

Main Idea: In Matthew 7:1-6, Jesus warns us (kingdom seeking disciples) of two dangers in our relationships with other people.

- I. Jesus confronts the danger of judging others (1-5).
 - A. We are fallible (1-2).
 - B. We are fallen (3-4).
 1. It shows up in what we see (3).
 2. It shows up in what we say (4).
 - C. We are being fake, unless... (5).
 1. We deal with our own sin first.
 2. We then help our brother with his sin.
 - II. Jesus confronts the danger of not judging others (6).
 - A. We are not to be judgmental.
 - B. We are to be discerning.
- Make It Personal: Jesus has revealed two realities to us.
1. Our relationships take work.
 2. Our relationships reveal our need for a Savior.

This morning we are returning to the what is perhaps the most significant sermon ever preached, Jesus’ sermon on the mount, on the most significant topic that could ever be discussed, the kingdom of God, in a series we began back in 2019. We began by working through the beatitudes. Then COVID hit and we tabled our series in 2020, and later returned to it in early 2021, when we worked through the rest of Matthew 5 and Matthew 6. Today we enter the final chapter and a very timely topic. *Judging people*. Is it good to judge people? You might be surprised at Jesus’ answer.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:1-6

The words we’re considering this morning are from the lips of King Jesus. How His followers treat other people is a big deal to Him.

Jesus delivered this message early in His public ministry. According to the end of chapter four, Jesus had been proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing diseases, so that His fame was spreading. Great crowds were following Him. So what did He do?

According to 5:1, He went up on a mountain, sat down, and began to speak to His disciples about the nature of His kingdom. He has these two groups of people in mind as He speaks. The crowds—those who are considering becoming His followers. And His disciples—those who have made it clear they want to be His followers.

This is Kingdom Living 101. If you want to be My follower, says Jesus, this is what you can expect. If you are My follower, says the King, these are My directives for you. We might say that in this sermon Jesus is giving a crash course in discipleship.

First, He addresses the disciple's character (the beatitudes in 5:3-12), then the disciple’s responsibility (the similitudes in 5:13-16), and then the disciple’s attitude towards God’s law and righteousness (5:17-20).

He makes a staggering announcement in 5:20, saying, “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” The scribes and Pharisees? They were the most righteous people in Israel! At least, so they thought, as did most people.

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

But not Jesus. He said they, and anyone else who had the kind of righteousness they promoted, weren't going to heaven. The problem? They had turned the kingdom of God into a matter of mere external righteousness. So they looked good, but their hearts were corrupt, as Jesus demonstrated with example after example in the second half of chapter five. In essence, Jesus made it clear that the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. That's true with murder, and adultery, and divorce, and speaking falsely, and retaliation, and how we treat our enemies.

God sees the heart, in each of these areas, and if a righteous act is pleasing to Him, it's coming from a heart that's motivated to please Him. But that's our problem, isn't it? My heart gets angry. My heart lusts. My heart wants revenge.

And this is my basic problem. I need a new heart. I need a superior righteousness, says Jesus, for the standard is none other than God Himself. "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," says Jesus in 5:48.

In chapter six, the King goes deeper in exposing the problem of the heart by addressing "the why question," when it comes to helping the needy, and praying, and fasting (6:1-18). So, I do a good deed. That's good. Maybe. But why am I doing it? Whose praise am I seeking?

Then He turns to money in 6:19, and confronts the problem of anxiety. He says His followers are not to be anxious. About anything. Instead, they are to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (6:33)," and if they do, their Father will meet their every need. And if they're anxious, it's an indication they're not really trusting their Father, or that He may not even *be* their Father.

My friends, this is a convicting sermon, and that by design. This is the King's standard, a righteousness of a God-pleasing life that flows from a God-pleasing heart.

But I lack that, you say. Indeed, we all do. We all lack. And that admission is a prerequisite to belonging to His kingdom. Until we admit we lack, we're just like the scribes and Pharisees, and we're not yet in His kingdom. But when we admit we lack, when we *ask* for what we lack, He gives what we lack, by His grace, through the One who is speaking these words, who has come to save His people from their sins. That's next week's message, in 7:7-11.

But there's one more subject to be addressed by the King, and it too exposes our tremendous need for a Savior. It's the subject of *judging others*.

Here's the problem. Jesus just said that we are to seek first the kingdom of God. So you accept that standard, that calling. And you seek first His kingdom. But then you look around, and you see others who, in your opinion, aren't doing the same. Then what?

Should I even be asking that question? Is it any business of mine how other people are living? Do I have a responsibility to a person whose life seems to be out of step with the King's commands? If so, what is that responsibility?

Our Savior-King addresses these matters for us in Matthew 7:1-6. He begins with a couple of commands in verses 1-2, followed by a couple of questions in verses 3-4, followed by more commands in verses 5-6. In essence, Jesus warns us (kingdom seeking disciples) of two dangers in our relationships with other people. The first is the danger of judging others (1-5). The second is the danger of *not* judging others (6).

Let's face it. We will always have occasion to judge others. Why? Because even Christians are susceptible to sin. Becoming a Christian does not end our struggle with sin. Indeed, the battle intensifies because we're more aware of both the opposition and

the opportunities to sin. Though forgiven, Christians are not perfect. That fact forces us to deal with this complex, yet critical question.

How should I as a Christian behave towards another person who is missing the mark? Jesus answers this question for us by addressing two pitfalls. The first is judging others. The other is *not* judging others. Let's probe this carefully.

I. Jesus confronts the danger of judging others (1-5).

As we get started, just look at the flow of this paragraph. Jesus is straightforward, and warns us not to have the attitude of a judge (1), nor the attitude of a hypocrite (5a), but to have the attitude of a brother (5b). Jesus did not call His disciples to be judges.

He says in verse 1, "Judge not, that you be not judged." These are familiar words. Even non-Christians know these words, and quote them regularly. Judge not. That's a negative command. Jesus prohibits disciples from judging. Don't judge.

But what does Jesus mean? The word "judge" has a wide range of potential meanings. Strictly defined it means "to distinguish, to decide". Elsewhere in the Bible, this same Greek word is translated in different ways, such as: "avenge, condemn, decree, esteem, go to law, ordain, sentence, sue at law". The word in its basic sense refers to making some type of a "distinguishing decision" (whether positive or negative).

Let's address what Jesus is not saying, what He is NOT prohibiting. First, Jesus is not forbidding human courts of law (Tolstoy). "Judge not" does not mean that we shouldn't have courts with judges. We need judges, and God has granted delegated authority in the civil arena (see Romans 13:1ff).

Second, Jesus is not forbidding us to make moral judgments. He's not telling us to refuse to discern between good and evil, as if it didn't matter. We know that's not the case because He just us to be different from the religious hypocrites in 5:20. And that involves a value judgment!

Third, Jesus is not commanding us to suspend the use of our critical facilities in our relationships with other people. When we observe a fault in someone else's life, we're not to pretend it isn't there. This is not a call to be gullible. Some kinds of judging are both legitimate and mandated in God's Word. That's true even in this passage. According to what Jesus says in verse 5, there IS a fault in the brother. The problem is not with the diagnosis, but with the attitude that accompanies the diagnosis.

So what is Jesus prohibiting when He says, "Judge not"? He is forbidding what Bruner calls the judgment of condemnation.¹ R. C. Sproul says we ought to think of it this way, as, "Condemn not, lest you be condemned."

That's the point here. While we must make judgments at times, we, the disciples of Jesus, must refuse to take the seat belonging to *The Judge*, for that seat is already occupied. We do not condemn people. We don't have the authority to do that.

Hence, we are not to be *judgmental*. Every trace of censoriousness (a censorious attitude) must go. There's no place for a hyper-critical spirit in our midst. In our rigorous commitment to God's Kingdom (6:33), and we *should* be committed to seeking first God's kingdom, we are not to adopt a condemning attitude towards those who don't seem to be as committed. We're not to criticize those who don't live up to the King's standards and expectations. It's not that it doesn't matter. It's that what we are

¹ Bruner, p. 272.

condemning is true of us too. We too have fallen short. The only difference is, by His grace, we've asked for help, and He has answered our cry!

So we're not to be fault-finders, judges, those who condemn. Why not? That's the question Jesus addresses next. Why does Jesus say that it is dangerous for us to judge others? He gives us three reasons.

A. We are fallible (1-2). Verse 2, "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."

You and I are fallible. *Prone to wander, Lord I feel it.* We all fall short God's standard. This means, at times it's necessary to make value judgments in light of what God's Word says. Yet when we do that, we are making ourselves vulnerable to similar judgment. By whom? Jesus doesn't elaborate, but there are two possibilities.

First, we may be judged the same way by other people. Listen to verse 2 in the NIV, "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged." So I see you falling short of God's standard, and I make a judgment. I say, "That's not right. It's not acceptable in the eyes of our God." That's needful at times. But as I do so, I must remember this. It may be about *me* tomorrow, for I'm fallible too. And the way I deal with your sin today is going to shape the way my sin is dealt with tomorrow.

Secondly, and most importantly, we will be judged by God Himself. The Jewish people had a high regard for God's name. They avoided the actual speaking of God's name whenever possible. Such is the case in Matthew 7:2, a Semitic passive. Jesus uses passive verbs ("be judged", "be measured"), but the implication of who will do the judging and measuring is clear.

We could paraphrase verse 2, "For in the same way you judge others, God will judge you; and with the measure you use, God will measure you."

Life is a journey. For each of us, life is a pilgrimage leading to a final judgment, a final assessment. And who is the ultimate Judge before whom all of us will stand? God Himself. God alone has the right to judge. As humans, we don't because we are fallible. And when we choose to be judgmental and condemn of other people, we are choosing to do God's work. Judging is usurping God's place, and those who judge others will one day themselves be judged, by God.

Do Christians need this reminder? Indeed, we must, for not only did Jesus address the matter in His Discipleship 101 manual, but Paul addressed it too. Listen to what he wrote to the church in Rome, in Romans 14:10-13:

"Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother."

James, the half-brother of Jesus, confronted the problem as well, in James 4:11-12: "Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?"

So here's the first reason is dangerous to judge others. We are fallible.

B. We are fallen (3-4). To illustrate our fallenness, Jesus takes us to the carpenter's workshop and shares a little hypothetical situation regarding logs and specks.

Verses 3-4, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?"

Don't you hate it when you get something in your eye? Even a tiny speck of dust in one of our eyes can greatly distract us. And it can attract attention from other people around us too. As in, "Hey, let me help you get that out!"

Here's the second reason we shouldn't judge others, because we are fallen. And our fallenness shows up in two ways.

1. *It shows up in what we see (3).* "Why do you **see** the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not **notice** the log that is in your own eye?"

There's where our fallenness shows up, in what we *see*, and what we don't see too. We are very selective in what we see. We quickly see problems in other people's lives, but not our own. We see the speck, the mote, the tiny piece of dust. But we don't see the log, the plank, the beam, the rafter. That doesn't make sense, does it?

Last week my camera on my Dell laptop stopped working. I'm in a zoom appointment, and I'm not there. Now that's frustrating! The problem? It has to be those crazy updates. Why do they keep taking over my computer with those updates?! So I googled the problem. Yep, that's what it must be. Some software engineer out there decided to require an update and didn't even think about the problems it would create for a hard-working guy like me.

And then I kept scrolling down the trouble-shooting page. It suggested I might check the on and off switch for the camera. What? I didn't even know there was such a switch! But there it was, on the side of my computer, a tiny little switch which I had apparently bumped. I clicked it and quickly discovered I wasn't seeing the problem rightly. The problem wasn't somebody else. It was me all along.

Here's how the KJV renders verse 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?" That's a good question when your computer camera isn't working, and when your marriage isn't working too, or things between you and your parents.

But it's not just in what we *see*. Our fallenness shows up in what we *say* too.

2. *It shows up in what we say (4).* "Or how can you **say** to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?"²

Martyn Lloyd-Jones made an interesting observation when he said, "There are no people who are more sensitive to criticism than those who are always criticizing others."³

Did you ever notice how we tend to have a rosy view of ourselves, and a jaundiced view of others? As humans, we are prone to exaggerate the faults of others, and minimize the gravity of our own faults.

It happens at Christian institutions. I remember being a resident director of Quincer Dorm and listening to students complain about the faults of their roommate.

It happens in churches too. When I was in the 6th grade, one of the other boys at our church was talking to me, and he began talking about another family in our church,

² You'll notice that Jesus has asked two probing questions. "Why?" back in verse 3. And now, "How" in verse 4. He's helping us see our fallenness. We're prone to see it, and judge it, in others, but not ourselves.

³ Lloyd-Jones, p. 171.

and said something like, "My mom told me that their problem is that they're so religious." I hear it all the time in marriage counseling. "Let me tell you what he did...or she did."

D. A. Carson suggests the most obvious biblical example of this is David:

King David steals another man's wife. Despite his large harem, he lusts after this particular woman, seduces her, and later discovers that she has become pregnant by him. Her husband is absent at the military front (fighting the king's wars) and so David arranges to have him killed. The king is now guilty of both adultery and murder. The prophet Nathan enters the royal court; but instead of confronting his monarch outright, he tells a parable, a short story about a poor farmer whose one little lamb has been stolen by a rich, powerful neighbor with a large flock of his own. David is incensed; perhaps some of the force of his wrath arises from his own suppressed guilt. In seething indignation, and quite unconscious of any irony, he asks who this wicked farmer is. Nathan replies, "You are the man."

Somehow, King David, incredibly blind, had been unconscious of the plank in his own eye as he fumed over the speck of sawdust in the rich farmer's eye.⁴

Indeed, our fallenness shows up in what we *see* and then in what we *say*. "How can you *say* to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye?'"

Have you ever offered to help someone who had something in their eye? How'd they respond? It's a delicate operation to get a speck out of someone's eye. Sometimes such help is needed. But I'm in no position to help if I have a chunk of wood in my own eye. And if I see you coming to help me with the speck in my eye, and I can still squint enough to see that a log is hanging out of your eye, I don't want your help! Why? Because you're in no condition to help me.

In verse 5a Jesus says that such a person is a "hypocrite." That's interesting. Back in Matthew 6:2 Jesus used the word "hypocrite" to describe religious fakes. Here he uses the same term with reference to a judgmental disciple.

This brings us to Jesus' third reason for not judging others. First, we're fallible. Second, we're fallen. Third, we're being fake.

C. We are being fake, unless... (5). I say, "Fake, unless," because of what Jesus says in verse 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."

So if we're making a judgment regarding something we're seeing in each other's lives, we're being a hypocrite (i.e. we're being fake), *unless* the following occurs.

1. *We deal with our own sin first.* "First, take the log out of your own eye." Literally, "first out of your own eye, throw out the log!" Get your own life in order. Take inventory of things at home first.

Friends, helping other people with sin issues is delicate work. If a person has a log in his own eye, even if he is a well-educated ophthalmologist, I don't want him near the speck in my eye. Do you? And so it is with spiritual restoration. Jesus says that you can't help me, and I can't help you in spiritual matters as long as we're tolerating sin in our own lives.

⁴ Carson, D. A. (1999). [*Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5-10*](#) (pp. 109-110). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Having said that, notice two very significant words in the middle of verse 5. “And then.” So we deal with our own sin first. *And then*. And then what?

2. *We then help our brother with his sin*. It's true that we're not to rush into spiritual surgery, but neither are we to avoid it. Once we've addressed matters in our own lives (and the log is gone), we now have a new responsibility, to help our brother remove the speck.

So when Jesus says, “Judge not,” He is not telling us to “mind our own business.” What’s going on in your life *should* matter to me, for it matters to our Father, and we are family. But here’s where we start, by being as critical of ourselves as we often are of others.

Then comes the second responsibility. Once we have cleared up matters in our own lives, by God's grace, we are responsible to get involved helping our erring brother. Spiritual restoration is NOT meddling. We have a brotherly responsibility to each other. Once we've dealt with our own eye trouble, we can see clearly to deal with our brother's.

So, who needs this instruction? Who should we be thinking about right now? Listen again to a comment by D. A. Carson:

I used to think that those who most needed Matthew 7:1–5 were young people, especially students. They are struggling to establish their own identities, trying to come to terms with new ideas. These new ideas are quickly espoused and stoutly defended or as quickly rejected and unthinkingly mocked. But young people and students are far from being the only ones who go through periods of identity crisis and of critical exposure to new thinking. Older people, fearful of their positions, concerned with their prestige, and often disturbed by what they take to be the lack of productivity in their lives, often become singularly defensive, rigid, judgmental, intolerant, even nasty and petty. The young, at least, may grow out of it; but for the old to reject such a long-established pattern of behavior may take a dramatic display of divine intervention, perhaps in the form of a crushing, devastating experience that engenders humility.⁵

There’s the first danger that Jesus addresses. He confronts the danger of judging others. But then He moves to a second danger.

II. Jesus confronts the danger of not judging others (6).

Verse 6, “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

Interesting. How does verse 6 fit into the context? How does verse 6 relate to verses 1-5? Jesus told us that we are not to judge faults. But in verse 6 He tells us that we're not to ignore faults either. Or as John Stott puts it, “The saints are not judges, but the saints are not simpletons either.”

There are actually two ditches to avoid. One, being judgmental, and two, being undiscerning. As disciples we must avoid both.

A. We are not to be judgmental.

B. We are to be discerning.

Jesus is painting for us a realistic picture of how relationships work in His kingdom. The fact of the matter is that not everyone will be grateful for the constructive

⁵ Carson, D. A. (1999). *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10* (p. 111). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

criticism and correction they might need, and we might offer. In fact, some will resist it, or flat out reject it, or receive it but later resent it. This is where verse 6 enters.

Notice the two negative commands Jesus gives us. One, don't give that which is holy to dogs. And two, don't cast pearls before swine. The two prohibitions are parallel, and basically mean the same thing.

What does Jesus mean by "holy things" and "pearls"? He is talking about truth, specifically, true words that we might share with someone who needs to hear them. What do sinners, those with logs and specks in their eyes, need? They need to hear truth.

But they may not *want* to hear truth. They are like "dogs." Jesus isn't talking about household pets here. In His day dogs scavenged in the garbage dumps of the cities. They were wild, unclean, and despised. While some of you may talk to your dogs, you didn't talk to the kind of dog Jesus has in mind here, for he wouldn't listen.

Jesus also mentions "pigs." To the Jew, pigs were not only an unclean animal (and unacceptable according to kosher laws), but were also wild and vicious. I raised some pigs once, and when I entered their pen, I talked to them and let them know I had food for them, and they responded, positively. But not these pigs. They're capable of harming you, and they will, no matter how sincere you might be in your desire to help them.

What is Jesus saying? In life you wouldn't give something valuable to a wild dog, and you wouldn't place a string of priceless pearls before a pig. Why not? Because you know they wouldn't appreciate them. Oh, the pigs might come running to the pearls at first, but once they realized they were not morsels of food, they would trample them into the ground, and they might even attack you.

So it is with the truth. Everyone needs the truth, but not everyone wants it. So if I have truth that will help someone, should I give it to them?

For example, "You have a sin-speck in your eye. You'd see better if it wasn't there. I can help you get it out. That's the truth." So should I share this truth with you?

It depends. I have to make a judgment call. Some people have warped values. They'd rather have a can of coke than Living Water. So in my conversations with that person, do I keep bringing up the subject of the truth about his need for Living Water?

Brothers and sisters, we're not to be judgmental, but we are to be discerning. Proverbs 9:8 puts it this way, "Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you."

So, getting rid of the speck would help you. That's the truth. But I have another truth to consider. Your receptivity. Are you ready to hear it?

Some people are simply *not* ready to hear the truth. Indeed, they're dead set against it, as they've demonstrated when they were given truth in the past. So to go ahead and give another dose of truth would be casting pearls before swine.

I think Jesus Himself is the best interpreter of what Jesus had in mind in verse 6. How did Jesus present truth to people? It depended on the person. He never altered the truth, but He did alter the way He presented it, and at times, *didn't* present it.

When Pilate asked questions, Jesus answered. When Herod did, Jesus gave no answer. Why the difference? Herod had already received truth, which he had not only resisted but opposed, and all He wanted out of Jesus this time was the entertainment of seeing a miracle.

To a woman caught in adultery, Jesus gave life-giving truth. To the chief priests at His trial, silence. To a repentant tax collector named Zacchaeus, He talks about salvation. To a teachable Pharisee like Nicodemus, He answers questions about the new birth. With the hard-hearted Pharisees in Matthew 23, He pronounces a series of woes.

Everyone is different with Jesus. When a person is ready for truth, He gives it. When they're not, He doesn't.⁶

How do we know a person's receptivity? We must make judgments. Is this person ready for truth? And to know that, we must know the person.

There are implications here for how we do evangelism. Frederick Dale Bruner makes this helpful observation, "There is a form of evangelism that urges Christians to use every opportunity to share the gospel. Unfortunately, insensitive evangelism often proves harmful not only to the obdurate whose heart is hardened by the undifferentiating evangelist, but harmful also to the gospel that is force-fed. Pressure evangelists tell us that...when a Christian worker is filled by the Spirit he or she will turn dogs into puppies and pigs into piglets and that there will be a decision and not a disaster at the end of a Spirit-filled encounter."⁷

Friends, apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, a person cannot understand, let alone appreciate and receive, spiritual truth. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."

So do we give up on certain people? Never. We must always remember that the man who wrote half of the New Testament books was once a hater and persecutor of the truth regarding Jesus. Jesus isn't telling us to give up on people, which we must never do. He is telling us to be discerning as we present truth to people, realizing that some people just aren't ready to hear more truth, not yet.

In his helpful commentary John Stott suggests that verse 6 presents an exception rather than the rule. He says, "To give people up is a very serious step to take. I can think of only one or two occasions in my experience when I have felt it was right. This teaching of Jesus is for exceptional situations only; our normal Christian duty is to be patient and persevere with others, as God has patiently persevered with us."⁸

Of course, what Christian words can't do, a Christian life can often do! While it may be impossible to talk to some people about spiritual matters, it's always possible to show Christ to the same people through our lives.

Most of us can relate to this. There are people in our lives that we care deeply about, but they're not open to the truth we'd love to share. Indeed, they may attack if we try. What should we do? We pray the truth. We live the truth. We love that person who needs the truth. And we wait for God to open their hearts to the truth, as He has done with us.

Make It Personal: Jesus has revealed two realities to us.

1. Our relationships take work. Jesus has warned us today of two relational dangers, the danger of judging others, and the danger of not judging others, the danger of

⁶ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "You do not handle a Pilate and a Herod in exactly the same way; you answer the questions of a Pilate, but you say nothing to a Herod." p. 188.

⁷ F. D. Bruner, p. 275.

⁸ John Stott, p. 183.

being judgmental, and the danger of failing to remember that all people are not at the same level of spiritual interest. With this in mind, let's ask ourselves some important questions.

First, do I enjoy finding fault with other people? Does it bring me pleasure and satisfaction to "open up a can of worms" and "uncover a skeleton in someone else's closet"? Do I seem to be always on the lookout for problems in other people's lives?

If I have answered yes to these questions, I am guilty of what Jesus says should not be present in the life of one of His disciples. If we delight in probing into other people's problems, it may be because we are trying to distract from our own problems. If so we need God's forgiveness. And how do we obtain forgiveness? 1 John 1:8-9 is an essential passage. Rather than denying our sin (1:8), we confess our sin (1:9 "say the same thing about it God does"), and receive God's forgiveness and cleansing for our sin.

Second, am I willing to get involved in the restoring process in my brother or sister's life? We're told in Proverbs 3:27, "Withhold not good, when it is in the power of your hand to do it." This restoration work is at times both painful and risky. We might be rejected by the other person. But when we do it, we're just our Savior.

2. *Our relationships reveal our need for a Savior.* That's the ultimate point of this passage, of this sermon on the mount. We see a standard we cannot meet without a Savior. But we have a Savior! Read the rest of Matthew's gospel, and you'll see Him, living out these words perfectly, dying in our place, and conquering death for our benefit.

Closing Song: #438 "Cleanse Me" (verses 1, 2, 3)

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning's message from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was entitled, "*The Danger of Judging Others, and Not Judging Others.*" Take time as a group to re-read Matthew 7:1-6. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear this passage read?
2. In verse 1 Jesus prohibits *judging*. What does it mean to "judge" someone in this context? Why does Jesus say a disciple is not supposed to judge others?
3. What is going to happen to us, according to verse 2? What are some practical benefits of remembering this?
4. Jesus talks about a "speck" and a "log" in verses 3 & 4. What's the point of Jesus illustration? Some use this passage to support the notion, "You mind your own business and I'll mind mine!" Is it ever right to talk to someone else about a problem we perceive in his or her life, and if so, when and how?
5. In verse 5 Jesus says to "take the log out of your own eye." In practical terms, how do we do that? Perhaps share a personal example of what this looks like.
6. What does Jesus' command in verse 6 mean? How does it relate to verses 1-5? What are some practical implications for our lives this week?