

Pastor writes

Greetings to you! The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'Judge not and you will not be judged'. I am sure many of us have watched football matches with a referee having a yellow card or a red card indicating a serious foul. Very often we use yellow cards and red cards on others but we excuse ourselves for every wrong thing that we do.

Jesus gives four exhortations on judgment: 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you.' This judgment is not making an ethical judgment. The idea is that of a judgment and censorious attitude towards others. This holds the other person in guilt and never seeks to encourage them towards God. What is commanded is an attitude that is hesitant to condemn and quick to forgive. What is prohibited is the arrogance that reacts with hostility to the worldly and morally lax, viewing such people as beyond God's reach.

Secondly, we are challenged not to condemn, so that we too will not be condemned. God is gracious to those who are gracious to others. He will not judge those who do not judge others. He will forgive those who forgive. The demand for our graciousness towards others is because God has been gracious to us. How we deal with others will affect how God will deal with us. Many a time we have our own personal prejudices and we look at others through coloured lenses and we condemn them. An element of pride and superiority sets in, which leads to spiritual arrogance. Jesus is warning us about this arrogant attitude, 'for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.'

Thirdly, we are called to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us. We have been forgiven innumerable times, but we are not ready to forgive others. What is in view here is an individual ethic and not a governmental one, since the state is charged with creating an environment where its citizens are safe. The passage does not deny moral judgment. What is warned against is judging others harshly and treating ourselves leniently. That the result is an unforgiving attitude and an approach that ceases to hold out hope, as if someone is beyond God's reach. The emphasis is on mercy, being able to forgive and refusing to judge harshly.

Finally, the fourth command is to give generously. When we give of our time, talent, and money to God then we will be given much more than what we have given. We will be given a measure that is pressed down, shaken together, and over-flowing. The measure we give is the measure that will be given also.

The second part of the passage from Chapter 6:39-42, is a call to righteousness. Jesus is warning against self-righteousness and arrogance. He tells the disciple to examine themselves and understand that it is only Jesus who can guide them. He tells them a blind man cannot lead a blind man because both will fall into a pit. Our own spiritual eyes should be opened because only then we can lead or

teach. Our own personal saving knowledge of Christ is the first step of our eyes being open; otherwise we too will be like the Pharisees whose eyes were spiritually blind to the things of God.

Jesus says a student is not above his teacher but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. Jesus is cautioning the disciple to stay within his teaching. The disciples were not to be over-confident or super-critical of others without any self-examination. They were to pick up the right teacher - which was Jesus himself.

Jesus exhorts the disciples not to look at the speck of saw-dust in their brother's eye while paying no attention to the plank in their own eye. Jesus again comes down heavily on those who judge others harshly while they do not examine themselves and treat themselves leniently. May we follow Jesus' advice in that we do not judge, so that we too might not be judged.

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