

The Mote and the Beam

Matthew 13:34 “*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.*”

Matthew 7:1-5 and Luke 6:41-42 provide the text for this study. The subject at hand addresses judging. Some would call it criticizing. In short, judging is observing the actions of another and then judging those actions. Never forget, the intent of judging is not to find praise, but to find fault.

This parable speaks of the kind of judgment that can result in the judge being condemned. When we go to civil court, it is not for the purpose of the judge being judged. It is for the accused to be judged. Matthew 7:1 says “*Judge not that ye be not judged.*” There is a judgment of others that can lead to the judge being condemned. Let us be clear that there is no wrong in the observation of sin. I am not judging a man coming down the road with a bottle of whiskey in his hand when I say to him “it is wrong for you to partake of strong drink.” I am not judging when I observe folk involved in sin and turn and remove myself from them. Sometimes we find ourselves both silent and tolerant in regard to sin because we are fearful we will be accused of judging. In this wicked society, folk who speak out against sin are accused of being “judgmental.” The very next parable of our Lord in Matthew 7:6 clarifies this to us. This parable of the swine and pearls says we are to watch for and stay away from sin.

The judgment of this parable is an observation of the outward appearance of men. The judgment spoken of in this parable is in regard to that which can be seen with the human eye. We know this because the parable speaks to us about seeing the mote and the beam through the eye. For sure, we cannot see the inside of another person. Only Christ can.

If you do not wish to be evaluated by others, and who does, don't evaluate them. That is the gist of verse 2. We are told “*ye shall be*

judged.” It sounds not as “if” it will happen, but that it “shall” happen. God will simply turn the tables on the one who criticizes. I don’t wish this to happen to me or any one.

The mote. We think of a mote as a small splinter or chip off of a beam. Actually the Greek meaning is “a small twig or straw.” For certain, the mote is a tiny object.

The beam. The beam is a massive object in comparison to the mote. The beam is a massive piece of timber. The beam could hardly fit in the hand, much less the eye. Thus, we see the Lord greatly exaggerating to get across the message.

Verse 3 asks a difficult question to answer- why observe the mote in another’s eye when you have a beam in your own eye? Why observe the twig in your brother’s eye when you have a tree in your own eye? Considering the question at hand, it seems that we would never want to evaluate someone else. Yet, there are those who spend their life evaluating others. One who constantly evaluates others is actually telling on one’s self. They are seeking to distract from their own faults. A beam in your eye will stop you from seeing yourself. A tree in your eye will stop you from seeing yourself. A person who evaluates others is trying to hide something in their own life. Remember, a twig is a twig, but a tree is 10,000 twigs.

Verse 4 is an offer to help someone remove their faults. That sure sounds like a noble gesture. “Hey, fellow, I see you have a splinter in your eye. Allow me to help you get it out.” An offer to solve another person’s faults is simply an attempt to cover up one’s own faults. If I ever get a twig in my eye, I will not ask a doctor to remove it who has a tree in his eye. He may pluck out your eye!

Verse 5 calls the person doing the evaluation a *hypocrite*. What is a hypocrite? A hypocrite is one who finds fault in others while having faults in their own life. No one likes that term. If you ever wish to make a person mad, call them a hypocrite.

If you are going to spend your time as a church member evaluating the faults and short-comings of others, you will have no time to serve the Lord. Why do I say this? If there are any perfect people in

church, someone has failed to introduce them to me. I have been in church 50 years and the perfect brethren are surely hid somewhere. Fact of the matter is there are no perfect folk in your church or in my church. In fact, I have never met a perfect person.

We are told in verse 5 we can help others with their faults, but only when we have our own life straight. I doubt anyone will ever be qualified to do so. I don't see how a person with a mote in his own eye can help a man with the mote in his eye. It is only through a spirit of love that we can help others with their faults. Harsh judgment has no place in the work of the Lord.

Favorite sayings regarding criticism

Blowing out the other fellow's candle won't make yours shine any brighter.

Criticism is like dynamite. It has its place but should be handled only by experts.

Those who can, do. Those who can't, criticize.

Criticizing another man's garden will not keep the weeds out of your own garden.