

**MAKING JUDGMENT CALLS**  
**April 24, 2016 morning service**  
**Matthew 7:1-6**

Two weeks ago I slid into a chair in a restaurant. A sweet young lady came to take our order and I noticed on her forearm an unusual tattoo. I'm not often brash to ask but I just said to her, "Can you tell me about that?" She looked at me quickly and said, "Yes, but would you please not judge me?" I said, "Sweet lady, I may do a lot of things in this restaurant but judge you will not be one of them. I'm not here to judge you. I'm here to know you. You're going to serve me. I hope I can serve you." She hugged me before we left that day. We had a wonderful talk.

Judging one another. One of the most misunderstood passages of scripture in all the Bible is Matthew 7:1-6. I'm going to ask you this morning to stand with me and read the word of God out loud and I want you to get this text and let it resonate in your heart. So we're all standing. Matthew 7, the last message in this series on hypocrites in the church. Read aloud with me.

*"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 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. Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."<sup>1</sup>*

Do not judge lest you be judged. Gerald Wolfe, that wonderful gospel singer who's been here on several occasions texted me when he saw I was preaching on this. He said, "Pastor, the most misunderstood passage in all the Bible, you're preaching on it Sunday. Try to make it clear." I'm going to do my best with God's help for us to understand making judgment calls. God love you. You be seated as we look into this passage.

Take any scandal, any scandal, any scandal you want to and if you say something about it, you'll hear these words, "Judge not, lest you be judged." Really? Is that what Jesus meant? Does that mean we cannot have a court system because at the head of the court sits a judge. There's one whole book in this Bible, 21 chapters. Judges. Don't judge. Really? Paul said in Galatians 6 and verse number 1: *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass [Caught. Now get that. If you catch, if I catch you in sin that means I had to judge you], you who are spiritual [as if to say somebody's not, therefore, we've got to judge], restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*

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Beloved, life is filled with judgments. It happens somewhere on a Saturday every year during football season. They stop the game and somebody starts playing jeopardy music and all the guys get together in a little huddle and try to figure out the call. The commentator will then come on and say, "Well, you know, it's a judgment call." Well which ones are not? That's what referees do. They make judgments. It's what we all do. So what in the world is Jesus saying to the hypocrite because he used the word? What does this mean about not judging? Well let me just lay out a few things here and try to get a broad perspective and a biblical context of what I believe the Lord is speaking to us about here.

Number one. Making judgment calls is real life. It's real life. You see, our culture values individualism and it devalues absolute truth. Oh whatever the individual says, that's our value but something that would be an absolute truth. Oh no, no, no. You see, the people who say, "Judge not," will say to you, "I don't believe your moral absolutes." They'll judge you about that. You see, our culture condones moral relativism for the sake of a non-judgmental spirit. Making judgment calls is real life. It's what Jesus said in the sixth verse that we don't quote near as much as we do the first verse. Judge not, lest you be judged. But then Jesus said in verse 6, "Judge." "Don't give what's holy to the dogs. Don't throw your pearls before swine."

He's not talking about barking animals and oinking pigs. You see, the dogs in the first century, you didn't have a dog in your house in the first century. You didn't have a pet that was a dog. They were scavengers. They were like wild wolves. The Lord's saying, "Now be very careful because you've got people in the church who are like dogs and you don't put what's holy before – you've got to discern and judge who the dogs are." Then don't take your pearls, those precious, precious pearls. Don't throw those out in front of swine. Why? Well he says they'll trample them under feet and after they crush them, they won't make a necklace out of them. They'll turn and rip you too. You see, life, real life is filled with judgment.

The Westboro Baptist Church in Kansas are some of the most judgmental people you'll ever know. Former pastor, Fred Phelps, you know who I'm talking about. They protest homosexuality all over this country and they also protest funerals of soldiers because they say that the military is backing a nation that backs homosexuality. Therefore, they judge them. Let me tell you what I want to say to you about Westboro Baptist Church. I judge them. I don't hate them but I do make a judgment. As a matter of fact, I don't think they're Baptist nor a church. You see, you have to make those calls. Everybody makes judgment calls.

Hey, if I was the pastor of First Baptist Church of Corinth and Paul wrote us the letter in I Corinthians and he wrote chapter 5 and he said, "I hear that among you there is a member in an incestuous relationship," do we make a judgment about that? We better. When we have people that get saved, and they have here, that have a criminal record of having abused, sexually abused, children, do we baptize them if they show repentance? Yes. Do we let them work in the children's ministry? No. Why? We make a judgment call. Your life is filled with judgment calls. It's the hypocrite who will

not make the call. Just ignore it. Judge not. No, no. Don't judge. Anything goes. No, anything doesn't go. The word of God will not let you do that. So understand that making judgment calls are a part of real life. You've got to do them. You do.

If you have children, you have to make judgment calls. "Oh, I don't care. Just do whatever you want to." You know. "Take the car. What time will you be home? You know, whenever you want to come." "How much can I spend?" "It doesn't matter." "We have the prom. My girlfriend – Daddy, can you get me a hotel room down at the Grande? We're going to spend the night." "Sure." You see, if you tell that boy he can't go down there and spend the night with that girl at the Grande on prom night, you've judged them. Judge not. You better judge.

Are you getting the picture here? We have to first see what Jesus is not saying. He's not saying there's no judgment calls to make. Life is filled with judgment calls. I was at the Wahoos game last night. There was a blind man behind the plate making judgment calls. They tell me a home plate in pee wee ball, little league ball, Babe Ruth ball, major league ball, it's the same width everywhere. Bill Linne was a catcher in college. I was asking a major league catcher the other day, Mr. Linne, I said, "How wide is home plate?" He said, "It's according to who's calling." He said, "Sometimes it's this wide. Sometimes it's this wide." What's going on? He's making a judgment call. You make judgment calls and you've got to pray and ask God for wisdom. You say, "Preacher, I don't want to call it judgment. Then call it discernment but it's the same thing. Life is filled with making judgment calls.

Secondly this text says that making judgment calls must begin at home. Before you judge others, you must judge yourself and Jesus uses what I think – I think He's using humor here. I think our Lord is chuckling when He says this. He said, "You see your brother. He's got a speck in his eye, just a little thing, but you've got a big log sticking out of your face. You've got this big log." So He says to us, "First deal with the log in your own eye. Then maybe you can deal with the speck."

You've got to deal with you. Judge yourself first. How do you do that? Number one, you repent of your own sin. You make a judgment call about you. You see, hypocrites are great at judging others. They just don't want to judge themselves. One gentleman said that hypocrites are like barbers. They trim everybody else but never themselves. It's a little hard to cut your own hair. I've seen some people that look like they tried. It's always about judgment outwardly. You've got to look in the mirror. You repent of your sin. Then you have a broken heart for others, and then after you've gotten clean, after you have a broken heart, you reprove your brother and deal with the speck.

You see, Jesus is saying, "Judge your brother." He's got a speck. You've got to deal with it but you can't deal with the speck until you deal with the log. Get to the mirror. Get introspective. You see, some of us say, "I can never make a judgment call about somebody else because I am so sinful myself." Well get clean. Get right with God. Become usable. God'll cast your sin as far as the east is from the west. He'll

forgive it and forget it. He'll make you a usable vessel and a usable vessel is always, 101% of the time marked by humility.

I'm dealing with a situation in SBC life right now. I made my first – God wore me out in this text all week long about one situation in the Southern Baptist Convention where there's two brothers going at it. I made my first attempt yesterday but before I made any attempt I went to my quiet closet and I closed the door and turned out the lights and I got on my face and said, "God, is there anything in my life? Clean me up. God, get all the sticks out of me so that I might be able to help my brothers." You see, friend, making judgment calls must begin at home. They are real life deals.

Thirdly, while making judgment calls is real life and they must begin at home, here's the part I think Jesus is really getting at. Making judgment calls demands proper attitude. Judge not. That word judge is the word *krinō* where we get criticize and to put down. Jesus is saying, "Have the right attitude." Christ forbids a rigid, censorious, judgmentalism that scrutinizes others without even a glance at ourselves. It's this rigid, I'm going to censor and judge you, I'm going to scrutinize everything you do and I never even take a glance at myself. You see, what I think Christ is forbidding here is a self-righteous, officious, hasty, unmerciful, prejudiced condemnation that based on human standards and human understanding without the Holy Spirit of God and the Holy Scriptures overriding everything you say. There's no place for the self-righteous, offensive, officious, hasty, unmerciful prejudice condemning hypocrite in the life of the local church. It's attitude.

If you have to deal with sin in somebody's life, you have to go brokenhearted if you go Spirit-filled. It's the only way to deal with that. Now notice what Jesus said. Don't miss this. Do not judge so that you'll not be judged. Verse 2. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by that standard of measure, it's going to be measured to you. Now watch this. The way you pour out your judgment on other people, if you go with that prejudiced, judgmental, hurtful, hasty attitude, I'm telling you, that's going to come back on you. The way you judge, it's coming back because other people will judge you. When you're mean-spirited, you just get ready. That mean spirit's going to come back to you. You say, "Well I can stand it." In your weakness, that meanness will come back to you and overtake you because you will be judged. Yes you will.

Friend, you'll not just be judged by other people that you give it to. I have people, someone will die and we'll be at their home and they'll say, "Pastor, I'm just amazed. I amazed. All these people are coming by and they're loving on me and encouraging me and they're bringing food." Number one. Some people do that just because it's right but let me tell you, the folks that normally that ministry comes to in an overwhelming way are people that have usually been the ones that have given through the years because in the measure that they've meted it out, it oftentimes flows back over on them in the same way. So there's a positive side to this judgment as well as a negative side. In the way that you mete it out, it comes back to you. If you give it out in abundance in love and kindness and graciousness, it comes back to you.

I've had people point faults out in my life. Some have done it graciously and others have done it pharisaically. It's that grace that you listen to. It's the grace that brings it to you. So the way you judge, you will be judged. But now listen to me. You're not just going to be judged by man in this world. You're going to be judged by God in the next world because the Bible says it is appointed to man once to die and following that the judgment. Every person in this room will stand at the judgment seat of Christ. There are two of those in scripture. There's a judgment for the saved. How many of you are saved and going to the judgment seat, to the Bema seat and will give an account of your life? Raise your right hand and say Amen. Alright, all of you that are saved today, that are believers, you're going to stand before God and you're going to give an account for your life and the way that you lived it. There are going to be rewards gained and rewards lost. There's going to be well done and there's going to be the lost that will come. We will all stand and give an account. It does not mean that we're losing our salvation and going to be assigned to hell. It does mean that you will give an account at judgment for the life you lived.

As one elderly lady often says to me, "I wouldn't walk in that person's shoes for their socks when they stand at judgment." Friend, we'll all stand there. You say, "What's that mean?" I don't know, it just sounds cool. I don't know what it means but I get the picture. You don't want to stand where they're going to stand. Don't worry about them this morning. Have some concern about yourself standing at the judgment seat. We'll all stand at the judgment. Have you ever stood in the judgment in this world? You ever stand before a court with a judge? It's only happened to me one time. You ever have a police officer write you a ticket and judge you when you didn't do it? I have. Have you ever had an officer let you go free when you did it? Amen.

I was coming in Bob Davis Way the other morning. There was a sweet lady, she's one of our neighbors that lives out here. I rolled the window down. She was walking and had on her workout outfit. I rolled the window down and she looked over at me. She said, "Reverend, hi, good morning." I said, "You do know there's a speed limit through here, don't you?" She said, "I very well do and you break it pretty frequently when you come through here." I said, "Judge not." Oh we laughed together. Judgment. Hey, dear friend, you're going to stand there and you're going to give an account for everything you do. That's what the book says.

Now for my lost friend. You might have raised your hand and said Amen but you're lying. You know deep in your heart you're lost. You too will stand at judgment. You'll stand at the great white throne the word of God says. The Lord's going to look and He's going to judge you by your deeds first and you will be found guilty because you will have more sin than you have righteousness. He will also judge you when you've said no to Jesus Christ, "I will not trust Him." For Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and life. He is the only way to get to heaven. He is the only road that leads to glory. He is the only Savior of the world. He died for you. He loves you and you will give an account unto Him. At that throne He will say, "Depart from Me because I never knew you." You'll be thrown into the place that burns with fire and brimstone, a place called hell, Gehenna, where no one can fetch you out, no one can get you out. You're

there forever and ever. It's the greater condemnation. All of us will stand at the judgment, some as saved people, standing before the Bema seat, others that are lost. You say, "Preacher, does it ever get too late?"

I did a funeral Friday. One of the gentlemen that used to sit right up here and played trumpet, played 20 years in our orchestra. He was a football official and a trumpet player. Two weeks before he died, his brother-in-law who had rejected Christ at every turn, at every turn would not say yes to Christ. He said, "No, I don't want any of that." Preacher after preacher, layman after layman, family member after family member would press the gospel and he'd say, "Just leave me alone. I don't believe. I don't want to have anything to do with it." But two weeks before he died, he's on his deathbed. One night he had a dream and he came to his senses and he confessed Jesus as his Lord. They said, "No one walked in his room those last two weeks that he did not share with them what God had done in his life."

Friend, you must take me to a place and tell me of a time. This is my time. Which judgment will you stand at? The Bema or the great white throne? Everyone here stands at one of those and Jesus is the great divide. Have the right spirit here because you're going to want the right spirit over there. Don't be mean. Let the Spirit of God break you and woo you. Don't be a hypocrite. Don't judge everyone else and then not judge yourself. Have the attitude of brokenness and weeping as you go to someone and say, "I must confront. I must talk to you of this." Go with great passion of a broken heart.

There's one last thing I want to tell you this morning and that is that making judgment calls should be guided by Matthew 7, verse 12. We didn't read it this morning but you'll find it down in just a few verses farther where the Bible says: *In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.* All the Law and Prophets wrapped up into this that you treat people the same way you want them to treat you. We call that what? The Golden Rule.

So the new principle at Olive Baptist Church. Let's infuse this into the body life of our church. Anytime that you have an issue with a brother or sister or somebody, just use this one word. Golden. Just golden. You don't even have to put rule on it. They'll know. Golden. Let's be golden. Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you. Before you do unto one, golden. Let the gold shine. Be careful with this little thing right here. Boy, it's easy to just stroke and punch and send. Everything that twitters is not gold. Yeah. They say you can take it back but it's out there somewhere. Be careful that you don't judge people on your little device for as you judge, you will be judged. As you measure it out, it'll be measured back to you.

I'd been married three years and my wife judged me. We were living in our house in Texas that we loved. As a matter of fact, we hated to sell it but we had to one day. Then a few years after that we had little children. They were just about the ages of our little grandkids now. Liz made a deal with me. She said, "Let's have a talk." I said, "Alright." She said, "Would you sign up to be the plastic picker upper before

bedtime?" I said, "I don't even know what that is but I think I'm going to buy in here." She said, "Well you take a clothes hamper basket and all the stuff the kids have strewn out, just put it in there and slide it over in the corner so we start fresh in the morning." Well first I had to ask a question. Why is it important? Can't we just leave it out there? They're going to dump it right out in the morning anyway. She said, "Well do you like your office to be clean when you come in?" I said, "Okay, I get the picture." I said, "I'm in."

So for days, weeks, months I was the plastic picker upper but I got a little slack. A day or two would go by and I'd go to bed and forget it. Then sometimes a week. So my wife had to confront me. She had to judge me. I got a great lesson from my wife. She did not judge me when we got in bed. She did not judge me when she got the kids up. She did not judge me when all the plastic stuff was in the floor and I'd failed. No, she waited for a day or two at lunchtime and then she asked this question. "Do you want to resign from your post as the plastic picker upper?" I said, "What?" She said, "Well, several days have gone by and you've not done what you said you would do." I said, "If you give me one more chance." Now let me tell you how deep that resonated in my heart. My son-in-law and I went to the Wahoos game last night and our two grandchildren stayed at our house until we got back and when they left someone had to be the plastic picker upper. I had not forgotten.

You see, my wife judged me but she could have judged me to the place that we would have had an argument and fight because she could have come in and said, "You never do." Well now wait a minute. I sometimes do. But we'll start that way. "You never, Greg." Never? I mean you know the old adage. A broken clock's right twice a day. You've got to measure your words. You see, friend, what you've got to do is you've got to deal with your own log before you deal with that speck. If you don't, you're a hypocrite because you will not do to yourself what you're about to do to another. The way you judge it's going to come back to you.

Any hypocrites in the room? Oh man, we all are, aren't we? We all wear that mask sometimes but thank God there stands a Savior that if you confess your sin He's faithful and just to forgive your sin and cleanse you of all unrighteousness and to make you a usable vessel to fill you up and flow through. I know I have some men, they say, "You know, pastor, I'm just hard. I'm just sewn up that way. It's the way my daddy raised me." Well get over it. "Well I can't help it." Yeah you can. Greater is He that's in you than he that raised you. Is this Bible truth or what? I mean if He can take a murderer like Saul and make a preacher out of him, surely he can take an old sad sack like you and transform your life. Yes He can. Yes He can. He's the Savior of the world. He's the Lord of glory. He's the one that will make your words sweet even in judgment calls because He'll give you wisdom of knowing how to say it.

So don't ever come up to me when I make a judgment call and say, "Judge not" because I'm about to say, "I'm going to judge you." Discernment. Judgment's all through scripture and we must judge properly not hypocritically.

When we sing a song in a moment, you're here and you're looking for a church to join. You say, "I want to be a part of a family," we want to invite you to come today. Some of you raised your hand awhile ago and said, "I'm saved," but you said, "I just raised it because everybody else did. Preacher, I need to know Him today." Then come. I'm telling you, Jesus will save you. Some of you did raise your hand, you know and you realize Jesus died for you, you're a sinner and you need Christ. You say, "I've waited but I believe today's my day." We invite you to come.

You saw these two precious ladies baptized today. Maybe you've never followed in baptism. It's your day to come. Then come. Then you may have a crisis of judgment in front of you and you know you've got to make the call. You need help. Maybe you just come kneel in this altar and bring that burden to Jesus today and say, "Father, give me wisdom to get the log out so I can see the speck properly and deal with it in a Holy Spirit fashion." Judgment calls are real life.