Mt. Wade Missionary Baptist Church

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God’s Law

What is your definition of the word judge?

How do you define judging others?

Here are a couple of definitions from Merriam Webster Dictionary

* a person able or qualified to give an opinion on something (she was a good judge of character)
* a leader having temporary authority in ancient Israel in the period between Joshua and the kings

Romans 2:1-5

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Lesson Introduction

This is one of the passages that covers several subjects and can be studied from the viewpoint of any one of them. It is an excellent study on judging, criticizing others, the judgment of God, self-righteousness, the moralist, and the legalist. It also deals with the judgment of the heathen, and answers the question so often asked: “What will happen to the heathen, to the person who never hears about Jesus Christ?”

We will begin chapter 2 with “God’s Case Against the Moralist.” This may be a tern that you are not familiar with, but once we give the description or definition, you may quickly identify a moralist.

In the eyes of Scripture a moralist is a person who lives a moral and clean life, but he judges others because they do not live as he thinks they should. He is moral, upright, just, good, decent, and honorable. The moralist has strong values, standards, and principles. He is well disciplined and able to control his life. He lives just as everyone thinks he should. He knows right from wrong and he lives it. He knows how to behave and he does it. In the eyes of society he is just what a person should be. He is a good neighbor, an excellent worker and provider, and an ideal citizen.

So what’s the problem with the moralist?

1. The moralist judges others. The word judge (krino) means to criticize, to find fault, to condemn. This is the terrible flaw of the moralist.
2. Any person can become a moralist when they set themselves up as a judge of others. Any time we judge another person, we are declaring that we …

* are living by some rule that another person is not living by
* are more moral than someone else
* are better than someone else
* are superior to someone else
* are more righteous than someone else
* are more acceptable to God than someone else

Judging others says, “I am right, and he is not. I succeed, but he fails.” Therefore …

* “Look at me, but ignore him”
* “Draw near to me, but shun him”
* “Esteem me, but put him down”
* “Approve me, but condemn him”
* “Be my friend, but withdraw from him”

Simply saying, judging others raises self and lowers others, exalts self while reducing others; and in the eyes of God this is wrong. It is a sin. Why is it a sin? Because it is full of self-righteousness, pride and arrogance. It sets self up as a moralist, and it makes a person judgmental and critical of others.

December 20, 2023 - Midday & Evening Class

The Bible says, “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Mt. 7:1). “Judge not…” any man without full, clear, certain knowledge, without absolute necessity, without tender love. “…that ye be not judged.” The Greek verb used here for judge is krinō. It denotes the idea of expressing a negative opinion about someone. The real danger of judging is clarified in Mt. 7:2 which says, “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Jesus is saying that God will judge people according to the same standards they apply when judging others. Those who judge harshly, for example, will be judged harshly by God.

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Judgement is restricted to the servants Master. Since God is the Master of all humanity, only He reserves the right to Judge. As servant (Christians), we should only be judge by God.

Yea, he shall be holden up (Gr., shall be made to stand): for God is able (Gr., has power) to make him stand” (Ro. 14:4).

“Let us not therefore judge (have a negative opinion of) one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock (place a cause for stumbling) or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Describes causing someone to do something against his or her conscience or moral principles.) (Ro. 14:13).

“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?” (Js. 4:12). This means that those who judge others adopt a role that belongs to God alone.

1. In God’s eyes, sin is a matter of the heart and mind, not just an act. The thought and desire makes a person just as guilty as the act itself. God knows that many would carry out their thoughts if they had the courage or opportunity. God knows the heart, the mind and the thoughts. Sin, whether thoughts in the mind or performing the act, both comes short of God’s glory. It is for this reason that we are not to judge, criticize, and find fault with others. If we do we come short of the glory of God.

* The Bible ask this question. “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Mt. 7:3) The speck (speck of dust) is something so small that it is almost irrelevant. The beam refers to the support structure of a house frame. Jesus is showing the major contrast in man’s judgement of others while he fails to see his own faults.

Here’s a thought to consider. We are not to go around criticizing and finding fault with each other and putting each other down when one of us fails. Instead we are to reach out and try to redeem and help each other. Imagine what a different world this would be if we stopped criticizing and actually reached out and tried to redeem those who sin! Isn’t that what the Bible teaches? “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Ga. 6:1–2). “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations [to criticize and judge]” (Ro. 14:1). “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro. 15:1). (also read 1 Cor. 9:22; 1 Th. 5:14; Jam. 2:15-16, 3:10)

The Misconception of Judgment

The judgment of God is in accordance with truth and will be executed in perfect justice. The word truth (aletheian) means true as opposed to false. It means what really is; what actually exists; what exactly takes place. God’s judgment is perfectly just, exactly what it should be, nothing more and nothing less. His judgment is based upon …

* what really happens
* what the facts are
* what actually takes place
* what a person really is within his heart
* and what the person actually did

God is able to see beyond human limitations. “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 S. 16:7).

God knows the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; therefore, He will judge according to truth. His judgment will be perfect, conforming exactly to our deeds. It will match our actions perfectly. The only time His actions in judgement does not match our sinful deeds is when God extends to us His mercy.

Note four points.

1. The moralist thinks he will escape. His offense is much greater, for he is like all other men: sinful and short of God’s glory. Yet he criticizes and judges those whose failures are discovered and exposed, and he thinks he will escape. He forgets that God sees the inner thoughts of the human heart, and that God will judge men not only for their deeds but for their thoughts . The Bible says,

* “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Lu. 12:2). You can’t hide your actions from God, nor conceal you inward thoughts.
* “And [Jesus] needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (Jn. 2:25).
* “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Co. 4:5).
* “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (He. 2:3).
* “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ec. 12:14).

1. The moralist thinks God is too good to engage in punish. When he thinks of God, he thinks of the riches …

• of God’s goodness (chrestotes): His kindness and grace and love

• of God’s forbearance (anoche): His refraining, holding back, abstaining, and controlling His justice

• of God’s longsuffering: His suffering a long time, being patient and slow in judging sin

God is all this and much more. What the moralist fails to see is that God’s goodness …

• is not a blank check for sin

• does not give license to sin

• does not condone sin

• does not indulge sin

• does not overlook sin

God’s goodness is to lead men to repentance, not to sin. The fact that God will forgive sin should stir men to seek forgiveness and to please God. If a man goes out and sins, thinking that God will just overlook and forgive his sin, he is making a mockery God’s goodness and grace. He is taking God’s goodness and making it a sham, a joke, a thing of indulgence. The man who despises God’s goodness, who sins thinking God will just overlook and forgive his sin, is wrong. He is mistaken. God does not just overlook and forgive his sin; He does not condone, indulge, nor give license to his sin. God will judge him and the judgment will be according to the truth.

* “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Co. 6:9–11).
* “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Ga. 6:7).
* “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ep. 5:6).

1. The moralist thinks man is basically good. He thinks that man can be good enough for God to accept. He thinks God looks for the good in man and that within each man is enough good for God to accept. The moralist thinks that God’s goodness accepts man’s …

* good works
* good thoughts
* good behavior
* good feelings
* good nature
* good tendencies

God is pleased with whatever good is in man. But what the moralist fails to see is that God’s goodness is perfect. It cannot accept …

* any imperfect work
* any foul thoughts
* any evil behavior
* any ugly feelings
* any corruptible nature
* any sinful urges

God can only accept perfection. No man is perfect: not in nature, thought, or behavior. Therefore, all men are unacceptable to God. No man is good enough to be acceptable to God, no matter how good he is. The goodness of God is to lead men to repentance: to turn men to God for righteousness, and the free man of self-righteousness. The fact that God allows men to repent should stir men to confess their imperfection and self-righteousness and to seek God’s righteousness which is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Note. Most people think that God will accept them, that in the final analysis they are good enough for God to accept them. They never dream that God will reject them, not when everything is said and done. What they fail to see is that God’s judgment is based upon truth. The truth of what a person’s thoughts and motives are, of what is really within a person’s mind and heart. God’s judgment is based upon the truth of a person’s response to God’s goodness, love and the salvation He offers.

“When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Ro. 1:21–22).

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Ga. 6:3).

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Pr. 20:6).

“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Pr. 28:26).

“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord” (Ob. 3–4).

1. The moralist hardens his heart against the judgment of God. He refuses to repent. He just cannot accept the fact …

* that he is not good enough for God to accept
* that God’s goodness and love would ever condemn him

But note the term righteous judgment (dikaiokrisias), which means just, fair, impartial, correct, exact. God’s judgment is a judgment that should be, that should and will take place. In fact, God must judge, for God is love. As love, He must straighten out all the injustices on earth. He must right the wrongs and correct all the injustices of men. He must judge men with a perfect and “righteous judgment.”

Note also the term treasurest up (thesaurizo), which means to store up, to heap up, to lay up. The man who hardens his heart and refuses to repent stores up more and more wrath against himself in the day of judgment. The fact is clearly seen. Just think how terrible it is for a man to rebel against God’s goodness. He has the glorious privilege of knowing God’s goodness. He hears God’s goodness proclaimed day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. Yet he despises God’s goodness, refusing to repent and rejecting God’s goodness time and time again. His rejection is bound to store up wrath against himself. His judgment is bound to be greater than the judgment upon a person who has never had the privilege of hearing about the goodness of God.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn. 3:36).

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Ro. 1:18).

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ep. 5:3–6).