

Judgment

In keeping with the lessons of late, Social Gospel and the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which were requested topics; this lesson is also a topic that has been requested. The question is what is meant by the idea of...

Scriptural Judgment

So often when having a discussion with people that are seeking only to justify themselves and their disobedient actions this is the response that is given; Who are you to judge me? The Bible says that we are not to judge others. That comes from...

Matt 7:1

1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

Now note what Christ says in...

John 7:24

24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

If the passage from Matt. 7 tells us that we are not to make decisions, or judgments, then what does the passage from John tell us? Christ says, quite clearly, that judgments are to be made, righteous judgments. There is no contradiction between these scriptures. Not when they are understood in their context and surrounding passages.

Matt 7:2-5

2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. *3* Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? *4* Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? *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.

Our Lord's comment in verse 1, if taken out of context and made to stand alone, might very well be understood to say that we are to make no judgments, but when seen in its context with the rest of the passage in Matt. 7, then it is readily apparent that Christ is not saying to make no judgment, but rather is saying that we need to understand that any judgment we bind on others will be bound on us. If we demand of others that they live to a standard that we are not willing to live to ourselves, then we are hypocrites. That is the point Christ is making when He says...

"Take the beam from your own eye before trying to remove the speck from your brothers."

The real impact of the Lord's instruction here is that whatever standard which is used to measure others must be the same standard that we measure ourselves by, and that is the very point that He makes in...

John 7:24

24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

The following is an excerpt from Adam Clark's Commentary on this passage...

"Attend to the law, not merely in the letter, but in its spirit and design. Learn that the law which commands men to rest on the Sabbath day is subordinate to the law of mercy and love, which requires them to be ever active to promote God's glory in the comfort and salvation of their fellow creatures; and endeavor to judge of the merit or demerit of an action, not from the first impression it may make upon your prejudices but from its tendency, and the motives of the person, as far as it is possible for you to acquaint yourselves with them; still believing the best, where you have no certain proof to the contrary.

While any commentary is nothing more than the thoughts of a man and not the definitive statement of the understanding of God's word, I do think that here, Clark has some very good thoughts to be considered. Christ used the example of circumcision in this context. If circumcision was to be performed on the Sabbath when the child was eight days old...

Gen 17:12

12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.

Circumcision was to be performed on the eighth day, even if that day was the Sabbath.

John 7:19-24

19 "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" **20** The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?" **21** Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel. **22** For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. **23** If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? **24** Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Can you see what Clark is talking about in the rest of this passage and why He concludes with the statement in verse 24? These people were condemning Christ for healing on the Sabbath but they performed circumcisions when the time fell on the Sabbath. Their judgment was hypocritical and without compassion based on prejudice. That is what Clark is saying. Judgment

must first and foremost be in accordance with the Law, the standard, it must be applied both to ourselves first, and then to the actions of the world. That is the righteous judgment of John 7:24.

The scriptures do not teach that we are to not make judgments; they teach that whatever judgment we do make is to be in complete accordance with the standard of God's Word. They teach that we are to first live that Word before all men. They teach that we are to apply that Word with love, patience, and respect to all.

James 2:2-4

2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, **3** and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," **4** have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

James points out that they needed to avoid making judgments based on what he calls their...

“Evil Motives”

This term “Evil” here comes from the Greek...

Poneros (NT:4190)

Akin to ponos, "labor, toil," denotes "evil that causes labor, pain, sorrow, malignant evil," it is used

- (a) with the meaning bad, worthless, in the physical sense, Matt 7:17-18; in the moral or ethical sense, "evil," wicked; of persons, e. g., Matt 7:11; Luke 6:45
- (b) with the meaning toilsome, painful, Eph 5:16; 6:13; Rev 16:2. Cf. poneria, "iniquity, wickedness."

I think this is very interesting. The root of the word is...

Ponos (NT:4192)

Ponos (pon'-os); from the base of NT:3993; toil, i.e. (by implication) anguish:
KJV - pain.

Evil, coming from the root of a word that is translated as toil, pain, or anguish, we tend to think of the word “Evil” as something that is inherently bad or against that which is good...

3 John 11

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

John defines for us what God considers to be “Evil.” Anything that is not good is evil. Anyone who does not do good does evil. Friends, therein is the statement of judgment that each and

every one of us must make. We must decide what is good and what isn't, then we must decide if we will do that which is good or not. By definition, that is judgment. Our judgment. Paul writes concerning this judgment in...

Eph 5:6

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

He starts this thought with...

Eph 5:15-17

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, **16** making the most of your time, because the days are evil. **17** So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The will of the Lord is the determining factor between what is good and what is evil. Understanding and doing His will defines good. Disobedience to His will defines everything that is evil. This brings us back to the discussion we started on the term that is translated as evil, Ponerous. The implication is that doing or being evil isn't an accident. It is something that is worked at, toil. It is possible to be evil, disobedient, by accident. Ignorance can and will cause man to be evil, by definition, evil being any disobedience to the will of God, whether from ignorance or by choice. That is Paul's point in Eph. 5, it is man's responsibility, our responsibility, to seek to know God's will and to do it. That demands judgment on that one who seeks to do His will, demands it. Anytime there is a standard it requires from the one who would adhere to that standard, judgment, decision, decision of whether or not the standard will be obeyed. That is judgment. When driving down the freeway and someone flies by you doing 90 and you comment on that to your wife or husband, are you passing judgment on that driver? Not at all. The judgment has already been passed by the standard which is California vehicular code that defines what the speed limit is to be. When you have someone who urges you to engage in something that the standard of God's will defines as evil, it is not you that is passing judgment, it is God's will, the standard that has defined the act as evil, not you. None of us get to put any of the laws into the vehicular code, but when we are going down the freeway at 75 and we are passed, it isn't difficult to make the judgment that they are in violation of the code. When we understand that God's will to say we are to sing and not use musical instruments in our worship, it isn't us that makes the judgment that says if a different group chooses to do so, it is in violation of God's will, that isn't interpretation, that is understanding.

Yet the response that the world cries is we are judging them, this brings us full circle to the passage we read in...

Matt 7:1

1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

The world sees this as its great panacea, its ultimate justification. I will live my life as I see fit, and you will not disagree with how I choose to do so. If you do then you are judging me, and

God says you can't do that. It is funny that so many of the world don't have a clue what God's word says, but they know what this verse says? They misunderstand it, misuse it, and misapply it, but they do know what it says. If they truly knew what Christ was saying, they would understand that His statement wasn't intended to anyone from making judgment on truth and actions, it was to teach that any judgment that is made and applied to others must first be applied to ourselves and that it must be in accordance to the standard that is God's word. Application of the standard demands judgment, is judgment. Not ours, but God's. When someone says that we are not to judge, they are basically saying one of two things...

- 1) They are looking to justify their actions and words
- 2) They see that we are applying a standard to them that we do not apply to ourselves

Therein is our responsibility and accountability, when we live by the standard of the word, doing good, then our lives sit in judgment of all those who don't. When our words are the words of God, then they become the words of judgment against all that do not heed those words but are disobedient and willful following their own paths and agendas. We will all stand before the judgment seat and stand accountable for our deeds in this flesh.

There are two judgments that the world will experience. The one is in and of this world, the judgments that we make every day of our lives. Will we choose to live by the standard of the Word, or will we choose to live by our own standard? Will we follow and do good or evil? The second is seen in...

2 Thess 2:8-12

8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; **9** that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, **10** and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. **11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, **12** in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

All will be judged by the truth. That cannot be avoided...

Heb 9:27

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

Let's not confuse application of God's standard with the idea of enacting law. We have not authority to enact law, but we are commanded to discern between right and wrong, to make judgments. Let us be careful to live that standard for ourselves and in application to others. It is God's judgment and not our own that brings life, it is disobedience to His judgment that brings death.