

(PP1) Becoming human- giving glory x 47 Sunday 25 November_2018.

(PP2) Marks of a human: Judging others – knowing ourselves. (Matt 5- 7)

Some weeks ago, we returned to JESUS talking to his Disciples – his Followers about: -

Following Jesus as Disciples: the ups and downs. Matthew 5: 1. Jesus climbed the mountain, separated himself from the crowds and gave his attention to teaching his followers – disciples. He spoke about what it really meant to follow him and please him by the way we live our lives in community and in the world. His teachings are condensed in chapters 5 through 7. THEN in verse 1 of chapter 8 we read that he descends down from the mountain and again the large crowds follow him. But before he descends, he speaks to his disciples about the things that that we have heard in **Matthew 7**. Matthew says that the teaching of Jesus is with spiritual authority and not like that of the Scribes – the teachers of the Law.

Matthew 7. This appears to be a series of paragraphs about a variety of things with no obvious connection, but I think the key verse that connects them all is what Jesus speaks in **verse 12**:

“Do for others what you want them to do for you: this is the meaning of the Law of Moses and the teachings of the Prophets”.

(PP3) v1 Judging others – do not judge others, so that God will not judge you, - What is Jesus teaching he Disciples here and why is this so important? Without a doubt this is probably often a mis-understood text. But it’s an important teaching to Jesus and therefore as his Disciples we need to wrestle with its true meaning and the word for judge which is KRINO. Here means: do not assume the office of a Judge presumably over other people’s behaviour and actions.

BUT Jesus is clearly not telling his Disciples to stop being discerning and assessing realities. In this very chapter he says:

Do not give what is holy to dogs – they will only turn and attack you. Do not throw your pearls in front of pigs - they will only trample them under foot. V6 Jesus himself chooses to speak both to the crowds but also on occasions, as here just to the smaller group of Disciples – committed followers. He teaches and models discernment.

- He also speaks of recognising and discerning “false prophets” by their fruit (vv15 – 23)
- He talks about what people build their lives upon as wise and foolish builders (vv24 – 29) and
- He says in vv13, 14 that few people find the narrow path or enter by the narrow gate.

Jesus knows that a true perception of reality is needed, and we are not to stop exercising judgement and discernment, BUT we are not to practice

judgementalism. We are not to be naïve but nor are we to be nasty. We are to be discerning but not damning of people. We are not the Judge passing sentence – God will Judge us all.

(PP4) V2 *In the same way you and I judge others we too will be judged. God will apply to you (and me) the same rules that you and I apply to others.* If I am a harsh judge of others then God will apply the same harshness to me. If I am a merciful, patient person with others then God will judge me with mercy and patience.

We are (says Jesus) to exercise judgement/discernment with GRACE. We must says Jesus treat others as we ourselves want to be treated.

It sounds simple enough ...BUT...in the pressures of busy lives and big aspirations to achieve it is not always easy to be patient and merciful or even to take time to consider why others behave as they do...

Goodness...we even find it hard to find time to reflect on why we behave as we do...

BUT says Jesus – do not point out to someone the speck, the splinter – the corruption in their vision, the way they view the world without considering you own BLIND SPOTS AND BIASES.

Jesus says often we are **hypocrites** (NB Greek actors with masks deceiving ourselves and others). We ourselves see a small splinter in another person's understanding while we ourselves have the equivalent of a plank or even a log in our own eye. We can be blind to our own weaknesses, hypocrisies and un-Christlike behaviour.

Before I pass judgment on another person's perceptions, views and behaviour I should take time to reflect on my own blind spots and limited perceptions.

A truly discerning person is a reflective person.

Examen: as I ask the Spirit to "lighten" my darkness and speak to me about things I think and do that may not be pleasing to Jesus I need to be still and **ask for grace to see beyond my own limited perceptions.** Jesus reminds us of prayer:

V7 Ask, and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ...

N.B. V11 Bad as you are, you know how to give good things....we are not pure in thought, word and deed. Before criticising other we need to examine ourselves in God's light.

Jesus reminds us of the Day when he will Judge all...

V21 Not everyone who calls me "Lord, Lord" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do what my Father in Heaven wants them to do, v22 When Judgement Day comes, many will say to me "Lord, Lord...." READ ON...

It is God who knows our true heart...It is God who knows the true heart of those we encounter. We cannot write them off. Yes we must exercise discernment about what we say to people and who we share with – but always with the request to God that we may be as gracious to others as God has been to us. **We need to know ourselves – as God has shown us ourselves “in a mirror”** (*James 1:22-25*) and know our blind spots, our short sightedness and biases or astigmatisms (how focus light). God gives us slow corrective eye surgery.

Song/ prayer response:

(Stuart DeVane, Glenn Gore)

Draw me closer, Lord
Draw me closer, dear Lord
So that I might touch You,
So that I might touch You,
Lord I want to touch You.

Touch my eyes, Lord
Touch my eyes, dear Lord
So that I might see You,
So that I might see You,
Lord I want to see You.

Your glory, Your love,
Your glory, Your love,
Your glory, Your love,
And Your majesty.

Copyright © 1997 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing.