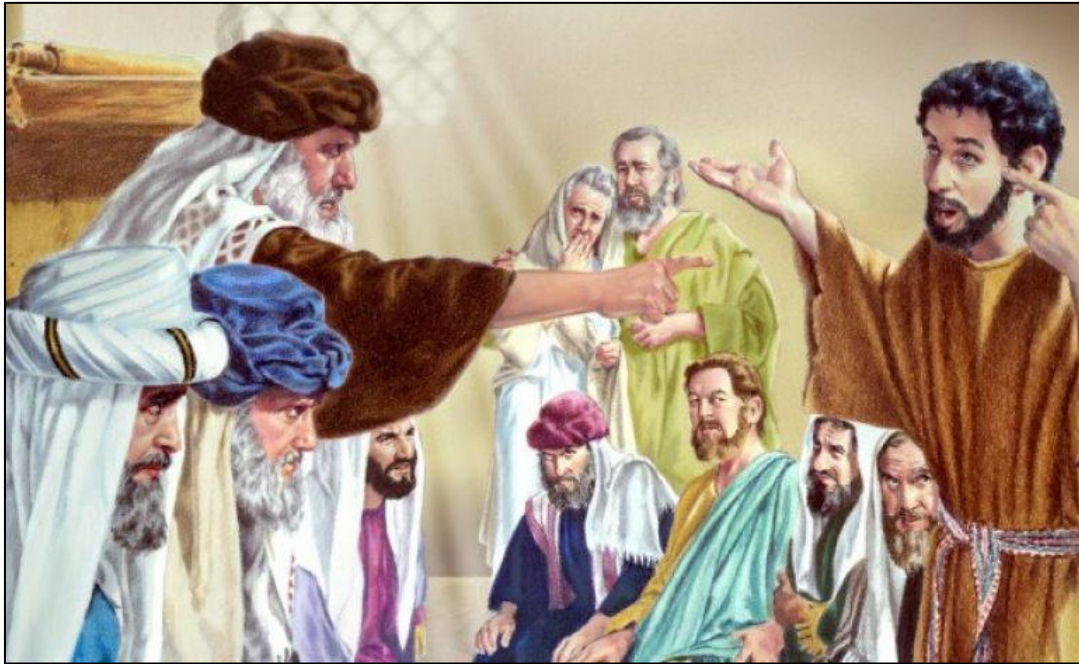


THE WORDS AND WORKS OF KING JESUS

PART 6: KINGDOM LIVING IN TODAY'S CULTURE

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MATTHEW CHAPTER 7

The Main Point → Righteousness does not come from judging others.

Continuing his first discourse (teaching session) Jesus moved to another kingdom concept in the Sermon on the Mount. Previously he had primarily dealt with themes connected with the inner spiritual life (e.g., improper motives when giving, praying, and fasting). Now He touches on how those belonging to his kingdom are to live outwardly in this world. He deals emphatically with judging (fault finding) others.

I. SUMMARIZING THE TEXT

A. Pharisaic judging (7:1-5)

To “judge” here means to criticize by fault-finding. Remember that Jesus called for a righteousness that was greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). To the Pharisees, the way to be more righteous was to be judgmental and critical of those who were not keeping the law as well as they were. Jesus here rebuked that kind of thinking.

B. Dogs and pigs (7:6)

After he warned us against judgmental attitudes and self-blind criticism, Jesus here reminded us that he did not mean to imply that the people of his Kingdom should suspend all discernment. They must discern that there are some good, precious things, such as the gospel, that should not be persistently offered to those ("dogs, pigs") who will reject them with contempt (cf. Matt. 10:14)

C. Persevering in prayer (7:7-11)

Jesus teaches us to "ask-seek-knock" which is to have intensity, passion, and persevering in prayer. Keep asking for strength, keep asking for guidance, keep asking for growth, etc. These words are in the present tense meaning they are to be on-going, continuous throughout the Christian life.

D. Practicing the Golden Rule (7:12-14)

Jesus gives us this simple principle, which we often call the Golden Rule. It summarizes the second greatest commandment that we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31). If we would simply treat others the way we would want to be treated, we would naturally obey all that God's Word says about our relationships with others.

E. False prophets (7:15-23)

"Fruit-bearing" is the outward manifestation of our inward beliefs. Warnings against false prophets¹ are based on the fact that not all prophets teach truth. Truth can be violated, and the gospel's enemies usually try to pass themselves off as fellow believers. One of the fruits of false prophets is false teachings. The Pharisees falsely taught that righteousness comes from keeping the law.

F. False disciples (7:21-23)

Jesus then turns to describing false disciples who proclaim to be righteous, but are not. They can be recognized by their lack of good works which is a sign of barren unbelief (v. 20). Jesus is not suggesting that works are necessary for salvation but that true faith will produce good works (cf. Eph. 2:10; Jas 1:22-25; 2:26). Proclaiming to drive out demons, and in Jesus' name perform many miracles is probably not authentic.

G. Faulty Foundations (7:24-27)

The house represents life and the rain represents God's judgment. To build one's life on anything other than Jesus Christ, such as Pharisaical legalism, will not merit eternal

¹ A prophet (Gr. *prophētēs*) can predict events beforehand (foretell), but its primary meaning is someone who proclaims the truth with God's authority (tell forth). (Mounce 545).

life. To build on Jesus Christ calls for repentance, rejection of salvation by works, and trust in God's grace to save through his merciful provision.²

II. DISCUSSING THE TEXT

1. Why do we have a natural human tendency to judge others?
 - It boosts our self-image.
 - It makes us feel good.
 - It makes us feel superior to others.
 - It makes us appear to be a strong Christian.

2. What is the difference between judging and discerning?
 - "Pharisaic judging" is criticizing others by fault-finding.
 - Judging/judgment can also be used when discerning the difference between truth and error.

3. Is Jesus saying that we should never judge others? (See Matt. 7:15-16; 19:28; John 7:24).
 - Jesus did not prohibit the judgment of others.
 - He only requires that our judgment be completely fair and that we only judge others by a standard we would also like to be judged by.
 - Matt 7:15-16 ""Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?"
 - Matt. 19:28 "*Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*
 - John 7:24 " Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.""

4. What does Matthew 7:2 and Romans 14:10 tell us about judging others?
 - We will be held accountable to Jesus (*Bema* judgment) about how we judge others.
 - Matt. 7:2 "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
 - Rom. 14:10 "You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."

² (MacArthur 1135)

5. How can a Christian know if he is judging someone or practicing discernment?

- Our motives should tell us which one we are doing.

III. APPLYING THE TEXT

Three reasons why judging others is to be avoided:

1. We are not as smart as God.
2. We judge others by their outward appearance (1 Sam. 16:7; 2 Cor. 10:7).
3. We judge others who have the same faults as us (Matt. 7:4).

IV. CHALLENGE FOR NEXT WEEK



Read Matthew Chapters 8 and 9. How do you suppose people viewed Jesus' miracles? What did the Pharisees notice about Jesus (9:10-13) and why did they complain about him? How does this relate to us today?