

# Notes for a Sermon on Judgementalism

## St Paul's 28 Sep 2003

Story #1

“Rocca is SO guilty. He deserved everything he got!”

Jesus said:

MAT 7:1 "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.

We are all good judges. Part of human nature.

Best judges in England.

Grand Final week is a good time to find examples of people using their *judging* capability.

- Collingwood will win for sure.
- The rain is better for the Lions.
- All Pies fans are dills.
- Brisbane aren't as good this year.
- The umpire was wrong.
- We were robbed.

We like to judge, even though we are often wrong. Is the risk of wrong, the reason Jesus is saying we should not use our judgement?

Maybe Jesus is pointing out that judging is dangerous. For example:

- “There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.” –Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977
- “Who wants to hear actors talk?” –H.M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927.
- “We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.” –Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.
- “Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.” –Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929.
- “640K ought to be enough for anybody.” –Bill Gates, 1981

So being judgmental is dangerous, but is this what Jesus is talking about? Or is he saying something else?

One Christian writer reminds us that some of us do not simply make judgements, we do it so much that it dominates our lives, we become judgemental persons. Is that me? Is this what Jesus is warning us against? Here are 6 questions to consider:

- Do I find it easier to see what's wrong with others than I do to zoom in on what is right with them?
- Do most of my criticisms humiliate rather than edify the other person?

- Do I insist on being right, rather than righting my wrongs? [It's more right to be loving, than to be right.]
- Do I resist asking for forgiveness when I discover that I was at fault?
- Do I think that being cynical is normal?
- Do I believe that sarcasm is a social grace—one that actually causes people to like me more?

6/6, according to this writer, and we're going to hell.

Is Jesus saying we should not judge at all?

I drive down here today...

- car coming along batavia ave
- roundabout on army road
- lights on dorset road
- two lanes
- 60 sign
- turn right through traffic

Jesus came to take away our sins, not to take away our brains.

Who is Jesus talking to? Some suggest this is directed to those well-known hypocrites, the Pharisees. But this is part of the Sermon on the Mount, addressed to a motley crowd. No this is a message for all of us—we are all seduced into the sin of judgmentalism at some time. Maybe some more than others, but none is free from this temptation.

Maybe it helps us to realise that this passage is not about judging at all. It's about hypocrisy.

- It's about saying one thing and being another.
- It's about the world leader who talks about how good his country is, then wages war on innocents.
- It's about the chief executive who presides over a corporate loss and then takes a pay rise.
- It's about the man who's a valuable team member at work, and then goes home and bashes his wife.
- It's about us, when we stand in church and sing of the love of God, then go out and make a hurtful remark.

Jesus is saying that if we act like that, we'll be judged like that. Hypocrites are exposed. What goes around, comes around.

Read The Message Version. Page 21.

But what are we to do?

The sin of judgmentalism is the most common sin on earth. We all do it from time to time, some of us more than others, but all of us do it.

- Are all the judgements I made this week about our political leaders tempered by an awareness of my own shortcomings?

- Are all the judgements I made this week about my work colleagues fair in the light of how conscientious I am at work?
- Are all the judgements I made this week about my wife, kids, parents moderated with humility?
- Are all the judgements I made this week about some of you guys informed by my own weaknesses?

Well, there's hope.

The Methodist Order of Knights.

Read the Message Version. Page 418

The hope is that one of the spiritual disciplines we must cultivate is the discipline of loving the good and lovely. It is a discipline because our natural sinful self is a negative, judging, stereotyping, blaming character. But Jesus calls us to follow him. And following him means making the effort, constantly, daily, moment by moment, to undermine our tendency to be judgmental with the character of love and beauty.

And there is so much beauty and truth in our world to celebrate:

Go home and make a list of 10 things that are "true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, and gracious."

What is in your list?

- The exquisite perfection of the plum blossoms in your garden?
- The sensual pleasure of a warm bath?
- A mother's hug?
- The feel and amazement when you hold a new-born child for the first time.
- The spectacular view of the Bay of Islands along the Great Ocean Road?
- The complex swirl of wood grain in a hand-crafted wooden bowl?
- Sleeping in on Saturday morning.
- That moment in sport when your coordination, the bat and the ball all synchronise into the perfect cover drive?
- Every moment in which a child takes another step towards maturity?
- The adagio movement in Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor?
- Raindrops on roses, whiskers on kittens...

Share your list with your family. Tell your life group. Stick it on the fridge.

The more we practice the spiritual discipline of accentuating the positive, the more we are able to do three important things. First, the plank in our own eye will go away. Second, we shall see past the speck in our brother's eye. And third, in our brother's eye we shall begin to see things that are true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling and gracious. We'll start to see the best, not the worst. We'll start to see the beautiful, not the ugly. We'll start to see things to praise, not things to criticise.

Let's make a commitment to Jesus that we shall work on first removing the plank from our own eyes so we can see the attributes of heaven and of the Kingdom of God in others. Let us work to change the way we see, think and talk about people. Let's ask the Holy Spirit for a new set of Kingdom glasses so that our eyesight is lined up with our Heavenly Father's who sees all that is good.

A-men