jesus are to be merciful, forgiving, and slow to judge, yet we do need to discern the true character of people and not indefinitely continue proclaiming the gospel to those who adamantly reject it, so we can move on and proclaim it to others. If people trample the gospel or us, or even try to tear us to pieces we need to discern when enough is enough. There is a limit.

Jesus is reminding us that being non-judgmental does not mean we are undiscerning, wasteful, and silly.

Again we need the Holy Spirit to help us discern when and if we should call time on damaging relationships.

So friends, in all of this, remember God is the Judge!

Followers of Jesus are to encourage and help each other to become more like Jesus.

Followers of Jesus have no place judging the sin of those outside the church.

Our primary concern is our own character!

And we are to discern what relationships are good for us to pursue!

Whoa...God help me....

That's right, we need the Holy Spirit. We need God's help.

How else can we reconcile with others, love our enemies, forgive others, stop judging, be healed from our own planks, and discern when to stop certain relationships.

Pray!