

# Judgment in the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #12 - Adam Purvis & Mike Laramie - June 15, 2025 - Matthew 7:1-6

**INTRO:** Good morning church! Today is Father's Day. We're continuing our sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expositional study of Christ's Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived.

**Need:** Does our country feel more polarized today than in the past? Politically, it certainly seems so. You know, many historians feel that the last time the United States was mostly in agreement with each other was during the "Era of Good Feelings" from about 1817-1825, or roughly the Monroe administration. It was a period of nationalism after the War of 1812, and while there were political parties, they didn't seem to have bitter disagreements, at least for 8 years. Before then, and since, much of the US has been divided – urban vs rural, free state vs slave state, north vs south, eastern vs western, Democrat vs Republican. Even the times that many of our elders remember as the "good old days" in the post-WW2 environment, we had our divisions – young vs old, segregationists vs civil rights – pick the issue, or in our day, perhaps liberal vs conservative, black vs white, and on and on...

Do you know what happens a lot when there are issues that divide groups of people? Most times, people identify with that issue. They make that issue part of their identity. They no longer vote Republican or Democrat, they are Republican or Democrat. How many people are actually dues-paying members of a political party? When we make an issue a part of our identity, we then feel personally attacked when we encounter views different from our own. Most times, we then judge members of the opposition, condemning them for their "incorrect" positions.

**Trans:** Jesus continued His Sermon on the Mount by addressing judgment as He transitioned His message towards more interpersonal issues.

**BODY:** In Matthew 7, Jesus continued the Sermon on the Mount and taught His listeners to avoid harsh and hypocritical judgment while also maintaining spiritual discernment. We can avoid harsh and hypocritical judgment and practice spiritual discernment. How can we avoid harsh and hypocritical judgment and practice spiritual discernment? The text gives three ways we can avoid judgement.

**Read text:** Matthew 7:1-6 (ESV) "Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. <sup>6</sup> "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."

## We Can Practice Spiritual Discernment and Avoid Judgment When We:

### 1. Evaluate others with Christlike humility

**EXP:** (v.1-2)

**"Judge" (1)** (κρίνω, *krinō*) - to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong; to be judged, i.e. summoned to trial that one's case may be examined and judgment passed upon it; to pronounce judgment, to subject to censure: of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others.

The best definition of *krino* is to observe, evaluate, and make a decision between two things. This can be between things that are good and evil, or perhaps something that is good and what is better. Related to this word is *krisis* in the Greek, where we get the word crisis, which in the first Century merely meant "a decision".

Verse 1 is probably the most frequently quoted verse from the NT in 21st Century America - it is also the most misunderstood. It is typically used to argue that no one is qualified to comment on whether another person's actions are right or wrong, even if that person's behavior is clearly condemned in the Scriptures. Is

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this what Jesus meant? Are we to suspend our critical faculties in relation to other people, refuse to discern between truth and error, goodness and evil? This notion goes all the way back to the end of the 2nd Century. Irenaeus had to defend a bishop's right and responsibility to reprove those who err. - Charles Quarles

*1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (ESV) "Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life"*

**"Lest you be judged"** - Jesus assumed that his disciples were judging hypocritically. While this may mean that you will also be judged by others, far more important is the fact that we will be judged by God. Much like His teaching in the Beatitudes, (if you forgive others, you will be forgiven by God; if you show mercy, you will be shown mercy), so too it is with judgment.

**"Measure"** (2) (μέτρον, *metron*) - measure, an instrument for measuring; proverbially, the rule or standard of judgment. The yardstick you use on others will be used on you.

Righteous judgment is the privilege and responsibility of those walking in genuine faith.

- A believer has been given spiritual discernment to lovingly speak into the life of another believer.
- But someone who claims faith without walking in it (whose life contradicts the gospel) is not qualified to speak correction into the lives of others in the faith. Similarly, someone claiming faith without walking in it will not be receptive to correction.
- And when it comes to those outside the faith, our posture should not be correction, but cultivation. We are not called to critique the fruit of an unbelieving heart, but to plant the seeds of faith that might one day produce it. We ought to share corrections through the salvation and redemption offered through the gospel, rather than correction of actions and choices through judgment.

Let's define what we mean by "judge". The difficulty with this word is that the word translated "judge" does not have an easy definition in English. Sometimes it means "approve of", and others "to have an opinion". Many times, we think of the person in the black robe with a gavel - pronouncing sentence. In ancient times, it meant to have rulership or dominion. For the purpose of this message, let's go with the "sentencing" meaning. Contrast that with discernment - this is the ability to discriminate between two or more things, or to be able to evaluate something.

At the same time, there is the idea of critique, or critical thinking. Many in our culture today find the word "criticism" to be wrong or evil. No one wants to be criticized. What this viewpoint misses is that constructive criticism is key to our growth. When someone offers constructive criticism, they have our best in mind. "I've found this thing in you; let's fix it, so you will be better". It seems that in context, the meaning of "judge" in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is "condemn".

**ARG:** Galatians 6:1 (NIV) Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently.

Matthew 18:15 (ESV) If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

Zechariah 7:9 (ESV) "Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another..."

**ILL:** Fighter pilot debriefs.

## Judgment in the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #12 - Adam Purvis & Mike Laramie - June 15, 2025 - Matthew 7:1-6

**APP:** Are you in some sort of accountable relationship with other Christians? One of the ways we offer here is in our Community Groups. Your first step may be to join a group. If you are in a CG, is it a safe space where you can share your struggles with others? Do you feel comfortable allowing others to point out where you have fallen short? If not, you need to be part of the hard work in creating a loving community that discerns without hypocrisy and genuinely is concerned with each member's Christian growth.

## 2. Correct ourselves with sincere honesty

**EXP:** (v.3-5)

**"Speck" (3)** (κάρφος, *karphos*) - a dry stalk or twig, a straw; chaff. A little speck or twig.

**"Log" (3)** (δοκός, *dokos*) - a beam, a log. Why are you looking at the little twig in your brother's eye when you have a whole tree in your own?

Josephus used this term to describe a huge beam of wood as large as a mast of a ship that was used by Vespasian's navy for a battering ram. It had a huge piece of iron on the front cast in the shape of a ram's head. This log would inflict great damage on opposing ships, much like Jesus' log would inflict damage upon the hypocrite.

**"Eye" (3)** (ὀφθαλμός, *ophthalmos*) - the eye, vision, sight; the eyes of the mind, the faculty of knowing.

In Chapter 7, Jesus teaches on relationships. Much like Jesus' teaching on money and the Kingdom in Chapter 6, Jesus returns to the metaphor of the eye. **Matthew 6:22 (ESV) The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.** Remember that Pastor Stephen pointed out that the eye as the lamp of the body was a metaphor for the ability to see needs for generosity, so too in 7:3, Jesus points out how important our vision is when dealing with people. Our eye needs to be just as clear seeing our own failures as when we see the faults of others. *Lamentations 3:40 (ESV) Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!* We need to be careful here, as introspection can lead to self-absorption. As Charles Spurgeon once said, "Any practice that detracts from faith is an evil practice, but especially that kind of self-examination which would take us away from the cross proceeds in a wrong direction." We will never see ourselves clearly simply by focusing more intently on ourselves. Go to the word, hear the voice of the Lord, and experience the flood of divine light pouring into your mind with clarity and comfort.

**"Hypocrite" (5)** (ὑποκριτής, *hupokritēs*) - an actor, stage player; a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite

**"See clearly" (5)** (διαβλέπω, *diablēpō*) - to look through, penetrate by vision; to look fixedly, stare straight before one; to see clearly

Some interpreters will object to the notion that some sins are more grievous than others. Popular theology teaches that all sins are equal in the eyes of God. However, this is not Biblical theology. The Bible teaches that all sins are serious and that any sin is deserving of God's fierce wrath. Yet this does not mean that all sins are equal. Jesus clearly taught that some sins may be greater than others. The contrast between the speck and the beam confirms this. - Charles Quarles

Jesus' standard for relationships in the Christian counter-culture is very high. In our attitudes and behavior, towards others, we are to play neither the judge (becoming harsh and condemning), nor the hypocrite (blaming others while excusing ourselves) but a true brother or sister, caring for others so much that we first blame and correct ourselves and then seek to be constructive in the help we give them. We need to be as critical of ourselves as we often are of others, and as generous to others as we always are to ourselves. - John Stott

## Judgment in the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #12 - Adam Purvis & Mike Laramie - June 15, 2025 - Matthew 7:1-6

**ARG:** Romans 2:1 (ESV) Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

Romans 14:10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

Psalms 51:10 (ESV) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

**ILL:** Remember the story of David with Bathsheba. In 2 Sam 12, the prophet Nathan regales David with the story of a rich man who takes a poor man's only lamb, rather than sacrificing one of his own flock. David responds with indignation, but Nathan rebukes him with the admonition - "you are that man!"

**APP:** Self examination is a key to the Christian life. Spend time in silence and solitude, speaking to the Lord. Allow the Holy Spirit to examine your heart, search you, and let Him bring to mind those things you need to hand over to Him. As Martin Luther said, "all of a Christian's life is one of repentance."

### 3. Share spiritual truths with open hearts.

**EXP:** (v.6)

**"Dogs"** (6) (κύων, *kuōn*) - dogs, hounds. Is Jesus literally talking about dogs here? Definitely not, this is a figure of speech. Jesus is talking about people, not certain groups of people per se, but about those who consistently reject, mock, or attack sacred truth.

**"Holy"** (6) (ἅγιος, *hagios*) - sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated); holy, saint. Don't entrust the holy things of God to people who mock and attack it.

**"Pearls"** (6) (μαργαρίτης, *margaritēs*) - a pearl; a proverb, i.e. a word of great value.

**"Pigs"** (6) (χοῖρος, *choiros*) - pigs, hogs, swine. Again, to describe persons who vehemently oppose the truths of God. Don't force holy truth on hearts that are hostile. Use discernment in how—and to whom—you share the treasures of God.

**"Trample them underfoot"** (6) (καταπατέω, *katapateō*) - to tread down, trample under foot, to trample on; metaphor: to treat with rudeness and insult, to spurn, treat with insulting neglect. This is how you discern the "pigs and dogs" by the way they treat the holy things of God and you.

**"Attack you"** (6) (ῥήγνυμι, *rēgnumi*) - to rend, burst or break asunder, break up, break through.

2 Peter 2:22 (NIV) ... "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud."

The metaphor of dogs and swine are similar. Wild dogs tended to attack those who fed them, and both dogs and pigs were unclean animals to the Jews. It would be considered unthinkable for the meat of the temple sacrifice to go to the dogs, just as one would not give precious pearls to pigs. In context, since Jesus is speaking of judgment, we today should not be the one making a judgment on the receptivity of a hearer of the Gospel before we present it. But clearly if someone is repeatedly unreceptive or hostile to the Gospel, Jesus teaches us to move on to someone who is receptive.

Matthew 10:11-14 (ESV) "And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town."

## Judgment in the Kingdom

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Tim Keller in his sermon "Reading Hearts" (Redeemer Presbyterian Church, July 9, 2000), capturing his interpretation of Matthew 7:6: "Jesus is likening someone to a dog and to a pig. It almost seems contradictory to verses 1-5, right? And how does it square with his charge to tell everyone the good news? Are we to write people off? What Jesus means here is that animals need care, i.e. you shouldn't give pigs something they can't digest or handle. So, when we look at the parable in this light, we see that Jesus is actually scolding the caretaker."

Jesus is focusing on the caretaker and not the animals....

**ARG:** 1 Corinthians 5:12 (ESV) For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

Proverbs 9:7 (NIV) Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse. Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you.

**But this doesn't mean we are to abandon and ignore unbelievers, rather to show discernment**

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

**ILL:** The Faith of a Canaanite Woman (Matt 15: 21-28) Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly. Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us. He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs. "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

**APP:** Are you in place with someone that feels like you're just beating your head against a wall? Do you know someone who obviously hears the truth, but firmly rejects it? Don't mistake openness to discussing scripture with openness to scripture. In this sermon, Jesus is telling us to use discernment to give the appropriate kind of care. Jesus isn't telling us **not** to share truth. He's telling us to value it deeply enough to share it wisely. Truth is sacred. People are eternal. Our calling is not to force fruit to grow, but to faithfully sow in love.

**CONCLUSION:**

Let's pray.