

The Sermon on the Mount: Chapter 7 (4-1-2020)

Some of the most misused words in the Bible are, “Stop judging, so that you will not be judged.” These words are used to justify virtually any and every sin. These words are used to attack faithful Christians who seek to lead people to repentance. God teaches us to lead people to repentance by pointing out their sin, by warning them of God’s condemnation of their sin, and by pointing them to Christ’s cross and empty tomb for the forgiveness of their sin. So often, when Christians do this, those admonished counter-attack, “Who are you to judge me?” they say, “The Bible says, ‘Stop judging, so that you will not be judged.’” In this way they deceive themselves into thinking that God doesn’t care about their sin, and, therefore, they will continue to cling to it.

But with these words God is not ruling out all judging. Rather, he is ruling out arrogant, self-righteous, hypocritical judging based on one’s own thoughts and feelings, rather than being based on God’s Holy Law. In the following verses Jesus doesn’t tell us not to look at the speck of sin in our fellow believers’ eyes. Rather, he tells us to take the beam of sin out of our own eyes first. We do this by looking into the mirror of God’s Holy Law, identifying our own sins, confessing them before God, and turning in faith to our Savior Jesus for forgiveness. Then, after removing the beam from our own eyes, we are able to see clearly to remove the speck of sin from our brothers’ and sisters’ eyes. The apostle Paul put it this way in Galatians 6, “If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.” So, don’t let anyone sophomorically justify their own sins by using Jesus’ words as an attack, “Stop judging, so that you will not be judged.” Incidentally, by pointing out sin with God’s Holy Law, you are not the one judging, but God, the righteous Judge himself, is doing the judging.

Only when my sins have been removed through Spirit-worked faith do I begin to receive all of the privileges that come with being God’s dear child. I have the privilege of storming his throne of grace with all of my prayers and petitions, knowing he will answer my prayers with good gifts. I also have the daily assurance that I am on the narrow road, passing through the small gate that leads to eternal life. Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

That faith is nourished and sustained through the pure Word of God. That’s why Jesus tells us to watch out for false prophets. They don’t come and say, “Hey, look out for me.” Rather, they disguise themselves, and seek to pass themselves off as faithful messengers of God. So how do we identify these false prophets? By looking at their “fruits”. The fruits of a false prophet are their false teachings. We must compare their teachings with God’s Holy Word. When these two clash, we know who the false prophets are.

Keeping God’s Word pure among us is the only way to build our families and our church family on the Lord’s rock-solid foundation, as opposed to building them on the shifting sands of falsehood. Of course, that rock-solid foundation is nothing other than Jesus and the Truth of his Word. Unlike the false philosophies of this world, the Truth of his Word has absolute authority in all matters of faith and Christian living.

My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare to make no other claim But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, his covenant and blood Support me in the raging flood;
When ev’ry earthly prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.

After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read Matthew chapter 7.

Pastor Zuberbier