

My notes are always available online before service Sunday mornings... (and forever after)

Last week we looked at the fact that Jesus forbids us to **judge and condemn** others

- Must get that message if you were not here
- We looked carefully at what Jesus does and does not mean by judge and condemn
- We are examining this concept because we were fascinated by the way Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery
 - Though she was clearly guilty, and Jesus did not deny or gloss over that, He said to her after her accusers left: "**Neither do I condemn you**" (Jn 8:11)
 - Cf. John 3:17
For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

Jesus then, who refused to condemn and judge sinners but would rather **free and restore** them, is our model

- Our model for living life on mission—as we **take Christ** into culture
- Our model for interpersonal relationships—as we **embody Christ** to one another

We quickly realize the difficulty this presents for two reasons

1. We are **prone** to judging and condemning others (have you seen that this week?)
 - a. If not, you either: Are amazing; did not listen; do not care to apply the Word
 - b. Most of us need to repent and remember the consequences
 - c. James 2:13
For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. (NASB)

There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you. (NLT)
2. We have to balance **not judging and condemning** with a **commitment to truth-telling**
 - a. We are radically concerned about: right/wrong & truth/error & God's glory
 - b. We need to understand the difference so as not to be strong-armed into **ungodly passivity** that leads to multitudes of Christians **living sloppily**

Review in Reverse

We cross the line from Truth-Telling to judging and condemning when we:

1. Make any negative decisions about people's motives
2. Attempt to hold people to, and punish people for violating, something less than God's rules and standards
3. Think less of or treat people poorly because of how they do or do not behave or believe
 - a. **That does not mean we do not confront those wrong beliefs or behaviors**

When, why and under what conditions do we confront sin in others?

Let me summarize my points with 4 pithy statements and then we will explore the ideas represented therein:

(context is interpersonal relationships—not Church discipline or governmental rule)

**(context I also in the Church, but we can apply these concepts to being on mission and relationships in gen.)
(all 4 conditions must be met)**

1. We confront sin when we are genuinely concerned for the well being of the other
2. We confront the sin of others only after we have confronted sin in ourselves
3. We confront sin with the goal of restoring the other not punishing him/her
4. We confront sin in an attitude of genuine other-centered, God-glorifying love, gentleness and humility

To clarify by stating the opposites; we **do not confront sin** when we:

- Are concerned primarily about our well being
- Are concerned primarily about others' sin
- Desire to punish others for their failures
- Have an attitude of anger or a desire to reject

We start with a very popular statement by Jesus from Matthew 18:15

- **And if your brother sins against you go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.**
 - We generally like to move right on to the following verses
 - **For two reasons:** We like leadership to handle things; we like others to be disciplined
 - But it starts with **the one on one** (the rest is if that primary relational effort fails)
 - That is another sermon
 - What I want us to see here is simply this:
 - 1. We do confront sin at times
 - 2. The goal is to **win back the other person** to a place of healthy relationship
 - Not to win an argument or conflict—but a person
 - That is not to say right and wrong are not worth fighting over—they are
 - But we do not sacrifice people on the alter of right and wrong because Jesus sacrificed **in their place** (kinda the point)
 - The goal is always restoration and not rejection
 - Cf. The woman caught in adultery
 - So, we confront sin when we are **genuinely concerned about other people** and our right relationships with them
 - **You have won your brother**
 - Love does not always confront sin, love also covers a multitude of sins (**1 Peter 4:8**)

 Matthew 7:1-5

What governs the appropriateness of our confrontation is our careful attention to **verse 2**

- This idea of generosity from last week (**pressed, shaken, running over**)

A core component of God's mission and our faith is that we are blessed to be a blessing (See **Genesis 12:1-3** and the Abrahamic Covenant)

We are not merely the recipients of God's gifts and blessings, but we are channels of God's gifts and blessings

- As God's channels we exist not just to enjoy what God gives us, but to pass on what God gives us¹
- This concept inherent in creation is explained in statements such as
 - Colossians 3:12-13
 12 **So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;**
 13 **bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

We need to create and be a community of care and safety

- Where people feel cared for not condemned
- Where people feel safe to be honest about who they are
- Why do you think so many Christians are fake around other Christians?
 - Because we have failed to **create and be** communities of care and safety
 - Because we are not very nice to people who have believed and behaved very badly—Jesus was

The reason we are told to look first to ourselves is:

- The more clearly we see ourselves the more rightly we see others
- **The more thoroughly we confront our own sin the more compassionately we confront others' sin**
- The starting point of our mission to confront sin, corruption and injustice in the world has to start with **self-confrontation**
 - Otherwise we earn the reputation as judgmental hypocrites in the world
 - And we create communities of fear and distrust in the Church

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We confront sin when we are genuinely concerned for the well being of the other

We confront the sin of others only after we have confronted sin in ourselves

¹ Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 60.

Galatians 5:25-6:3

5:26

- Many of us live by competition and comparison and try to make ourselves feel and look better
- This leads to boasting, vengefulness and ungodly conflict

6:1

- **You who are spiritual** (a reference to walking in the Spirit from 5:16 & 26)
 - **We confront sin with the goal of restoring the other not punishing him/her**
- **Restore** – The fundamental meaning is to put a thing in its appropriate condition²
 - A verb—an action word
 - The word the ancients would use to describe repairing or mending of something broken (like their nets and bones)
 - **Metaphorically it is used for the mending of broken people** (in text)
 - The idea here is assistance, not punishment³; restoration not disciplinary action⁴
 - The problem is we love to punish (Cf. 5:26)
 - The antonyms of this word (**restore**) are **to dissolve utterly** (διαλυω), **to renounce or disown** (αποτασσω), **to reject** (απορριπτω) **to cast aside**
 - We are to:
 - **hold together** (not dissolve)
 - **to identify with** (not renounce or disown)
 - **to accept** (not reject)
 - **to stick with** (not cast aside)
- **In a spirit of gentleness** – Not the outward expression but the inner condition⁵
 - The opposite of this would be “**anger, wrath, irritation**”
 - That is what we imagine the crowd was like that brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus (Cf. John 8)
 - How we see Jesus is as possessing a **spirit of gentleness**
 - That verb **restore** was especially used as a surgical term⁶ (delicate and careful work)
 - We trust surgeons to be that way (Daisy Love)

Restoring one another is part of our **corporate responsibility** as members of the Body of Christ

We confront sin in an attitude of genuine other-centered, God-glorifying love, gentleness and humility

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), 842.

³ Leon Morris, *Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom* (Doners Grove, Ill.: Intersity Press, 1996), 62.

⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1998), 421.

⁵ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), 1208.

⁶ Leon Morris, *Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom* (Doners Grove, Ill.: Intersity Press, 1996), 62.

Looking to ourselves is part of our **individual accountability** as members of the Body of Christ

- **Looking to yourself** – to spy out, to contemplate, give attention to
 - Present active participle = a continuous or repeated action
 - **If we are concentrating on ironing out our own imperfections, we are going to be less likely (and have less time) to squabble over other's imperfections**
 - "The legalist is always harder on other people than he is on himself, but the Spirit-led Christian demands more of himself than he does of others *that he might be able to help others.*"⁷

The reason we can do this is because of the already and not yet reality of the Kingdom

- Cf. The already of the Cross and the not yet of the Judgment Seat
- "Between this already and that not yet stands the believer who is called upon to emulate the behavior of Christ, the ultimate burden bearer, who came to restore not condemn the sinner."⁸
 - Historic and prophetic justice...
 - Enables us to give generously to those who have performed poorly
- = 6:2...

6:3

- This is speaking to those of us who somehow feel **morally superior** and so feel justified in punishing others
 - Our model is Christ who was **something**, but emptied and made Himself **nothing**, taking on the form of a bondservant and dying in our place (**Philippians 2**)

The culture in to which this was first introduced was the ancient honor and shame culture

- Where boasting and self-promotion were the norm
 - To confront error was to shame someone—don't do it
- And it was radically counter-culture to suggest that someone of higher status should gently care for someone of lower status who was failing and burdened
 - Burden bearing was seen as the work of slaves!
- **The pattern of Christ and the message of the cross went against the major social assumptions of Greco-Roman culture!**

The way this confronts our culture and social assumptions is that we have a general mind-set of "live and let live"

- Which keeps us from:
 - (1) Confronting sin and (2) bearing other's burdens
 - The Cross of Christ turns these social assumptions on their heads
 - And calls us to **confront with compassion** and **humbly carry** each other's burdens

⁷ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Free* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1975), 140.

⁸ Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1998), 417.