

Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Lecture 14, Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge

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This is Dr. Bill Mounce in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 14, Matthew 7:1-6. Do Not Judge.

David made an interesting comment at the break, and I just wanted to share it.

He was wondering if verse 34 would affect the translation of give us this day our daily bread or give us our bread for tomorrow, a day at a time. I don't think Jesus was thinking of the Lord's Prayer at this point. It's been too far removed.

But it is interesting that the focus of 34 is to stay focused in the present, stay focused on the day, and deal with tomorrow when it comes. Theologically, that would be, I think, a pretty strong argument that on the Lord's Prayer, it's give us the food we need today. If we were praying, give us the food we need for tomorrow, and it would run counter to verse 34.

I wouldn't want to say it has to be that, but I think it's a very interesting argument. Theologically, we stay in the present. I always find that give us this day our daily bread is much more meaningful than a third world country where the prayer only lasts.

Overall, the focus on the first part of this is how we relate to other people. The final section is the conclusion, but this is how we relate to each other. The first topic is judgment, verses 1 to 6, how we treat one another. Do not judge. It probably would be no surprise that we start with the issue of a critical spirit.

For the person who does not understand chapters 5 and 6, being critical of other people is a natural thing to do. But if you are a beatitude kind of person, then chapter 7, verse 1 makes sense. Or stated another way, if you tell your people don't judge, you'll have the same total lack of result that I had.

So, you have to go back and start at the golden chain. And as you go through that, then 7.1 is an understandable thing. Obviously, you know what I think about critical spirits.

I've used it as an illustration many times. I think a critical spirit slowly, patiently chooses its way through the very fabric of the church. Don Carson writes in his book on the Lord's, on the Sermon on the Mount, that some people are so critical that they feast on roast preachers every Sunday lunch.

I had a great life. Roast preacher. You know, Satan loves a critical spirit.

When a church becomes critical, and it eats its way through the fabric of the church, and it pushes out grace, it's almost impossible for that assembly of worshippers to ever move back into grace, to be a place of grace again. I mean, once a critical spirit takes over, it's almost impossible, I think, to get rid of it. So, what does this mean? Do not judge.

Well, I've got three possible positions. The first interpretation is flat-out wrong, but we'll hear this from our non-Christian friends all the time. We're told do not judge means you have to be an opinionless, spineless, weak, wishy-washy jellyfish.

Don't judge. You know, the Bible says don't judge. Don't you judge me.

And of course, that's an impossible interpretation, despite how many times we're told that's what it really means. All the way through the Sermon on the Mount, we're called to make judgments. Our righteousness has to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

There's judgment going on. Our piety is not to be external and smug like the Pharisees. That involves judgment.

In 7:15, he's going to say, beware of false prophets. That involves judgment. Nathan judged King David.

1 John 4:1, test the spirits. Paul passes judgment on the sexually immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5. So, there's no way that 7:1 just means you and I can't have an opinion about anything. Judgment has nothing to do with our lives as Christians.

It can't mean that. So, interpretation number one, it's not possible. Interpretation number two, and I got this word from Martin Lloyd-Jones, and that's do not be censorious.

Now, when I was originally working on the sermon series, every commentary I read used the word censorious. I don't know what the word meant. I've never seen it before in my life.

Frankly, looking at the dates, I think they picked it all up from Martin Lloyd-Jones. The word means to be fault-finding, severely critical, and judgmental. It's to assume a position of authority where we can stand in judgment of the other person.

According to this interpretation, Jesus is saying there is no place in the church and in our private lives to be censorious. No time to, I would say it this way, to enjoy finding

fault. Because, you know, the censorious people, the irregular people in our lives, they like this.

It gives them a sense of power, right? And there's no time to enjoy looking for fault, being destructive, and condemning the other person. Because, after all, that's God's role, right? It's God's role, the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of their sin. It's God the Father's role to execute vengeance.

And all that's gossip is, right? It's executing vengeance. It's just of a different kind. There's a huge difference between being censorious and, for lack of a better word, being discerning about things.

So, a censorious person enjoys looking for faults. A discerning person sees faults when necessary. A censorious person is destructive and tears things down.

A discerning person wants to be constructive and build things up. A censorious person is harsh in passing judgment. A discerning person is gracious in balancing grace and truth.

So, interpretation number two, which most commentaries go with, is they say Jesus is saying, don't be censorious, don't be a fault-finding kind of person. It doesn't mean you can't be discerning, but it does mean don't be fault-finding. Since writing this sermon, I realize that there really is a third alternative.

And the third alternative is, Jesus means exactly what he says. Do not judge. And I would probably want to add in, he's talking about judging a person.

Do not judge a person. It's going to take me about ten minutes, but let me explain why I think that's what's going on here. I have a very good friend who's on his own journey, and he's moving from a condition of critical fundamentalism to what it means to truly love God and love one another.

That's the journey that he's on. And he was asking if I would read a book that was called *Repenting of Religion* by Greg Boyd. Greg Boyd's a pastor in Minnesota.

Greg is the real popular proponent and pushes hard on the openness of God, which is the doctrine that God doesn't know the future. If God knows the future, then there is no freedom of choice. There is no free will.

And since there must be, this is a gross simplification, because there must be free will, God can't know the future. Well, it's so wrong of a position. I have my mindset, I'm never going to read anything Boyd writes.

There are certain debates that are simply not even worth spending the time on. And then my friend came and said, Boyd's book on Repenting of Religion is one of the top five books in his life. It was a transforming book.

And I thought, he's a really good friend. So I said, okay, I'll read it. The book is fascinating.

And I would really recommend that you sit down with your deacons and your elders and you slowly and chew your way through this book. Forget the fact that Boyd believes something that's really, really wrong on the future. Just let the book speak for itself.

The book starts off a little confusing. The first couple of chapters are like... But what he's doing is talking about the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the point that he's making is that that's God's tree.

God decides what is good and what is evil. God decides what is right and what is wrong. That's the symbolic meaning of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

He uses that as a basis then to argue that the problem is we don't want to accept God's... Same thing, same person. We don't want to accept God's definition of what's right and wrong. Because that's what happened in Genesis 3, right? Eve and Adam decided that they had different definitions of what is right and wrong.

And so they wanted to follow that. And his point is that's what the church does. Let me summarize the last bit of the book then.

He says, we are called to love one another. It's real simple. Greatest commandment, greatest two commandments.

Love God, love one another. Instead, what we do is pass judgment on to one another. And here's how we do it.

He doesn't say this until near the end, but when you get to it, you're amening him. There are a group of sins that we have decided are okay. I mentioned this earlier, I think.

We've decided we're redefining the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There are a group of sins that we have decided are okay. Oh, those are the ones I commit.

There is a group of sins that are not okay. Those are the ones that Dave commits. So, instead of loving Dave, we pass judgment on Dave.

And the motivation is that it makes me feel like I'm better than Dave. You got that point of the book, I went. It's so clear, it's so obvious, and that's what happens. You see an irregular person go down the street. What do you do? What's the human thing to do? Oh, they're heavier than I am.

Or they're not as much this that I am. Oh, I'm better than they are because they're that, and I'm this. Right? I mean, it is the human condition.

We pass judgment on what we determine are unacceptable sins in order to feel better about ourselves. Now, what he does at the end of the book, he says, I believe that there are two situations in which we pass judgment. The most important one is when you have a relationship with a person who confronts you about a sin, that something could actually happen.

See, because if I go to Dave, and I confront him in his sin of wearing that shirt, we don't have, well. Obviously, you can pick on him; I don't really have a relationship. I can look at Seth and his love for Dylan, and I can say, well, that's just, and I don't really have a relationship where me confronting Seth in his sin can have a positive effect. Right? I mean, if there were something seriously wrong in Seth's life, I'm not really at a place to know, okay, why does he do that? What are the forces that led him to do that? What has been his journey? Is he getting better or not? I don't really have a relationship with Seth where I can sit down and put my arm around him and cry with him and say, this part of your life is just eating my heart out, and I'm afraid it's hurting you.

So if you have a relationship, and there are examples of this in the Bible if you have relationships with people where the judging and the confronting are, you would never use those words with a good friend, would you? If Seth and I were just okay, if Dave had a deal with Seth, he would never say, I'm going to confront you. He never can say, I'm going to judge you. He can say, Seth, I love you to pieces, and it really hurts me to see this behavior in your life.

I think it's destructive. Can we talk about it? And what Boyd says that's legit. The other interesting thing that he says, and it's based on Matthew 24 and Jesus' general attitude towards the Pharisees, is that when someone is in a high position of authority in the church, the effects of their sin would have devastating effects on a very large group of people, and then Boyd will say, that is the other exception to the rule, that there has to be a way to go and to confront.

So, you have Paul confronting the man sleeping with his stepmother in 1 Corinthians 5. The church was proud of it. It was devastating the church, and it had to be dealt with. Of course, Paul's an apostle, so he has, I believe, a different set of rules.

He has prerogatives that I don't have, because I'm not an apostle. But those are the two exceptions that Boyd gives. I watched Ben Witherington.

By the way, Ben Witherington's coming here. Make sure you come. Ben's is fun to watch.

He came to Vancouver to speak at a conference, and I got to listen to him. He was talking about Christ's humanity, specifically that passage where the woman touches the hem of his garment and is made whole.

And Jesus said, Who touched me? And he kind of assumed an early professorial stance. And he goes, What do you think Jesus meant when he said, Who touched me? What was its real meaning and significance? Maybe. Maybe Jesus meant, Who touched me? Maybe it means just what it says.

So, what do you think Jesus means when he says, Do not judge? Oh, I don't know. Maybe he means, Do not judge. Yes, there will be situations, exceptions, rare, few, and far in between.

I have an extremely good friend. I love him to pieces. I really do.

But he is a critical person. He's a critical person. A while back, I said, I have a question for you.

Well, he said something about how I have a right to an opinion. And I let it sit for a couple of days. And I came back to him.

Something my wife taught me. Timing is everything. Sometimes, you don't say it right away.

Sometimes you kind of wait a bit. So I waited a couple of days and I said, I got a question for you. Why do you think you have a right to an opinion? He wasn't happy with the question.

I asked the question in another context recently and just got, I think, verbally attacked by a bunch of friends. Why do you think you have a right to an opinion? Well, I mean, the fervency at which I was told that they had a right to have any opinion about anything they wanted was like, wow, I just wish we all loved Jesus with the same fervency. So, I ask you, do you have a right to an opinion? About a person.

I'm not talking about politics. I'm not talking about a theological thing. I'm talking about a person.

Do we have a right to an opinion about a person? See, in order to have an opinion about a person, you have to pass judgment. In order to pass judgment, you have to have full knowledge. Right? If you don't have full knowledge, you can't pass judgment on a person.

Have I told you about my family's preoccupation with overweight? The sin in the Mounts family is being overweight. I'm an embarrassment to my family. In my family, I'm overweight.

And it's just this... I don't know. It's just frustrating. And I picked it up.

It's what I was raised in, that being fat at any level was one of the worst things you could possibly do. And Robin and I were down at a store down in Washougal. And the checker was not obese, but she was considerably overweight.

And Robin could see it on my face. I didn't say anything, but she could see it on my face. I was passing judgment.

And she wasn't a very nice checker. She was kind of rude. So, we walked out of the building, and Robin just said, maybe she's already lost 100 pounds.

Maybe her husband left her this morning. Maybe she was abused as a child, and a lot of gals who are abused in an attempt to not be abused again try to make themselves unacceptable, and so they gain a lot of weight. Maybe she was abused as a child.

She didn't say anything else. We just walked to the car, and I said, "I just got slammed."

Because, see, in order to look at her and go, fat, which, first of all, is not the greatest sin on the face of the earth. My family's wrong on that one. But see, in order to have even an opinion about that checker, I would have to really know her.

How much she's lost. What is her family condition? What is the pain that leads her to hurt her body? Right? I don't know all that stuff. None of us do.

Bruce Waltke came and did this class on Proverbs. It's up on BT. It is a fantastic class.

And the point that he makes is you can't have... Let me get his words right. You can't have... I can't think of the word. You can't make a pronouncement about something being right and wrong until you have universal knowledge.

The only way to know something for sure is to have universal knowledge. Because if we don't have universal knowledge, if we have incomplete knowledge, then we don't

have enough knowledge to pass judgment on any one specific thing. And so, his point is that only God has universal knowledge.

Only God has absolute knowledge. Maybe Jesus meant we're just not supposed to judge. Yes, there are rare exceptions when we're in a relationship or when the church leadership is going to have a devastating effect on so many people in the gospel that something has to be done.

Never because we want to. Never because we enjoy it. Never because it makes us feel better about ourselves because we don't commit that sin, although we commit other sins.

Maybe Jesus means just don't do it. We have to test the spirits. We so quickly go to the exceptions.

The second illustration I was referring to, the person happened to be a lady. She just went to all the exceptions. We've got to test the spirits. And it was like, my wife's family says, take a red.

Take a downer. Just calm down for a second. But it was so important to her that she be able to be judgmental.

And I think that's our church. I think that's a church as a whole. We're called to love one another.

In John 17, if we love each other, people will know that God the Father sent God the Son. That's what's at stake. Instead, we chew and spit out one another.

Church is its own worst enemy. Gossip is the natural language of the church. And that's not when we went through our church situation, it's the first time I'd ever really experienced that.

But as I have talked to people over and over and over again, it is, all of us, if you haven't done it yet, it's going to happen. This will happen to you. It's just the nature of the church.

When I went to Zondervan and I said, hey, I'm going to write a book. Why save the lost when you can fight with the saved? And I said, I'd like to do 30 case studies of churches that have been torn apart and had been reconciled. 10 were going to be torn apart by arrogant pastors, 10 that were torn apart by arrogant elders, and 10 that were torn apart by gossipy people.

I thought it could be an interesting case study. As I thought more about it, I said, "I don't know if I can find 30 healthy churches." I talked to all the senior staff at Zondervan.

It turns out almost all of them were pastors who had gotten chewed up and spit out. And they agreed, you may not be able to find 30 churches that have gone through a difficult situation and have come out stronger. So, I said, alright, I've got other things to work on.

I won't do it. So, obviously, this is something that I wouldn't dare say, but it's pretty close to where I live. What do you think? Certainly, it means don't be censorious.

But the censorious people that I know don't think they're censorious. They're absolutely justified because they think they're right. I still remember walking through the church.

I used to, sometime during the worship singing time, I used to walk around and look in the Sunday schools and pray for them and stuff like that. And I was walking out, getting ready to preach, and this one gal, happened to be a lady, just launched into me. She didn't like something I had done.

I said, I'm glad I talked to you about it, but can we do it after I preach? And she followed me the entire length of the church, yelling at me. She was bound and determined to be critical and judgmental of me, and she wasn't willing to let me get through my sermon. They say there are regular people in our lives, right? So, it certainly means censorious.

I think it means just don't do it, unless you absolutely have to. Treat one another with grace and mercy. The use of this word is in conjunction with two other words.

In Romans 14:3, it's used in conjunction with holding someone in contempt. Are you holding someone in contempt? Yeah. And the X in that O is holding someone in contempt.

Luke 6 is used in conjunction with condemnation. Condemnation. The first word, I'm sorry.

Self-contempt? To hold someone in contempt. Yeah, to hold someone in contempt. That's the way the NIV renders it.

And so, to me, judging would be to assess someone, to hold them in contempt, or to self-contempt them, as opposed to holding them on slander. Yeah, to judge someone and as a result, hold them at arm's length. To judge, to hold someone in contempt.

Yeah. I wonder how many people we just kind of instinctively passed judgment on, that there's a back story that's so compelling and so strong, and if we just knew it, we would not do and think what we do. I was flipping channels last night, and I saw a documentary on a guy who's 900 pounds.

He can barely sit up. He doesn't have any clothes on, but it doesn't matter because the fat just folds all over everything. I've never seen anything like this before.

And I just think, what pain, what hurt was there in your life that this is how you medicated it? And I felt so bad for him. And I think that's what our response is supposed to be. To pass judgment on and thereby seek to influence their lives.

Yeah. There's no reason to defend fat people. That's not at all what I'm saying.

Yeah, there's all kinds. There's genetic. When you develop belly fat, it produces in men an estrogen-type hormone that makes it harder and harder to become healthy.

It just exacerbates the problem. There are just so many things that go on. Yeah, and I know of people who are overweight and eat salad three meals a day.

Just shoot me. I hate salad. I just hate salad.

The only salad that's decent is if there's fried chicken in it or something. But yeah. And I'm just using, that's been part of my journey and I think it's an attitude that the Lord used to help me start to deal with a critical spirit in general.

Anyway, okay. Well, something for you all to think about. I'm pretty sure it's the third.

I think Boyd's right. Do not judge. And we have three reasons why we are not to judge.

Number one is we're told to. Jesus said, just don't do it. Don't do it.

That's what we've been talking about. The second reason is the whole principle of reciprocity, right? Don't judge, or you will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged.

Then changes the metaphor and says the same thing. And with the measure you lose, it will be measured to you. Again, this is not quid pro quo.

We're not saying I'm going to treat people in a certain way so that they will treat me in another way. But it is saying, along with mercy and forgiveness, that in some way,

how you judge is going to come back on you. In the same way how you show mercy and how you forgive is going to come back on you.

We're saved by faith. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And yet, our relationship with God and others in some way is affected by how we judge or we don't judge.

Now, the questions that we've looked at occasionally throughout the sermon really come to the front here. Judged by whom and judged when. Right? Judged by whom and judged when.

And I would say, first of all, the consequence is certainly true of people judging now that critical people invite criticism. And if you, if anyone, are the kind of person who's always assessing, always viewing people negatively, always asking unasked for advice, which is just criticism in disguise, then don't be surprised if they're critical of you. That's just the way it is.

If you and I are critical of other people, they are going to be critical of us now. But secondly, I would say, more importantly, I think this is true of God. I mean, so many of the passives in the sermon are divine passives, right? And so, you have to seriously take that the one doing the judging and the one doing the measuring back is, in fact, God.

So the question is, what does that look like? And I've got a present and a future answer. In the present, being judged by God means that censorious people, critical people, are going to be judged by God now, by which I think he means that God will allow the consequences of our sin to take over. God, you know, who hardened Pharaoh's heart? Pharaoh or God? Well, I think it's seven both.

Seven each time. The whole point is that God has created the world in such a way that when you and I actively reject Him, when we harden our hearts, He hardens our hearts as well. Not because He's actively involved in making the hearts hard.

Because that's just how we made reality work. That sin pulls us down a spiral, right? And so whether it's God hardening, but maybe in Pharaoh's case, he did actively do it. I don't know.

But I think censorious people are judged by God now in that God allows the consequences of their sin to take over. Judgmental people and critical people become angry, crusty people who simply can't see the good around them. Right? And the friend that I referred to about having an opinion, this is his life.

It's taken hold of him. He's a really good person, but his critical spirit has affected his marriage.

It has affected his relationship with his kids, with me. And it's just this downward spiral. And I think that's God's judgment on His critical spirit.

So, I think the judgment happens now. In light of how the Sermon on the Mount goes in general, I think, in some way, our final judgment is affected by our critical spirit. But I don't know how.

I don't understand the bits and pieces to that. But I certainly understand that now, if we judge, we will be judged. We will be judged by other people and they will be critical back.

We'll be judged by God. He'll allow the consequences of our sin to take over. That doesn't mean He won't redeem us at a later point.

Yeah? Yeah. Yeah. I think the problem is that if you preach this as not being censorious, nobody thinks they're censorious.

That's part of the problem. If you kind of leave the door cracked open, and also, I just don't think that's what it means, but there are some practical application issues. Jesus uses dramatic speech all the way through the sermon, right? And He doesn't mean to say there aren't exceptions.

Don't get divorced. And here, well, except for pornaea, we know from 1 Corinthians 7 that there's another exception: abandonment. But He's trying to drive the point home.

And so, I think the way He says it in 7:1 is, don't do it. It's not to deny the reality that there might be, based on Scripture elsewhere, situations in which you're going to have to do something. But the basic thrust of it is just don't draw opinions.

Don't be critical. You're supposed to love them. The exceptions then come out of other verses.

If you see your brother committing a sin that doesn't lead to death, deal with it. And so, there are situations, Matthew 18, if your brother sins against you, go and show it to him. Now, is that being critical? No, that's a situation where you have a relationship where you cannot confront but talk to someone about something you see in their life, and if you are in a relationship with them, then it actually can do some good.

And so, if I confront Seth, it's not going to do any good. If Dave talks to his friend in love and tears about something, it can do good. And so, I think that's how Boyd says it.

I think Matthew 18 and other verses allow it. I mean, the difference between interpretations 2 and 3 is they're very close. They're on the same end of the spectrum.

So, there's not a lot of difference. It's just that what I have found is that if you leave, the door cracked open on a regular basis, that, okay, don't be censorious, but you know, we really do need to be some bit of a fruit inspector, and people just latch on to that, and they go with it. So, it's easier to say, look, just don't do it.

Our natural tendencies are, most of us anyway, it's just by nature to be critical. I mean, I've got my best friend, this is Ed, who works on BT with me. He doesn't have a critical bone in his body.

He doesn't know how to be critical. And so, he has no tendency towards this at all so, if that's your personality, fantastic.

That's great. Most of us don't have that personality. And so, I'd say, for me, I just say, look, part of my goal in my life is, I just don't want to form opinions about people that are negative.

I don't know you. I don't know your story. I don't know your back story.

I don't know enough. My job is not to do, and it's to love you. I think if you leave the meaning of the word judge open to this idea of assessing character, then you are eliminating the positive.

It says, "Judge not." That means don't have an opinion one way or the other. Don't assess one thing as good and another as bad.

I have difficulty with, and I don't mean to, but that illustration is, you have told us about your friend who has a critical spirit. And you've used, in my opinion, or in my observation, you've made an assessment of his critical spirit critically. And I don't think that we can avoid doing that on a practical basis.

So, I think that there's something deeper in this judge not, so that my assessment would be that we are not to be the judge, judge not as the judge, and don't assume the role of God in condemning. That's not us, that's not what we do. We don't do that.

John 7, Jesus' attack, says that he has an opinion by those who are assessing his behavior. And John says in 7:4, judge righteous judgment. There's got to be a balance of what we are to do in judging so that we find a definition that allows us to say, "Don't do it."

In my opinion, McKnight argues that this means not condemning, not sending somebody to heaven, and not accepting the role of ultimate judge. That's not for us. But for this other business, I don't see how you can avoid assessing behavior.

It's either something to approve or disapprove of, but recognize that our approval or disapproval of it is based on limited knowledge and cannot be ultimate and needs to be with grace and kindness. So, you're going to go with censoriousness. The argument against it is that that's not what these paragraphs are about.

He goes on to talk about, you see, a speck and a log, and stuff, but we're not talking about ultimate judgment. We're talking about the relational kind of give-and-take that we have. I mean, think about how many people do you, and. I could be wrong, and you could be right; I'm not saying that.

I don't think that's what the context is. How many people do you and I individually really know so well that we could lovingly go to them and put our arms around them and say, I need to talk to you about something. See, I think that number is really very, very small.

I just don't think, with the nature of relationships, that there are that many people. I mean, I have very few in my life. And so this is a speck and a log thing.

But don't pronounce judgment. It would certainly come under both censoriousness and this other one. So, you may want to read Scott on that to see.

I found the note I was looking for about when does God judge us? And say it positively. If we are not censorious people, if we are not judgmental people, then I wonder if God is more patient with us. If we go around being critical of other people, I wonder if He will more quickly pronounce judgment on that.

But if we're people who genuinely try to love one another and to only confront sin, however you want to say it when we have to, I wonder if God treats us differently. I wonder if God is more patient with our sin. I don't know.

God will judge all of us according to His unbending and uncompromising justice and in His inexhaustible reservoir of mercy and grace. In some way, this is going to be felt in our final judgment. So, yeah, I mean, this is really, really hard.

And because I think most of our natural instinct is to pass judgment so we feel better about ourselves. I think we have to be really cautious about this one. But you need to believe what you want to believe.

Okay, don't judge why? Because you're told not to. Don't judge why? Because of the doctrine of reciprocity. The third is don't judge.

And reason number three is the speck in the log thing in verses 3-6. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye? Oh, that's interesting. The NIV said, brother.

I guess you... I'm surprised it's not brother and sister. I'm trying to figure it out. Because out of the for went brothers and sisters in almost every place.

Huh, anyway. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank, to the log, in your own eye? They're just painting this absurd picture of a 2x4 coming out of your eye. How can you say to your brother... And again, the point is that this is not how we relate to people outside the covenant community.

This is how we relate in this room, how we relate to people in the covenant. How can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there's a plank in your own eye all the time? You hypocrite.

Actor. First, take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. It's absurd to point out sin in someone else's life when, at the same time, you're blinded by your own sin.

That's what he's saying, right? So, deal with the sin, the plank that's in your own life. Jesus is obviously not saying that we should never point out sin. The whole point of the passage is you need to be in the right position so that you can, so we'll turn the tables so that Seth can pull David aside and talk to him.

But if there is ongoing sin in Seth's life, he's not really in a place to be able to point out the sin in David's life. So, before he does that, he's got to deal with his own issues. And I suspect that as we work in a sin in our own life, we will start to see the speck differently.

Perhaps with more patience. Perhaps with a little more honesty. But I think part of the process is you're getting rid of the plank in your own eye, and you're dealing with the sin in your own life so that you have a clearer perception of sin and how to deal with sin in a brother's life.

Okay, so usually, this passage is used to say we can't judge at all. And that's not what it's saying. It's saying you need to deal with the plank and then you will be able to work with the other person.

My guess is that maybe once you've dealt with the plank in your own eye, the sin in the other person doesn't have to be dealt with for one reason or another. I just think the process of working with our own sin really changes how we look at other people. And certainly, how we're going to work with them.

Okay, then Jesus starts talking about dogs and pigs. And I think what he's doing is guarding against excess. He's guarding against excess.

Is that the right word? He wants us to be discerning in this whole process. I made a mistake when I was in Shanghai, and I didn't emphasize anything. They really struggled with it.

Jesus does not call people dogs and pigs. When I first said it, I'm sure it was me; it wasn't the translator. We talked for a half hour about why Jesus would call someone a dog and a pig. They really, really struggled with that.

And I finally said, "Okay, let me..." and I restated it: This is an analogy—a metaphor or something.

And it's... He's not calling people dogs and pigs. He's saying, look at the behavior. And dogs were wild animals, right? They ran in packs.

They were very dangerous. And pigs were not porky the pig. Pigs were wild.

They were terrifying. My friends and I have been told that they hunt wild boar in... Where in Texas do you hunt wild boar? Is it East Texas? It's somewhere in Texas. Wild... Pardon? You can't hunt them here? Okay, feral pigs? What's a feral pig? Just wild? Okay.

Oh. Really? Yeah. Okay.

I have a friend in Spokane who is from Texas and loves to hunt. He calls them wild boar, and he enjoys it because it's so dangerous.

And that's a much closer... You know, hey, hey, that's all folks. This is not the pig that Jesus is talking about. It's a terrible imitation of Porky the Pig, but you get the idea.

You wouldn't take something... On the football field? They hunt wild boar on the football field at the University of Texas? Oh. Oh, oh, oh. Your humor is very subtle, and I don't always pick it up.

Okay, so feral pigs are wild boars. We're talking millions of them in the South. Millions in the South? Wow.

So, it's like as bad as a deer down here, huh? Okay. All right. Cool.

You would never take something that was sacred, something that was dedicated to God, and give it to a pack of wild dogs. You would never take something precious like pearls and give them to a feral pig, to a wild boar. Because if you do, what's going to happen? Well, they're going to turn.

They're going to trample them, which probably means the pearls. They may trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces. There are some people who think that the trampling is the pigs and turning and tearing is the dogs.

There's nothing specifically in the Greek, but in the Mounce translation, it's kind of a dumb name, but it's what it's called; we said otherwise, the pigs may trample them under their feet, and the dogs turn and tear you to pieces. Either way, it would be silly to take something that's precious and just give it to something that's going to destroy it. Right? So, the point is, why are you talking about this, Jesus? And the answer is, we just talked about getting rid of the plank in your own eye so that you can see the speck of sin clearly in your brother's eye.

But that doesn't mean you have to do this all the time. There are people who have at least a speck of sin in their eye. And trying to point it out would be as silly as giving something sacred to the dogs and pearls to the pigs.

So, call to be discerning. Not judgmental. Call to be discerning.

There are times in which you do what Jesus said, but more emphatically in this case, there are times in which you don't. There are times in which you don't. In that process, however, you do have to determine who is behaving as a dog and who is behaving as a pig.

And that is a discerning or judging process by which you assess behavior and character so that you can follow this instruction. I would never use the word judging of that process because Jesus said don't do it. Without playing with words.

I know you're not. But without playing with words, we have to, regardless of what position, they all assume, they all require a discerning spirit so that you know when to do it and when not to do it. But I would like to believe that Dave, when Seth is looking at Dave and trying to be discerning, this isn't a judgmental thing.

This is saying is this the right thing to talk about? Are we in the right relationship to talk about? Is this the right time to talk about? Ok. We all agree that that requires discerning and that's something that is required of all of us. A critical, judgmental spirit is never in place.

And again, we would all agree on that. The judgmental, critical spirit. So, this is a hard one.

This is hard. And again, my encouragement is we so naturally move to being critical. We just naturally, unless you're Ed, we naturally move to being critical.

And I just think we have to be so safe. Of course, I'm the non-confrontation guy. So, in my mind, I can say, Oh, now is not the right time.

Now is not the right place. Ten years later. Now is not the right time.

You know, I mean, so, you know, it's hard. This is a hard thing. And it's something we all have to struggle with.

The strength against prohibition, against censoriousness, the charge of looking to yourself first, may lead people to be completely undiscerning and to never deal with the speck. And so, he's not calling people dogs and pigs. He's making a comparison.

And the point is that there are some people in some situations in some time where we have the freedom to step back and just say, not now. Or, I'm not the person. Okay? Yes, sir.

Has no relation to the person. Yeah. And he was able to interpret it as the dogs and pigs referring to the Gentiles.

Yeah. Jesus is here for many, his disciples, to evangelize the Gentiles who go after resurrection. Yeah.

That's an odd statement, isn't it? I just don't agree with that. I don't think that when people speak, things are connected. Unless you're in a major section, a shift, I think things are connected.

Thoughts are connected. You can have tangents and whatnot, but they're connected. And so, my exegetical preference is always to see connections, because I just think that's how people talk.

So, I have a bias against that, but I just don't know why a discussion about not evangelizing, again, which has nothing to do with anything, or why Jesus would say don't do it when He Himself was doing it. Let me ask you a question. You may not have read other books on the Sermon on the Mount, but one of the reasons I chose these two is they're so different.

Have they been helpful? Or would you encourage me to find another textbook? What? I think they were helpful. I'm assuming you all like chorals. I said his name right too, didn't I? I've been practicing it.

I've been staying up all night. Chorals. Chorals.

Okay, you all, that was... I mean, I think the beginning's kind of slow, but for the... One writer disagrees with another. Chorals. Yeah, chorals.

Okay. I mean, there's a lot of good stuff in Knight's book, a lot of stuff that I disagree with. He looks at things differently.

How many people would encourage me to keep using Scott's book? Alongside of chorals. How many would encourage me to find something else? No, but I wouldn't use it. I'm on video, I can't.

We can edit that out. I think most of this needs to be edited out. Actually, since I'm probably the one editing, break to new lecture, Bill.

All right, all right. Okay, I mean, Carson's little book on Sermon on the Mount is very good, but it's very, very short. There's some older ones like by Gulick that are good, but they're more exegetical, and I didn't want to just do two parallel books.

Okay, well, I'm glad that overall you're, and you like it. Yeah, and so, okay, that helps, that helps. I'll keep looking, but it's... Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, we don't... Denotation and connotation, you have to recognize that judge has a denotation, and then there are connotations, and you're posing a connotation Whereas, you can't... I don't think you want to say that what Jesus says in Matthew 7:1 we should never do, because he said... And I didn't say that. I said that there are rare and few exceptions, yeah. But then what Jesus says in John 7:24 where he uses exactly the same three words to judge righteous judgment, that we don't do that.

Yeah, I understand. You've made your point. And I know the difference between denotation and connotation.

I know you do, but that's what I'm trying to... I think that we're labeling with this connotation of something that may sound like we're establishing a denotation. What's the Greek word for discern? Well, this word is... Let me check it. Yeah, this is just a standard word for judge.

And so, I'm using discerning to try to create a difference between a judgmental spirit about people to... a need to discern something about someone you're in a

relationship with. What's the Greek word? I don't... I'm sure there's a Greek word for discerning. I don't know what it would be.

This is the word judge. But I think it's defined by the speck in the log. So... You said I'll have to make up your mind.

Got a couple of positions there. And... Questioner 2 So, in some ways, this judgment, He says do not judge for, you too will be judged. Well, we know we're going to be judged by God.

But it's not, hey, you don't judge others. You have to be judged. So could it be, you judge, correctly, this one and this age by God? Can it mean you'll be judged by others? The same way you judge people... Yeah, I think there's several layers. Relationally, if we're critical people, people will be critical back.

If we are critical people, God will judge us in that He will allow the consequences. This is the way He created the world. That sin comes back on itself and just drags you down.

So again, are you saying it has a lot of meaning? I think a lot of the Sermon on the Mount has multiple levels of meaning. And do you think that all of them use it the same way in Romans 2? Where He says there are a lot of excuses. Oh man, whoever you are, you're going to be judged by others.

That's a perfect example of what we'd both agree on. In Romans 2, you have Jews passing judgment on the Gentiles even though the Jews are doing exactly the same thing but thinking because they're Jews, they're not going to be held accountable for it. That's the argument in Romans 2. Oh, David would like that.

But there's no limitation in the words. In other words, the dogs and the pigs are Pharisees. But it's also brothers here.

The log and the speck are brothers, right? So, if you want to read verse 1 as part of verse 3, then the context of this is within the community of faith. Yeah, as a whole, they had not developed the concept of, well, I'm really a Jew, and you're not because you still are physically descended from Abraham. I mean, there were some of that, but I don't think that was the majority position.

Yeah. It's just that it's stated so universally that it certainly would be an application of it. The Pharisees certainly condemned those who did not follow their interpretation of the law.

There's nothing before it or after it that would relegate it specifically to that context. That would be... My guess is, as he was saying it, the disciples could have been

thinking of that as an application, but it would be one of several applications. I'm wondering more about the exception of the non-judge, which would be based on your close relationship with somebody.

I'm probably wondering about the last half of verse 2, where he says in the same way that Judge Elliot needed the judge to come. I can't help but wonder if there is a relational connection. Can you extrapolate that out just a bit? For example, parents have a certain control or authority over their children that requires a level of judgment.

And then we stand before God with judgment. He obviously has authority over us. Yeah, this doesn't apply to him.

This doesn't apply to him. No, I wouldn't think so. There's no speck in his eye.

I wouldn't think this would apply to God at all because I think it's a divine passive. And so, God is the one who's returning judgment. And I mentioned it quickly, but I should have said this earlier.

My view of the apostolic office, I don't think it's repeated. I think it's the one gift that doesn't exist anymore. I don't think it's true of any other gift, but the definition of an apostle is limited to the first century, I think.

And I think apostles could do things that I can't do. Apostles could do things that Scripture now mandates, but because of their relationship to God and as a prophetic voice with divine authority behind what they do, I think Paul could do things that I can't do. For example, I can't write to my church and kick someone out of the church that I think is living in sin.

Or even worse, in 2 Thessalonians, he's kicking people out of the church because they're lazy. There's just no way I would ever understand any other person having the right to do that. So, I think that God has His own set of rules, and I think apostles have an exceptional case.

If that helps that distinction at all. In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul himself is not, I think, kicking, excommunicating the man, but demanding that the church be opposed. Yeah, okay.

He's made a judgment. He's passed the judgment. And he expects the church to carry out.

And in doing so, agreeing with his decision. Is that a fair way to say it? Oh, well, I don't know. I think he's asking them to do what they're told.

I could be wrong. It's never happened before. I'm with you and present.

As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm the one who has been doing this. So, when you are assembled, and I am with you in spirit, and the power of the Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

Yeah, I'm not sure he's asking for anything more than compliance. Okay, point granted, but then Christ Himself says, they've come down on you today to take your freedom. But then He seems to be giving you church.

You know, that's a good point that the end part of church discipline is that the church as a whole executes judgment, whatever word you wanted to use. Yeah, that's a very good point. I'm trying to think of where that... I don't remember Boyd ever talking about that, but that really is a third category where not anyone is an individual.

And I know that there are certain pastors that think they're God's gift to the world and they can do the function. They can pass judgment on someone. But this is the church function, depending upon what you do with 1 Timothy 5, and the pronouns are confusing.

Rebuke the sinning elder in the presence of all so that the rest stand in fear. Those are all still community acts of judgment. I think if Boyd were here and we asked him about that, he would say, you can't enjoy it.

You're not doing it to make yourself feel better than the other person. I would think all those qualifications would still apply, but maybe that's a good third category to add to my notes. That there is a place for corporate judgment.

Does that make sense to you all? AUDIENCE MEMBER I think corporate judgment is because the corporate stands as the body of Christ, and so therefore stands in the place of the church. With 1 Timothy 5, I think that the commentator in 1 Timothy 6 would have to spend all the time elaborating about the church and why they are not the church I think that's a good clarification.

This is Dr. Bill Mounce in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 14, Matthew 7:1-6. Do Not Judge.