

Sermon on the Plain – Part 2
Matthew 7:1-5, 16-27, 12:33-35, **Luke 6:37-49**

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye. “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”
(English Standard Version – ESV)

Background:

- “Judge,” “condemn” and “pardon” (Luke 6:37) are all the language of the Day of Judgment, prefigured in God’s current reckonings with his people.
- The image in v. 38 is of a measuring container into which as much grain as possible is packed. The packed container is then shaken to allow the grain to settle, so that more can be poured in until the container overflows. Pouring it into the lap refers to the fold in the garment used as a pocket or pouch. Jewish people sometimes used “they” as a way of avoiding God’s name; thus, “they will pour into your lap” (NASB) may mean that God will do it, or perhaps the notion that God will repay a person through others. The Old Testament often speaks of God judging people according to their ways (Isaiah 65:7). Proverbs and other texts speak of his blessings toward the generous (Deuteronomy 15:10; Proverbs 19:17; 22:9; 28:8).
- Jesus’ parable about the blind leading the blind (v. 39) was a familiar proverbial image. The point Jesus makes here is that one must learn the right way (v. 40) and receive correction before seeking to teach others (v. 41).

- In ancient Judaism, the purpose of a disciple's training was to make him a competent teacher (v. 40), or rabbi, in his own right. By definition, a disciple did not have more knowledge about the law than his teacher.

- Jesus uses hyperbole (vv. 41-42) to get the attention of his audience and accentuate his point. Exaggeration like this would not only draw attention, but laughter as well.

- Figs and grapes were often cultivated together (vv. 43-45) and were two of the most common agricultural products in Palestine, often linked in Old Testament texts. Thorns and thistles were always troublesome to farmers (Genesis 3:18; Isaiah 5:2,4).

- Jesus again uses the image of the Day of Judgment (vv. 46-49). The idea of ultimately being judged for hearing but not obeying was familiar (Ezekiel 33:32-33), but no Jewish teacher apart from Jesus claimed so much authority for his words; such authority was reserved for the Law.

Questions:

+ If all citizens are judged on the basis of laws, what does Jesus mean by saying, "Judge not?" Jesus says, "Judge not" and also "Condemn not." How are the words similar and different? What kind of people or who in particular do you judge? How can you be less judgmental? Whom do you need to forgive, and for what? When and how will you extend forgiveness?

+ In Luke 6, how do verses 39-40 relate to verses 41-42? How do they relate to verses 43-44? What "blind" people have you followed? What happened? Whom do you follow now? Why? What "speck" do you tend to focus on in others? Why? What "log" blinds your vision? Why? Jesus said, "Each tree is known by its own fruit." What kind of "fruit" does your life produce? Jesus mentions good and evil treasure of the heart? What treasures reside in your heart?

+ How does Luke 6:46 relate to everything Jesus says in this passage? What point is he making? In Jesus' parable of Luke 6:47-49, what do the "flood" and "stream" metaphors represent? What is the foundation (if any) of your life, and what is that foundation built upon?