

The Sevens Arrows of our Christian Economy – Arrow #3 We should not judge unfairly

Introduction

Today as we continue through the 7 arrows of our Christian economy, let me just briefly review the church we visualized a couple of weeks ago. A church where everyone is welcomed, a church where everyone is incorporated into the body, a place where God is honored all the time, a church where we look forward to coming to on Sunday morning, a church where we can grow spiritually and a church where we like to come on time for worship. As I stated before, my personal goal for our church is to help create an atmosphere where people know they are loved and where people can experience the love of God. We don't want just be AT church, we need to BE church. I'll tell you this several times, this church will be Christ centered and Bible based. Why do I choose a message about arrows? It is found in Scripture

Isaiah 49:2,3

He has made My mouth like a sharp sword,
In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me;
And He has also made Me a select arrow,
He has hidden Me in His quiver.
³ He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel,
In Whom I will show My glory."

The first 2 arrows, in case you haven't been with us were **(1)** the value and necessity of prayer and **(2)** the need to have a church where we are encouraged. Now today, arrow #3.

Arrow #3 We should not judge unfairly

Brothers and sisters, every message we hear is not going to be an ear tickling message.

II Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

The Bible is not a grocery store. We can't pick and choose only the things we like to consume. We have to take everything the Scripture tells us.

Our Scripture text for today is Matthew 7:1-5.

Matthew 7:1-5 ⁷ "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 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..

Matthew 7:1 is probably one of the most quoted verses in all the Bible and this is a verse that is quoted by Christians and non Christians alike. It's almost as popular as John 3:16 and that verse is "Do not judge so that you will not be judged."

Matthew 7:1 ¹ "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

This one verse has probably allowed our society to become one of the most tolerant in the history of mankind because we are so concerned with being politically correct. Let me give you some examples of political correctness. I'll make 3 statements and you tell yourself in your own mind if you agree or disagree.

#1 People who sleep together before marriage are sinning because God calls premarital sex fornication. **#2** A doctor who performs an abortion without just cause is a murderer of an innocent baby because God says thou shalt not kill. **#3** Marriage is between a man and a woman and any other relationship is sin because God says so. Maybe you'll say to yourself "but Pastor Brian there are extenuating circumstances" – We cannot fall prey to a situational morality. We cannot determine what is morally correct because the situation seems to suit us. God has determined what is morally correct. I want homosexuals, prostitutes, drug dealers, thieves, to sit in the front row of this church. Today I would like us to learn 3 lessons about judging.

Lesson #1 Before we judge anyone, we must first examine ourselves

It's really pretty amazing to think about someone with a log in their eye trying to convince someone that they have sawdust in their eye. When we don't see the log, we don't see that judging is rather addictive. I think the world around us promotes this. You only have to go onto Facebook where you are allowed to "like" or "unlike" something. Have you not set yourself up as a judge? When it comes to judging the solution is to look back at ourselves first. There is a wonderful African proverb that makes a lot of sense. It simply says this. Chimpanzees laugh at their other chimpanzees tails. You see the chimpanzees forget they have a tail also. As a matter of fact, chimpanzees don't even have tails, so I wonder what it was they were looking at that made them laugh?? So before we begin to judge others let's first look at ourselves. Every time we have communion we're reminded what it says in I Corinthians 11:28

I Corinthians 11:28 ²⁸ But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

I want you to notice also from our support text today, especially in verse 5 where it says that sometimes we are hypocrites

Matthew 7:5 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

Sometimes we are hypocritical when we are trying to improve somebody else without first looking at ourselves. I want you to notice from this passage that God does not forbid us from judging one another because He says also in verse 5 "and THEN you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye". As a Christian what is the loving and compassionate thing to do when we see someone who is in obvious and overt sin? Do we just walk away? NO. We don't ignore sin. But it's important to look at ourselves first. I truly believe that our church is only as strong as our weakest believer and when we as a church try to help others to become stronger we will all be blessed. Some of you have already made a judgment this morning. You made it before you came here. You have decided for yourselves that even though the Bible may say something is sin and even though the Bible may say it is ok to remove the speck from a brother's eye, you have already decided that you are not going to be the one to do that. You've already concluded and determined the brother or sister's sin isn't bothering you so you're just going to leave it alone. No one enjoys confrontation. Yet, I believe God calls us to confront one another and if you think everyday life is full of stress, confrontation is like stress on steroids.

Lesson #2 We must be extremely careful to have the right attitude when judging

Whatever we do must come from an attitude of love.

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Scripture says to treat others with the same attitude that you want them to treat you. Verse 2 of our text

Matthew 7:2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you

It says in the same way you judge others you will be judged with the measure you use. Sometimes we jump to conclusions because we consider ourselves to be free to judge one another without understanding all the facts. We unknowingly become very judgmental. Let me illustrate that by telling you about a corporate executive who visited one of his company's warehouses. He went incognito. When he went to the loading dock, he noticed a man simply leaning against a bunch of boxes. He observed this man for about 20 minutes and the man did nothing except lean against these boxes. So he walked up to this guy and said "how much do you make a week? The man said, I make 90,000 yen each week. So the CEO pulled 90,000 yen out of his pocket and handed it to the guy and said "this is your severance pay... you're fired". The foreman walked over to the CEO and said "what's going on here" and the CEO said, I observed that man doing nothing for 20 minutes except leaning against those boxes. The foreman said 'that man doesn't work for us.. He was only here delivering packages and was waiting for a signature'. You see, sometimes we jump to conclusions without knowing all the facts.

When we need to make some kind of judgment we need to try and put ourselves in the other person's place. I know that when I need to be corrected, I really want it to be done in a loving way, not harshly. Come to me personally. Don't go talking to everyone behind my back. So Jesus is saying here that before we judge someone we need to put ourselves in that person's place and we need to ask ourselves how would we want to be treated. And with that in mind, we may need to change or adjust our attitude when speaking to someone about sin in their lives. I think sometimes we can display the wrong attitude just in the way we communicate with someone non verbally. Take for example standing in front of someone with your arms folded, it shows a sign of hostility. Sometimes we unknowingly look down upon people make a judgment and then turn our noses up and walk away. There is a lot to be said about our demeanor. We can learn a lot from how the Lord did it. When it came to religious hypocrites, the Lord was incredibly straightforward. Remember from Scripture He described the hypocrites as blind guides leading the blind

Matthew 15:14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

And then He also described the hypocrites as whitewashed tombs

Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

But when it came to regular people caught up in sin the Lord was incredibly patient and compassionate. I think of the woman caught up in adultery in John 8. He shielded that woman and then said 'Go and sin no more'.

Lesson #3 We must use the proper standard

First of all let me help you determine that it's ok to judge but not to be judgmental. Scripture is our standard. Scripture says it is ok to admonish one another. Admonish means to rebuke or reprimand.

Colossians 3:16 ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Yes, God says it's alright to admonish one another. Matter of fact, He said we should be doing this in song in the name of Christ as we admonish our brothers and sisters. No one said it was going to be easy. The problem is almost no one likes to do the admonishing. God gives us further instruction on why it's ok to judge one another.

John 7:24 ²⁴ Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment. In other words, if something is wrong according to God's standard, and we know that, God has given us the right and the responsibility to admonish one another

I Corinthians 5:11 ¹¹ But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

Wow, I hope and pray that as we grow and develop as a church that the brothers and sisters at OIC never have to come to the point where we don't even eat with one another. God has given us the standard and if we don't know and understand that standard, then we haven't been reading our Scripture or allowing the Holy Spirit to bring conviction about the wrongs in our life. The standard of course is God's Word. And I truly believe that God's Word tells us in Matthew 18 that there is a standard for helping to correct a brother or a sister.

Matthew 18:15-17 ¹⁵ "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Let's hope our church never gets to a point where we have to ask someone about the sinful state of their lives and no correction is made and we have to bring it publicly to the church. That would be an extremely sad day for OIC and for the Lord. Our standard always and forever will be Christ. Jesus has told us that we can be fruit inspectors.

Matthew 7:16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?

As Christians we have a responsibility to look at what other Christians do. We compare that behavior to the Word of God and then we can make a judgment. We need to come to a decision as to what to do next. As we judge we must use the proper standard. The proper standard with the appropriate attitude. I know myself before I become too judgmental about someone I want to first show them mercy.

Conclusion

Let's examine just one more passage of Scripture today.

Galatians 6:1,2 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Never expect a non Christian to act like a Christian. Therefore we can't look at the world and expect them to be acting in a righteous manner but we have every right to expect that from our brothers and sisters in Christ. Is it ok to judge? Yes, but it's not a witch hunt . Is it OK to judge? Yes. The Bible never contradicts itself so we should only judge in a manner that uses Scripture as our standard. But maybe it's better to say it'OK to be fruit inspectors. Admonishing one another is one of the most difficult things a church body can do but God calls us to do it on occasion. I think it's important to understand that the goal of any judging is restoration, not probation. No one is calling us to be someone else's probation officer. You see, if it has become necessary to speak to someone concerning sin, and we have helped them to turn away from it, we have made our church stronger but if we continue to hold this against them, even though they have turned away from it, we are holding them in a probationary situation But God, the God of all love, has sent His son to pay the price for that sin. Once we have asked forgiveness it's as if God has forgotten it. But our church must have a standard. I truly believe we as a church are only as strong as our weakest member. Guess what... we all have weak moments. I know that this message is not ear tickling. I know that this message is not easy to hear but brothers and sisters in Christ, if we are ever going to be the church God has called us to be, we must adhere to the standard He has given us.