

Judging Perfection Mark 7

Introduction

- Gymnastics or Ice Skating Judges
 - Fear of flipping
 - Can't imagine jumping on ice skates or picking up someone on the the ice and twirling them up in the air.
 - Gymnasts and Figure Skaters take something that is extremely difficult and make it look easy and graceful.
 - BUT, it is all left in the hands of the judges.
 - What we might admire on TV, the judges see flaws
 - What one judge sees another judge may not
 - What one judge appreciates, may not be what another judge appreciates
- What if Christianity was left to judges?
 - You would have different denominations
 - You would have church splits
 - You would have different traditions
 - You would have Christians focused more on outward appearances than the real mission of God to make disciples
- I hope you are picking up on the irony of what I am saying here...Sometimes looking in the mirror reveals the true flaws within ourselves
- New Sermon Series, *What is Perfection?*
 - Culture of Perfect body, family, life; to the point it has become an obsession-and yet have we gotten any closer to perfection or has our quest for perfection led to destruction?
 - Colleen Carol Campbell, *The Heart of Perfection*¹
 - Perfectionism- "an addiction to control and a refusal to accept imperfection in some human endeavor."
 - Christian Perfection- "Comes from giving God the reins, turning our lives over to Jesus, and allowing the Holy Spirit to upend our plans and explode our expectations."
 - Purpose of sermon series
 - Move toward a better and healthier understanding of perfection.
 - Relief the guilt of not being perfect, without reducing the significance of sin
 - Become Christians who strive to grow in our relationship with God in an imperfect world
 - One of the unhealthy traits that can develop in our quest for perfection is becoming judgmental

¹ Colleen Carol Campbell, *The Heart of Perfection How the Saints Taught Me To Trade My Dream of Perfect For God's*. New York: Howard Books, 2019. Kindle Loc. 119

- It comes from the desire to be right
- To base our “right” by comparing it to others
- And then, justifying our “right” based on the wrong we see in others
- All to affirm that we are doing what is right.

What is your Agenda?

- **Mark 7:1-3**
 - Pharisees and Scribes observing Jesus and his disciples
 - Motive for observation-Jesus was a threat so that wanted to find some basis of accusation to bring against him
 - They already had an agenda before they even saw Jesus
 - Key words- the tradition of the elders
 - This was not Mosaic Law
 - This was something put into law aside from what God had prescribed
 - It appears that there were several practices observed by the Jewish leaders that were not necessarily instituted by God, but were man made traditions accepted as religious law
 - This is what happens when perfection becomes focused on what we do instead of what God has already done.
 - We invent ways to be perfect, instead of accepting what God has already done for us.
 - What is your agenda?
 - **Mark 7:5-8**
 - Lips vs. Heart
 - Vain worship
 - If our agenda is anything less than edifying, then the focus is on us and not on God.
 - Even when correction is necessary, grace should always be our approach!
 - Next time you go to an outing just think about what you are talking about and who you are talking about
 - Is it edifying?
 - Chances are, if you are talking about someone, there is someone else talking about you!
 - What does it say about us, when we talk behind other people’s backs?

Develop the habit of Listening to Others

- **Mark 7:9-13**
 - What is Corban?
 - A Jewish law that allowed for funds that were set aside for the care of parents to be offered to God/Temple and release the children from the responsibility of taking care of parents
 - Loophole for the benefit of the children, without fulfilling God’s law
 - How many of you all would like to test your hypocrisy?
 - Yeah me either!

- I'd like to think that I'm above what I despise, but the truth is the moment that I think that way—I find that I fall into the very sin I'm condemning.
 - It's the trap of hypocrisy!
 - Changes in society to the point of feeling as though our faith is being fringed upon
 - Just in my short time, I've seen evidence of that
 - But, can I tell you that younger generations are not always rejecting Jesus, but they are rejecting traditions/ and at times the hypocrisy they have witnessed in the church
 - There's not one generation that does not believe that they aren't right; its just how they express it that is different.
 - I'm not telling you that you shouldn't stand for the truth, but be careful that the truth you stand for is truth and not tradition
 - Talk about what we have tried to cultivate through intergenerational ministry
 - Because—**Mark 7:13**
- Develop the habit of listening
 - Ask-How is the Spirit moving?
 - Where the Spirit is moving is where you will find perfection!
 - **Acts 2:17(ESV), "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams"**
 - What would have happened if the Pharisees and scribes would have been willing to listen to Jesus?
 - The truth is, the Spirit is always moving in different ways within generations, because each generation is different and has different needs.
 - Don't forget, that whatever generation you are about to judge is a reflection of the generation before it!

Test Your Hypocrisy

- The real issue here is purity
 - Religious leaders adopted traditions, but they were not living pure lives
 - They had an agenda that was not God's
 - They were not willing to listen to what God was truly saying
 - They missed the point
- **Mark 7:18-23**
 - Declared all foods clean
 - Gentile audience
 - Religious laws put in place to separate from idol worship
 - God was doing something new by opening the door to Gentiles
 - The law set parameters, but the Spirit is the one who changes the heart!

- ESV Example²
 - “Actions are merely external and do not come from the heart”
 - Communion
 - Worship
 - “Teachings are not from God, but reflect the tradition of men”
 - This is how you do it because this is the way we have always done it
 - “Not only are human traditions ineffective for cleansing the heart, they actually lead to disregard for God’s Word.”
- There’s a little hypocrisy in us all
 - Pride tells us that we must do it better than someone else
 - Arrogance leads us to believe that we are right
 - God’s grace puts things into perspective
 - Test your hypocrisy with God’s grace
 - What is our agenda
 - Are we listening to others to see where the Spirit is moving
 - How are we responding to God’s grace

Conclusion

- Communion
 - There are two practices that we adhere to as Protestants
 - Communion
 - Baptism
 - Neither of them in themselves saves us
 - Communion-Do this in remembrance of me
 - Baptism- make disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - Both are symbols of salvation
 - Outward signs of inward grace
 - Today we have the opportunity to remember what Christ has done for us
 - It’s not that we qualified for God’s grace because we are better than someone else
 - It’s because God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to die on the cross for the sins of the world
 - As you take communion today
 - What is your agenda
 - Are you listening to others to see where the Spirit is moving
 - How are you responding to God’s grace

² *ESV Study Bible*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2008. Kindle Location 258005)