

Summer in the Red

Week 8 Fault Finder or Hope Dealer?

- Continuing in the Sermon on the Mount. This is the same service, same crowd, same focus: A great Kingdom-Life that God has created us for. (Seek first the Kingdom just a few verses ago.)
- Jesus lays out how Kingdom citizens live in relation to others. “This is how you ought to be treating one another.”

Matthew 7:1-5 (NLT)

7 “Do not judge others, (**Refuse to be a critic-Passion**) and you will not be judged.² For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. ³ “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴ How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First, get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

Matthew 7:1-5 (Message) A Simple Guide for Behavior

Don’t pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It’s easy to see a smudge on your neighbor’s face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, ‘Let me wash your face for you,’ when your own face is distorted by contempt? It’s this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.

- Some of you are so excited about this message. You are already thinking about all of the people you can send this to or maybe your spouse next to you.
- 3 Areas of Criticism: what you see, what you say, what you do. Jesus covers all 3.
- Our world is full of critics, but the world is broken and doesn’t know God. Jesus is saying, “Hey, it should be different with you!”
- Criticism is difficult to see in the mirror. We hate when people criticize us but don’t realize when we criticize others. We feel justified in it because if they weren’t so weird, didn’t spend their money so unwisely, and did things the way we think they should then we wouldn’t need to criticize them. We are actually helping them! Aren’t we??
- How they raise their kids, spend their money, post on social media, run their business, what they eat, how they dress....

Object Lesson: *Using a 2x12 to illustrate how the plank creates a wall or a bridge with others. Use the wooden ruler to illustrate what we think our criticism looks like when in reality it’s a plank of division. When we lay it down, it becomes a bridge of hope.*

- Surface: Jesus uses strangely exaggerated items, a speck, and a plank.
- Deeper: Has to do with the functioning of the eye. According to ancient views, looking into someone else's eyes was considered (it still is!) an important method for discovering who the other person is. Such eye contact establishes the beginnings of a relationship between persons. At the same time another person's eyes were believed to contain mirror images of the beholder.

Criticism might be driving a wedge between you and God or someone you love. Enough criticism can kill any relationship or dismantle any vision.

Galatians 5:14-15 NLT

¹⁴ *For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

¹⁵ *But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.*

- When we continually bite or criticize, it's literally destroying others. Wow!
- What if your critical words are destroying the potential intimacy you could have in your marriage? What if they're building a wall between you and your kids? Or stopping others from hearing about the goodness of Jesus because all they hear from you is criticism
- Look at these contrasting verses:

Proverbs 12:18 NLT *Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.*

Ephesians 4:29 NIV *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

- Some people cut, others build. Your words have power. (MSG: Say only what helps. Each word a gift.)

Our words have the power to build walls or build bridges.

- No idea how much criticism can hurt someone's heart.
- No idea how God might use a single word of encouragement!

Ex: Words have power to shape us. We are today the words we have received or rejected. (Personal: My parents, My Pastors, My Partner.)

Want to be a Fault Finder or Hope Dealer?

- **FAULT FINDER**

- Most people are this because of our original sinful nature. We came into this world with a propensity to find the worst, therefore, it's easier to be this person. (Default)
- Married: You can take a great person and rip them apart. "I don't like the way you...." And you fall out of love because you stopped celebrating and started criticizing.
- When you only focus on what someone is not then you'll never see what they are.

Fault Finders:

- The Pharisees (Religious leaders)
- The Devil (The Accuser)
- WHY??
 1. Pride (We think we know what's best)
 2. Insecurity (most critical of our own weaknesses)
 3. Ignorance (Until you sit in the seat, you don't know.)
- We might think our criticism makes us look smarter or better, but it actually makes us look insecure and mean-spirited.
- Have you ever met a critical person you wanted to be like?

No one ever grew spiritually by focusing on the flaws in someone else. Francis Frangipane

- **HOPE DEALER**

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hope Dealers:

- Paul was a supreme hope dealer. Just read Romans 8 (No condemnation, we are children of God, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, If Christ is for us, who can be against us, more than a conqueror, God is working in all things, nothing can separate us from the love of God.
- Metaphors of Jesus: The Bread of Life, The Living Water, The Light of Life, The Door, The Good Shepherd, the Living Vine. **1 Timothy 1:** Jesus is called "our HOPE" **Titus 2:** Jesus is called "the blessed HOPE" **1 Peter 1** Living HOPE

Ex. The Woman Caught in Adultery: Jesus Deals Hope

- The Religious leaders saw sin and found fault in the woman caught in adultery. Jesus saw the sin but gave her hope.

- Criticism stops us from being empathetic, which is what empowered Jesus to do His greatest miracles. He was 'moved' and, as a result, released the power of the Spirit to bring about help. Had He been critical, it would have created a 'power blockage'. Same with us.

John 8:10 (TPT)

"Dear woman, where are your accusers? Is there no one here to condemn you?"

- Fault Finders throw STONES. Hope Dealers throw GRACE
- Fault Finders are moved by CRITICISM. Hope Dealers are moved by COMPASSION.
- Fault finders POINT their finger. Hope dealers EXTEND their hand.

You may find hundreds of faultfinders among professed Christians; but all their criticism will not lead one solitary soul to Christ. ~ D.L. Moody

LifeGate Core Value: Life-Giving: ***We are known more by what we are for than what we are against.***

Does this describe you? Want to be good at dealing hope??

Tips for Hope Dealers:

- 1. Choose to think the best, not the worst.***
- 2. If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all.***
- 3. Avoid sarcasm. It's criticism in disguise.***
- 4. Avoid critical people. We are not immune to the values of those around us.***
- 5. Remember where He found you.***

- The closer you walk with God, the greater your awareness of your own sin and your need for His grace.
- Decide: "Because of who He is and what He's done, I will not waste my time building walls with criticism, but will build bridges with hope.