

# THE MOTE AND THE BEAM

## MATTHEW 7:1-5

Text:

Introduction:

Did you know that Matthew 7:1 is quickly replacing John 3:16 as the most memorized and quoted verse in the Bible? It is true! For instance, I am going to make a few statements. Let's see if you agree with me.

Sodomy is a sin. Sodomites need to repent of this sin in order to be right with God.

All pre-marital sex is wrong. Two people living together out of wedlock are living in adultery.

Abortion is murder. It is the killing of a human being and those doctors who perform abortions, except for rare exceptions, are guilty of taking innocent human life.

Now when those statements are made the world immediately trots out their favorite verse in the Bible: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Then they will say something like this, "Well, who died and made you judge?"

That brings up this question: is it ever right to pass judgment on the actions of others? Be careful how you answer that question! You might think that Jesus would have said “No! It is never right to judge another.” Instead, Jesus said, “It depends! There are times when you can judge and times when you cannot judge.”

The five verses that we have read today have something very important to say about this matter of judging one another. Whether we admit it or not, we all engage in judging from time to time. Some people have even made it their lifestyle to judge others by their standards. Let’s look at what Jesus has to say about this vital matter.

## **1. THERE IS A CAUTION TO BE HEEDED (VS. 1-2)**

### **Matthew 7:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> Judge not, that ye be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

A. The word “judge” means “to pronounce judgment; to expression of strong disapproval or harsh criticism.” It refers to “act the part of a judge; or to pass judgment on the words and deeds of another.

B. Jesus says “judge not”. Does this mean that all judgment is wrong? No! There are some occasions mentioned in the Bible where Christians are called on the exercise judgment over others.

### **1 Corinthians 5:3-5**

<sup>3</sup>For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, <sup>4</sup>In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>5</sup>To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

### **1 Corinthians 5:12-13**

<sup>12</sup>For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? <sup>13</sup>But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

### **Matthew 7:6**

<sup>6</sup>Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

### **1 John 4:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: <sup>3</sup>And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. <sup>4</sup>Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. <sup>5</sup>

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. <sup>6</sup> We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

### **Matthew 7:15-20**

<sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. <sup>16</sup> Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

### **Matthew 18:15-18**

<sup>15</sup> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. <sup>17</sup> And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. <sup>18</sup> Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

So, what is Jesus talking about here?

Jesus is talking about looking at people and attempting to judge their motives and their real spiritual condition based on what we see in their lives. The idea here is that the judge presumes to know the condition of another person's heart. He sets himself up as judge and

jury and proclaims the guilt and innocence of all those around him. This is the attitude that Jesus condemns!

- Don't criticize because you don't know all the facts
- Don't criticize because we all fail God and sin
- Don't criticize because you do not know the content of the other person's heart

## **2. THERE IS A CHALLENGE TO BE HEARD (VS. 3-4)**

### **Matthew 7:3-4**

<sup>3</sup>And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

Here, Jesus speaks to the real issue. When we judge another, we always do so from a warped perspective. He uses the humorous image of a man with a log sticking out of his eye trying to help remove little splinter from another person's eye. The word "mote" refers to "a dry twig or a piece of chaff." We might call it "a splinter". The word "beam" refers to "a load bearing beam in a house." Literally, it refers to "a log". Imagine how impossible that would be.

When I look at your life and see your faults, I am, in fact, blind to the problems that dwell within my own heart.

### **3. THERE IS A COUNSEL TO BE HONORED (VS. 5)**

#### **Matthew 7:5**

<sup>5</sup>Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Jesus uses some pretty strong language here. He calls those people who judge and criticize others hypocrites! He says that when we do this, we are merely acting like we are holier than we really are. Then, He offers some valuable counsel to those of us who fall in to this trap from time to time.

Jesus tells the would-be judge to first clean up his own life, then he will be in a better position to help his brother. When our own heart is clean, we are told that we will be able to “see clearly.” I get the impression that we will be able to see more than the “mote” in our brother’s eye. I think we will see a few things far more clearly.

- We will see our own heart more clearly. We will understand that we are just sinners ourselves who are prone to fail

- We will see God and the fact that we will stand in judgment before Him some day more clearly.
- We will see our brother more clearly. We will see his need for love, compassion and help more clearly

The question we must also consider is, It is not wrong to confront a person with his sin. It is wrong if you don't?

**Leviticus 19:17**

<sup>17</sup>Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

**Proverbs 27:5**

<sup>5</sup>Open rebuke *is* better than secret love.

**Matthew 18:15**

<sup>15</sup>Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

**Luke 17:3**

<sup>3</sup>Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Refusing to confront a person about his sin is just as wrong as a doctor refusing to confront a patient about his sickness. If you want to understand what Jesus said in Matthew 7:1, you must put right beside it what he said in John 7:24, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Now that says it all. You cannot judge a tree by its leaves. But you can judge a tree by its fruit. You cannot judge a book by its cover. But you can judge a book by its contents. The key is not to judge by appearance.

Illustration:

There was a lady in an airport who bought a book to read and a package of cookies to eat while she waited for her plane. Well, after she had taken her seat in the terminal and began to read this book, she noticed that the man sitting one seat away from her was fumbling to open up the package of cookies on the seat between them. Well, she could hardly believe her eyes that a stranger would just open her bag of cookies and eat them. He took one and ate it. She was so hot and steamed. She reached into the bag and took one and ate it. Well, the man didn't say anything. He just reached over and took another cookie. This woman thought to herself that she wasn't going to let him eat all of her cookies, so she took another cookie. When they finally got down to one cookie, the man reached into the bottom of the bag, broke the cookie in half, ate it, glared at the woman, got up and left. This lady couldn't believe this man's nerve. She was thinking to herself how fresh and arrogant he was. Soon the announcement came to board the plane.

This lady got on the plane, still hot and bothered at the audacity of this man, sat down, buckled her seat belt,



reached into her purse for a tissue, and there was her bag of cookies.

Close:

There are several reasons why people tend to judge and criticize others.

Criticism boosts our own self-image. Pointing out someone else's failure and tearing him down makes us seem a little bit better, at least in our own eyes. It adds to our own pride, ego, and self-image.

Criticism is often enjoyed. There is a tendency in human nature to take pleasure in hearing and sharing bad news and reveling in the shortcomings of others.

Criticism makes us feel that our own lives are better than the person who failed. In other words, criticism builds us up in our pride.

Criticism helps us justify the decisions we have made and the things we have done throughout our lives. We rationalize our decisions and acts by pointing out the failure of others.

Criticism points out to our friends how strong we are. Criticism gives good feelings because our rigid beliefs and strong lives are proven again by our brother's failure.

Criticism is an outlet for hurt and revenge. We feel he deserves it. Subconsciously, if not consciously, we think, "He hurt me so he deserves to hurt, too." So we criticize the person who failed.

Here is the invitation. Have you been guilty of passing judgment on other people because they do not live like you do? Has the Lord spoken to your heart about this matter? If He has then you need to come make it right and get the log out of your eye.

Have you been unjustly judged by others? Have you forgiven the ones who did that to you? You need to! This altar is open to you.

Have you ever been saved? If you have, then live like it. If not, then come to Jesus and look to Him for the needs of your heart and soul!