

There are so many Churchy clichés.

Some are harmlessly overused jargon like the video we watched.

But think of some of the phrases that get commonly thrown around the Church like they are straight out of the Bible:

“God never gives you more than you can bear” // “You’re never more safe than when you’re in the center of God’s will” // “It will happen if you have enough faith”

These aren’t just harmless jargon. These phrases can be dangerous.

GALATIANS 5:9 (AMP): *“A little leaven [a slight inclination to error] leavens the whole batch [it perverts the concept of faith and misleads the church].”*

The question we should ask ourselves in light of this verse:

How many of our missteps are the result of being misled by misconceptions?

How much of our headaches and heartaches as the result of half-truths?

“The truth will set you free,” but half truths hurt.

Even this deserves a deeper look at context.

Context of the truth setting us free is in John 8:31-32, where Jesus says:

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Truth doesn’t set us free automatically.

The truth sets us free when we cling to it. When we know it.

Less than 30% of Christians will read their Bible through.

82% of Christians in America only open their Bible at church. *(translation: 82% aren’t opening their Bible)*

We end up missing out on the Bible’s greater content and context.

In the end, we don’t know the truth, so instead of living free we live misled by halftruths.

People quote those words of Jesus **“Judge not”** all the time.

As we’ve discussed in this series: What do we do with churchy clichés and potential myths?

1.) hold them up to scriptures greater content and context.

2.) how they hold up in LIFE

MATTHEW 7:1-6

“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others.

The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

“And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

“Don’t waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don’t throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.”

This is an important text to study, as regardless of how much Matthew 7:1 has been quoted or not quoted, the rep that the Church has earned is that it’s judgmental.

Many in the Church engage in culture in a similar fashion: to condemn it. They are culture warriors, but their often conversations change nobody because a sure way to NOT be heard is to be combative and condemning – so they quickly become offensive and entirely unpersuasive.

The person Mark Twain was talking about when he spoke of people who are:

“good in the worst sense of the word.”

The person Ghandi was talking about when he said: *“I like Christ I don’t like your Christians.”*

The great Christian author **Phillip Yancey** once said, *“I rejected the church for a time because I found so little grace there. I returned because I found grace nowhere else”*

The world needs grace. It needs God’s grace.

So the other side of the coin you’ve got the person that’s all about grace.

Christians should only love, never judge.

“Don’t judge” is a partial quote and ultimately a half truth.

This half truth- like others we look at- hurts.

In the name of grace and inclusion many take out the gospel’s offensive truths, and eliminate any call to repentance and salvation. We forget it’s the bad news that makes the good news so good!

But in our culture it’s hard to graciously take a firm stand and judge anything, because judging is totally problematic when there’s no such thing as absolute truth. Tolerance is now defined as everyone being right, and nobody has the grounds to judge.

Hold it up to LIFE.

We see it again and again through life: Some things work. Some don’t. Measurements. Diagnosis. Some answers are right. Some aren’t.

Why do we try to resist this reality with morality and spirituality?

Jesus doesn’t tell his followers, “Don’t judge” followed by a period.

He says don’t judge, followed by a comma and more thoughts on it.

Jesus would say in **John 7:24 – judge correctly.**

Luckily the greater content and context of the Bible helps give us some clarity.

We aren’t left with difficult to discern half truths. We’re given greater context and clarity.

It provides us with a pretty good collection of Do’s and Don’ts.

Don't judge: THE UNBELIEVER

*"Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy.
Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you."*

You could preach a whole sermon on this one verse,
But in light of judging and the verses preceding the parable, we see Jesus saying:
Don't waste what's valuable. Don't waste time and energy.

Want a complete waste of time: spend time judging non-Christians by Christian standards.
It even sounds foolish when you say it, but we do it all the time.
Why do we expect those who don't love Jesus to act like Jesus? Why do we expect those not living under the conviction of scripture and the Holy Spirit to share the same convictions as you?

They are living according to their convictions!
Rather than judging them for living based on their convictions, our time is better spent making sure we as followers of Christ are living according to OUR convictions as well as they are!

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:12:
It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders. but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside...

Jesus doesn't tolerate or overlook untruth and sin. He took the cross for it.
But people? He loved all people.
Did he accept everything they did? No.
But He accepted everyone no matter who they were.
Even those the religious leaders wouldn't tolerate.

Woman caught in adultery:
Neither do I condemn you... (grace) Now go and leave your life of sin... (truth)

Jesus teaches us the important distinction between **condemning** and **condoning**.
Just because you don't condemn anyone, doesn't mean you condone the actions of everyone.
The first is a grace, the latter is an anarchy.

It's why Jesus said: ***"Hate the Sin, Love the Sinner."*** *Oh... wait... he didn't.*
He DID say, ***love your neighbor.***

When you say "hate the sin, love the sinner," who's the sinner? *That person. Him. Her. Never me.*
It reeks of self-righteousness.

Instead? just **"Love your neighbor."**

Don't judge: PREFERENCES

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.

– Paul in Romans 14:13

“therefore”- *what's the there for?*

Romans 14 deals with some wild stuff because again-the early church dealt with some wild stuff. In the early church, there was no consensus on whether it was OK or not to eat meat that had been blessed by pagan priests in pagan temples. There was a decent argument for both sides. Some said if you ate it you might as well have been participating in the pagan worship. Others said it was no big deal.

And apparently somebody went to the Apostle Paul himself about it. Because he goes about addressing it. And his answer probably wasn't what they were expecting.

“You're both right”

Romans 14:14, 22-23

I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong ...

... Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right. But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions.

Paul makes a powerful point. One we heed or we can fall into legalism. We can confuse what we don't like with what God forbids.

God forbids many things in scripture. He will judge those things. Issues of **timeless morality** – sexual immorality, murder, and alike.

But then there's **matters of preference**. Or matters of conscience. That doesn't sit right with you? Cool. But don't condemn those that do!

We draw all these lines in the sand over preferences and dig our trenches.

Jesus says the world will know us by our love.

But the world often knows us by our pettiness.

Why? Because we go to war over preferences.

We make some of the **harshest** judgments in the places that scripture has been the **least** clear.

Let matters of conscience be just that – Paul would say: stop passing judgments over preference.

Do judge: YOURSELF

At the heart of Matthew 7 – self-righteousness.

Self righteousness = **We are terrible judges of ourselves.**

Sin is deceptive. Who is it most deceptive to? I usually have no problem seeing the sin around me. But sins deceptive work makes us spiritually blind to our own sin.

We need others.

Personal spiritual insight is often the product of community.

Self examination is a community project.

Inviting accountability into your life.

Giving people permission to judge your life.

Do judge: OTHER BELIEVERS

Inside the family of faith there should be a permission giving relationship that we can sharpen each other graciously. This isn't with everyone, a sharpening free for all.

If you know more about them from Facebook than you do from face to face conversation. God probably isn't calling you to come out of left field and judge them.

That's why we NEED these permission giving relationships so badly.

“Who am I to judge when I live imperfectly?”

We act like we're being polite.

We're really being passive.

We feign being gracious.

We're really being disobedient.

Galatians 6:1 - if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:12-13

*It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders. **but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning.***

We don't judge to condemn.

We don't inflict guilt, shame, and condemnation.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren, he doesn't need help doing his work.

God doesn't confront you with truth to shame you, he confronts you with truth to change you.

We judge in order to see restoration, not condemnation.

Galatians 6:1 – do so gently and humbly.

Humbly... **We don't do it to feel better about ourselves.**

Does it puff you up? Make you feel better than? You aren't doing it humbly. Don't do it at all.

Why did Jesus have to die?

Because God is a God of grace and mercy.

And God is a God of truth and justice.

He's big enough for both.

"Only God can judge me" = We use that as license to do whatever.

Karl Marx once mocked religion as the opiate of the masses. I'd tell you that the true opiate of the masses is the post-truth belief that nothing we do will ever be judged after this life.

"Only God can judge me." ...He will.

And what's the cold hard truth:

The truth is that you are more sinful than you would ever dare believe.

No self examination or self help solves this.

The truth of God's GRACE is that you are more loved than you ever dared hope.

The proof is in Jesus Christ and the cross