**THE MOTE AND THE BEAM**

***Matthew 7:1-5***

Sunday School Lesson

*Parables of Jesus Christ*

Week 2 – 10/29/2017

**Introduction:** The parable of the mote and the beam found in the seventh chapter of Matthew is one that has a simple yet profound truth to it. Jesus makes mention of this parable as part of His sermon on the mount. In order to fully grasp the meaning of this parable, it is important to understand the entire sermon that Jesus is preaching. **We cannot look at just verse one *(Judge not, that ye be not judged.)* without also looking at verse twenty *(Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.).*** Certainly, we know that Jesus was not contradicting Himself with these two statements; consequently, we must study carefully to understand exactly what the Lord is hoping for us to understand in this matter of judgment.

1. WE ARE NOT FORBIDDEN TO JUDGE, BUT WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURAL LIMITATION OF OUR JUDGING.
2. **Jesus is not saying here that we are not allowed to judge in any capacity.** I Corinthians 2:15 says, “*But he that is spiritual judgeth all things…”* If this were the case, parents would not have the authority to judge their children. There could not be any law in our country because we would not have the Scriptural authority to carry out judgment of that law. The Bible has an entire Old Testament book called the book of Judges that would have to be ignored since their daily responsibilities involved carrying out judgment for the people of Israel. Often, we quote verse one as a weapon against taking ownership for our actions, but the Bible tells us in verse twenty that we can expect to be known by our behavior or works. The truth is that all of us judge situations and people every day.
3. **Our judging should never really be our own, as it must be based on the Word of God.** Here is the key to the context of the first part of this lesson. If a person is openly disobeying the Word of God, we can judge that matter and see that they are in the wrong. (Matt. 18:15; I Thess. 5:14) This is not our own judging. We are simply acknowledging the judgment that God has already established. Additionally, we may have to break fellowship with someone to ensure that we are not putting ourselves in position to be judged by the Lord as well. (2 Cor. 6:14-17)
4. **Judgment is reserved only for the Lord.** (2 Tim. 4:1) Keep in mind that this is the judgment Jesus is speaking of in verses one and two. The sermon on the mount was preached to the Jews who were trusting in obedience to the Law as their path to Heaven (instead of faith). There were many that they had cast out because they had committed egregious sins against the Law. John chapter 8 is a great example of this. They brought a lady before the Lord, and they were ready to condemn her. Jesus refused to allow them to condemn her, and He further stated that they were judging after the flesh. Jesus has reserved a time for mankind to be judged. We ought never to judge or condemn someone to the point that they cannot be restored. We also should never limit the power of salvation based on the type of person that we see. If we do, we ourselves have been given over to one of the greatest sins of all – the sin of pride!
5. WE ARE NOT CAPABLE OF JUDGING THE INWARD MAN, BUT THE LORD DOES GIVE US INSIGHT ON HOW TO BEST JUDGE WHAT WE CANNOT SEE. (vs. 15-20; I Sam. 16:7)
6. **To get a glimpse of the inward, we must look at their fruit.** The Bible states specifically what fruits the Spirit of God produces. Those fruits are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:21-23). While we all struggle to manifest these fruits each day of the Christian life, a person who never produces any fruit is one that we have to be cautious of. The Bible uses the word “beware” in our interaction with them. This means that we ought to continue to watch carefully for the more external signs. When the external signs ultimately manifest themselves, you can then reprove them Scripturally. (I Cor. 3:1-3 – Paul judges.)
7. **We ought not to be on a mission to seek them out**. In verse 15, we see that these are they “which come to you.” The Lord is not asking us to go out with the intent of finding every person who is not truly who they portray to be. As we interact with people on a day-to-day basis, we ought to try the spirits (I John 4:1) to judge whether they are a follower of Christ or not. This is to protect you from being drawn away from the Lord, and it also allows you to better understand how to help that person.
8. WE MUST HAVE THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE FOR OUR JUDGING.
9. **We ought to primarily judge ourselves, knowing that God will judge us.** (I Cor. 4:4; 11:31) In Matthew 7:3, the Lord shows that the issue is that we do not even consider the beam in our own eye. Our flesh hates to acknowledge our own failures. It is so much easier to point out everyone else’s mistake. When a child makes a mistake at school, he wants to tell his parents how the teacher did not do something properly. If you start to notice the failures of someone else, you must first search yourself to make sure you are not projecting your problem onto them. When the beam is in your eye, it is all you see when you look at your friend. You don’t even realize that it’s actually yours.
10. **We must not focus in on one person.** In verse 3, notice the word “beholdest.” Jesus here is pointing out that the man in the parable is locked in on his brother’s mote. He did not just look or glance. He had been staring at him for a while to try to find something in his eye. If we find ourselves constantly looking at one person and waiting for them to fail, there is a pretty strong likelihood that we have developed ill will or even bitterness towards them.
11. **We must understand that judging something and criticizing someone are not the same thing.** Notice in verse 4 that the man cannot help but point out that there is a mote in his brother’s eye. First, he is looking at it for a while, and then he just has to say something to him. Given that a mote is like a small splinter, I am certain that the brother already knew it was there. All that was accomplished by bringing it to his attention was frustration and a potential for bitterness. If you are not genuinely trying to be helpful, it’s best to leave the matter alone. It is also a good idea to recall what the Lord saved you from. It may be that you have grown cold to the change that the Lord wrought in you.
12. **We must allow time for growth and focus on the greatest problems.** There are many people who have never returned to church because someone judged them. While I am sure there are times where it is an unavoidable situation, what happens sometimes is that someone brings something to their attention that was a mote, and they make a beam out of it. We need to allow fellow Christians the time to grow, as we were allowed. They may just be able to get the mote out without our help. God is the ultimate judge, and He can speak to them much better than we can.
13. WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN WRONGLY JUDGED?
14. **You cannot allow yourself to get offended** (Psalm 119:165). If you are truly walking with God, the Bible says that nothing should offend you. If someone judges you unfairly and you find out about it, make it a matter of prayer for that person. Keep in mind that there is a very likely chance that they may be battling with the very thing that they have spoken about you.
15. **You ought to search yourself to ensure you are not missing the beam or the mote** (Psalm 139:23). If you feel like fellow Christians are constantly judging you, you ought to ask the Lord to search you and reveal anything that may be a stumbling block to serving Him. Keep in mind that if there is openly sinful behavior or a lack of the fruits of the Spirit, you ought not to be surprised when people judge whether your faith is real.

**CONCLUSION**: As Christians, we ought to make sure that we are pleasing the Lord in everything that we do. We ought to judge situations off of the Word of God, but we should never allow ourselves to judge others in pride. If we do, we will not be a good representation of Jesus Christ. Let us never forget what the Lord did in us when we received Him as our personal Saviour!