

Luke 6:37-49

“An Inward Evaluation”

In the 139th ps we read the words of David, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*” Ps 139:23-24 In 2 Vs there are 6 references to himself and his need to be searched out, known, tried; looked into and *led* in the way everlasting. Peter exhorted us in a similar manner when he said, “*Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure,*” 2 Peter 1:10 I have found that as I read the scriptures they’re chalked full of instruction on how it is that we’re to lead our lives *practically*. But every now and then we’ll run into a passage that calls us to a thorough examination of exactly who we are *inwardly*. How is it that I stack up or measure up *specifically*? Is there a need for repentance in me *personally*, a change in my life *directly*?

Often times when we come across such passages we can have the tendency to think of others and how nice it would be if *they* would read this, or be here to *hear* this. But if we would still our hearts *before* the Lord and humble ourselves in the sight *of* the Lord the Spirit doesn’t often speak to us for the sake of someone else. God would have us to examine ourselves. Paul told the Corinthians, “*For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*” 1 Cor 11:31

This section of scripture that’s before us today serves as just such a passage; it’s like a mirror that I look into that I might see who it is that’s staring back at me. Am I well pleased with what I see, or are there changes that need to be made? I would just encourage you that as we read through these things, think about these things that you would set yourself in a position of vulnerability/honesty before the Lord and allow Him to search you, to try you that He might lead you in the way everlasting. That is, in the way of righteousness; it could be that this text encourages your life in a way that keeps you headed in the appropriate direction. Could be that it exhorts your life in such a way as to say, “Hey, let’s deal with this now so it doesn’t have to be dealt with later.”

Vs37-38

Wednesday evening if you were here you remember that during the time of devotion we were reminded of 3 things that should be ongoing attributes of the believer. #1 We're to study the *Word* of God, #2 We're to yield ourselves to the *Spirit* of God, and # 3 We should be quick to confess our *sins* to God.

Here Jesus gives to us 4 additional commands (2 negative and 2 positive) that should typify consistent characteristics of the Christian as well. To the negative? "Judge not" and "Condemn not". To the positive, "Forgive" and "Give". 2 Things that shouldn't be happening in your life/in my life, 2 things that *should be* happening in our lives.

And what we're going to discover here is in essence the spiritual law of sowing and reaping. In the book of Galatians Paul said it like this, "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*" Gal 6:7-8 Of course we realize that when he speaks of the "Flesh" and of the "Spirit" that those are very broad terms; he doesn't speak of specific acts of sowing be it to the flesh or the Spirit. Here Jesus gives specific examples and exhortations as to what a certain mode of living, a certain demeanor or practice of life will result in.

The 1st 2 words of Luke 6:37 are probably 2 of the most popular words in the entire bible; even the unbeliever has them memorized. "Judge not." Unfortunately these words are most commonly taken and twisted; removed from the context of the totality of scripture so as to mean that you shouldn't examine a person's life and draw a moral conclusion. People use these words as a shield to hide behind when they're being called out for sin in their lives. "Hey man, your judging me!" "The bible says, 'Judge not'" so that even though they're the one in sin you're somehow worse for drawing attention to it and calling them out on it. Humanity has mastered the art of the "blame shift" and the ability to turn the tables.

If people would just read their bibles they'd clearly see (even in a few Vs) that Jesus wasn't saying that we can't call sin "sin" nor was He saying that there is no such thing as moral absolutes and that what's right in a person's life is relative in nature. Jesus is not calling for a universal acceptance of any lifestyle or any teaching, if that were the case there would be no need for the cross because sin is simply a relative concept depending on each individual's personal persuasion. If that were the case Vs 41-45 would be irrelevant; how am I to tell if the fruit of your life is good or bad? How can you discern if my life is bearing the fruit of righteousness and godliness if you can't make a moral assessment of my life? Now, Jesus did prohibit *hypocritical* judgment (we'll see that in a few Vs); that is applying a standard to someone else that I myself am unwilling to be subjected to. However being subjected to a balanced scrutiny of the scripture isn't in any way a violation of the word of God.

It's true that the believer is called to unconditional love; but that doesn't in any way imply that I'm called to unconditional *approval*, there's a big difference.

Ok, "judge not". It's in reality a word that's in the present active imperative from the common Greek verb "Krino" from which we get our English word, "critic", or "criticize" or "criticism" or even "discriminate". Again it's in the negative so that the essence of what's being said here is this; "Stop criticizing all the time" "Quit being critical", don't be persuaded by personal prejudice. It's a reference to that self-righteous spirit that accuses you but excuses me.

"Condemn not" this lends itself more to the idea that we think of as it pertains to *judging*. Again in the present active imperative meaning, "Don't be like this, stop doing this all the time." We shouldn't be characterized by a critical, judgmental spirit always thinking we know the inner motives or intents of the hearts of other people. "She just did that to spite me" you don't know why she did that, you just made that up because that's how you feel about it. There's no way you can validate the inner motive of a man's heart, that's God's job. It's our job to show mercy, to forgive and be gracious even as God has been merciful, forgiven, and been gracious to us.

He says, “Forgive and you will be forgiven” as you’ve probably figured out by now the word “Forgive” is in the present active imperative. Forgiveness should be consistently characteristic of who you are and who I am. If God has forgiven the enormity of our sin who are we to withhold forgiveness toward someone’s offense toward us (Matt 18)? Now I want to point out here that the context has nothing to do with eternal judgment but with sowing and reaping in this life. The forgiveness of our sin as it pertains to eternity was dealt with upon the cross of Jesus Christ we’re forgiven by faith in Him and His work on our behalf. The idea here is that God searches the intent, and the motive of our hearts and He will honor that inner motive accordingly be it to the positive or the negative. The way you treat others is generally the way you’ll be treated by others. If you’re always critical, people will criticize you, if you’re gracious and merciful, that will often times be repaid to you. But as we mentioned in our introduction Jesus is expounding a bit here on the law of sowing and reaping. In psalm 18 we read it like this, “*With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.*” Psalms 18:25-26

He says, “Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over...” To the Corinthians Paul said it like this, “...*He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*” 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 That is to say that whatever measure/standard we use (be it to the positive or to the negative) it will be measured back to us in like manner. When we read of “pressed down, shaken together and running over” the picture is that of grain going into the container, being pressed down and shaken together to make more room then filled to the overflow to make sure every bit of what you paid for you got. Again to the positive or to the negative, God will not be a debtor to man and He will see to it that what’s been doled out will be returned in like manner. If you withhold, you’ll be withheld from, if you’re generous, gracious and merciful God will take care of you in like manner.

Vs39-40

It's amazing how many people turn to the spiritually blind to help them *see* what life is all about, what they're supposed to do and how they're supposed to live. They'll subject themselves to cults, or motivational speakers, or eastern mysticism; any # of religious endeavors and it's like the blind leading the blind. It can only lead to disaster; if I'm blind to God's ways; if I don't truly know God's word or God's heart, how can I lead you in your pursuit to know Christ and to make Christ known? I'll get us both in trouble. If we're to "walk" in a manner that's true *to* Jesus, then we're to follow *after* Jesus who knows all and sees all accurately. We need to have as our mentor one who follows Him and desires to honor Him, studies His word and seeks His face.

We can never be above our Teacher, but once we've been fully/perfectly trained we'll be like our Teacher and that's our goal. To be trained *by* Christ that we might be *like* Christ; that's God's goal for us as well. That's what Paul was talking about when he said, "*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" 2 Cor 3:18 That's what J.B. was talking about when he said, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" John 3:30 It's what John meant when he wrote, "*...it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*" 1 John 3:2 It's the process of sanctification which will one day culminate in glorification, when we see Him we will be *like* Him.

Vs41-42

The Lord obviously utilizing humorous hyperbole in order to make His point; He's all, "Why are you trying to get the speck of dust out of your brother's eye when you've got a telephone pole in your own!? First deal with the more urgent matter in your own life before you try to line out that same issue in your brother or sister's life." He's not saying that we can't be used to help each other overcome sin; we most definitely can and need to be. But He's saying we need to get make sure that sin isn't a snare in our own lives 1st.

It goes back to judging and being judged; it's easy for me to see sin in your life. But generally it's because its sin that I myself have either been guilty *of* or struggled *with*; there's a sin nature with in us all. However the same sin just seems a lot uglier on you than it does on me...

A good example of this would be the scenario in David's life found in 2nd Sam Ch 12 when Nathan the prophet came to him and illustrated a story to him about a man who unjustly stole another man's lamb. David was enraged over the matter and was quick to condemn that man yet he was blind to the sin in his own life which was of the same nature only far greater.

Here's the point of the passage. Jesus is saying that I should seek the Lord for my own sin and repent of my own sin in broken humility before Him 1st. *Then* I'll be equipped to help you with integrity and in humility if you're in that place.

Now that's not to say that I need to have 1st been ensnared by something in order to be equipped to help someone through something, but rather I shouldn't stand over you and seek to lead you if I'm bound by that same sin in my own life.

Vs43-44

Of course for a tree to bear good fruit there needs be a good *root*. The idea here being that what's in a man will be made evident by what's produced in the life of that man. He will produce fruit that accords to the root that is with in him.

It was the 3rd day of creation: and we read, "*Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind.*" Gen 1:11-12 Things reproduce according to their own kind due to the seed that is with in them. You know that a peach tree is a peach tree because it brings forth peaches. You don't go looking for oranges on an apple tree, it doesn't bear that kind of fruit, it bears apples. Even so you won't get godly from the ungodly and you won't get ungodliness from the one who is abiding in Christ.

Now that's not to say that there will never be sin nor backsliding in the believer's life. Jesus made it clear that trees need to be pruned. Occasionally things will crop up that are no good and they'll need to be trimmed back, pruned, repented *of* and dealt *with*, you get the idea. But the overall consistent/persistent showing of a man's life will bear witness to what kind of man he is; godly/ungodly...

Vs45

Underline that phrase, that right there is key, “Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” The human heart is like a reservoir that contains the things most valuable to its owner and the way the owner lifts the lid on the treasure trove and shows you what’s in there is through his/her mouth.

Jesus makes it real easy for us here. He simply says; “If the guys mouth is like an open sewer, make no mistake he’s not walking with me nor does he know me.” Now when I say “sewer” that doesn’t limit itself to profanity; sure profanity is like verbal sewage, but it could be constantly gossiping, could be slander or never being an encouragement or having anything good to say. I used to know a man who I don’t think he was happy unless he was complaining or griping about something, just a harsh spirited never satisfied kind of guy. Our speech is to be seasoned with salt, full of grace, becoming of the Lord. The bible says, “*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*” Col 4:6

Vs46

Great question isn’t it? If He is our Master that makes us His slave, why then do we disobey?

Vs47-49

So Jesus says here, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord’ and not do the things that I say?” Then He goes on to describe what that person is like who will only *hear* His words but not *do* His words, not *obey* His words and He contrasts that with what the person is like who *will* do the things that He says. In essence He says that if you want a spiritually strong and stable life 3 things are necessary. #1 You must 1st come *to* Him, that is follow *after* Him, belong to Him, *your* heart needs to be in *His* hands. #2 You must *hear* Him, that is take in His word, study His word, rightly divide His word. and # 3 You must *obey* His words, the principles of His word must become practical in my life.

You might note that in this parable, this illustration both houses for all intents and purposes looked identical from the outward appearance; but what made them far different was what went beneath the surface; their foundation. The same kind of storms beat on them both, but the outcome of the one was obviously and considerably different than the other in that it stood through the storms when the other collapsed as the result *of* the storm.

The difference is that one dug deep and laid his foundation on the rock as to where the other didn't make it below the surface. What is it that constitutes digging deep and laying your foundation on the rock? Not just hearing the word, but *doing* the word; learning it does not equal *living it*. I think many people have deceived themselves into believing that they're building on the rock because they go to a lot of bible studies. Hey, that's great; we need to be in the word. But ultimately sitting here in church won't sustain you through life's storms. You've got to put this stuff into practice.

In a very real respect we ought to be thankful for the storms of life; because it's much better for us to find out *now* what kind of foundation we're resting upon than when we're standing before the Lord in judgment because by then the deal is sealed. The choice to obey is today.

Now listen to me. I just want to throw this out there. If you're constantly crumbling under the weight of life's trials and temptations; you might want to check yourself here and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you, are you *really* a doer of the word? Or are you a hearer only, how are you placing into practice the principles of the word of God? Again I'm not saying you'll never struggle or fail. But what's the norm Vs the exception in your life as it pertains to standing strong in the face of tough times, trials and temptations? Because *they will* visit you mark my words; the way you react to them will be indicative of where you're at with the Lord. So consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding. May you take the time to do an inward evaluation so that if necessary the Lord might work in you transformation from the inside out even right here...right now.

Prayer Points:

God search our hearts; and whatever need there may be for transformation in our lives; have Your way. May we bear fruit worthy of belonging to You; may we walk in obedience to You and may our mouths be used to bring *glory* to You and edification to one another. Jesus make us like You...

Listen, Jesus wants to do a work in your life from the inside out. He wants to take your heart and change your heart that you might bear good fruit to the glory of His name. Don't harden your heart against His work in your life, don't be offended at the fact that you're a sinner and you need turn from your sin and give your life to Him. Just call it for what it is, humble yourself before the Lord for God is close to the broken hearted and saves such a one who has a contrite spirit...Jesus shed His blood for you, why not give Him your heart today?