

Today's gospel has 2 words, perhaps the most misapplied, misquoted, understood, 2 words in the Bible. Jesus says, **Judge not**. You've heard it said, maybe used against you to be tolerant, what you think is sin, immorality, false teachings. Like a get out of jail free card, **Judge not**.

It happens year-round, but especially June. Try to speak out or post about marriage and rebuke sinful pride. Prophets, apostles, Jesus speak of marriage, the Bible only knows of marriage, what God creates! between a man and women, throughout. Foremost all marriage is to reflect Jesus, the man, the groom and the bride, she, is the church. All homosexual activity, even heterosexual activity outside marriage is immoral, sin, wrong. Repent or perish, from the voice of all Scripture, from Jesus. But you will hear, "*Jesus tells us to love not hate, that's your opinion and the Bible is open to different interpretations.*" No it is not!

The Bible doesn't teach us not to ever judge. Exactly the opposite, you must judge! Scripture continually calls you to judge between good and evil, right and wrong, what is of God and is not. What Jesus condemns, is a Christ-less judging, self-serving judging, self-justifying judging. How else are you to see a plank in your eye and know to surgically remove a speck from your brother's eye unless you know how to judge. **Judge not** -not by your standards or the ways of men. God's Word teaches you how to judge, what to judge, that you must judge.

An then, we're guilty, too often of self-serving judgments. We vainly imagine that we sit above it all, objective, fair, and wise, ready to weigh in with wit and insight that will gain upvotes, likes, and other accolades of men. We delude ourselves. We think that we are competent to judge not only every decision that our boss and anyone in position of authority has ever made, to the way our neighbor takes care of their yard. We think that we always know better, perfectly understand situations, know their motives.

Repent and be charitable, to explain everything in the kindest way, as the 8th commandant teaches. Of course we must judge. St Paul tells you today to **overcome evil with good**. That means you must speak and act at times. Pray for wisdom to rightly judge and discern.

And one of the many ways we show judgment, is this...**Be merciful as your Father is merciful**. To be merciful is to be like Joseph, hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, told his father he's dead, and because he wouldn't sleep with another man's wife, locked in prison. Mercy is finally, after all those years and scars, deprive of your family for 2 decades, to have the same brothers stand before you, you, one of the most powerful men in the world, able to do to them anything you want, take any revenge you desire, yet shed tears of joy, embrace them as long lost family. That's mercy. But not perfect mercy. Still there's more.

To be merciful is to be like David, you're kind, offer aid only to have a spear thrown at you, by father-in-law King Saul. Saul ruins your life, hunts you down. Because of Saul's lies, your friends betray you, your countrymen turn their back. Mercy is to be so close to your enemy, after all that's been done, even as they're trying to kill you; you now stand over their sleeping body where you could end your terror with a knife and bring justice to yourself, yet -spare him -even rebuke others who tell you to take your revenge. That's mercy. But it's not perfect mercy. Still there's more.

Be merciful as your Father. More than Joseph and David, but as God your Father. Merciful, to seek and embrace kiss your beloved children, only to have them shove you away and spit in your face; to have a precious bride whose constantly adulterous, to seek to help the sick, only to have them mock your care; to feed the starving and have them complain about the food; to clothe the naked while they gripe the clothes aren't nice enough; to open your hands to offer them the very best and to have them pierce those hands with nails, and torture and raise you up and watch with cheers and mockery as you slowly suffocate and bleed to death. And you never stop loving and forgiving them, no matter what. That dear Christian is mercy. Perfect mercy. There's nothing greater.

Be merciful, as your Father is merciful. Why Jesus calls us all **hypocrites**. Do not delight in finding someone else's faults, even derive some pleasure pointing them out. Do not assume the worse and jump to conclusions with others, hold grudges. **Be merciful as your Father as you judge, forgive, give.**

Be merciful as your Father. Mercy, not giving someone what they deserve. Which of us have not been slandered and mistreated? They may deserve your criticism; deserve your cold shoulder or your closed fist. Maybe they deserve your hatred and scorn, deserve your revenge. You've certainly earned this against your Father in heaven, yet He deals with you in love and forgiveness. With such an overflowing measure given to you, how can you withhold it to others? **Be merciful.** Show compassion.

Jesus is judged so that your lack of mercy, your selfishness is forgiven. You are spared, beloved of God and still gives you the treasures of His kingdom. Do not ask why. Simply say 'amen'. For what else can one say to the love of God except, 'Amen, yes, yes, it shall be so.' Nothing and no one means more to Him than you. And nothing and no one can change that. His care for you will not stop

And where do we find His mercy toward us? Right here. Poured on all of you in a lavishing washing. Your Father gives you today as He gives every Lord's Day. He gives more and more. More mercy. More forgiveness. More life. More of His gifts. Come to His table and receive His perfect mercy in His body and blood for you. **Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good; for His mercy for you endures forever.**