

## Friday

“Judge not, that you not be judged,” is likely the most frequently quoted verse in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America by Christians and non-Christians alike. It is also one of the most misunderstood teachings by Christians and non-Christians alike.

Do any other passages come to mind that are often quoted but not often understood very well? A little something for you to ponder this weekend.

Please read Matthew 7:7-11 in preparation for Sunday worship.

## Devotional

## Worrying

March 5, 2023

## Monday

Read Matthew 7:1-6, focus on v. 5

Jesus isn't saying merely to take the log out of your eye for your own benefit so that you don't judge or aren't subject to judgment, but that you would get the log out of your eye so that you can help others.

If you desire to take Jesus' words seriously that we are to help each other with the specks in our eyes what are you going to do?

1. *If* there is a log in your eye, take it out with the help of the Holy Spirit and other believers. Don't assume there's a log in your eye, but if there is, work on that first.
2. Be a person of integrity: trustworthy, not a gossip, and willing to be judged yourself
3. Be a compassionate and loving judge – this is the only kind of judge that will do: How would I like someone to tell me about this issue?

Where do you need to land this week on those three items to be developed as a compassionate and loving judge?

## Tuesday

Read the citations below as you come upon them

“Do not judge...” is commonly and popularly misunderstood to mean that no one is qualified to comment on whether another person's actions are right or wrong. No one can judge anyone else and thus no one can be judged.

Biblically, this ignores vv. 3-5 in this passage, ignores Jesus' teaching about discerning false prophets and false disciples (Matthew 7:15-

23), ignores Jesus' warning about failing to obey his teachings (Matthew 7:24-27), and ignores his teaching on the process of reconciliation between people in Matthew 18:15-20.

Take time to read each passage and check what Jesus teaches in those passages against our main passage: Matthew 7:1-6. What does each passage have to say about the role of our own judgment?

### **Wednesday**

Read Matthew 7:1-6, focus on vv. 4-5 (we are becoming experts!)

Let's imagine for a moment that you are an eye doctor and someone has come to you because they have something in their eye that they cannot remove and it is causing them pain and their quality of life is suffering. They are in the chair patiently waiting to meet you and then you stroll into the exam room with a three-foot long 2x4 sticking out of your eye. What do you suppose their reaction would be?

- Why would they want you to perform this minor speck surgery when your vision is impaired by a 2x4?
- Why would they risk being hit by the 2x4 protruding from your eye?
- Why would they think you were competent at all to help them with a tiny speck when you've got a 2x4?

They'd likely conclude that you are an unqualified hypocrite and run for the door. And they'd be correct in that judgment.

Can you think of times in your own life where you have run away from someone with a log in their eye?

Have there been times when others might have run away from you because of the log in your eye?

If people used to see a log in your eye, but it is no longer there, what else might need to happen before you try to take the speck out of their eye?

### **Thursday**

Read Matthew 7:1-6, focus on v. 6.

This verse is often confusing and has even vexed many biblical scholars, but we can see this verse clearly in the light of the first five verses of this chapter.

Don't pin someone down and compel them to let you remove the speck from their eye. Essentially, what Jesus is saying is that you don't need to force surgery on anyone. If they tell you (in so many words) they like the speck there, leave it.

Jesus isn't referring to pet dogs, but wild street dogs scavenging the city for food. Giving these dogs meat, especially the meat reserved for Jewish worship practices, would not be appreciated by the dogs, but they would likely stalk and attack you for more. These wild dogs would never be grateful for the food they'd been given.

Likewise, pigs don't value pearls. Pigs often ate white peas or acorns that are similar in appearance to pearls (at least to pigs). A pig would definitely be angry to eat pearls thinking it was getting some yummy acorns and peas. The furious pig would trample the pearls until they were buried beneath the muck, never to be accidentally consumed again. Then they might come after you for offering them pearls in their trough.

So, when you offer compassion and love in helping someone correct their sin and they reject it, move on. Their speck is not your life mission – being the hands and feet of Jesus is your mission and you fill that, in part, by being a loving and compassionate judge, not beating people over the head until they submit to your judgment.