

**“Do Not Judge Others”**  
**(6 Habits Of Highly Effective Christians)**  
**February 9, 2025**  
**Matthew 7:1-5 & Luke 6:36-38**  
**Preached at Messiah Lutheran, Joliet Illinois**  
**by Pastor David Nygard**

All Bible passages are taken from the New International Version (NIV)

**Matthew 7:1-5** Jesus said “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

**Luke 6:36-38** Jesus said “<sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup> Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Grace to you from Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. I don’t know what you want to hear this morning. Please remember one thing. You matter to God. What bothers you, bothers God. Whatever breaks your heart, breaks the heart of the Lord. Jesus has not given up on you. Don’t you give up on Jesus.

Can I give you great advice? “Do not judge others.” Would you like to get along better with your family and friends? Try this. “Do not judge others.” Would you like to end the division and anger in America? This will work. “Do not judge others”. If you want to know what my sermon is about, it is about twenty minutes. Don’t judge!

Here is God’s sense of humor. My sermon is called “Do Not Judge Others”. Tomorrow, I begin four days of jury duty. Hello!

Pastor Kurt is preaching about “6 Habits of Highly Effective Christians”. It sounds interesting. But what is meant by the word “effective”? “Effective” doesn’t mean perfect. There are no perfect Christians. Effective doesn’t mean “rich” or “successful”.

An effective Christian is someone who tells God, “Not my will, but yours be done.” An effective Christian has the heart of a servant. He or she feels empathy for others. Effective believers pray to be used by God to make a difference.

None of us have all these qualities. We’re all at different places on our journey of faith. We don’t strive to be effective to win God’s love. He loves us already. We don’t make changes to earn a place in heaven. Jesus already paid that price. No, we make changes because God has something better in mind for us. It’s part of God’s amazing grace. The Holy Spirit changes us a little bit at a time.

Jesus isn’t giving us new rules or laws. He is telling us what works. This works. Jesus said, **“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Matthew 7:1-2)**

We judge people when we criticize them or look down on them. We judge others when we let disagreements build a wall between us. We judge unfairly when we can’t forgive, forget or move forward in a healthy way.

Who do you judge? What individual have you given up on? Is it your spouse or friend? Your parent or child? Maybe it’s a whole group of people?

Half of the American voters think that the other half are bigots or hypocrites, godless or haters. Of course that’s nonsense. We can thank our politicians and the media for that. The devil is laughing.

Many of us have relatives that we don’t talk to anymore or they won’t talk to us. We’ve lost years of family love and memories because we judge each other over a mistake or a difference of opinion. How sad. The devil is celebrating.

Because no one is more important to us than family we take every comment, joke, or negative action in a personal way. We push people away. The devil is dancing.

First and foremost, God's forgiveness is always a gift. We never deserve it. God's forgiveness gives us the power and motivation to forgive others. According to Jesus the way that we judge people is the way that God will judge us. If we want to serve God, we need to be merciful and gracious to others. If we want people to love and forgive us, we need to love and forgive them.

**There are four reasons why we are foolish when we judge others. Reason #1) We are not mind readers.** Although we love to interpret the actions of others in a negative way, we don't know their motives. We don't know their life experiences. What one person means by the word "love" or "friendship" might be very different than our definition. We are not mind readers.

**We are foolish to judge ... Reason #2) We often judge people for the same things that we do in life.** If we resent the person who talks all the time, it's probably because we want to talk. If we dislike the individual who takes the biggest brownie, it's because we want that brownie. Been there, done that.

An Arab proverb says, "We don't see people the way that they are, we see them the way that we are." If we are petty, unforgiving or jealous we will assume that they act the same way. When we criticize others, we are judging ourselves.

**We are foolish to judge ... Reason #3) No one has all of God's truth. None of us are right about everything.** One of our former pastors David Glesne said, "There is some of God's truth in everyone." He meant that God has given everyone an insight, concern or habit that is true and helpful. But no one has all the truth. Therefore, a Christian can learn from a Jew, a liberal can learn from a conservative, a parent can learn from a child, a man can learn from a woman. Only Jesus has all the truth. He is **"the way, the truth and the life". (John 14:6)**

If we close our hearts to people because we think that we understand God and life better than they do, we are wrong. It's good to be different. If everyone in our family is a saver, we would never spend money and have fun. But if everyone is a spender, we will not save anything for an emergency. People who vote differently are not the enemy. We can learn from them. People who think differently are not the problem. They bring a healthy balance to our family and to our country.

**We are foolish to judge ...Reason #4) We are more like each other than we realize.** We often reject people because they look, think or act differently than us. But the truth is different.

Tom Spielman and I wrote a song called "Maybe He's Just Like Me". He wrote the tune. I wrote the words.

### **"Maybe He's Just Like Me"**

I know a man/ I see him every day/ I say Hello/ He looks the other way  
I can't read him/ He's a mystery/ But maybe/ He's just, just like me

#### **Chorus**

He wants/ to love and be loved/ He wants/ to know God above  
He wants to/ feel needed – every day

I know a woman/ who worries too much/ She works too hard/ She loses touch  
I can't read her/ She's a mystery/ But maybe/ She's just, just like me

#### **Chorus**

She wants/ to love and be loved/ She wants/ to know God above  
She wants to/ feel needed – every day

This old world is/ full of strangers/ Who act and think/ and speak differently  
I can't read them/ they're a mystery/ But maybe/ They're just, just like me

#### **Chorus**

They want/ to love and be loved/ They want/ to know God above  
They want to/ feel needed – every day

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Now we can judge difficult parents or rebellious teenagers. We can hate every bully or condemn people who vote differently. But maybe there's a better way. We can remember that they are just like us; They want to love and be loved. They want to know God above. They want to feel needed - every day. Maybe we can approach them with that in mind.

**Jesus said, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3)** Jesus wonders why we fuss about the speck of sawdust; the little sins of other individuals. But then we ignore the two by four, the big failures in our own lives.

**Jesus said, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:5)** Jesus calls everyone a hypocrite who judges the faults of others but ignores their own sins. I didn't say it. Jesus said it.

I know people who have stopped coming to church because churches are full of hypocrites. I hope that these pious judges stay out of schools, banks, bars and Super Bowls. These places are full of hypocrites too.

I think that we could change the name of Messiah Lutheran to Hypocrites Anonymous. We should put that on our sign. My name is Dave Nygard, and I am a hypocrite, but I am working on it. At least in church we hear sermons that challenge us to be honest with God and with others.

**Here are three steps to stop judging others unfairly.** Try one or try all three. It is God that makes them happen. **Step #1) Every day take time to confess your sins to Jesus.**

Martin Luther said, "Because we sin daily, we need to confess our sins daily." Be honest with God. Don't blame others. You don't have to name every sin. Certain sins will come to mind. For example, "Dear Lord, I know that my sarcasm hurt my wife. I know that my jokes embarrassed my son. I confess that I didn't volunteer at the homeless shelter. I had the time. Please forgive me because you died for me. Show me a better way. Amen."

**Step #2) We can say in very clear terms why we resent or judge someone.** Often when we're angry we yell or slam a door. Sometimes we give others the silent treatment. They might not know the reason for our anger.

I am a Scandinavian. Scandinavians aren't the most verbal people. In my Minney-sota high school the debating team was made up of mimes.

**It helps us to communicate with X-Y-Z statements; sentences with three parts. The X part tells how a certain action made us feel.** "I felt betrayed." "I felt unimportant." "I wanted to run away."

**The Y part tells what the other person did to hurt us.** "You embarrassed me." "You screamed at me." "You broke a promise."

**The Z part tells when the person did the hurtful action.** "It happened Sunday after church." "You said it Friday at the dinner table."

Here's how it works. "I felt betrayed when you broke a promise Friday at dinner." "I wanted to run away when you screamed at me Sunday after church." The simpler that we can express ourselves, the easier it becomes to rebuild relationships.

**Step #3) Instead of judging others we can look for the good in them.** If we look for the bad in someone, we will find it. But If we look for the good in people, we find it. We could even tell that person one positive thing every day we're together. "I like that you're always on time." "I like how you interact with children." "I appreciate how that you volunteer at church." It can't hurt.

This works. **Jesus said, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you."**

As a result, your cup will overflow. God will give you **"A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."** (Luke 6:37-38) I didn't say it. Jesus said it. Believe it. I will preach next on Sunday March, the 9<sup>th</sup>. God bless you. Amen.