

I. **Intro: To Judge or not to Judge?**

- A. **“Judge not, that you be not judged. “For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.**
  - 1. This is one of the most widely quoted yet most widely misunderstood verses in the New Testament.
  - 2. We are, in fact, called to judge (to evaluate what is right or pleasing to God). **John 7:24, 1 Cor 2:15, 5:12, Rev 3, Rev 19:2**
  - 3. Jesus is Bridegroom, King, and Judge. “He is not just a King with power, He is a Bridegroom with desire.” As the Righteous Judge, His Judgments are an expression of His mercy in that He judges to remove what hinders love.
  - 4. Jesus makes, in Matthew chapters 5&6, decisive judgments about what is right and what fosters the deepest level of love in the people of God. He calls us to agree with Him about these evaluations.
  - 5. What Jesus is prohibiting in this verse is judging with a wrong spirit, a wrong attitude of the heart.
  - 6. Here, Jesus is fighting to protect our hearts.
    - a. Matt 6 ends with the call to **“seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” Matt 6:33**. This is the same idea as the call of the First Commandment to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength **Matt 22:37-40**
    - b. Getting into a critical spirit or giving merit to the criticism of others will distract and dull our hearts from the pursuit of God. Jesus knew this and so He warned us not to go there
    - c. In verse 2, we must pay attention to the measure or standard in which we judge. Later in verse 12, we will be told to treat others the way we would want them to treat us. If we would want someone to evaluate us by the blood of Jesus and the sincerity of our hearts in repentance toward God, that is the same standard we are to use with others. Also, a critical spirit demands to be fed, if we are self-critical we will end up critical of others and visa versa.
- B. **Matt 7:3-5 “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? “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? “Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.**
  - 1. To be sure, we do want to see clearly to evaluate and help remove from our brother or sister’s lives what hinders love and righteousness. **(Gal 6:1-2)**. However, if we are not actively taking

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steps walking in the other direction of the areas of our lives that that disagree with God, it is hypocrisy.

2. If we don't take these steps we will end up fixated on the speck in our brother's eye and many times we will identify the speck based on what bothers us about someone.
3. It is essential that we go to our brother. If we go to our brother Holy Spirit will be there in the midst, and if we take the steps above we will be able to go to our brother in a tender spirit. If we don't go to our brother we will stew on what bothers or offends us about someone and we will end up in a critical spirit.

C. **Matt 7:6 “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.**

## II. Persistent Prayer

- A. In reference to the Lord's prayer in Matt 6, I want to revisit a couple points.
  1. We see in **Luke 11** that the disciples asked Jesus "teach us to pray."
    - a. "No man is greater than his prayer life" - Leonard Ravenhill
    - b. "I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach" - Charles Spurgeon
  2. In light of what we are about to read (ask, seek, knock), the Lord's Prayer is important because it shows us the privilege of intercession in that we don't have to start the conversation with God in prayer. Our Father and the Eternal Son have already been talking about us. Your name is on the Son's lips as He speaks to the Father. We get to enter right in to a conversation that's already happening!
  3. We are brought into the family dynamics of the Trinity. The Father wills, the Son speaks, and the Holy Spirit moves. We get to speak and the Holy Spirit moves! This is the eternal glory and privilege of an intercessor.
- B. **Matt 7:7-8 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.**
  1. If you ask, seek and knock, and you stay with it you will see breakthrough in God's timing and in God's way. Breakthrough in your heart to love God when you don't feel it and to walk in righteousness, and breakthrough in relational tensions that challenge our pursuit of God.
- C. **Matt 7:9-11 “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? “Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

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1. Connecting with our Father is what will sustain us in prayer to continue asking, seeking, and knocking.

D. **Matt 7:12 “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**

1. It seems like Jesus is changing the subject here but he actually didn't pause His addressing of relational tensions to give a random teaching on prayer. His teaching on praying until breakthrough comes in context to the relational tensions that derail us from a vibrant pursuit of God.

III. Two opposite messages, False Prophets, and discerning the fruit.

A. **Matt 7:13-14 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. “Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

1. These two ways are two messages that claim to lead to the same thing. They both emphasize the promises of God.
2. However the broad way neglects the call to obedience and pressing in to experience all that God has for us in this age. The radical reach for full obedience, the sermon on the mount lifestyle.
3. The narrow way emphasizes the promises of God and the call to love God on His terms of reaching for obedience and agreement with Him.
4. The broad way is attractive to the masses. Far fewer will go by the narrow way, however that few is millions across many different streams of the body of Christ.

B. **Matt 7:15-23 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. “Therefore by their fruits you will know them. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**

1. Even more so, as we near the return of the Lord, the prevalence of false prophets will rise dramatically. These false prophets are promoters of the broad way. This is not easy to discern outwardly as these false prophets emphasize the promises of God, gain massive following when you combine them, and some even move in the gifts of the spirit. Yet they do not bear the fruit of making the pursuit of loving God in seeking righteousness the first

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priority. They convince masses that they can have the promises of God without “**striving to enter the narrow gate**” Luke 13:24

IV. Wisdom that endures the Coming Storm

A. Matt 7:24-27 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

1. “**These sayings**” - The summary of what was taught throughout this Sermon on the Mount
2. Jesus is saying that He wants us to know not just that this teaching is essential to distinguishing the narrow gate from the broad gate but that this teaching is essential because there is a coming storm!
  - a. The idea of false prophets and rain, flood, and wind together in the same context should evoke the backdrop of **Matt 24**
  - b. Jesus wants us know that a storm is coming! Not only the storm of life’s pressures but the storm of the end time drama.
  - c. This is vital because a great misconception in the church about the end times is that we can “just be ready.”
  - d. Yet the biblical idea of preparation is **to take head so that our hearts are not weighed down in that hour by the cares of this life, and to watch** (know the details), **and pray** (talk to God about the details). **Luke 21:34-36**
  - e. Jesus found it important to tell us that the storm is coming. He did not suffice to end this sermon on the note of preparing our hearts through the teaching of this sermon, it was important to Jesus that we do it with the understanding that there is a generation in which a great storm of false prophets, rain, flood, and wind will come. The sermon on the mount is the way forward to a heart that is not offended now and a heart that will not be offended later!