LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 7 (Part 1) :1-5

Judging Others

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

We're continuing our study in the book of Matthew. We're in the seventh chapter. I'm a little bummed that we're getting through the Sermon on the Mount here. I was going to say quickly, but it's been anything but quick. But we're moving our way through.

This is the last chapter of the Sermon on the Mount. Of course, you know, that's not going to stop our study. We'll keep going on to all the other chapters. But I've just loved the chapters 5, 6, and 7. The Sermon on the Mount is just so good.

Such great stuff, you know. And no less today. We're going to take the first five verses and look at those. So read along with me. It says, Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 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? How can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when all the time there's a plank in your own eye? 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. That's where we're going to stop reading. We'll take it from there. Pray with me. Heavenly Father, open our hearts.

We totally rely on you to give us insight and understanding into the Scriptures. You're the teacher, Lord. You're the instructor. You are the one who brings it to life, who applies it to our daily living. You're the one, Lord, who gives us ample understanding.

So do that today. We look to you, God. We long to hear your voice. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

This passage, of course, begins with a very well-known principle, spiritual principle called sowing and reaping. We see this lots of places in the Scripture. Sowing and reaping is a very, very common thing.

What a man sows, so also shall he reap. Now, we don't use the word sowing today so much, except for when it applies to, you know, mending a garment or something like that.

But in the ancient days, that was the word for planting. And when a farmer would go out to plant his crop, he would sow his fields. We just call it planting. The equipment that we use is called a planter. We're so creative about those things.

But it was sowing back then. And the Bible simply says, whatever you plant in the ground, that's what you'll raise. And it's really one of those simple sort of truths of the Bible, but something we forget about. And Jesus is applying that simple principle here in Matthew chapter 7 to the issue of judging. And he's saying to us that if you're judgmental, you're the kind of person that goes around making free to judge a lot of people in a lot of circumstances and a lot of things all the time, and you're always kind of pointing the finger and judging, then you can expect the same in return.

That's what you'll get in life. In other words, I like how he says it, with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. So if you do very little judging, then you'll reap very little judgment from others. If you judge a lot, big-time judging, then you can expect that you're going to get big-time judged. This principle, by the way, is rock solid.

It's one of God's laws. It's as stable and as secure as the law of gravity. And the law of gravity says that if you jump out of a fourth-story building window, you can expect to hit the ground rather hard. And there's really nothing you can do about that. You can try to defy gravity in certain ways, but apart from that, gravity is in force.

Well, the same is true with sowing and reaping. What you sow, Paul says this to the Galatians, don't be deceived. What a man sows, so also shall he reap. God can't be mocked in that regard, he says. It's just going to happen.

And so he's using this kind of negative example to say, once again, that if you judge others, you can expect that in return. However, one of the things we don't often talk about when we're discussing sowing and reaping are the positive side of sowing and reaping, because you can sow positively just as you would negatively. He's using a negative example, saying if you go around being judgmental, you're going to be judged. But listen, if you go around showing mercy and forgiveness, you can expect mercy and forgiveness in return. It's interesting, isn't it?

We like to kind of dish out the hard stuff to other people, but we want to be understood. We want to be forgiven. We want to be loved, and we want people to be kind to us. But there is a law that goes along with

these things that says you're going to receive essentially what you've kind of dished out. And so, you know, that's a very important thing.

You know, there have been times in our lives, our, meaning Sue and I, where God has given us opportunities to sow seeds we weren't even aware of it at the time. I was on staff at a church for a while up in the Seattle area, just north of Seattle, and when I mean just north, I mean it's like a stone's throw from the Seattle city limits. But anyway, we felt led of the Lord to resign that position and assumed that God would show us quite quickly what our next assignment was. And there was an entire year that went on where we had no idea what God had for us, and it was a difficult year. It was a hard year for us.

But we decided, since we had a couple of friends who were starting a church up near Everett, Washington, for those of you that kind of know the geography of that area, we decided that we were going to go ahead and make the drive from where we lived every Sunday to go up and just help them in whatever way we could. And we really didn't care. It was setting up chairs, and as it turned out, they asked us to come and lead worship. He asked me to teach every other Sunday, and I even taught the youth group. And so we did that for a year, and we just kind of thought we were just trying to stay busy at the time.

It was like, well, you know, let's do something. Well, later on, we came to realize, wow, God did a really cool thing in our lives. He gave us a whole year to sow seeds of faithfulness, just to come alongside this couple. And we were never more a part of their church than that one year after we left. We left.

We were gone. And they knew. They knew when they brought us in to help. We'd been friends with them for a period of time, but they knew that we weren't going to stay. They knew we were kind of waiting for the Lord to open the next door for where we were going to go.

And yet they let us just serve and come along and be faithful. And, you know, as soon as I look back on that time, we're so thankful that God dropped that in our lap. We didn't even realize at the time what he was doing, but he was literally giving us an opportunity to sow those seeds of faithfulness so that we might reap them later on. And we have. For 21 and a half years, we have reaped incredible faithfulness from God's people.

And so, you know, God is just so good to give us opportunities to sow what we're going to need down the road, you know, and so forth. But in terms of the negative aspects of sowing and reaping, that particularly being judging, he says, don't do that. You and I are not to kind of have that characteristic, you know, in the world. We're to be different from the world. And we're not to be the kind of people who are always, you know, going around judging.

And you guys know, because we've talked about this, that the Sermon on the Mount is all about being different. It's all about Jesus telling us as the body of Christ, I want you guys to look different from the world. I want you to act differently. I want you to take on a whole different, you know, attitude about life and living and people and loving and caring and those sorts of things. And I like the fact that we as Christians are being told here right now not to be judgmental kind of people.

We're not to play the part of judge and jury, you know, because frankly, the world already kind of sees us that way anyway. You know, it's not uncommon for unbelievers to look at Christians and say, yeah, well, they sound judgmental. They're always judging people. And to a large degree, that assessment is unfair because what they're actually doing is they're highlighting the fact that we do have convictions. And we believe that there are things that are right.

And we believe that there are things that are wrong. And the world likes to put kind of a spin on that. And this is becoming pretty popular. You've probably noticed in the world, the world likes to think this way. They like to think, if you agree with me, you're open minded.

If you disagree with me, you're judgmental. That's essentially the way the world wants to spin it so that they can put pressure on you and I to kind of shut our mouths. And we'll talk more about that here in a little bit. But I think that as Christians, we've kind of been bullied into a corner in some respects. And we've kind of lost our edge.

We've lost our ability to speak into the world and say things and so forth. And of course, you know, the world believes that if we disagree with them on any particular point, then we are being judgmental. We are being closed minded. You know, we're being jerks. And they would accuse you and I of being condemning.

Why are you always condemning everything? Condemning people. Just because you don't agree with them, you condemn them. Let me tell you something. Disagreeing and condemning are two very, very different things.

As a parent, I have raised four children, and there have been many times in their lives I disagreed with things they did or said, but I never condemned them. My parents disagreed with me when they were raising me on lots of points, but they never once condemned me. You can disagree without condemning. And if the world throws that in your face, it's important that you kind of make sure they understand the distinction. Listen, I am not condemning people.

In fact, you know what? Condemnation is not my job. Right? It's kind of funny. There are some Christians, though, who kind of think it is.

They think they've got a ministry of condemnation to the world. You know, that's my ministry. I just kind of look, and I call it the way I see it, you know? And if that involves a little healthy condemnation, well, then so be it. And they kind of take this role as if it's a God-given role.

I don't think it's a God-given role. I think they're just being prideful and boorish. The fact of the matter is Jesus didn't come to condemn. Did you remember he even said so? Right after that most wonderful scripture that we all love, John 3.16, for God so loved the world.

We love to quote that one. We rarely quote the rest. Look at John 3.17. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. You see, that was his ministry.

It wasn't a ministry of condemnation. It was a ministry of salvation. And you and I are the body of Christ, and so we're supposed to go into the world. We're supposed to do what Jesus did, right? And Jesus says, I did not come to condemn.

So don't you. That's not your ministry. Listen, there will be a day of reckoning. The Bible makes that very clear. There will be a day of reckoning for all mankind.

But that's in God's keeping, in God's timing, and it's his to do. It's not yours. It's not mine. So we're not to condemn. Now, but please understand, believing that something is wrong is not condemning.

Well, I mean, a person could, you could go on to condemn, I suppose, but the two are not the same thing. If I believe that divorce, for example, is wrong, and I say so, I am not condemning every person who has gone through a divorce, you know, not at all. I'm simply echoing what the Word of God has to say on the subject. At least that's what I should be doing related to that. So you can see how this thing kind of goes.

Now, I want to take a look here at the particular kind of judgment that Jesus is forbidding here in this passage. Look with me once again in your Bible in verse three, and it says, why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank? He's using hyperbole here. Obviously somebody can't have a plank in their eye, but that's the picture that he wants you to see is that, you know, you're condescending to your brother or your sister saying, oh, let me help you get that and take care of that problem. You've got that little, let me get that speck out of your eye.

And if you can, it's a comical picture, you know, that all the while that you're doing this, you've got this plank, you know, this two by four sticking out of your own eye, you know, waving it around. It's this weird kind of cartoonish sort of a picture, but he's using it to describe the hypocrisy. And that's what he says in verse five, you hypocrite. And then he says, first, take the plank out of your own eye, and then you'll be able to clearly remove the speck from your brother's eye. So what kind of judgment here is Jesus telling us not to have toward other people?

A hypocritical judgment, a hypocritical judgment. That is where the tendency of my human prideful flesh rises up to look condescendingly upon some brother or sister and to kind of look down my nose at him and say, oh, you poor thing, let me help you with your problem. And I've got the problem in spades, but I'm ignoring my situation and coming to look to help my brother or sister because that makes me look spiritual and makes me look better than them. It's really a way of exalting myself among other people. Frankly, that's what the Pharisees did all the time.

They were constantly trying to make themselves look better than the populace. You know what? You and I are never supposed to do that. We're never to have a haughty or puffed up attitude toward people. When we go to help people, we sit down with them and say, you know what, boy, do I understand what you're going through?

Do I understand the weakness that, can I, let me pray with you. And you know what? When we're done, how about you pray for me? And we will stand together in this and, you know, I am just like you, no different, all the same passions, all the same weaknesses, all the same blemishes. You got them.

I got them. We got them. Let's just, let's pray for each other, you know. Do you understand the difference of that attitude related to kind of the, you know, the high and holy, you know, looking down at people, how could you do such a terrible thing, sort of a thing. Hey, listen, if there's somebody here who doesn't understand how somebody could do something terrible, then we're not even in touch with our own hearts, you know, in that area.

So Paul actually echoed this, this condemnation of hypocritical sort of activity. He did it in the book of Romans chapter two, verse one, he says, you therefore have no excuse. I think we were there. You who pass judgment on someone else for, he says, at whatever point that you judge the other, you're actually condemning yourself because you pass judgment. You who pass judgment do the same thing.

So you see, we're never to do that. We're never to pass that kind of judgment. Don't pass judgment in that sense when you yourself are struggling with the same issues and so forth. But you know, that brings up a question. It raises a question that we have to answer.

This is something we actually went over with the kids last Sunday night in refuge. They're getting kind of a double dose. The question is, does that mean that we are never ever to judge under any circumstances? I mean, when the statement comes to you and I in Matthew seven, it says, do not judge lest you be judged. Is Jesus saying, don't ever judge any time ever?

Is that what he's saying? No, it's not what he's saying at all. He's saying, don't judge hypocritically, but let me just, let me just say something. We have to judge. We have to judge because there are some things you can't tell if you don't make a judgment.

Do you know that later on in this very chapter, Jesus is going to say these words to, to us. Here's what he says later on in the chapter. He says, watch out for false prophets. Here's what, here's what the deal is. They're going to come to you in sheep's clothing and that means they're going to look, talk, smell, sing, act like sheep on the outside, but inside inwardly, they're ferocious wolves.

And so you might ask the question, well, how in the world are we going to be able to tell? He says, oh yeah, by their fruit, you'll be able to tell. What is their fruit? What is he saying when he says by their fruit, you'll recognize him talking about the inside of their lives. He's talking about the heart that eventually is going to come out and you know that heart always does.

The heart always, after a while, you can see the heart. Somebody can look all high and holy and great and this and that, just stick around and live with them for a while. Just watch their lives for a while. See how they treat family members, see how they're dealing in their life. You're going to see rotten fruit if the, if the heart is rotten, eventually it'll happen.

But let me ask you a question. If you're going to check out their fruit, how can you do that without judging? You can't. Do you know that every time, think of real fruit that you look at in the produce section of the grocery store. When you walk up to the grocery store produce section and you look at the fruit that's there, oh, grapes are on sale, oh, look at here, we have bananas, hey, pretty good price.

Not a bad price on, you know, muskmelon or whatever. I can never remember if the real name is muskmelon or cantaloupe, whatever, doesn't matter. You know what I'm talking about. Anyway, or whatever fruit they may be, apples, you know, and you know, who goes to the fruit section and goes, okay,

I'm just going to put some of these in the bag here, but I'm not going to look because I'm not supposed to judge. That'd be stupid.

What you do is you look over the fruit, you go, okay, these bananas are rotten already. You know, and this watermelon over here, man, there's all these soft spots, you know, and this, these strawberries look awful. I'm not going to buy those. We make judgments all the time. You have to judge.

You have to judge. It's something that just must go on in our lives. Do you know that there are other passages where Jesus tells us to judge? See the same people who quote Matthew 7, 1, don't judge, lest you be judged. They never even get around to looking at some of the other things Jesus said on the subject of judging, like in the gospel of John chapter 7, stop judging, he says, by mere appearances and make a right judgment.

Isn't that interesting? Jesus tells you and I to make a right judgment. Don't make a wrong judgment. Make a right one. Do you know we have another name for that today in our culture?

Make good choices. You know, you talk, people will talk about someone and they'll talk. Talk about maybe somebody who's kind of headed down the wrong path and they'll say he's not making very good choices right now Or something like that, you know He's not making good choices You know what that means? They're not judging correctly. That's what that means.

They're looking at life Assessing it and coming to the wrong conclusion That's what that means so Jesus says Stop judging by the outside the appearance of something look into it reason it out Understand it and make a good judgment. You've got to Later on in the in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He wrote to them and he said in first Corinthians chapter 10 He said I speak to sensible people judge for yourselves what I say Here's the Apostle Paul Providing judgment on the things that he talked about in the scripture Well what you and I call scripture for them as a letter, but the point is he said judge judge Correctly you see and then actually Elsewhere in that letter a little bit earlier in first Corinthians chapter 6 Paul writes and he says I say this to shame you Is it possible there's nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers remember what that comment grew out of? The believers were taking each other to court in front of unbelieving judges dragging each other to court and Paul's like you guys Isn't isn't there's anybody in your church who can render a judgment Well now wait a minute here Paul Jesus told us not to judge He said don't judge hypocritically, but you've got to judge other things. You've got to make good decisions I could have brought up so many other passages.

I really I could have I could have just bored you silly with all kinds of scripture passages where we are told in the Bible to make a judgment But yet as Christians We have been told by the world don't judge and What they mean by that is keep your mouth shut and don't talk to me about Jesus and we heard them loud and clear And we obeyed for the most part and we have kind of put away our Calling in Christ to make good decisions to make discerning decisions to Understand between right and wrong. Oh the right and wrong. It's all getting all blurry these days even among believers The one people who should not have any problem seeing life for what it is and what things are and yet Even in the church when you talk about various things that the Bible is very clear on people are waffling. Why is that? Because we've been beaten like a dog with a rubber hose and That rubber hose is called thou shalt not judge and we believed it.

We thought it was just this cross the board, you know You know forbidding of making any kind of discerning judgment whatsoever And we just kind of sit around and then when they start talking to us about how they behave and the way they live We kind of go. Well, yeah, I guess I'm and people Christians say this to me all the time They'll say well, I know it's not for me to judge. I go stop it It is for you to judge. You've got to make a judgment. You've got to look at this thing rightly and Understand what is right?

What is wrong? What is good? What is bad? What is sweet? What is sour?

You got to figure it out based on the Word of God. We'll talk about that Paul actually prayed for the Philippians along these very lines. Look what he said here in Philippians chapter 1 He said and this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight Look at this so that you may be able to discern What is best and therefore you can be pure and blameless until the day of Christ Wow Look at that He says I'm praying for you guys that you're gonna grow in your ability to discern you want to know another word for discern rightly judge Make a correct not a condemning Judgmental sort of a you guys are all that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about seeing a situation for what it is and Making that judgment. Let me you know, you guys know that one of my favorite authors of all time is A.

W. Tozer Who's with the Lord now, but he said this I love this quote. He said the great deficiency in the church today is the lack of Spiritual discernment ability to judge how there can be so much Bible knowledge and so little insight so little moral Penetration is one of the mysteries of the Christian Church today Isn't that an amazing quote for a man who died in 1963? He so continues to have his finger on the pulse of what is really behind some of our greatest ills and I agree wholeheartedly for whatever it's worth that we lack discernment and We lack the ability to be critical thinkers Now when I say critical thinkers

people, I'm not talking about somebody who's overly critical all the time They're just going around criticizing everybody and everything It's not what critical thinking means critical thinking means the ability to judge a situation Rightly and to discern what's really going on and to make a determination based on that Understanding to go the right way you see That's what critical thinkers are people lack that skill of critical thinking We have a whole generation of kids who have come up today that this this relevant sort of everything's you know, it's all yeah Well, you know they've lost that edge that ability to be critical thinkers and to say no Why why what is one of the main reasons that we've lost this ability? Well, I'll be honest with you I think one of the reasons is because we have failed to do what Jesus told us to do back in John 7 We looked at the verse earlier where he said learn to make a right judgment Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment We haven't been able to do that.

And I think the reason we haven't been able to do that is because well two things We've been beaten down by the world and there thou they've been using the word against us To say don't judge lest you be judged and we just kind of went. Oh, yeah, that's right Totally misunderstanding the very verse that we should understand and we should be able to explain to them And the other thing is is we've become biblically illiterate And what I mean by that is the method by which we judge is the Bible You see I'm not telling you to go around make a determination based on your wisdom Or your ability to Look at a situation and necessarily rationalize it for what it is. I'm not telling you to do that I'm telling you to look at it through the spectacles of God's Word. I'm telling you to have a biblical worldview I'm telling you to look at marriage by the way The Bible tells you to look at marriage telling you to look at at things like homosexuality the way the Bible tells you to look at it I'm telling you how to look at things like money and family and finances and Relationships and premarital sex and all those other things don't look at it through the eyes of the world Don't be beaten down to the point where you say well, I guess it's not mine to judge you're to look at these things according to the Word of God and look through the the wisdom of God's Word and make a determination based on that again, not a condemning judgmental overly critical attitude but a determination Nonetheless, does that make sense? It's very important that we we we hear this because you see when we go to the word when we go to the scriptures and We ask the scriptures what they think about these things.

No, the scriptures are very naturally by nature. They are sharp You guys you know that don't you it says it right in the word about the word Look at Hebrews chapter 4 a verse that you all know probably quite quite well next one Computer not responding. Oh, okay Hebrews 412 for the Word of God is living and active and look what it says sharper than any double-edged Sword and what does it do it? penetrates it

cuts even to dividing soul and Spirit, I don't know how many of you have ever sat down and tried to think of the difference between what what is it? What is soulish or?

Has an origin in the soul or an origin in the spirit, but it's very very very difficult to distinguish between the two but the word can the word can divide even to the dividing of joint and Marrow and look what it last says. I love this it judges It judges the thoughts and the attitudes of the heart and it begins in the life of the believer Right here when the Word of God Judges me Now the world would teach us to sit in judgment on the word, but the word sits in judgment on us It tells me how to believe. I don't tell the word how to believe I Don't tell the word what it thinks it tells me what is really true. What is really accurate? Not so that I can go around and be a jerk and And put my nose up in the air and say well I know about this and you don't know so that I might discern my path and go in the right way, but we've ignored it.

Again, we've been beaten down by the world to the point where we feel like making a judgment is wrong. And then secondly, we have not applied ourselves to the Word of God to understand the Scriptures, and therefore we've had this double damage in our lives, and we wander around, and what are we doing? We're like lemmings, just following the people of the world, just following them right off the cliff. God help us to rise up and be who we've been called to be and to look at life through the Word of God, through the Scriptures, that we might have a biblical worldview rather than a worldly worldview. Sometimes you look at believers and you can't find any difference between them and the world around them.

There's no difference. The way they live, the way they talk, the way they love, the way they spend their money, you know, their priorities, no difference. The things they believe, no difference. What's all that about? That's all about compromise.

That's about compromising our convictions because we've been beaten down and convinced we were being judgmental and harsh and condemning when in fact God simply wanted us to just believe what the Word says. So what am I saying? Am I telling you to go around and start being judgmental? Obviously not. We've covered that.

What I'm saying is that you and I are to do what the Apostle Paul told us to do in his letter to the Ephesians, the fourth chapter. He says this, then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, blown here and there by every wind of teaching and what? By the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming who want to get us to shut our mouths, but instead speaking the truth in love. We will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ, and that is our calling you see. It's not to be condemning and judgmental and overly critical.

It's to be speaking the truth in love. And I know some of you have found yourselves in difficult situations like at work, at the grocery store, at family functions or something, and some subject comes up that's just one of those tinderbox subjects. It's one of those hot button issues that just comes up from time to time, political something or other, this or that, whatever it might be. And you know, you know that you know that that's just one of those things that just takes a spark and you've got an explosion on your hands and you're not really sure how to do this because the last thing you want to do is come off, you know, sounding judgmental. And I understand that and nor should we come off sounding judgmental.

But we are still called to speak the truth in love, in love. And that's where we maybe need to go back to the drawing board and by that I mean to prayer and say, Lord, how can I speak in love? How can I share these things in love? Because if I'm going to get hot and cranky and, you know, all lathered up over a particular subject emotionally, you know, I'm probably not going to be able to speak the truth in love. And so if it's an issue for me that's just one of those things that I can't even start talking without losing it and fleshing out, well, maybe I need to kind of back away until God strengthened that area of my life.

But I'm not going to hold my tongue because they just, they say so. We need to speak up, but we need to speak the truth in love. You know, the subject of this or that comes along and we say, well, you know what? God loves those people. He just loves them with an everlasting love and, you know, He loves them so much that Jesus died for them on the cross.

But let me tell you something, what they're doing is wrong and I love them too and I'll serve them. I'll kneel on my knees and I'll serve those people and I don't want to see any one of those people falling into a situation for which they cannot arise. But I'll tell you something right now, I still got to tell you what they're doing is wrong. You know, that's speaking the truth in love, guys, in love. So put your emotions aside and speak the truth in love.

Why? Because the word of God is the standard. That's our understanding. That's our way to know if something's right or wrong. And the word of God is never going to let you down.

This is not my opinion. And that's another nice thing you can inject into the conversation. You know what? This is not my opinion. You know, if I were going to have a personal opinion, I'd probably want to have one that kind of would settle this thing and make everybody go, yeah, yeah, I agree.

But unfortunately, I can't always do that. Sometimes I just have to step out and just say, you know what? I love you guys, love this situation, you know, I love these people, but that's wrong. That's wrong. Amen?

Speaking the truth in love, but speaking the truth. Amen. Amen. Amen.