

## **Why Christians Should Love and Not Judge**

Sermon, September 13, 2020

**Scripture reading:** John 8:1-12 and Romans 14:1-13

**Golden verse:** “Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another.” Romans 14:13

### **Sermon**

A couple is ready to leave to a party. One says: “your face looks good, but you should put 500 kilograms of makeup on your judging personality”

This passage, Romans 14, is about judgment. “*Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another.*” (Romans 14:13)

### **Why was it necessary for Paul to discuss this topic and why is it necessary for us today to focus on this subject?**

In Paul’s time, pagans presented burning offerings of sacrificed animals to their pagan idols, and often the butcher sold the rest of the meat. Some of the new Christians gave up their old traditions in following Christ Jesus. They said: “Because we do not know whether the meat sold by the butcher was sacrificed in honour of one of the idols or not, we would rather not eat even a bite of meat, but only vegetables.”

Some other Christians said: “Who cares? Meat is meat. We don’t care about idols. There is no other God than our Almighty God, who gave us food.”

These two groups of Christians started to judge each other. Paul said that nobody should be judged: neither those who eat meat nor those who became vegetarians. Although we behave differently, we all are God’s Children and we should not judge each other for lifestyle or practices.

My own experience is that unfortunately, we humans, including me, are ready and eager to judge people. I find myself several times starting a judgmental sentence, and if I am listening to the Lord, the Holy Spirit reminds me and stops me in the middle of a sentence not to judge.

We all know that nobody will benefit from judgmental comments, but they will hurt everyone: the person we talk about, and me and you who fall into such sin because the Bible classifies judging as a sin.

Today, we will focus briefly on the following questions: What does it mean to be judgmental? What is the reason we judge? What do we do in those weak moments when we judge? Next Sunday, we will discuss the meaning of exhortation in the Bible and what the Bible suggests instead of judging.

### **What does it mean to be judgmental?**

Judgmental. What does that word mean to you? How about irresponsible and irrational? Or maybe smug or snobbish? These are just a few definitions for being judgmental. These are not the words that I want to be attached to my faith. However, unfortunately, these are some of the words that WE as Christians are being defined by on occasion. To place judgment is a hidden boast.

### **What is the reason we judge?**

We judge people because during that time we don't have to focus on our own weaknesses, or we try to hide our failings by focusing on others. Paul highlights that the person who is judging is placing him or herself above the other person, and forgets that the other person is a sister or brother in Christ.

Maybe you, too, remember on those two controversial scenarios that months ago were in the news. One was about bakers, who refused to bake a wedding cake for a gay couple, The other one was about a waitress with a tattoo on her arm receiving a rude note instead of a tip. When I heard about these stories, my heart was hurt and disappointed.

I was not there in the store or the restaurant so, I don't have all the details that took place, but I believe in my heart that we all are God's children, and God wants us to love everyone and treat everyone with respect. Telling someone we will not provide a service because they are different than we are is wrong.

### **What do we do in those weak moments when we judge?**

Being judgmental means **casting stones**. In Romans 14, Paul is instructing Christians on how to treat each other as children of Christ. However, if we behave differently with non-believers, that makes us fake and hypocrites. It is easy to become narrow-minded in our Christianity and forgetting the commandments of God. Would a wedding cake not be baked for a serial killer?

The person who is judging puts himself in the judgment-seat and judges others. But that judgment throne is reserved only for God. Those who judge others does not take seriously the judging God and the judgment of God. We have to remember, that one day we will all stand before the judgment seat of God, and each one must give an account of him or herself to God.

When we judge, we think that we are right and the other person is wrong. As we gossip about them, we push God down from His throne and we will sit in it judging people. Then, we will continue to say all kinds of negative things about them, underlining how bad THEY are and how great WE are.

When we judge, we divide families, groups, and congregations. We create small groups, that have different opinions about the situation. In this way, we are the devil's co-workers who want to divide and destroy us.

Our God is asking us to accept each other, to accept everybody as they are. If we truly are children of God, we have to accept one another and to love one another.

At this point, some of you could say: I accept all of this that was said. I accept that I should not judge people based on their behaviour. However, does that mean that I should not have an opinion at all about anything or anyone? Am I still judgmental if I find something wrong in my Christian brothers or sisters' lives?

Christ Jesus said: "Do not judge, so that you will not be judged." (Matthew 7:1) So what did Jesus mean and what He did not? Can we not disagree with a non-biblical view? Do we simply have to go silent and not say anything about anything? If we do not see things the same way, does that mean we are judgmental?

This is what He does NOT mean:

- He does not mean that, as Christians, we should not deal with sin. It would be unkind for us not to help our Christian fellows to face their weaknesses in order to make changes. Jesus did not say and He did not mean that we should not be involved to correct their errors with love and care.
- The Lord Jesus is not saying that we are not to make value judgments or assessments on situations. Everybody makes assessments and value judgments every day on a wide array of things.

This is what He means:

You and I, we all, should be much more careful not to be a fault finder, a critic. We all should work very hard to eliminate a critical spirit, a harsh heart, and a sharp tongue.

The Lord is teaching us to look for the best in people and we should not doubt that every person will try to do their very best.

Before we would say any uncontrolled judgmental sentence, we should remember that God is the ultimate Judge, and He will assess motives of the heart.

Jesus Christ said that, as we assess others, we will be viewed in the same way. Before we would make any corrections, we have to make sure that our own hearts are right before God. For this, I would like to come up with a recommendation.

When we would intend to say anything to anybody, we should keep two cards in our hands. In the left one a red coloured card, which would symbolize our uncontrolled and judgmental personality. In our right hand, we should hold a white card, symbolizing our positive attitude to help people. Before we say anything, we should look at these two cards, and before we would start our sentence, we should raise one of these cards, with an introductory sentence: I am raising the red one - I am judgmental and I want to criticize; or I am raising the white one, because with Christ on my side, I am listening with empathy, and I want to help.

May the Holy Spirit clean out every pride, self-righteousness, envy, insecurity, and unforgiveness from our own lives before we approach someone else. It is OK to make an assessment, but first we have to examine our own hearts, and we have to realize why we want to say anything to others. We have to make sure that we speak with love, humility and wisdom when we are speaking and assessing so that the intention is for the best for everyone. Then, we can talk. Go for it. Our Lord Jesus loved people enough to call out that which was wrong and speak truth. And Jesus was not judgmental! Let's walk in His steps! Amen.