

Biblical Judging

Matthew 7:1-6

Introduction – Chapter seven is not simply a collection of final thoughts. There is a clear underlying theme of biblical judgment throughout. In our day, the great unpardonable sin, is to say there is sin. We live in an age that lacks any sense of biblical discrimination, and attempts to use this verse to justify the position. We want peace and pluralism at any cost. If you stand for principles, you will be identified as ‘fringe’, ‘difficult’, and ‘extreme’. And that’s within the church.

Understanding What the Text Is Not Saying – “Judge not, that you be not judged”, is one of the most well known verses among non-believers. It has become a frequently quoted verse among Christians as well, particularly when a church shows a little muscle and actually disciplines someone. But this verse cannot be isolated and absolutized for several reasons –

1. **It would be self-contradictory.** You cannot tell someone to ‘judge not’ without judging them.
2. **It ignores the context** - of this passage (see verse 6), of this chapter (v15), and of the Sermon on the Mount in general, where Christ has been judging the religion of the Pharisees. In addition it would contradict the teaching of Christ elsewhere. We are to judge with righteous judgment (John 7:24), and we are to judge those who sin against us (Matt 18:15-18). Paul judged the man caught in sexual immorality (1 Cor 5) and calls those who do not judge him arrogant (1 Cor 5:2). In 2 Thess 3:6 we are commanded to withdraw ourselves from Christians who walk disorderly. This requires that we must judge others.

“Measured Back to You” – Now this raises another question. How is it that Christians are going to be judged?

1. **There is an eternal judgment** – which determines who will be in Heaven and Hell. This judgment has already occurred for believers in Christ. Our justification by faith (Rom 4:23-5:2) keeps us completely safe in Christ.
2. **There is judgment concerning covenant blessings and curses** – and these judgments occur in this life. Paul teaches on this regarding the Lord’s supper (1 Cor 11:27-32). God does not ignore our sins, but chastens us as a good Father (Heb 12:5-11).
3. **There is a judgment of rewards** – and we have seen this throughout the Sermon on the Mount (5:12 as one example). The works of ministers will be judged (1 Cor 3:11-15), teachers will be judged more strictly (James 3:1), and every believer must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:9-11). A life squandered may be forgiven, but nothing can retrieve a squandered life. And “*to whom much is given, from him much will be required*” – Luke 12:48.

Biblical Judging – In verses 1-5, we learn that there is a type of judging we must not participate in and a type that we should.

1. **Level Playing Field** – We must judge from a position of humility, not of self-exaltation. We are all sinners, we are all ‘like that other man’ – Luke 18:9-14.
2. **God’s Standards** – The judgment is never our judgment. It is the judgment of the Word of God – John 12:48. Again, we see it is arrogant not to call sin for what it is.
3. **Applied To Me First** – Hypocrites are not allowed to judge. But a man who has taken the beam out of his own eye should seek to restore his brother. In fact, he is required to – Gal 6:1.

Dogs and Swine – There are those Jesus calls dogs and swine. We think this sounds rather un-Christlike, except Christ said it. These terms probably refer to those who have professed to loving God, but are now apostate (2 Pet 2:20-22) – their lifestyle or their doctrine shows that they are not of us. There comes a time when such a hard judgment is to be made, as the scripture has taught elsewhere – (Prov 9:7-8, Prov 23:9, Prov 26:4)

Holy Things and Pearls – these could be the offices of the church, or the means of grace, but most likely it is referring to the gospel itself. There comes a time when you are to withhold the gospel (Matt 15:11-14). This rubs against the grain of the modern evangelical mindset that will do anything to satisfy the consumer. But Jesus would not put up a circus tent and do his magic tricks just to gather a crowd (Luke 23:9).

Cautions – We are not given license here to hold back the gospel arbitrarily, nor upon our own judgments. It is only after persistent blasphemy and stiff-necked attitudes. Nor are we to withhold the gospel out of fear for our own personal safety. You must wait and be very clear before you make such a decision.

Applications –

1. Do not judge where you would be condemned. Humility and repentance start with you.
2. Discrimination is necessary in order to obey all of Christ’s commands. You must treat all people lawfully which does not mean that you treat all people the same.
3. The gospel is a holy and valuable thing. Do not despise it. Are you amazed that God would send His Son for you, and do you love the Word, the sacraments, the gathering of God’s people? Those who despise the gospel will have it taken from them. Those who love the gospel will set their hearts to praise and glory in God.