

Love Over Judgmentalism

James 2:10-13

James 2:10-13 ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Introduction:

1. Old Judgmentalism

- Ie/ Downton Abbey – set in pre World War 1 England – the rich judged the poor, the poor judged the rich, the socialists judged the conservatives and vice versa, the traditionalists judged new technology like the telephone, sister judged sister, and the grandma was judgmental of everything
- Our older world cast bold prejudicial judgments:
 - Nazi's judged Jewish people and other nationalities as inferior to the Aryan Race
 - Jim Crow laws placed judgment on African Americans forbidding them to eat, sleep and use the restroom where it was designated as for "Whites Only"
 - Women were judged as not worthy to vote

2. Today people are judged by ...

- The clothes they wear, the cars they drive and the gear people carry (iPhone vs Android)
- Tattoos and facial piercings
- If you voted for Donald Trump or not. Some states will hate you on both sides of that topic.
- I told a pastor thinking of taking a pastorate in City after being in the Midwest that the community will judge him for his position on politics and marriage. That has become a significant California baseline for acceptance.

3. New Judgmentalism in Covid19 Era

- In a store without a Face Mask
- N95 Facemask or not
- Designer facemask or a towel with a rubber band
- Being at a beach
- Walking too closely to you on the sidewalk
- Covid19 is the fault of all Asians and Chinese restaurants
- My judgmental spirit arises at the guys driving 100mph on the freeway

4. Christians can be just as bad

- "I don't smoke and I don't chew and I don't hang with those who do"
- Christians would be judged because
 - their music is too rocky
 - their dress is too casual
 - their facial hair is too long
 - they say "darn" and "heck" or stronger

- they don't go to as many church meetings as much as I do or serve in as many ministries as I do – what's wrong with them?
 - I know of people who would judge you if you weren't a 5 point Calvinist
 - Others would look down at someone who isn't a Premillennialist or Amillennialist
- We've warned that we should judge someone who comes to church when they've been pregnant out of wedlock, had an abortion, battling drug or alcohol addiction, struggling with pornography, going through a divorce – we're here to minister to those who want to get right with God.
 - There's a difference between condoning sin and judging who we would help or not.
 - **The Church is not a country club where we judge who we want to come in as members, but a hospital where we are committed to help those sick in sin get well in Christ!!**
 - E.g. One of the first things I changed when I became senior pastor was the membership application which wanted our members to abstain from alcohol, dancing and playing cards. We were placing non-biblical restrictions on issues not declared as sinful.

5. Pharisees

- There were plenty of commands in the Law of Moses. You're familiar with the 10
- These laws were given so we would love God and love others. They were about respect for God and respect of others.

Mark 12:28-31 ²⁸And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

- Commandments – they were the first and foundational of 613 laws found in the Torah (Gen to Deut).
- The Jewish leader compiled a commentary of oral tradition, new laws and sermons called the Mishnah which gave more laws on how to follow the 613 laws. The Mishnah would become a part of what is called the Talmud today.
- This contained laws made by man to keep people within the law.
- Example: Command 4 – Keep Sabbath Day Holy – the Midrash added 39 laws on how to Keep the 4th commandment: how many steps you could take and what you could carry
- For example
- They followed the Letter of the Law than the Spirit of the Law to find enough approval for heaven
- They wanted to look good on the outside but not deal with the inside – their heart.
- They proposed additional commandments which made them look more religious than those who couldn't keep all these extra laws. That's called **LEGALISM**

- When the Pharisees judged Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus chastised them for being proud about their law-keeping but not knowing that laws are really about loving God and loving others.
- They imprisoned people in a religious law keeping system than being freed from the law in Christ.

Matthew 23:23-26 ²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! ²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

Proposition: 3 Reminders To Conquer Judgmentalism

I. **When We Realize We're Sinners, We Will Love Others More Than Judge (10-11)**

¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

- This passage comes after a rebuke James gives the church about playing favoritism
- You can be moral in your ethics, but if you show favoritism, you're just as guilty for breaking the law
- **You can be religious, but if you're religiously haughty or arrogant, you're still breaking your religion**
- Minor sins are still an offense to God
- "whole law" – God's law proclaiming His righteousness, 613 commands in the Mosaic law but summed up in 2 commands: Love God and Love others
- "fails in one point has become guilty of all of it"
 - Ie/ a rock flew and cracked my windshield – it didn't shatter it, but it's a broken windshield and either needs to be repaired or replaced
 - Ie/ What level of cheating made a difference for the Houston Astros winning the World Series? Even if you cheat a little, you're still a cheat.
 - Taking steroids in baseball doesn't help you hit a curve ball – but if it didn't give you an advantage over another player, they still wouldn't have done it
- There are degrees of sin
- But **any breaking of the law makes you a lawbreaker**
 - Ie/. I am worthy of a ticket for not making a complete stop at a stop sign as I am for driving 100 mph – I'm still guilty even though the fine may be less

Matthew 5:21-22 ²¹ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

- **We can't justify being a lesser sinner than someone else in comparison**

- "Well, at least I'm not Hitler." ... Manson ... O.J. ... Thanos
- We're all sinners
- Sin is not placed on a balance scale with our good works
- Sin is measured against the absolute righteousness and holiness of God
- Sin cannot be addressed by religious works
- Sin must be atoned for by Christ on the cross. Wrath must be faced. Forgiveness needs to be given.

Romans 5:6-8 ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

II. When We Realize We're To Be Judged, We Will Choose Humility Over Pride (12)

¹² *So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.*

- **If we're all lawbreakers, who are we to judge another lawbreaker?**

- We are to speak and act as those under judgment (tense: continuous speaking and acting)
- We're like the guy in prison helping another guy in prison in a Shawshank Redemption
- I remember being in a court room as a young man for a speeding ticket – I asked a guy also waiting for the judge what he was here for – we're not judging others when we're about to face the judge
- But here's the good news – we're not being judged for hell – Christ already bore our judgment
- We are being evaluated for how we've used our freedom to do good
- "Law of Liberty" = God's law is not oppressive, it's freeing
- We've been set free to do good for God's glory and help others
- Douglas Moo: "God's gracious acceptance of us does not end our obligation to obey him; it sets it on a new footing. No longer is God's law a threatening, confining burden. For the will of God now confronts us as a *law of liberty* – an obligation we discharge in the joyful knowledge that God has both 'liberated' us from the penalty of sin and given us, in his Spirit, the power to obey his will." (*The Letter Of James, The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, Eerdmans, p. 117)

- Ie/ If you're sick with Covid19, you must rest, recover and quarantine
 - But if you're well, with the gift of good health, what good can we do in our community?
 - We are free from the sickness to do good to others!
 - If we're employed, how can we help the unemployed?
- We are freed in salvation to do right – we are no longer slaves to sin, but to righteousness

Romans 6:17-18 ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

- So much of the Jewish religion was about the burden and inability to keep the law
- The religious system was infected with manmade hierarchy of those who were more religious than others
- People took pride in their righteousness
- But this imprisoned people in a system of judgmentalism and works

1 Peter 2:16 ⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

III. When We Realize We're Forgiven, We Will Choose Mercy Over Judgment (13)

¹³*For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

- This does not mean that showing mercy is a means of salvation.
- There are a lot of charities that help the sick and poor, but this does not grant salvation.
- Faith in Christ alone is the basis for salvation.
- Ie/ If Mother Theresa is in heaven, it will not be because of her feeding the poor but whether or not she trusted Christ as her Savior or not
- This passage is instructing us that our victory over judgmentalism is through the exercise of mercy.
- Ie/ I think of the Roman Emperor in Gladiator who gave his thumbs down when he allowed the poor guy fighting a beast or another gladiator to be given the fatal blow (coup de tait)
- Self Exam:
 - Am I heartless because of my pride?
 - Or am I merciful because I've been forgiven?
- James' Jewish audience understood the formula of retribution (not karma, which is arbitrary, but retribution from a Just Judge)
- If you're judgmental to others, you'll be judged more severely.
- **Mercy triumphs over judgment!!**

Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 7:1-2 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

- Here is what helps me when being judged and keeping me from being judgmental:
However negatively someone thinks of me or harshly one criticizes me, I'm am far worse in reality than how they think of me.

Conclusion:

1. Avoid Judgment – Put your faith in the Savior Who bore our judgment.
2. Avoid Judgmentalism – We're all sinners saved by grace helping each other to grow in grace.

Discussion:

1. What issue(s) (preference, pet peeve, prejudice) do you find yourself frequently judging others on? Why is that such a sore spot for you?
2. How can we grow a greater sense of mercy towards others?
3. Personally take a moment to reflect on the sins that Christ has forgiven you of and the merciful fact that we're not being judged for our sins because He bore them.