

Sermon 51: Concern, Discernment, and a Critical Spirit: Matthew 7:1-8

Text: Matthew 7:1-6 "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened..."

Summary: Christ warns His disciples against harboring a critical spirit that is dismissive of others while refusing to address his own sin.

Introduction:

- **Concern:** A genuine desire to consider the needs and struggles of those whom we value.
 - **This is a quality that should distinguish every one of God's children:**
 - **Matthew 5:7** "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy..."
 - **Philippians 2:1** "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy..."
 - **Colossians 3:12** "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering..."
- **Discernment:** The ability to determine what is right, wrong, and best according to God's standard in complex situations.
 - **God calls His children to be discerning:**
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:21** "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good..."
 - **Philippians 1:9-10** "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent..."
 - **Acts 17:11** "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all

readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so..."

- **Critical Spirit:** A condescending preoccupation with others that does not consider our own faults and struggles objectively and looks down on others.
 - **This is fleshly response that scripture consistently and aggressively condemns:**
 - **Luke 18:9** "He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others..."
 - **Romans 14:3** "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him..."
 - **Romans 14:10** "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ..."
- **This passage must be interpreted with these principles in the forefront of our minds.**
- **This passage when considered carefully will demonstrate the tremendous continuity within scripture on this topic.**

Part 1: Observing the passage:

- **Four Commands:**
 - **Command 1: Do not set yourself in the place of God:** "Judge not..."
 - **Remember your place:** We are all vulnerable to these sinful struggles as much as the person we are about to address.
 - **Consider your jurisdiction:** Is this a matter that we are obligated or authorized to address?
 - **Do not deviate from God's standard:** Are we imposing our own opinions and usurping God's articulated expectations in this area?
 - **Command 2: Address your sinful actions, attitudes, and patterns before you address an issue:** "Cast out the beam..."
 - Justifying sin is arrogant.
 - Justifying sin is dangerous.
 - Justifying sin distorts our perspective.
 - **Command 3: Do not waste your energy on counterproductive confrontations:** "Give not that which is holy unto dogs..."
 - **Proverbs 26:4** "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him..."

- **Proverbs 26:17** "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears..."
 - **Luke 9:5** "Whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them..."
 - **Command 4: Seek God's wisdom when considering confrontations: "Ask..."**
 - **What:** We need to have a firm grasp of what is true before we seek to address a matter.
 - **Proverbs 18:13** "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him..."
 - **Why:** We need to consider our motives for addressing a matter.
 - **Galatians 6:1** "Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself..."
 - **How:** We need to consider the way we approach a matter that we have determined we must address.
 - **James 3:13** "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom..."
 - **James 3:17-18** "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace..."
- **Three Warnings:**
 - **Warning 1: You will be held to a higher standard if you hold others to an illegitimate standard: "That ye be not judged..."**
 - **Matthew 10:14-15** "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city..."
 - **Matthew 11:21-22** "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day...It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you..."
 - **Matthew 11:24** "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the

mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee..."

- **James 3:1-2** "Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all..."
- **Warning 2: God will handle us proportionate to how we handle others:** "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again..."
 - **Psalms 18:25** "With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright..."
 - **Matthew 5:7** "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy..."
 - **1 Peter 5:5** "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble..."
- **Warning 3: Some people and situations need to be left alone:** "Lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you..."
 - **"Trample:"** They attack the truth.
 - **"Rend:"** They attack the messenger.
 - **Proverbs 9:7-8** He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee..."
 - **Proverbs 26:17** "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears..."
- **Five Assurances:**
 - **Assurance 1: If you follow Christ's commands, you will have the ability to make discerning judgments that helps others:** "Then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye..."
 - **Assurance 2: If you seek God's wisdom with a genuine heart, He will give you the wisdom that you need:** "It shall be given you..."
 - **Assurance 3: If you are diligent, you will find a productive solution:** "Ye shall find..."

- **Assurance 4: If you diligently seek the Lord's wisdom, He will establish your ways:** "It shall be opened unto you..."
- **Assurance 5: God will not discriminate against those who genuinely and persistently seek His assistance:** "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened..."

Part 2: The continuity of scripture:

- **We desperately need God's wisdom: Proverbs 2:2-11** "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee..."
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 - "He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints..."
 - "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee..."
- **We especially need this wisdom in tough situations: James 1:5-8** "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways..."
 - "If any of you lack wisdom..."
 - "Ask God..."
 - "Giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not..."
 - "It shall be given him..."
 - "Let him ask in faith noting wavering..."
- **We need to address issues that develop between brother and sisters in Christ: Matthew 18:15-17** "If thy brother shall trespass

against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican..."

- "Go and tell him his fault..."
 - "Between thee and him alone..."
 - "That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established..."
 - "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican..."
- **We need to seek to restore sinning brother and sister:**
Galatians 6:1-3 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself..."

- "Ye which are spiritual, restore..."
- "In the spirit of meekness..."
- "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted..."
- "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ..."
- "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself..."

Applying Christ's teaching:

- God wants us to develop discernment and a compassionate heart.
- He wants us to walk conscientiously, regularly considering our thoughts, motives, actions, and patterns.
- He wants discernment to shape **when** we address situations.
- He wants discernment to shape **what** we say in those situations.
- He wants compassion to shape **why** we are motivated in those situations.
- He wants compassion to shape **how** we approach those situations.
- He wants us to avoid the common pitfalls that accompany blind spots.
- He wants us to be genuine in all we do.