

# DON'T JUDGE

Week #3 of a 4-Week Series, "Jesus' Greatest Teachings"

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Alright; you ready?

So I'm doing this four-week series based on what I believe to be "Jesus' Greatest Teachings." And I believe that the fundamental first thing that Jesus taught was his oneness with God. And that many of us have understood that that he was teaching just his oneness with God. But the underlying truth is: He was teaching us all how to live from our oneness with God. And he said things like, "*The kingdom of heaven is like ...*" And he gave parables to kind of describe a relationship that was non-physical, but it was profound. It was the essence of who we are.

That's why I always kind of scratch my head when people say that they just teach the literal word of God; that the Bible is just the literal word of God. Because Jesus' greatest teachings were parables. And those aren't literal; those are all allegories. They're parables of how the kingdom is all about. It's deeper than that. And he, over and over again, taught us to live our life from this place of oneness with God.

And then he taught us to love. He said the most important thing was that you love the Lord your God with all your mind, your heart, your soul. And then he said that we're to love our neighbors as ourselves.

And so this week we're going to talk about how we do that. Because this week, the third thing that Jesus taught over and over again was **DO NOT JUDGE.**

This is a hard one! Right? It's just a hard one! Because we want to judge people! Like, our ego -- our humanity -- just wants to just judge 'em. Just tell 'em what's wrong with 'em. And if they would just listen to us, we could get them right. [Congregation laughs] And it doesn't matter if they're our neighbor, our friends ... this is part of us, that we just want everybody to know how wrong they are. [Congregation laughs] And how right we are. And the fact that they don't know that already just upsets us. [Congregation laughs]

Like, if everyone would get on the same page it would be so much easier! Like, if I could just be like king for the day, I would make sure everybody really knew how wrong they were, and all the right people just knew how right they were.

So let's look at this. Let's look at this in a deeper way: the difference between judgement and discernment. Because there's a lot of similarities between them. And discernment is a spiritual gift. And judgement and discernment start off in the same direction. It's an acknowledgement of what is; it's an acknowledgement of what you are; they are. It's an underlying truth. It's seeing things the way they truly are.

But the difference between judgement and discernment is that judgement then takes a radical turn. And it's like, "*This is who you are, and this is how I am, and this is how it is.*" And then judgement says, "*But that's not okay.*"

And if we could just stay in discernment to say, "*This is how I'm like you, and this is how I'm different from you, and they're all wonderful!*" that's not a problem. If you say to someone, "*Oh, you're not good with math, but I'm really good at math. And so, if we work together, we can get this done!*"

But when we say to ourselves, "*I'm not good with math ... and that's not okay,*" now we've moved from discernment to judgement, and that becomes problematic. It's when we add that little caveat; when our

ego has to jump in at the last minute and say, *"I see who you are, and who you are is just not quite right."*

Like, I have big hips. Discernment says, *"That's adorable."* Judgement says, *"That's not okay."*

My skin is darker than yours. Discernment says, *"That's beautiful."* Judgement says, *"That's not okay."*

I express my sexuality differently than you do. Discernment says, *"That's wonderful."* Judgement says, *"That's not okay."*

The judgement about the situation -- the condition -- is not the essence of the person. It's the outer condition. And we want to point out the outer condition instead of looking deeper into who that person really is. To really acknowledging the truth of one another. Acknowledging that Christ Spirit in one another. For we can celebrate each other without having to label it as "not okay."

Because the problem is that judgement can go to some pretty dark places. You know, it might start out as just, *"It's not okay,"* and then it can go to, *"It's wrong." "It's bad." "It's less than." "It's broken." "It's evil." "It's unhuman." "It's unworthy." "It's dirty." "It's stupid." "It's ugly."* We've all heard those comments about one thing or another, where they just weren't acknowledging what was true. They had to label it in such a way that it made it wrong or bad. And that's the problem, especially for us as spiritual people.

You know, in Matthew 7, we read:

*"Judge not, that you will not be judged. For with the judgement, you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure that you get back. And why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own? And how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take this speck out of your eye,' when you first haven't taken the log out of your own?"*

[Laughs] I love this!

*"You hypocrite!"*

Ooooooh! [Congregation laughs]

*"First take that log out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly the speck in your brother's eye."*

See, judgement violates two basic spiritual principles. The first one is free will. Because we all have free will, we all get to show up in any way we choose. And when we violate that law -- or think that people don't have the right to be the way they are -- it really violates the underlying premise that even God allows us free will to be any way we choose to be. To express ourselves in the infinite number of ways that we can express ourselves.

So that every time we judge someone, we say that the way you're choosing to be is not okay with me. That's an interesting ego place to be: to think that you actually have the right to tell another child of God that you know how they should be. And our ego wants to do it over and over again. In fact, sometimes we love to do it!

And yet, it's still an interesting place to think that my ego is so huge, that not only do I think I can take care of my own life, but I can judge everybody in their life, and that somehow I really know best!

And the second spiritual law is that, as you give, so shall you receive ... that whatever you're giving to life is going to come back to you over and over and over again. The reason we judge is that judgement makes us feel powerful. We tend to judge the most when we feel the weakest. So we judge those around us to make ourselves feel better.

Judgement keeps us in the realm of ego. It keeps us in the service of our ego. And the question we need to ask ourselves is: *"Do I want to be in service to my ego, or do I want to be in service to God?"*

See, I really believe from a spiritual point of view -- and I hope I can explain this -- that, as a spiritual being, everything you judge creates a sphere around you. And beyond that sphere is God. And the more we judge, the more it creates confusion all around us. And that the universe actually puts those situations into our lives so that we judge them over and over again until we actually develop compassion for them. And more often than not, we actually have to become the thing that we're judging so that we have to have compassion upon it.

But beyond all of our judgement is just this infinite goodness of God that we can't see -- that we can't notice -- because all we see is all the things that we judge over and over and over again.

Rumi said it this way:

*"Out beyond the ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to even talk about."*

Like, when you stop judging -- when you slow down the judgement -- you begin to notice all the ways that God is showing up in your life. You actually begin to feel the presence of God in greater and greater ways.

And you think that your judgements are somehow helpful or needed or practical. And yet, it's just keeping you from experiencing the fullness of God. It keeps all of us from experiencing the fullness of God!

As we surrender our judgements, we experience God more and more, beyond our judgements. As we feel the power of God, we no longer need to judge; we become wholly protected by the presence and power of God.

Now, one of the quotes I like is when the disciples were kind of arguing about who was the best disciple. [Congregation laughs] Because I really love that, you know? Because they wanted to know, like, who was the greatest in the kingdom. And they kind of ran to Jesus and said, *"Okay, so, which one of us is the greatest in the kingdom?"* And I just love the purity of, *"Is it me? Like, am I the greatest in the kingdom?"* And here it goes:

*"At that time they came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like a child, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"*

I love that! Right? Because they're feeling very full of themselves, very spiritual. They were walking with the man! They were doing the things that he was doing! They were talking the talk and walking the walk. And they got kind of full of themselves. And then he brought a kid in, and put him right in the midst of them and said, *"You want to get to heaven? This is it! You want to experience the fullness of God?"*

And I want you to see that there's a level of vulnerability in being a child. Because sometimes before we get wounded, there's a pure place of vulnerability. There's a pure place where we can just know God.

Jesus also said in Matthew 10:

*"Behold; I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves."*

Ooooh, wow! Doesn't that sound great?!? [Congregation laughs] Like, sign me up for that one! Like, how much of us want -- as we're doing our spiritual life -- the idea of, *"Send me out as a sheep in the midst of wolves!"*?

I mean, the documentaries I've seen ... that's not a good thing, right? [Congregation laughs] Like, you're ... A sheep is a lower level on the food chain than a wolf! Right?

And so, that idea that *"I'm going to send you out as a sucker out into humanity"* is one of the reasons we judge so much. Because we feel so vulnerable! Because we feel so powerless! We want to judge everyone so that we feel better about ourselves.

And Jesus said:

*"I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be wise as serpents, but innocent as doves."*

Can you imagine living tomorrow without any judgements? Without any judgements?

See, I want you to put your hands on your heart, just for a minute. And if you're comfortable, close your eyes. And I want you to just feel someone that you -- or some situation -- that you just love deeply. And I want you to feel how much your heart opens. That situation -- that person -- that you just love profoundly -- your heart just explodes open.

Now think of another person that you've judged. And feel how quickly your heart closes. That we can't be in love and in judgement in the same moment.

Now open your heart again all the way. When you're ready, come back.

So I want you to see that, because we don't fully trust love, we judge. And what would happen tomorrow if you decided just to leave your heart all the way open, and go through one day and everybody deserved all your love? That you could just love every person in front of you at the level that God loves you?

See, living without judgement's a challenge; it's a task! It's something that we have to work on. It goes against the nature of our ego; the tendency to categorize or evaluate based on our beliefs, our values, our past. So here's some things we can do.

First one is: **PRACTICE MINDFULNESS**. Mindfulness is the ability to stay present and engaged in the current moment without judgement. And sometimes that is so hard! Just to be fully right here, right now, in the moment, in the experience without telling yourself -- in any way -- it should be different. That you have to quiet your mind and move into the moment so fully that the moment is all you're into. The moment is the only experience you're having.

Because it also moves us back into our body. Like, our thoughts can go all over, but when we breathe and we move into the moment, we move into our body. We move fully into the experience. Everything else just kind of dissolves away.

Two: **CULTIVATE COMPASSION**. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. By putting yourself in someone else's shoes, and seeing from their perspective, you can develop a more compassionate and non-judgmental attitude toward others.

Three: **CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS**. We often judge each other based on the assumptions and stereotypes. By questioning those assumptions, and being open to different perspectives, we can avoid making quick judgements.

This is four: **REFRAME NEGATIVE THOUGHTS**. Negative thoughts and emotions can lead us to judgmental attitudes. By reframing negative thoughts into positive ones, we can cultivate a more optimistic and non-judgmental mindset.

And five: **PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION**. Judging yourself harshly can also lead to judging others at the same level. By practicing self-compassion and treating yourself with kindness and respect and deep

understanding, you can cultivate a more accepting and non-judgmental attitude toward yourself and others.

So here we go. You ready for the homework? [Heavy sigh] Now, there's a hundred reasons not to do this homework, and maybe only one good one to do it. If you really want to become a more loving person, I think this homework is required.

And the homework is: At the end of every day, I want you to take five minutes and say: "*Who or what did I judge today?*" And write down one, two, three, four, whatever it is. And I want you just to begin to see those things that you regularly judge: those people; those situations that you regularly judge. And literally make a list of them: one, two, three, four, five.

And then I want you to recreate that situation in your mind: how you could have lived that moment without a judgement. How you could have lived it with an open heart. And just see the difference between the way you judged and how you could have done it.

Now, next week we're going to talk about forgiveness. Because that's the eraser Jesus gave us in all of life. Like, when we don't love, when we don't forgive, we don't live in our oneness with God, forgiveness is what we clean the slate with.

And the final step in your homework this week is to forgive yourself for all the times and all the people you've judged, including yourself. Because for most of us, the person that we judge the most is the person we see in the mirror every day.

So, here we go. You ready?

I want you to see that these four qualities that Jesus gave us ... I believe that we can simplify our spiritual life down to these four things.

1) **KNOW YOUR ONENESS WITH GOD.** Experience your oneness with God. Live in your oneness with God.

2) **LOVE WITH ALL THAT YOU ARE.**

3) **DON'T JUDGE.**

4) And what we're going to focus on next week: **WHEN YOU MESS UP, FORGIVE QUICKLY.**

And if you can live these four things, it really never becomes more complicated than that. Know your oneness with God. Experience your oneness with God. Live in your oneness with God. Love with your whole heart. Don't judge. And when you mess up, forgive. [Laughs] And we can be in a constant state of forgiveness, right? Because we're always messing up in one way or the other. [Congregation laughs]

But over and over again, knowing what your spiritual life is about I think makes it very simple. Not easy, but simple.

Your job is to feel -- to know -- you're completely one with God.

The second aspect: You're called to love. Love at the level that God loves you. Love without conditions or restrictions.

Third: Don't judge. Don't judge yourself; don't judge anybody. Don't judge.

And when you mess up, forgive and forgive fully.

Will you pray with me?

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. And today we allow our spiritual life to be very, very simple. That we're all one with God. We've always been one with God; we'll always be one with God. Two: That we can love. That we can love the world; we can love ourselves; we can love our friends; we can love our family with our whole heart. And three: That we can move past our ego and live in a world without judgement. And four: When we mess up, we just forgive. And we recommit to these four basic teachings. So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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