

Title: It's probably me.
Text: Luke 6.37-42
Theme: the sweet gift of humility
Series: Luke
Prop Stmnt: As followers of Christ, we are uncertain of ourselves, but certain of God.

Read Text:

Planet Fitness is a chain of workout facilities that claims to be a "Judgment Free Zone." What they are trying to communicate is that you don't need to worry about not being in shape in order to go to the gym. If you are not in shape you may need to go to a gym, but if you feel judged by beefy weightlifters and supermodel figures then you are not inclined to go. So, Planet Fitness says that their gyms are "Judgment Free Zones." You are not judged by what you look like, unless, what you look like is considered to be intimidating to others. So, here is the dilemma for Planet Fitness. What do you do if someone in your gym judges someone else? The only way for you to have a judgment free zone is if you ban all judgy people from your gym. But in order to ban judgy people, that means that you have to be judgy that they are being judgy and if you do that, then you aren't a Judgment Free Zone anymore because the judgy people who banned the judgy people are still there. You get my point.

When Jesus said, "Judge not, and you will not be judged" he was NOT saying that you are to suspend all moral categories and discernment and that there is no such thing as right or wrong and that anybody can do anything they want. If that were the case, then no Christian could be a police officer, security guard, prosecuting attorney, judge or member of a jury. If your child is throwing his oatmeal on the floor, who are you to judge him? If anybody could do whatever they wanted, then someone could judge others and that would be ok, right? That would make as much sense as someone saying, "You can't say can't." So, no, "judge not, and you will not be judged" is not saying that, otherwise Jesus would be violating his own rule.

In the church of Corinth, a member of the church was engaging in immorality with his step-mom and the church was not dealing with it and by not dealing with it, they were making it appear that this was okay and that they were okay with it. In 1 Corinthians 5.12, the Scripture says, "Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?" So, there is a kind of judgment that we have to avoid and there is a kind of judgment we have to do. Here, Jesus is prohibiting a particular type of judgment. So, what does Jesus mean by this?

Jesus is prohibiting the attitude and posture that you and I are the ones who set the standard that everyone else has to live up to. He is warning us against the notion that we are in any way, morally loftier or innately superior to others. Jesus is laying out the manifesto for his kingdom. The citizens of his kingdom are not people who are large and in charge. In order to be in the Kingdom of Christ, we have to acknowledge that we have nothing to offer. We are the ones who are in need of God's mercy because we are sinners who deserve his judgment. Therefore, as ones who are deserving of judgment, we do not, after becoming followers of his, turn into people who are judges. That is, we do not now adopt a position of superiority because we never

outgrow our need of the gospel. Our position as believers is humility, not condescension. So, when you look at these 4 commands in verse 37-38, Jesus is challenging us to examine our posture. So, in your inner action with others...

1. **What is your default position?** (37-38)

A. **Hostility?**

The command to not judge refers to the person who treats others as if there is no hope for them. They are beyond forgiveness, beyond any possibility of changing. Therefore, the one doing the judging has a default or automatic attitude of hostility and contempt to those he considers to be beneath him, either morally or in status/standing or in character? They don't even give a person a chance.

It is frustrating and grievous to see certain churches, denominations, mission agencies, evangelistic organizations cave in to cultural views and social demands adopt unbiblical positions on marriage, gender, etc. It can feel lonely at times. But in our effort to be true to God's Word, we do not become untrue to God's heart. We do not hold to a biblical ethic with a vengeful spirit. Being moral and faithful is not an excuse for being hateful. In fact, being truly faithful means to reflect the holiness and the merciful spirit of God. People trapped in their sin are already judged by their sin. They need mercy. They need to know that there is another way and they need to see the grace and love in that. Here is the warning. Judge not, and you will not be judged. Treating others with hostility because of their immoral practices invites God to treat you with hostility. In other words, genuine believers do not adopt ungodly positions on morality, and neither do they treat others with hostility. Related to that is the command not to condemn.

B. **Condemnation?**

The Apostle Paul had been a Pharisee. He excelled in condemning others. He fully embraced the idea that his group was morally superior to all others and he defended this and enforced this even to the point of imprisoning and executing Christians. But then Saul, as he was known, had his life hijacked by Christ. And the hero of the Pharisees became enemy #1 and moved to the top of their hit list. He was constantly in danger. In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul details some of the abuse that he experienced from the Jews because they hated him so much. "Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. (They thought he was dead, otherwise they would have continued.) Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people.... Paul's life was a constant punching bag. He was hated by the Jews. His life was made miserable by many of them. How did he think about them? Romans 9.1-3 "I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit – that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh." There is nothing amazing about hating those who hate you. But loving, praying for, refusing to give up on those who hate you is amazing.

Loving someone, praying for them, refusing to give up on them, does not mean that you capitulate to their demands or their positions. It means that you don't and you let them know that there is a better way for them and you want to see them grasp that.

Are you the type of person who treats others as if they are automatically guilty? Do others feel like they will never measure up to your expectations? Are there people who have hurt you that no matter what, will always live under your disappointment? Are you an intimidating person to be around? How do you approach conflict? Do you assume that the other person is probably at fault and that you are probably right? If you assumed the opposite, it would absolutely revolutionize many of your homes. If you assumed that you are probably at fault in some way, it would absolutely change the entire tone of your marriage and home. It is so simple, but so impossible without God's grace. Those are the two things that Christ forbids. Now two things he commands. Forgive and give. Is your default position...

C. Forgiveness?

One of the evidences of being a genuine believer is my willingness to forgive the sins of others against me. Jesus really presses this point hard in Matthew 18. The person who treats others as if they cannot be forgiven is betraying the fact that they have never really understood their sin and therefore their forgiveness. You are not a believer if you refuse to open your heart and be willing to forgive. That does not mean that you treat the unrepentant and abusers like their sin is fine or is not serious. Not at all. Forgiveness can only be granted to the repentant. It means that you are prepared in your heart to forgive.

Beloved, if I am a follower of Christ, then I have already been made aware that I am spiritually bankrupt. I have nothing to brag about. I am the problem, not the solution. In fact, I am never the solution, Jesus is. Therefore, when I am involved in a conflict, I need to be very uncertain of myself. I need to be very uncertain of my take on the situation. I need to be very certain of God, but not certain of me because, I have blind spots. Ironically, the things that we tend to be the angriest about are the things that reveal our own failures. How much grace did God have to give you in order to forgive you? An infinite amount! Therefore, are there people in your life who are beyond the reach of God's grace? Are there people that you treat as if they are hopeless? If so, then you are assuming that God is incapable of reaching them, God doesn't want to reach them, God's grace is not sufficient for them or you are somehow better. If you forgive and you are ready to forgive, then you will be forgiven. I take that to mean, that when you are merciful like your Father is merciful, then that is evidence that God is your father. But then Jesus commands us to give and to give generously. Why do you think he says this here?

D. Generosity?

I have heard this verse used by people trying to encourage people to give money to their ministry by saying, if you give to this, you will get so much more back. But this not about putting money in the offering. How is generosity connected to forgiveness?

Generosity is a great way to evaluate the authenticity of my forgiveness. If someone has sinned against me, and it is clear that they are truly sorry and they seek forgiveness. I need to forgive them. I need to forgive them for them, for me, and for the reputation of the gospel. How do I know if I have forgiven them from the heart and not just with words? Is my heart open to them? Am I ready to be generous? That is hard, isn't it? It's more like, impossible, apart from the gospel. But when you think about it, this is exactly what God has done for us through Christ. Through Christ, we are forgiven. Then how does God treat us? Does he hold us at arm's length? Does he put us on probation? He treats us as his children. He adopts us. He justifies us with the righteousness of Christ. He gives us the kingdom!

Now, we are ready to see how these commands set us up for what's next. If my spirit is closed toward another person and I am not offering forgiveness from the heart or willing to offer forgiveness from the heart, then that means that I have an unresolved issue. I have a blind spot and that is not okay. But if I think that's okay, then I am assuming that I am fine. This leads to the second question that this text raises.

2. What is your assumption? (39-42)

Are you a

A. **Leader or follower?**

This is where the expression of, the blind leading the blind comes from. A blind person knows that he/she is blind and is very cautious. If, however someone says, "I will help you, take my arm", then the blind person is assuming that the person providing leadership can see and will avoid danger. If the person who says "I will help you, take my arm" is blind, but doesn't know it, then they will both fall into the ditch (into danger). If you presume that you are always right, that others are inferior to you, that you do not need to listen to anyone else, that others will never measure up, that you hold others at a distance, that you are so confident in yourself that you really do not need help from anyone else, especially your spouse or other believers, then your spiritual pride is exceedingly dangerous to your soul and to your life. You are blind and by presuming to be an authority, you are leading others into the ditch.

I need to assume that I am a follower. Only as I follow Christ and assume the posture of a follower, and humble myself am I able to lead others. Our greatest asset as leaders is seen in how faithfully we follow Christ. What is your assumption about yourself. The second little parable asks, forces us to ask ourselves if we assume that we are the teacher or a disciple?

B. **Teacher or disciple?**

Jesus came to do the will of his Father. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. The teacher is Jesus. The teacher is the authority and our authority does not hoard the authority but shares it. Jesus gives his life for the good of others. We are not above our teacher. In fact, when we are fully mature followers of Christ, then our hope for others, our large-hearted hope for others, our longing for the salvation of others, our looking at our political opponents, our cultural

adversaries will be fundamentally different. We will not look at people as enemies to be booed or slighted, mocked or disdained, but as people, made in the image of God, who need to come to God and we need to help get them there. The last parable makes us ask the question of, do I assume that I am the authority (right) or that I am probably wrong (learner)?

C. Authority or learner?

Jesus then tells a parable story that is actually rather funny. The person who assumes that he has found something wrong with another person (speck in the brother's eyes) has no idea that he has a log in his own eye! There is no way that the guy with the speck is going to let guy with the log get anywhere close to him. Beloved, you and I live in a broken world with broken people. We need to be positions to help people. If we are blind to our own failures (logs in our eyes) there is no way that others will be receptive to any help that we offer. If I am a follower of Christ, then my default position is going to be humility (not hostility, not condemnation). I will be ready to forgive and be generous to those I forgive. My assumptions will be that I am a follower of Christ who serves others as a reflection of him, who needs to be led and not presumptuous to lead others, and who is way more concerned about the log in my eye than the speck in others.

I get involved in conflicts. Sometimes it is because of me, and sometimes I am the one who is trying to help people get some resolution. When both sides come into the resolution process with an attitude that says, "It's probably me" then things get ironed out so quickly and beautifully. If the assumption is, "It's all you." Then we're probably not going to get anywhere.

A while back, I developed a little tool that I use that is based on this text to help people in conflict and I am going to share it with you. You can download it, take a picture of it, and use it. I pray that it will be fruitful in your life.