

Harris Creek Church

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Series: Upside Down Kingdom

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To Judge or Not to Judge

Matthew 7:1-12

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

“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? 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? 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.

“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.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Hey, thank you. Good morning, everyone. So good to be here with you. Welcome. My name is Scott. We always say, whether we haven't met or not, my name is Scott. If we've met, my name is Scott. If we haven't met, my name is Scott. And I am so glad to be here with you this morning.

In 1996, I was living in Atlanta, Georgia. I was in grad school for physical therapy. Does anyone remember what was going on in Atlanta in 1996? The Olympics. Yes. It was so fun to be there. I was single at the time, apparently had a lot of time and money on my hands because I went to everything. Every event I could go to, I went to. One of the highlights was when the torch was running through Atlanta. I got on my bike and rode along with the torch all day. It was incredible. I went to baseball—I don't even love baseball—but I went to baseball, handball, track and field, gymnastics. I got to see the absolute GOAT of basketball, not LeBron, but MJ.

It was incredible, and it was so much fun to be at the Olympics. We are a big Olympics family in our home. My wife, she's had this circled on the calendar for four years. She just could not wait for the Summer Olympics of 2024 in Paris. It's on our TV constantly, and we're watching it whenever we can. So, we do love the Olympics.

There are a couple of different kinds of events in the Olympics. There are the kinds where whoever gets the most points, wins the medal. Whoever runs the fastest, swims the fastest, or jumps the highest gets the gold. But there are some events where it doesn't go based on who is the quickest, fastest, or highest. It's based on judges and what the judges evaluate in the athletes. I'm so blown away by how incredible these athletes are. Some of the judged events are diving, breakdancing, surfing, and then there's the one that absolutely blows me away: gymnastics. There are judges who evaluate who wins; they score them, all that. As I watched gymnastics—even watching it last night—I was thinking, one, how bad of a gymnast I would be. A balance beam is about four feet high. I don't think I could even get up on that thing. It's about five meters long and 3.94 inches wide. The athletes who do that, they're not just walking—they're doing flips and going forwards, backwards. I would be a really bad judge of gymnastics because, to be honest, if you land on your feet, if you don't fall off, if you survive and don't die, the score I would give would be a 10 for anyone who completes the task.

But I'd also be a bad judge because apparently, they've changed the rules of gymnastics. You don't just evaluate based on performance; it's also based on difficulty. So, I wouldn't even know what I'm doing. I'd be a bad judge because I don't know the rules. The other reason I would be a bad judge is because really, there's only one team I care about. And I know, as followers of Christ, we're supposed to care for the whole world—and I do—but Team USA is winning every single event. If I'm the judge, we're getting all tens and everyone else is getting a zero. That's just the way it's going to work. That's why they have not asked me to be a judge in the Olympics.

I would be a bad judge. Not to mention, when you look at judges or announcers, we look at these people who judge what they can no longer do. Last night, I'm watching this American on the pommel horse, and this guy is doing stuff on there that no human being should be able to do. I'm blown away. I think the words literally came out of my mouth, "That's the most incredible thing I've ever seen anyone do in their life. I'm shook. I can't believe it." And the announcer says, "That was a tragic mistake. They're going to regret that for the rest of their life. What a disappointment." And I'm like, "You hypocrite, you can't get up and do that thing."

So, I think that I'm a bad judge, and I think we can all be bad judges. Today, we're going to talk about being a bad judge. And we're not talking about just being bad judges of the Olympics, where the consequences are who wins gold, silver, and bronze. I'm going to talk about the fact that we are bad judges and the consequences are much more significant. When we judge incorrectly, it affects relationships deeply. It breaks marriages, employment relationships, and families because we do not know how to rightly and correctly judge one another. So, we're going to talk about bad judges and the one good judge.

We are near the end of our series called "The Upside Down Kingdom." In this series, we've looked at the greatest sermon ever preached—Matthew 5 through 7. Jesus has this amazing collection of teachings that we get to learn from. Week after week, as I've sat in seats and learned alongside you, I've been so encouraged by the teaching of the Word. We've learned about anger, marriage, broken communication, divorce, anxiety, and money. They're great to listen to, but so difficult to apply. Today's passage is no different. If you've got your Bible with you, open up to

Matthew chapter 7. We're going to be in Matthew 7:1-12. As we look at bad judges and the one good judge, we're going to see a couple of things. Number one is that we're bad judges of others. Second, we're bad judges of ourselves. Third, we misjudge the Father. We're going to discuss whether we are even allowed to judge others. We're going to see a principle that I believe will change your relationships with others. And then we're going to learn something about God that fundamentally affects our relationship with our Father.

I have loved getting to learn from this text. Of all the messages I've preached, I've said this a few times this week: this has been the most fun for me to study. As I got into the Word, I've been convicted about areas where I can grow. I've been encouraged about some areas where I've done really well, where I could say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." My affections for Jesus have grown. I want that to happen every time I open up the Word, and every time that you open up the Word, you'd be challenged, encouraged, convicted of ways that you can grow, and that your affections for Jesus would grow. So, as I have opened up the text and prepared, I have prayed that it would happen for you, just like it has for me—that we would continue to learn from the Bible, from God's Word.

Let's start in chapter 7, verse 1. This is Jesus speaking: **"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."**

Jesus starts off right in the beginning and says, "Do not judge." Now, that's one of the things that Christians are most often criticized for. We are critiqued for being judgmental people. If you ask non-believers why they won't follow Jesus, one of the first things they'll say is because Christians are a bunch of judgmental hypocrites. So, we need to understand why they say that about us. Are we allowed to judge? Verse 1 says, "Don't judge." So, are we allowed to judge or not? What we hear often is, "Christians, you hate people. All you do is condemn them for the way they dress, the way they live, the lifestyle decisions they make, the way they vote." We're often criticized for being judgmental people. So, I want us to learn how to do this rightly. Are we allowed to judge? And if so, how can we judge one another in a healthy way, not in an unhealthy or harmful way?

On the surface, when it says "Do not judge," it almost sounds like we cannot judge others, but you never want to take one half of one verse and interpret it based on just that little chunk of the text. Instead, you need to look at the whole verse. You need to look at the chapter. You need to look at the whole of God's Word. When we look at other verses about judgment, we see a few of them show up. **John 7:24** says, **"Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly."** So, it seems to give permission to judge, but we can't judge solely based on appearance. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 5:12**, **"What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?"** Again, it appears there's permission to judge others, especially those inside the church. Then just a few verses later, we see in **Matthew 7:16a** and **Matthew 7:20**, **"By their fruit, you will recognize them."** If we're going to determine what kind of fruit somebody has, it's a judgment call. When we judge someone, it means we do some scrutiny. We ask questions, we examine, we form an opinion, either positive or negative. It's this assessment of others and of other situations. And we judge all the time.

When I think about some of the judgments that you and I make, it's things like: if you're single, you are judging whether or not you would go out on a date with someone. If you're a parent, you make judgments on who your kids will hang out with. If you're hiring someone, you make a

judgment on whether or not you should hire an individual. And then all of us, every day, we make judgments on whether we should trust another individual. So, the question doesn't seem to be whether we judge or not, but rather, how can we do this rightly and in a healthy way? So, we need to learn how to judge.

1. *We're Bad Judges of Others*

Point one: We're bad judges of others. Jesus uses a play on words here, saying, "You will be judged by the judgment with which you judge. It will be measured to you by the measure with which you measure." In other words, what goes around comes around. Since we're bad judges of others, we need to learn how to judge rightly.

Earlier this week, on Wednesday, I was at a lunch meeting. I got up early, had a full day of activities and meetings, I was driving home after lunch to grab something before heading back to work. As I was driving down the street, I noticed the trash and recycling bins still at the bottom of the driveway. It was one o'clock in the afternoon, and immediately, I started judging. I thought, "My kids, who are home, probably slept until one o'clock or are just playing EA College Football all day." So, I called Kristen, and like many parents, when kids are behaving well, they are "my kids"; when they are neutral, they are "our kids"; but when they misbehave, they are "her kids." I said, "Your kids are lazy and left the trash can and recycling at the bottom of the driveway. Why can't they pick it up?" She responded, "They're out serving others in the city of Waco through Meals on Wheels. So, quit judging them." In that moment, I realized I'm a bad judge of others. We are bad judges of one another.

Some of you may say you don't judge others, or you're a good judge. I'm going to give you a list, though not exhaustive, of six different ways in which we tend to judge incorrectly—how we're bad judges of others. First, we're hypercritical of others. Instead of believing the best, we automatically assume the worst, nitpicking. I do this all the time with my kids, focusing on their faults rather than the things they did well. Second, we're hypocritical. We judge others for the same things we do. For example, I tell my kids to stop yelling, but I yell while telling them to stop. Third, we major on the minors. We spend too much time worrying about and judging people for things like whether they homeschool, private school, or public school their kids; what kind of car they drive; what time they get to or leave church. These things are important but not ultimate. Fourth, we're not kind. We're not loving when we judge or challenge others. As followers of Christ, we often get called out for not being gentle or kind in our rebuke. Fifth, we judge based on appearances. Someone walks into the room, and without talking to them or even looking them in the eye, we make a judgment call based solely on their appearance. **Proverbs 18:13** says, "**To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.**" Lastly, we judge in the wrong order. We judge others before we evaluate and judge ourselves. We'll explore this further in verses 3-5.

This would be a great opportunity for you to look at this list. Perhaps there are some areas where you're doing pretty well. As I reflect, I think, "I'm a kind, gentle person." Most of the time, I'm like a big teddy bear. I'm not going to be the one who hurts people with my words. I tend to be very compassionate. I'm not perfect—I'm not Jesus. My wife is probably nodding her head right now. I'm not perfect in that, but that's one area where I'm pretty good. But man, that hypercritical nature of always looking for the wrong... So, what is it for you? Where do you fall short? Where and how can you be a bad judge of others? Another error that's not on this list is choosing not to challenge people. Maybe you've heard critiques that Christians are judgmental,

so you're the person who just stands by when you see sin happening. What you're actually doing when you do that is enabling sin. You're not speaking out in the midst of sin; you're silent in the midst of it, which is sin.

Some of us need to learn that we actually need to step into the mess. When we see a follower of Jesus Christ sinning, we need to step in lovingly and confront it. When we see someone and know they continue to have an affair, or they're looking at porn, or they're abusing alcohol or drugs, or they're consistently people-pleasing, gossiping, or getting angry, and we just sit back and watch it, we're enabling them. We need to step into that. The scriptures speak to this over and over again. In **Matthew 18:15-17**, when you see someone in sin, you go to them one-on-one and lovingly challenge them. **Galatians 6:1** says, "**Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently.**" We are to challenge others. Sometimes the problem is we just sit back and watch it happen because we're afraid of being criticized or critiqued as being judgmental. The difference really lies in our attitude. Why are we choosing to judge or challenge others? Is it because we want to feel better about ourselves? Do we want to hurt somebody, or is the hope to restore that person gently?

Now, I think back over the years to the number of times people have lovingly sat down with me and judged me, and I'm so grateful. I could give you a handful of examples—I could go on for hours about people who have loved me. I think about the times my sweet wife has sat me down and said, "Hey, Scott, sometimes your tone with our kids is not gentle." Friends like Blake Holmes and John McGee have sat me down multiple times and said, "Scott, your gluttony, the decisions you make with your body, are not honoring God and your body." They lovingly judged me and challenged me on my gluttony. JP has sat down with me and said, "Scott, you struggle with pride. It's not that you think too highly of yourself; it's that you think of yourself too often." Even one of my teenage sons, Drew, sat me down about nine months ago and said, "Hey, Dad, one thing I see in you that I think is not honoring to God is that you tend to complain a lot." He also told me he loved me and how great of a dad I am, but he said, "Hey, Dad, I want you to know you complain, and that's been passed on to me. I think we can both get better." That is not fun. My idea of fun is not sitting down with my teenage son and having him lovingly challenge me, or my wife lovingly challenging me on my tone, or JP on pride. Those aren't fun conversations, but I'm so grateful that my friends did not just stand by and watch me sin. They didn't enable that sin. So, we are to judge others, but point one is that we're often a bad judge of others.

Let's keep going in the text. **Matthew 3:7** says, "**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? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there's a plank in your own eye? 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.**" So, we're a bad judge of others—that was point one. Point two is that we're a bad judge of self.

2. We're a Bad Judge of Self

Your vision stinks because we can't see clearly. Jesus uses this really humorous illustration. I think it's funny that the carpenter's son is probably looking around the woodshop or tool shed, where Jesus' dad worked, and He sees a log and sawdust. He uses those kinds of illustrations to teach us. He says the problem is you've got this Redwood tree coming out of your eye, like a plank, a log, or a two-by-four, yet you judge others for the little tiny speck in their eye. How

could you possibly see the speck in somebody's eye when you've got something obstructing your vision? Jesus tells us very lovingly and practically that before you focus on the speck—and yes, we will focus on the speck—you've got to get rid of this redwood forest coming out of your eyes. You need to remove it. What does that look like practically?

Let's say you show up to your life group, and there are eight singles in the room. You're an expert on the sin of the other seven people, but you don't do any self-reflection. That's what Jesus is addressing here. Instead, what if we showed up to life group and were very aware of how and where we fall short? We might know where those in our life group struggle, but the first thing I'm going to do is confess before I confront. I'm going to deal with my own stuff—my pride and judgmental spirit—and get the log out of my own eye so that I can help my brother or sister in Christ. Often, we come in recklessly, calling out the sin in others, but there's a major sin going on in our own life. There are even times when the sin of the other person is more consequential than our sin, but it always helps to get in the habit of dealing with our own issues.

In all the years I've worked with couples—and I've worked with many over the years—this is one of the things I see that distinguishes a healthy marriage from an unhealthy one. In healthy marriages, a husband or wife can see where they've contributed to marital dysfunction. In unhealthy marriages, all they do is point the finger at their spouse, unwilling to deal with their own stuff. Do you know why it's so easy for me to spot that in other couples? It's because that's me as well. There are times when I focus more on the sins of Kristen, the speck in her eye, instead of dealing with the log in my own eye. We all need to do some good, hard work here.

We need to figure out why the log is in our own eye. Is it sin that leads to the log? Is it something that's been done to us? Maybe we've been hurt in the past, which automatically puts us on the defense. What would it look like to do some self-examination to figure out why we have a log in our eye? **Psalm 139:23-24** says, "**Search me, God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.**"

Removing the log is not easy, but when we do, it allows us to focus on the speck in our brother or sister's eye. When we've got a speck of sawdust in our eye, it is really painful, irritating, and annoying. We need someone to help us, but when they do, they need to be gentle, patient, caring, and understanding. When you and I come to somebody with a speck in their eye, and there's a log in our own, we cannot possibly remove that speck with gentleness and care. Jesus tells us that if we're going to judge others, we've got to be a better judge of ourselves. Get the log out first.

Verse six 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.**" This may seem a little disconnected, but essentially what Jesus is saying is that some people will push you away. They're like vicious dogs, like pigs who eat pearls and trample all over you. Jesus is saying very lovingly that sometimes we need to shake the dust off our feet and walk away. So, thank you, Jesus, and thank you, Taylor Swift—we sometimes just need to "shake it off." We're a bad judge of others—that's point one. Point two, we're a bad judge of self. Let's continue on in the text.

Verse 7 says, **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."** Jesus is telling us to be persistent when we come to Him. He already knows what's on our hearts, but He is saying, "Hey, when there's something that you want, don't pretend it's not there. Ask for it." And He's saying not just to ask once or seek once or knock once, but to keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.

Sometimes I think we believe we're wearing God out and that He doesn't want to hear it anymore, like the annoying kid who pulls on Mom or Dad's shirt. But that's not what it's like with Jesus. He wants us to keep coming to Him. Persist in asking, seeking, and knocking. When we do that, it helps us rightly understand who God is.

He's a good God. He's not annoyed by you. He's not disappointed in you. He doesn't hate when you come to Him. He wants you to persist in coming to Him. That doesn't mean He's going to answer all of the prayers in the way that we want them answered. He's going to answer all prayers. Sometimes it's a yes, sometimes it's a no, and sometimes it's a not now. But Jesus wants us to persist in coming to Him. When we ask, we do it like we just read a few weeks ago in Matthew 6:10, where we say, "Your will be done, not my will." I'm going to keep on asking, I'm going to keep on seeking, I'm going to keep on knocking, and God, I trust that whatever answer You give me. Your will be done, not mine.

He continues on in verses 9 through 12: **"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him? So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."** So not only are we often a bad judge of others and a bad judge of self, but point three is that we misjudge the Father.

3. *We Misjudge the Father*

Largely, I think this is because we assume our heavenly Father is like our earthly fathers, and our earthly fathers have all let us down. I've let my children down at times, and so we assume our heavenly Father is the same way. But Jesus is saying here, He is not like that. He's not like us on earth.

I love the humorous illustration here: What kind of father, when their son comes to them and says, "Hey dad, will you give me some bread?" would say, "Nope, I don't have bread for you, but you can eat this stone." Or, "Hey dad, can you give me some fish?" and he responds, "I won't even do that—snakes are the enemy." What kind of dad would give a snake when their son asks for fish? That's not what a father does. Jesus says, "If you, even though you are evil (okay, I'm evil), know how to give good gifts to your kids, then how much more so your heavenly Father?" Yet we so often misjudge Him, thinking He doesn't want to give good gifts to His kids.

In 2013, my four sons at the time—twins were nine, so nine, nine, seven, and five years old. It was Christmas 2013. We got together with some other families and made a decision that each family would buy a big family gift, and we would come together to open those gifts. We met in a big room with a bunch of families, and I thought, "I've got the best idea for a gift for our kids." So, again, they were nine, nine, seven, and five. I told my wife, Kristen, "You and I are probably going to hate this, but they're going to think it's the best thing ever. We're going to get them a

full weekend at Great Wolf Lodge, which is one of the largest indoor water parks in the world. They're going to absolutely love it."

I told Kristen, "I've got a great way to present the gift. We'll cut up letters from a magazine to spell out 'Great Wolf Lodge,' blow up some balloons, shove the letters inside the balloons, and wrap it in the biggest gift box anyone has there. We're going to win the prize for the biggest present, showing that we love our kids more than everyone else." So, we did it. They were going to open up the box, see the balloons, pop them, scramble the letters, and it would say 'Great Wolf Lodge,' making us the best parents ever. Kristen said, "I'm not so sure that's a good idea. The kids can't really spell that well yet, and the five-year-old can barely tell the alphabet. That's just going to be really frustrating." I said, "Oh, Kristen, I've got it."

So, I took care of it and did it my way. We got together with the other families, with our kids opening present last. Everyone else went first. One family got a family iPad. My kids were like, "Oh, that's awesome." Another family got electric scooters, and the kids started scooting around all over the place. One family got a hoverboard, another got a puppy—not a stuffed puppy, but a real live puppy. My kids' eyes were big, and they were like, "I can't wait to see what Dad and Mom got us." They opened the box, saw the balloons, and started popping them, expecting money or something. But it just looked like there were letters from a magazine. No money. They popped all the balloons, shook the box up, but it was just letters in a balloon. It looked more like a ransom note than anything.

Now my kids were crying, looking around, saying, "Why did everyone else get a hoverboard, scooters, an iPad, and a puppy, and all you got us were letters in a balloon?" Bad parenting moment. I looked at Kristen and said, "I told you that would happen." We helped them put the letters together, and I told them, "Guys, you misjudged your father. I'm a good father, I want good gifts for you." And we had the best time. I remember one of the kids who got a scooter broke his arm a couple of weeks later, the hoverboard stopped working, and the puppy, though cute, pooped everywhere. I thought, "We won that! That was so fun. We had the greatest memory as a family." My gosh, your dad gives good gifts. Don't misjudge your father.

I tell you this because we misjudge our good Father all the time, saying, "God, I don't want the gift You've given me. I don't want this gift of singleness. I don't want the gift of this broken marriage. I don't want cancer. I don't want this broken relationship. I don't want my child to go prodigal. Why have You given me this gift?" I don't want to give you a trite answer and just gloss it over. I don't know why. I know why cancer exists, why marriages are broken, why kids go prodigal—we're in a broken world. But I know it's hard, and I know it's hard to believe that we have a good Father in the midst of that. But I just want to remind you what this text says: The best thing I can offer you is that God has not given you a rock. He's not given you a snake. You would believe that He is a good Father, even in the midst of hard times. And I know that's hard. And even more than I know, God knows.

The late pastor and author, Tim Keller, says, "God either gives us what we ask, or gives us what we would have asked if we knew everything He knows." Sometimes it takes time and perspective to see that He is a good Father, and He wants us to trust Him, to not misjudge Him.

In summary, we are bad judges of others, but we can learn to judge rightly. Second, we're bad judges of ourselves, but if we learn to get the log out, we can focus on others and be better judges of both ourselves and others. Third, we misjudge our Father, but He is such a good Father. I can't help but think there was a time when God's people thought all they got were letters cut out of a magazine and popped balloons.

For hundreds of years, God's people were waiting for their promised Savior, the Messiah. They waited and waited—400 years from the end of Malachi until Jesus came on the scene. They started to believe that maybe the Messiah was coming, but it was a baby born in a manger, weak and humble and dependent. They waited as this baby grew up into a man, lived a perfect life, and began His public ministry at the age of 30. People wondered, "Is this who was promised to come? Is He the one who's going to rescue us, take care of injustice, and heal the hurt? Is He the one who's going to deliver us?" They watched how Jesus lived and said some crazy things, like we've seen week after week in this sermon series. He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who are pure in heart, blessed are those who are meek, blessed are those who are peacemakers." And I think there were times when they said, "We don't need peacemakers. We don't need meekness. We don't need the poor in spirit. We need somebody who's going to rise up and lead us."

Then that same Jesus, who said all these crazy things, was arrested, tortured, beaten beyond disfigurement, and hung on a cross with blood gushing out of His sides. And people said, "Where is the one who's going to deliver us? You promised. We wanted a Savior, and all we got was somebody dying. We got popped balloons and letters from a magazine. You haven't given us what we need and what we want." But I want to remind you and remind me that God was not done. **Romans 6:23** says, "**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God, the free gift of God, is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" We got something so much better than a conquering hero—we got the one who died for our sins. It's so easy to misjudge what God has done and what He is doing, but He is begging you and me to trust Him. He is a good Father. He loves you, He loves me, and He's not disappointed. Let me pray that you would understand that, and that I would understand.

God, we live in a really broken world where we judge incorrectly. We judge ourselves incorrectly, and we judge You incorrectly. I believe what You want us to hear, God, is that You are a good Father. Would You help us to not misjudge You any longer, to trust You, to believe that when it looks like we've been given a rock or a snake, to believe that You give good gifts to Your children. You gave us Your Son, Jesus. I pray, God, for all those in this room, all those listening, that they would never ever think they deserve that gift. They'd never get used to it. That it would continually change our lives, knowing that You are a good Father who gave us Your Son. God, I pray for those who don't know that truth, that they would know how good You are. Thank You for Your Son, Jesus. God, thank You for this text that You preserved for us to learn from today. Would You help us to judge others rightly, to judge ourselves rightly, and would You help us to no longer misjudge You, but to see who You are? Amen.