

Luke 6:36-42

“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” And He spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye.”

It requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit always to divide rightly the Word of Truth. How much more this week, on the one hand, as SCOTUS has declared the right to marry to same sex couples throughout the land, and on the other, Jesus extols mercy in one breath and warns against judging in virtually the same breath.

In so speaking, Jesus warns against self-righteousness, because self-righteousness blinds a person spiritually. The self-righteous person can see neither his own sin nor his unworthiness, yet he busies himself seeking out the sins and unworthiness of others. Based on this text, it seems impossible to speak against any sins at any time, unless they are our own sins: “Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?”

So let us consider the word of Jesus: “Be merciful just as your Father also is merciful.”

“...your Father is merciful.” What does this mean?

If we back up to the previous verse, Jesus says, “Only love your enemies and do good and lend money to no one expecting a return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, **because He is kind to the ungrateful and evil.**” The Father is merciful—He is kind to the ungrateful and evil. Folks, that is how we got here—because God was kind to us ungrateful and evil souls.

How then can the Father be kind to the ungrateful and evil? Why does He not simply judge and condemn and consume them in His wrath? John writes (5:22), “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.” If we are to be like the Father, let us also be merciful **and leave the judgment to Jesus.** Be kind to the ungrateful and evil.

When extolling an excellent wife, the preacher writes, “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”

In Micah 6:8 “what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

In Zechariah 7:9 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another,”

Some will argue, you speak of Sodom and Gomorrah and of God’s judgment against sodomy; but look at how those who practice homosexuality are being blessed; no longer is aids the great fear of such as act so; and now they are given marriage as a right from the highest court in the land. Paul in Romans 2:4 explains how man misreads God’s actions, “Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” How is it God has allowed our baby-aborting nation to last this long? And what now? Consider it “kindness meant to lead you to repentance.”

Titus 3:4-5, “But when the goodness **and loving kindness** of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,...

God’s kindness toward mankind does not keep Him from showing us our sin and need for forgiveness. God’s kindness and mercy does not mean abandoning man in his sinfulness, let alone confirming him in his sin. Rather it means showering mankind with God’s mercy and leading sinful man to repentance.

Do not let anyone fool you. Having **been taught by Jesus**, as much as Matthew was taught by Him or John, **St. Paul** warns about living in unrepentant sin in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: *“Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”* Paul writes, *“And such were some of you.”* Yes, some of you were even Sodomites. Sent to the Gentiles, Paul was preaching what Jesus taught him concerning the Law of God and some were repenting and being saved.

What was the pre-requisite for such preaching? That Paul first be de-planked; that Paul be shown his own sin, so that he BEING THE CHIEF OF SINNERS might see clearly to remove the speck from the eyes of those lesser sinners around him—so that he could rejoice in their salvation—“and such were some of you.” But consider the whole list that, taught by Jesus, Paul relates. And to teach such things, is according to the Gospel!

For Paul writes to Timothy concerning the law (1 Timothy 1:8-11), that it is *“not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for men who practice homosexuality, for slave-dealers, for liars, for perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.”* Is St. Paul not merciful in his preaching and teaching? Indeed he is. And he judges not; he condemns not. For Paul leaves that to Jesus, even as the Father does. *“and for whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, **in accordance with the gospel**”* Paul writes.

Two Greek words lie next to one another in this list, ἀρσενοκοίταις and ἀνδραποδισταῖς, the first is translated “those who make sexual connection with men or sodomites” and the second “slave-traders or kidnappers.” Rather ironic that, while relying heavily these days on God’s law against those who enslave other men, the justices who have made themselves gods have tried to annul God’s law, having determined that sodomy is to be celebrated by marriage. God who sits in the heavens laughs. Woe to those who would judge God’s Word, picking and choosing to accept one Word of God and to reject another. Woe to those who take the judgment from Jesus’ hand into their own. As with the sons of Korah who tested God in the days of Moses, let all who fear God stay clear of these justices, lest God open the earth once more.

There is no mercy in this ruling. There is no mercy in confirming poor sinners in their sin.

Jesus trains His followers to see clearly. He does this, first of all, by bringing them to repentance and to faith in God’s mercy. Indeed, only when we have become convinced of our sin can the mercy of God be known and believed. **Until we are convinced of our sin, with the world** we would stand wondering, “Mercy for what? Who needs mercy?”

To recognize and remove the plank from one’s own eye is to realize and confess that we are **guilty** of **all** sins. Before God we can plead innocent of no sin. As soon as someone begins to say or think, “But I haven’t ever done this” or “I have never done that,” such a person is taking the place of the self-righteous. He has a plank in his eye, which unless he removes it, he will stumble headlong into hell.

We Christians live in the midst of a perverse and wicked generation, which there is no escaping. Must we remain silent in the face of increasing wickedness? In Sweden a national law forbids speaking evil of the gay lifestyle. Those who rightly group homosexuality with other sinful behavior, as Jesus does through St. Paul, such as adultery, drunkenness, thievery, murder, slave-trading and idolatry will find themselves ridiculed and condemned. On college campuses around our own country, men and women who simply fear God and believe what the Scriptures teach are persecuted for righteousness’ sake. And yet, without a clear delineation of sin, there is no mercy. There can be no call to repentance, and there can be no reception of the divine mercy.

Only those who are aware of their sin are able to depend on the mercy of God. But aware of their sin **and** the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, they can teach other sinners to rely upon God’s mercy shown in Jesus. These things those trained in Christ do. They do not condemn, but pardon. They look for opportunities to show mercy—especially to those overwhelmed by sin.

We are hypocrites, if while condemning such sins as abortion and same sex unions, we condone drunkenness, revelries or sexual immorality of any sort. Yes, we are hypocrites, if we give only to the friendly and those with means, for then it is duty and debt and not mercy, for it is hoped to receive something in return. But God shows His mercy toward us in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us. That is mercy and the goodness of God.

Good measure is simply to leave the speaking and the judging to Jesus. And to give – if called to do so, all the way to the arena – the simple reply: I am a Christian.

Can it be, that somehow, someway, God intends it for good—this evil that infects our nation as though the U. S. were destined to be another offspring born of Sodom and Gomorrah? Will the mercy of God triumph one day, as in the days of Joseph? It is difficult, in our weak minds, to imagine how it could. **Then** God was directing the Messianic Seed safely through Egypt to the Promised Land and finally to the Cross. Having raised Jesus the Crucified from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand, **now what directing is there** but to lead Christ's ever-increasing flock of little lambs through the snares and perils of this earthly life into eternal life. I believe God is up to the task.

Be merciful, beloved of God, for God has been merciful to you, forgiving you all your sins. “‘With everlasting kindness **I will have mercy on you,**’ says the Lord your Redeemer, ‘. . . For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed.’” Isaiah 54:8b, 10

Now the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

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