

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

MATTHEW 7:1-5 - JUDGING OTHERS by Malcolm Laird w/c Sunday 19th July 2020

This chapter is the last of the three chapters which comprise the 'Sermon on the Mount'. This well-known passage begins the discussion on making judgements. RELEVANT BIBLE VERSES: Luke 6:37,38, Romans 14:3, 1 Corinthians 4:3,4 and Mark 4:24.

Verse 1: Some people say this is the most misused verse in the Bible used by non-Christians. King James Version "Judge not, so that you will not be judged" World English Bible "Don't judge, so that you won't be judged". This verse, which appears in a similar form in Luke's telling of the 'Sermon on the Plain,' begins a discussion about how a person should relate to their fellows. It is thought to be a natural progression of how one should have a positive outlook for oneself as to how one should have a positive opinion of others. The verse parallels Matthew 6:14, which states the forgiving will themselves be forgiven. Jesus warns that one who condemns (Greek Krino) others will themselves be condemned. However, the next verse makes clear that not all manner of judgement is being condemned. We are to evaluate carefully. It is an attack on the hypocrites who criticise others while ignoring their own faults.

Do we make hasty and unfair judgements?

Verse 2: If you impose standards upon others, those same standards will be applied to you. If you seek to find faults with others, God will then seek to find fault with you (Ulmch Luz).

Verse 3: ***Do we attack others for their small flaws whilst ignoring our own larger ones?*** This metaphor is either a rather extreme one or maybe a humorous one. The reference to "sawdust" and 'beam' are often to be seen to be rooted in Jesus' traditional employment as a carpenter.

Verse 4: The 'speck' or 'mote' translated from the Greek can also mean 'any small dry body'. This verse is seen as stating that those with major flaws should keep quiet about the flaws of others until their own are dealt with. Often this is linked to the metaphor -'The blind leading the blind' which would lead to disaster.

Verse 5: Jesus argues that one must first remove the plank before going on to remove the speck. It is the height of hypocrisy to point out a minor sin when your sins are much worse. Jesus always made clear that judging was to be done by the 'Father' and humans should be making their own soul ready for acceptance into the kingdom of God. ***Read John 8:7 'He who is without sin'.***

It is accepted that interviewers make decisions on their candidates within the first thirty seconds. Do we do this in Church? Do we criticise others when we possibly do not have the ability for the task or are unwilling to volunteer anyway. In food bank we say 'We are not here to judge you, we are here to support you'. In her book 'The Salt Path', Raynor Winn says that on many occasions' people made an excuse and left when they heard they were walking the South West Coastal Path because they were homeless – few asked why and had just made a judgement.

What do you think is the difference between Judgement and Discernment?