

BLIND JUDGES

Matthew 7:1-5

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE TEXT

KJV—**1** Judge not, that ye be not judged. **2** For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. **3** And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? **4** Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? **5** Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

NASB—**1** Do not judge so that you will not be judged. **2** For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. **3** 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? **4** 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? **5** 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.

NIV—**1** Do not judge, or you too will be judged. **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. **3** "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? **4** How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

The Message—Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.

III. BACKGROUND

A. BIBLICAL CONTEXT OUTSIDE MATTHEW

1. TWO PARALLEL GOSPEL TEXTS—**Luke 6** and **Mark 4**
 - a. **Luke 6:37-42**
 1. Located in Luke's passage containing much of Sermon on Mount
 2. Two parts
 - a. "Do not judge" passage = vv **37-38**

b. “Your brother’s eye” passage – vv 39-42

3. **Do not judge—vv 37-38**

37 Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

a. Context

1. Follows—“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”—v 36
2. Shows *how* to be merciful—don’t be judgmental
3. Expands on not judging—go even further and pardon!

b. Expands on idea of mercy

1. Not just don’t judge—but also don’t take the next step—to condemn
 - a. Judge = κρινω = to determine guilt—render verdict
 - b. Condemn = καταδικαζω = to pass sentence
2. Show extraordinary mercy—even to the point of pardoning!

c. More explicit emphasis on human relationships—than in Matthew passage

1. Matthew passage says if you judge—“you will be judged”
 - Stated as maxim—timeless truth—passive mood—“it will be done to you”
 - *Could* be taken to mean—if you judge—**God** will judge you
2. But Luke clarifies what Jesus meant
 - a. Deals with practical, human results of mercy and judgment
 - b. If you show mercy—*others* will show mercy to you
 - c. If you are judgmental—*others* will be judgmental with you
 - d. Difference in Luke’s passage
 - Not just passive—it will be done to you
 - But includes 3rd person active—other people will respond this way

They will pour into your lap a good measure

4. Your brother's eye—vv 39-42

39 And He also spoke a parable to them: A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. 41 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? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

- a. Context—Jesus uses a parable to make His second point
- b. Luke's practical lessons
 1. Matthew tells a timeless truth
 - a. He focuses more on **attitude**
 - b. He condemns the hypocritical attitude—associated with judgmentalism
 2. Luke *adds* two practical lessons
 - a. A blind person (log in his eye) cannot lead another blind person (with speck)
 - b. A student should not presume to lead the teacher
 - Assumes the student is blind to some things that the teacher sees
 - Suggests students exhibit youthful arrogance and presumption
 - Teacher must open eyes of student, who can then become a teacher

b. **Mark 4:24**

And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides."

1. Context
 - a. After the Parable of the Sower
 - b. Immediately after passage on the Lamp
 1. Parallel to Lamp passage in Sermon on the Mount—**Mt 5:14-16**
 2. Jesus expands on idea of the Lamp—to emphasize accountability

Mk 4:21-23—*And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand? For*

nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

2. Meaning

- a. We are accountable for what we hear and learn
- b. We must share what we learn with others
- c. We will be measured by this accountability
 1. If we are faithful in measuring it out—we will receive in equal measure
 2. This is similar to Luke’s explanation 6:38

Lk 6:38—*Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together and running over.*

- d. But it works both ways—though

Mk 4:25—*For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.*

2. OTHER PASSAGES ON ‘JUDGMENT’

a. Passages that warn us about judging

1. **Rom 12:1-4**

- Do not judge others, or you condemn yourself
- Because you practice the same things

2. **Rom 14:1**

- Do not pass judgment on disputable things
- Which are strictly matters of personal conscience

3. **I Cor 4:5**

- Do not pass judgment hastily
- Wait for the Lord—who will discern hearts

4. Implication of these passages

- It is hard to judge impartially—because we also are corrupt and biased
- It is hard to judge accurately—because we never know others’ hearts or motives of

b. Passages that affirm the need for judgment

1. We should hold each other accountable—implies judgment/discernment

Mt 18:15—*If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother . . .*

2. Any true ‘judgment’ must be done by God’s standard

John 7:24—*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*

Context:

- o Jesus responded to those accusing Him of being demon-possessed
 - o Jesus said they were not living according to the Law they professed to follow
3. Later in the Sermon on the Mount—**Mt 7:15-20**—regarding false prophets
 - a. Jesus said we can tell false/true prophets by their fruit
 - b. He suggests we can and should judge between true/good and false/bad disciples

B. BIBLICAL CONTEXT IN MATTHEW

1. ‘Judge’ in Matthew—**κρίνω**

- a. Outside the Sermon on the Mount—Matthew uses it as **eschatological** term

1. Cognate term—**κρίσις**—‘judgment’—used several times
2. Five times referring the ‘day of judgment’ or ‘damnation’

- Mt 10:15
- Mt 11:22,24
- Mt 12:36
- Mt 12:42
- Mt 23:33

- b. Jesus told disciples they will ‘judge’ then

Mt 19:28—*And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

2. In Sermon on Mount

- a. Once possibly referring to eschatological judgment

5:21-22—21 *You have heard that the ancients were told, “You shall not commit murder,” and “Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.”* **22** *But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, “You good-for-nothing” shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, you fool shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.*

- o All these references are to human courts
 - o Except the last one—which has eschatological focus
- b. One other passage—refers to judgment at human court
- 5:40—If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.*
- c. Here—Chapter 7
1. This deals with practical—‘how to’ living the Kingdom ethic here and now
 2. Applied to current human relationships
 3. Deals with our current attitudes and behavior
 4. Shows us how to be ‘perfect’
 - o Like our Father—**5:48**
 - o Who is merciful—**Lk 7:36**
 5. This passage—is a negative way of stating the fifth beatitude

5:7—Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

IV. EXPLANATION OF TEXT—VERSES 1-2

A. DO NOT JUDGE, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT BE JUDGED

1. Do not ‘judge’

- a. Judge = κρίνω
1. Several meanings:
 - o Separate—distinguish—discern
 - o Approve—or disapprove
 - o Pronounce opinion about right and wrong
 - o Issue decree/pronouncement or rule
 2. Basically two main ideas
 - a. To discern—distinguish—divide
 - b. To pronounce a decision based on this observation

b. Can be either positive or negative

1. Positive—to make a fair decision and pronouncement

- a. Sometimes it is necessary to make judgments
- b. Otherwise—how can one distinguish between good and bad
- c. Jesus suggests this discernment must be used—in **verse 6**
 - o Don't be naïve and foolish
 - o We must discern the 'dogs' and 'pigs'

2. Negative—to be harsh and judgmental

- o Cognate word = κρίσις
- o Root word for 'critical'

c. Here Jesus uses the negative meaning—don't be critical—judgmental

d. Good translation = “Do not be judging”

- o present—active—imperative
- o means: do not be in the habit of judging
- o Some people habitually judge—lifestyle of criticism

2. **So that you will not be judged**

- a. Same word used here— κρίνω
- b. Passive mood—'to be judged'
- c. Implication: if you judge—you will be judged
- d. The very act of judging—establishes a criterion—that sets one up for the same treatment
- e. This assumption sets up conclusion at the beginning of **verse 2**

B. FOR IN THE WAY YOU JUDGE, YOU WILL BE JUDGED

1. Literal translation

“For in such **judgment** that you judge, you will be judged.”

2. Judgment = κρίμα

- a. Noun—means ‘condemnation’ or ‘sentence’ (pronunciation of punishment)
- b. Not only will one be judged—but will be subject to possibility of the same punishment
3. So if when we judge—we also pronounce a sentence/punishment as part of judgment
4. Likewise—we will be subject to the same sentence/punishment—of the judging process
5. This assumption sets up the final conclusion at the end of **verse 2**

C. BY YOUR STANDARD OF MEASURE, IT WILL BE MEASURED TO YOU

1. Literally

“By the [standard of] measurement that you measure, it will be measured against you”

2. Standard of measurement = **μέτρον**

- Meaning: rule—standard of judgment—measurement—‘metric’

3. That you measure = **μετρέω**

- Judge according to the rule—to measure out

4. It will be measured against you = **ἀντιμετρέω**

- Measure back—measure in return—repay

5. Context

Example: ancient grain contracts said delivery and payment had to be measured by the same instrument—owned by purchaser—to verify accuracy of quantity of grain delivered

D. OBSERVATIONS

1. This passage extends the discussion about ‘worry’—**6:25-34**
 - a. Previous passage—warned against self-obsessed worry
 - b. This passage—warns against with worrying too much about others’ business
2. This passage helps to set up the Golden Rule—**7:12**
 - a. Just as you should not judge others as you do not want to be judged
 - b. So—you should treat others as you want to be treated
3. Mercy—[and redemption]—should be the goal—not judgment

Jas 2:13—*For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.*

4. Why do people judge?
 - False sense of superiority—masquerading as care and concern for another’s well-being!
 - False sense of legalistic righteousness or inadequacy—masquerading as righteous indignation!

V. EXPLANATION OF TEXT—VERSES 3-5

3 *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?* **4** *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?* **5** *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.*

A. CONTEXT

Obvious connection to previous passage—The eye is the lamp of the body—**6:23-23**

B. WHY DO YOU LOOK AT THE SPECK THAT IS IN YOUR BROTHER’S EYE

1. Speck = **κάρφος**
2. Dry straw—twig—bit of chaff
3. Something that is hardly noticeable

C. BUT DO NOT NOTICE THE LOG THAT IS IN YOU ROWN EYE

1. Notice = **κατανοέω**
 - a. Meaning = perceive—observe—understand
 - b. One cannot see what is in one’s own eye—but should surely notice/feel it!
 - c. How can you pay no attention to it?
2. Log = **δοκός**
 - a. Plank—large supporting beam holding up superstructure
 - b. Obvious hyperbole for contrast—and humor!

D. OR HOW CAN YOU SAY TO YOUR BROTHER . . .

4 *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?*

1. Two problems

- Moral dilemma
 - Physical difficulty
2. Moral dilemma
 - a. How can we help a person with a small problem—when ours is so much bigger!
 - b. The size of the problem is relative
 1. Our problem is bigger—because it is *our* problem—blocking our own vision
 2. The other person’s problem may be big to him—but should be still relatively small to us
 3. Other people’s failures should not loom so large—that they consume us!
 3. Physical problem
 - a. How can we even *see* to remove the speck?
 - b. The great irritation of a speck of grit in the eye is so bad—the watering prevents good sight
 - c. Compounded by the size of the huge obstacle—the beam—that obstructs sight

E. YOU HYPOCRITE . . .

5 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.

1. Hypocrite = **ὑποκριτής**
 - a. Pretender—actor
 - o To take up another’s statement as one’s own position
 - o To impersonate—simulate
 - b. Word play on **κρίνω** (to judge)—from **ὑποκριτής**
 - c. Danger of being like the ‘hypocrites’—who are false followers—**6:2,5,16** xcv
 - d. Hypocrite is so blinded by the charade—that he does not see his own short-coming
2. Need for remedial action
 - a. Two problems still need to be remedied—he log and the speck
 - b. We still have an obligation to help our brother
 - c. But we cannot do so—cannot even *see* to do it—until we remedy our own problem

- d. Once we remove our own obstruction—we can see to help our brother
 - o **διαβλέπω** = look straight—fixedly—clearly—penetratingly [without blinking?!]
- e. The urgency of the problem
 - 1. Look at the verb
 - 2. **ἐκβάλλω** = cast out—throw away!—is more urgent than ‘remove’ or ‘take out’

F. OUR OBLIGATION TO HELP OTHERS

- 1. Paul reiterated this point to the Galatians

Gal 6:1—*Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself so that you too will not be tempted.*

- 2. Notice two things:
 - a. Judgment/correction—should be done gently
 - b. Watch out—that we are not tempted
 - o By the same temptation that caused the brother to sin
 - o Or by the temptation to become habitually judgmental

VI. JAMES’S COMMENTARY

James 4:11-12—**11** *Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.* **12** *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?*

- 1. What James—and Jesus— are talking about—do not judge others
 - a. People should not **set themselves above the law and lord it over others**—like a judge
 - b. None of us can do that—for three reasons
 - 1. We are all subject to the law—none of us is *above* the law
 - 2. We are all law-breakers
 - 3. Only one is not subject to the law—God—the only Lawgiver and Judge—God
 - o **Ps 75:7**—But God is the judge; He puts one down and exalts another
 - o **Is 33:22**—For the Lord is our judge . . . our lawgiver . . . our king—He will save us

- **II Tim 4:8**—*in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the **righteous Judge**, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*