

The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #20

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[0 : 00] I would invite your attention to the Sermon on the Mount, and let us turn, please, to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5.

Gospel according to Matthew, Chapter 5, obviously, one of the most familiar passages in all of the New Testament. And, along with the familiarity, it is one of the most misunderstood in all of the New Testament.

Before we have a word of prayer, I want to give you just a couple of things that I want to be germinating in your mind regarding the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes that begin the passage.

These verses contain a spiritual component or attitude that is clearly cross-dispensational and should reflect the attitude of all believers of all times.

I'll give you some examples of that momentarily. However, what really complicates the Sermon on the Mount is that this passage also contains elements intended only for the Jew of the day who functioned under the Mosaic Law.

[1 : 27] That's where the difficulty comes in, because both of these components are present in the Sermon on the Mount. And I don't know if you've ever run into anybody who says something like, well, I live by the Sermon on the Mount.

Very often you will discover they really don't know what they're saying. Even though their intentions and their heart may be in the right place, this is a very complex issue that can be sorted out only by comparing Scripture with Scripture, which we intend to do this morning.

So pray with me, please. We are grateful, our Father, for the presence of each one here today. We believe none is here by accident. And we ask that as we engage the text of this age-old passage that you inspired your servants to write 2,000 years ago, we will derive from it the clarity that is needed for appreciating and understanding it, for appreciating and understanding the marvelous way you have constructed and put your word together, so as to require a comparison of Scripture with Scripture for any understanding that is to be appreciated.

We bless you for everything you have done, especially in giving us the revelation of yourself in this marvelous book. We commit ourselves to you now for the understanding and appreciation of what we are going to consider.

In Christ's name we ask it. Amen. Today we are going to be talking about swearing and judging. A couple of topics that are covered, among many others, in the Sermon on the Mount.

[3 : 11] It is called that, of course, because as we read in Matthew chapter 4, and I would invite you to go back to that for just a moment. Matthew chapter 4, and beginning with verse 23, so that we can get the geographical setting.

This is very early on in the ministry of our Lord, and it is critical that you understand exactly who it is that consists of the audience, the place, the time, the date, etc.

So, verse 23 we read, As Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

Now, I am not going to stop here, much as I am tempted, and elaborate on what is meant by the gospel of the kingdom, because I think we have laid sufficient groundwork for that in previous sessions.

But I just want you to note this one thing. He is not, Jesus is not proclaiming a gospel or good news that is predicated upon his death, burial, and resurrection.

[4 : 24] That will not be the content of the gospel until after it has happened. Now, prior to the cross, the gospel that is being presented is called the gospel of the kingdom.

This is the kingdom of heaven come to earth, that Jesus came to proclaim and came to provide the basis for its establishment.

That will be realized through his death, burial, and resurrection. So, note he is proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. He is not saying, Folks, I want you all to believe in me as the one who is going to die for your sins and be resurrected again.

That is not what he is saying. Although he is, at different times, going to make it very clear that that is exactly what he is going to do. But when he does that, then the good news will shift from the gospel of the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

It will shift from that to the gospel of the grace of God. Because then the basis for that good news will have been laid in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

[5 : 41] In other words, the gospel of the grace of God is not proclaimed before Christ provided the basis for it. Even though man was justified by grace as Abraham and Noah were in the Old Testament, it was not predicated upon the realization of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ because it hadn't occurred.

It was thousands of years in the future. So, that's another subject in and of itself. However, continuing on with Matthew chapter 4, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

This, this, you know, we've read this and we've read it before and it just seems, while we might consider it extraordinary, it is an extraordinary because it involves Jesus Christ.

So, in this case, it's kind of ordinary for him because it's what he does. It's what we expect of him. But it is so easy to lose sight of that and just kind of gloss over the enormity.

Do you realize what this Savior was doing in going about healing every manner of disease and doing it in such a way that it was indisputable?

[7 : 01] Now, we have all kinds of people on the scene today who, of course, they're very quick to offer their disclaimer by saying, I don't heal anyone.

God does the healing. He just uses me as a vehicle. And that seems to be their way of getting out of it. But their healings or supposed healings do not begin to compare with this.

In the first place, I've read accounts, and I'm sure perhaps some of you have too, of medical doctors who have actually followed up the people who were supposed to have been healed, threw away their crutches or got up and walked out of their wheelchair and everything.

And some have actually followed up these individuals to find out what really took place. And lo and behold, what do they discover? The malady is still there.

There hasn't been any healing. Or if there was any improvement, it was a little emotional bump or something. But the malady isn't cured. And no reputable physician would sign off on it as a cure having been taking place.

[8 : 12] But it wasn't so with Jesus of Nazareth. I mean, when you live next door to a man whom you have known to have been blind for the last 15 years, and you know that he now sees and sees as well as you do, you know it's for real.

And that happened time and time again. And there was no possible explanation for the powers that Jesus of Nazareth had, apart from his being who he claimed to be.

And as you would expect, he's drawing quite a crowd. And so would any legitimate person engaging in this kind of healing today.

He would draw quite a crowd too. Matter of fact, if I had these powers, if I had these abilities, first thing I would do is head for Children's Hospital and empty that place.

And that is precisely what this one could do. Every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about him went out into all Syria.

[9 : 35] And they brought to him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and he healed them.

Just, I just can't get my brain around the response and the atmosphere that had to have been.

This would have to be a frenzy. Just a frenzy of emotion and exclamation and excitement. As people were bringing loved ones and relatives and children and just with no effort at all they are being made whole.

And great multitudes, well I guess, great multitudes followed him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Now, don't let the chapter break take place here. Keep right on going into chapter 5 and ignore the chapter division because God didn't put it there. Men did and sometimes the divisions aren't very good.

[10 : 43] And when he, Jesus, saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Now, I get the impression that this is the way it happened.

Jesus had this huge crowd of people thronging him, following him, carrying people who were ill on litters and people were coming in crutches and every which way they could just to get to him.

And there's a huge throng of people congregated there. And as our Lord looks over here, he sees this nearby mountain and he heads for it.

And by the way, today, of course, it is understandably called the Mount of Beatitudes where the Sermon on the Mount was believed to have been delivered and while it cannot be proved conclusively that this is where it was, it does seem like a reasonable suggestion.

And as he climbed up this mountain, and it wasn't a very steep, craggy mountain, the kind that you need special equipment to climb, it was just a slope. And as he walked up the slope, his disciples came trailing along after him.

[11 : 56] These were his inner circle. These are later going to be, I guess we could say, promoted in Matthew chapter 10 of all of the disciples that were following him, and they had to have been several.

He is going to select from them twelve. And these he will dub as apostles. So, all apostles were disciples, but not all disciples were apostles.

disciples. And, the twelve come to him as he is ascending on that mountain. And after he sat down, his disciples came to him, and opening his mouth, he began to teach them.

Teach who? The disciples. But when you come over to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, in chapter 7, and verse 28, we read, the result was that when Jesus had finished these words, that is, the words of chapter 5, 6, and 7, the multitudes were amazed at his teaching.

So, initially, as he ascended this mountain, or this steep slope, and began teaching from it, his disciples came to him almost immediately, and then, as he was teaching, the crowd began to build, and they started following up the mountain.

[13 : 25] And, as they arrived, of course, there were no seats, benches, or anything else, nor were they accustomed to it. Everyone just situated themselves, and seated themselves on the grass, and I suspect that there were thousands of people.

the multitudes were amazed at his teaching. Why were they so amazed?

Wasn't he teaching in accordance with the Mosaic Law, with which they were already familiar? Why should this be any different? Ah, but it was different, because he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

He had authority himself. The way they were accustomed to the rabbis' teaching, and by the way, the rabbis did all of the teaching. They did all of the teaching. And the way they taught was by quoting other rabbis, some of whom had departed hundreds of years earlier.

But they always referred to previous rabbis for their authority, and Jesus didn't. On many occasions, he did say things like, you have heard that it has been said, but I say unto you, and what he was doing was countermanding the authority of the rabbis, and the interpretations that they gave.

[15 : 03] On no occasion did he ever countermand the law. He is not saying, you have heard that it has been written, but I say unto you, no, no.

Because what had been written, he followed, and he endorsed. But it was the rabbinical interpretation of what had been written that had become so skewed that it tied the people in knots, and produced a lot of legalism and nitpicking and inconsistency that nobody could live with.

For instance, their treatment of the Sabbath. And I'm not going to dwell on this, I just want to give it as an example. Jesus never had greater conflict with the religious establishment than that which was realized over the issue of the Sabbath.

They were always after him about violating the Sabbath. But never, ever once did Jesus violate the Sabbath that the law of Moses prescribed.

What he did violate continually was the Pharisees' interpretation of the Sabbath. That was the point where he clashed with them constantly.

[16 : 28] Because they were only interested in the letter of the law. Jesus was concerned about the spirit and intent of the law.

And that's what made him say something like, listen, you've got the cart before the horse here. God didn't create the Sabbath and then create man to keep it.

Man wasn't made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man. You've just turned it around. And man has a penchant for doing that, reversing everything that God has done.

So here, he is teaching with authority and not as their scribes. When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him and they are sticking with him and here is a leper.

Now, nobody ever cleansed lepers because this was considered an incurable disease. but it is going to be added to the list of those whom Jesus is going to heal.

[17 : 31] And it goes on and on. So you can see the enormous popularity. I mean, Jesus of Nazareth is becoming a household word. And everywhere he goes, crowds form instantly.

And there's always a throng that he has to minister to. Now, back to chapter five, at the beginning of the Beatitudes and they deserve a treatment all of their own but it would take a long time to do it so we are just going to use a couple of illustrations here and conclude the series that we began several months ago on the difficult sayings of Jesus.

And this will be session number 20 and we are going to incorporate these two into today's session and then we'll move on to new material. So, let me repeat something here if I may.

Matthew 5, 6, and 7 commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount, which of course it is, they contain a spiritual component or attitude that is clearly cross-dispensational, that is, they are in effect and applicable to any dispensation and they should reflect the attitude of all believers for all times.

And for an example, look at chapter 5 and verse 13. This is true of believers, of people who are faithful to the Lord, and it doesn't matter what generation or what dispensation they lived in, whether it was Noah, thousands of years before Christ came, or whether it is the Apostle Paul, or whether it is believers living today.

[19 : 12] You, verse 13, are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? In other words, this is simply another way of saying that God's people, God's people are those who fight against and stand against corruptive influences that are in the world.

We all know that salt has a preservative character to it, and it retards spoilage. That is exactly what you and I are supposed to be doing.

In other words, Christians are far from perfect, and we've got our problems. But it is the Christian constituency, the biblically oriented believers, that prevent the world from being even more rotten than it is.

And it's pretty bad now. There may be times when we can legitimately question the effectiveness of our saltiness, or how salty we really are.

But we are the salt of the earth. And the only reason we are, is because by the grace of God, we are marching to a different drummer, and we have a different worldview. And as believers, bring their worldview, and biblical convictions into the marketplace, we have an influence, albeit not as much as we would like, but we are to have a positive influence on a decaying world.

[20 : 52] And that is true of any and all dispensations, it doesn't make any difference when you are living. And he goes on and gives us another example. In verse 14, you are the light of the world, and I'll be the first to admit, some of us are dim bulbs.

I mean, let's be honest, we're not all bright shining beacons setting out so many millions of candle power, some of us. By our lackadaisical lifestyle, by our lack of commitment to Christ, by our refusing to endorse and live by biblical standards, we can be a pretty dim light.

Sometimes flickering, so that we can't always be told whether we're turned on or off. But nonetheless, just as it is with the salt, we are to be the light of the world.

And these are examples that are cross-dispensational. But I want to give you a couple that are intended only for the Jew of the day who function under the Mosaic law. And this is where the problem comes in. Because there is a tendency among the Christian community to think that everything in the Bible is directed to us.

And it isn't. And neither is the Sermon on the Mount. And neither are the four Gospels. They are not directed to us at all.

[22 : 26] They are somebody else's mail. not ours. Not addressed to us. Now, here is the big distinction, a very careful one.

And I want you to understand this. While these things are not to us, they are for us. You have to understand that distinction.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. we are to take all of the Bible. And those of a dispensational dispensation or dispensational disposition, which I happen to be one, are often accused, oh, well, you only believe part of the Bible.

You only take part of the Bible. That's stuff of nonsense. The whole book is the Word of God. But while all of the Bible is for us, not all of the Bible is to us, you have got to apply Miles Coverdale's rules written in 1535 as to how we are to approach Scripture.

And when you do that, it's amazing how things just dissolve and problems just seem to go away. And we've talked about that numerous times in the past, and I'll not belabor the point now.

[23 : 46] However, well, let me give you some examples. Let the Scriptures talk for themselves. When I say they contain elements intended only for the Jew of the day, look at chapter 5 and verse 21.

You have heard that the ancients were told, you shall not commit murder, and whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court.

And whosoever shall say to his brother Raka shall be guilty before the supreme court. Now, need I say, this is not the supreme court of the United States where we have nine justices sitting.

That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about a Jewish law court that existed in Israel 2,000 years ago. And whosoever shall say, you fools shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

Well, what's that all about? And verse 23, if therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar. Have you done that lately? If you haven't, why haven't you?

[24 : 58] Here it is, right here in black and white. Or in my Bible, it's red and white. But you see what I'm saying? This is content designed exclusively, specifically, for the people to whom Jesus was speaking at that time.

And they are Jews living in the land of Israel. And by the way, this is operating under the old covenant. This is the Mosaic covenant.

And it has a very legal ring to it, as would be predictable. Because Jesus came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law.

And then, in chapter 6, and verse 28, we'll just meander through here a little bit. 628, Why are you anxious about clothing?

Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so raised the grass of the field, which is alive today, and tomorrow was thrown into the furnace, will he not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?

[26 : 15] Do not be anxious when saying, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Or with what shall we clothe ourselves? Do you ever do that? This is set against the backdrop of the anticipation of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

And it is filled with legal performance based requirements. You do not find any grace in this sermon on the mountain. It just isn't here.

And that doesn't mean that it is lacking somehow deficient. It isn't supposed to be here. It's for a different dispensation. This is operating under the old covenant, not under what we know as the new.

And in chapter 7 and verse 6, Do not give what is holy to dogs. Do not throw your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet, turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

[27 : 17] I have not found that to be so. And you could tie in with this John 14, whatsoever you ask in my name, that I will do.

I have not found that to be so either. God because it was never given to me. It was given to the apostles who needed that kind of power and that kind of authority for the commission that God gave them.

But God gave us a different commission. And we have a different power and a different authority. Not to be confused with this. And when you don't make the distinction, you end up with hopeless contradictions.

You can't make this thing square. It just won't fit. This is one of the major reasons why people say, yeah, there's contradictions in the Bible.

No, there aren't. There are no contradictions. There are many places where there appear to be some. And let me give you another example. Well, let's just go back and take the Matthew 5 passage and treat that by itself.

[28 : 32] Matthew 5 and 33. Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, you shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.

But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king.

nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Hmm. Oh, that's for sure.

You can't make one multiply, either. But let your statement be, yes, yes, or no, no. and anything beyond these is of evil.

This is all about swearing. A topic that is also grossly misunderstood. And he is saying we are not to swear at all.

[29 : 45] I remember hearing about Herbert Hoover, who was our president before FDR came to the White House in 1932. I think Hoover was elected, I believe, in 1928.

And he was a staunch Quaker. And when it came time for him to be sworn in to the Oval Office as the Supreme Court provided the Bible for him to swear his oath of allegiance to defend, protect the Constitution of the United States, etc., Herbert Hoover said, the Bible forbids me to swear.

So, he would not use the words, I do solemnly swear. He said, and apparently the chief justice who was swearing him in agreed to it.

He said, I do solemnly affirm. Just couldn't bring himself to use the word swear. Because Jesus says you're not to swear at all.

And by the way, this isn't talking about cussing. Although that frequently is read into this. He's not talking about using foul language, although that's certainly unbecoming of a Christian.

[31 : 15] But that's not what this is about. What this is about is swearing to magnify or increase the intensity of your integrity.

When I was a kid, we used to say something like, swear to God and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye.

And boy, if you said that, that meant you were for real. Any kid could take that to the bank if you said that. Or swear on, some would say, I swear on my mother's grave.

Or I swear by this or swear by that. And the implication is that you might not be telling the truth otherwise. if you don't swear, I swear on a stack of Bibles.

Well, if you swear on a stack of Bibles, then we can be pretty convinced that you're going to really tell the truth. And you know, that's exactly the rationale they use in our court systems today.

[32 : 22] The idea is that if you have someone raise their hand and put their right hand on the Bible, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God.

I do. And then they go on and lie like a rug. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could be absolutely guaranteed that if they swear on the Bible, you can take whatever they tell you to the bank.

It's got to be the absolute. Now, we have a penalty for that. We call it perjury. And if you lie, under oath, you are subject to prosecution.

But the idea is that you enhance your credibility by swearing by something greater than yourself. Jesus said, don't do that.

Do you know what is supposed to suffice? You say, yes, and that's what you mean. No, and that's what you mean.

[33 : 35] You don't have to embellish it with, I swear on a stack of Bibles on my mother's grave, on the God of heaven, or on the temple, or whatever. Just let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no.

Just be a person of integrity, so that you don't have to embellish it by adding something to it. And another thing, when I was a kid, do you ever do this? Do you ever tell a bold-faced lie?

But? Had your fingers crossed behind your back, so that whatever you say doesn't count, you know? We just look for loopholes, don't we?

And that's the way we, you know why? Because we sometimes feel that we need to lie. One of the most difficult things that we face here at the church, and we've come to face a lot of it over the last couple of months, and your secretary, Mary, faces it more than I do.

People calling here for assistance because once the word gets out, that Grace Bible Church paid somebody's electric bill that was going to be shut off as 111 bucks, call these people.

[34 : 55] And we get all kinds of calls, and so do a lot of other churches, you know. And one of the biggest problems that we have, and that all of our sister churches in the community have, is being able to get the truth out of people.

Because many of them feel that if they don't lie to you, they will not get what they need. So they have to make up a story, and usually embellish it, and make it worse than it is, in order to get the assistance that they're seeking.

And I facetiously said when we were having a meeting not long ago, I wonder how much, I wonder how much a polygraph machine would cost.

and if there's some way we could get an experienced operator to run, to at least help a little bit, because people come up with some horrendous stories, and your heart goes out to them, and then, and you want to help them, you want to do this for them, you want to do that for them, and then come to find out, three weeks later, that about 90% of it wasn't even true, and it tends to make you cynical then, and you cannot help but look upon every request with real suspicion, because there are so many people who just learn to play the con, and they work the system, and they go from this church to that church to another church, and they just milk it for whatever they can, and you know something?

It's become a way of life with them. That's their survival mood. That's all they know. That's all they do. They just work the angles and work the system. So truth can be pretty hard to come by.

[36 : 39] Scripture talks about believers as being those who speak the truth in love, and pursue the truth, and love the truth, and proclaim the truth, and protect the truth.

We are to be people of truth. So let your yes mean yes, no equivocation, and when you say no, that should suffice.

If you are a person of integrity, you do not have to embellish it with swearing on this or that or six other things, just a simple yes or no will be enough.

And then in Matthew 7, Jesus said, do not judge lest you be judged. judged. Well, how can you function without judging?

And not only that, but what are we going to do with a passage in John's gospel, chapter 7, where Jesus says, do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.

[38 : 04] Well, now, wait a minute. In Matthew 7, he says, don't judge. Then in John chapter 7, he says, judge with righteous judgment.

Well, what's it to be? And how is it that we are not to judge at all? You can't live if you don't judge at all. Every decision you make is based on your judgment.

Maybe good judgment, maybe poor judgment, but you exercise judgment all day long. When some of you leave here, you are going to a restaurant for lunch.

And you will judge which restaurant you are going to. And you realize that you are discriminating against all of the restaurants that you don't go to.

And you are going to the one that you're going to. And you are automatically discriminating against all the others. Is there something wrong with discrimination? No. You need it. God help you if you don't have any discrimination.

[39 : 09] You are to be a discriminating individual. That means you are constantly making selections and exercising judgment. You are to have discriminating things.

When you decide that you want to change the decor in your living room. Discriminating judgment would come in mighty handy there. Because it causes you to select one color or motif over another.

And you are discriminating. Discriminating is a natural thing. We do it all the time. It's another word for judging. But the word discriminate and discrimination has become so tarnished by the almost limited usage it is given.

It is placed in a negative venue and it doesn't belong there. We say well you shouldn't be discriminating. Well yes you should. Where the difficulty comes in is that we are not to discriminate on the basis of someone's skin color or economic background or physical appearance or deficiencies.

We are not to discriminate on unworthy grounds like race religion color etc. But we discriminate all the time. Every time you make a decision to buy this car instead of this car you are judging.

[40 : 40] You are exercising a judgment. Jesus isn't saying don't judge anything at all. No, no, no, no, no, no. This is the whole point. What he's saying and if you take this in context Jesus is saying you are not to be judgmental.

If you are judgmental that means you reach conclusions about a person or a situation and you don't have all the information.

Have you ever done that? Have I ever done that? Absolutely. I think we do it all the time. We may not intend to do it but we are just acclimated to do it.

We prejudge people. That's called prejudice. We prejudge people because we read what we see and we draw a conclusion on the basis of what we see but we don't have sufficient facts.

However, that doesn't keep us from forming an opinion and that's what judgmental is. we are to determine the facts of an issue before we form an opinion.

[42 : 07] But so often we are in a knee-jerk mode and we reach a premature conclusion and we may have it all wrong. And we look at that person in that light.

That's being judgmental. That's being prejudiced. And we just don't know enough to form an opinion. And it's easy to do. It's automatic. We just do it without even thinking.

We can be judgmental and prejudicial without anything. We just get first impressions. Like here's somebody who's called to be a jury duty, prospective juror.

And if you want to get off the jury, you don't want to serve on the jury, all you have to do when they question you is say, well, yeah, I'd be glad to serve on a jury because I want to fry that sucker.

I can tell he's guilty by looking at him. He's got beady eyes. Everybody I've ever known has beady eyes. He's guilty of something. I'm ready to hang him. You will not be on that jury, and for good reason.

[43 : 13] But you know, people, we just, Jesus said, judge righteous, judge not according to appearances, because appearances can be deceptive.

You don't know who you're dealing with sometimes based on appearances. Here's this old guy wearing rumpled Levi's and a flannel shirt, pulls in the parking lot of this big box store in his beat-up pickup truck, and gets out and goes in and starts helping a cashier sack up his customers' groceries.

People look at this guy, who's he? Oh, he's just Sam Walton, that's all. He just owns the whole shebang.

He just founded the whole thing. But you'd never know that from appearances. sometimes we just see somebody initially in an appearance.

You know the old saying that first impressions are lasting impressions? And we size somebody up just on the basis of what we see.

[44 : 34] And Jesus said, don't judge according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment. How do you judge righteous judgment? You need to get the facts of the matter.

And if you don't have the facts, or they are not accessible to you, then don't form an opinion. That's hard for me to do. Hard for me to do.

Because the tendency is to look at someone, you just size them all up, look at the car they're driving, look at the way they're dressed, look at the way they carried themselves, and you got them, you nailed them, and you may be miles apart, not even close.

But we just tend to do that. And one reason is because of our own pride. We think we are such a hot shot assessor of people and of character.

And sometimes we are as far away as we can possibly be. That's what Jesus is talking about. Don't be judgmental.

[45 : 40] don't assign things to people when you don't know the facts. And sometimes when you go in a man goes in a restaurant and he sits down and the waitress comes over and she takes his orders and he wants, for a side dish, he wants peas.

And he puts the order in and she goes back and she brings it back and puts it in front of him. These aren't peas. Peas aren't yellow. This is corn.

Hey, hey, I didn't order corn. You don't know the difference between peas and corn? I ordered peas.

Would you take this back, please? And I want a whole new dish because by the time you come back with my peas, everything else will be cold. And the poor girl, starts sniffing and making her way back there.

And not only that, but she's not going to get a tip either. I mean, I expect service when I come in this place. Is that too much to ask?

[46 : 54] And the guy didn't know. He didn't have a clue. That 15 minutes earlier, this girl just got off the telephone talking to her mother.

and her mother says, the doctor's given her 15 days to live. And what do you think that poor girl's mind is filled with?

As she's just going through the motions of serving those tables, overcome by the news that she just got from her mother. But this jerk sitting at the table who's so upset because peas and corn isn't peas, he doesn't have a clue what she's dealing with.

And, sad to say, in many cases, he doesn't care. So, we all have a tendency, I think, to jump to conclusions and to be critical of people who don't do what we think they ought to do and they don't know what we think they ought to know.

But, the old Indian proverb, you know, if you haven't walked in a man's moccasins for a mile, you don't know what he's dealing with.

[48 : 18] And we need to be willing to lighten up and cut others some slack, and not be so quick to sit in judgment on someone or to be critical of someone, because you never know what they may be dealing with.

That, that might make them even, even more competent than what they ordinarily would be.

I mean, if you were dealing with some of the things that they're dealing with, you might be more of a basket case than they are. Isn't it? It's just so easy to stand back and look at people and draw conclusions about them and their shortcomings and their failures.

And Jesus said, you know, we can be so critical of others that we can see a speck in our brother's eye.

And be critical of you got a speck in your eye. You're lacking. You don't measure up. You're not what you ought to be, which of course is what I am.

[49 : 36] Jesus said, and while you are criticizing him for the speck in his eye, you've got a log in your eye.

someone says, when you point your finger at someone, you've got three fingers pointing back at yourself. We ought to keep that in mind.

This doesn't mean that we ought not to consider or not to hold people accountable. I'm not saying that we shouldn't hold people accountable and we should just let anything and everything slide. No, no, accountability is a really important thing.

We need to hold each other accountable, but we also need to be willing to give others a benefit of the doubt because you never know what they've got on their plate that can radically cover their attitude and color their attitude and their behavior.

these are cross dispensational things. This that we've just considered is for any and every dispensation.

[50 : 50] People ought to always be this way. It doesn't matter what the dispensation is or when you're living. We ought not to be judgmental and that's what our Lord is talking about. And when we say something, our integrity should be sufficient to allow for a simple yes or no.

And that's the truth. And people ought to be able to have great confidence in whichever it is you say without having to say I swear on a stack of Bibles, swear on my mother's grave, all the rest of that nonsense.

Just to say let your yes BS and your no be no. Have you a question or comment? We've got about five minutes and I don't want to let you go early.

Anyone? Is our roving mic back there available? Thank you. Anybody have a comment or question? Feel free to inject it. Okay, well, you had your opportunity.

So, thank you for being here and if you will stand we'll be dismissed. Loving Father, we realize that there is so much more truth in these passages than what we are even capable of absorbing or of living out.

[52 : 26] But we ask that as we have engaged these subjects you will use them to stimulate us in our thinking and in the way we relate to others and help us to be more mindful that those around us each have their own story.

And it's always different from ours. Each person is dealing with their own heartaches and their own deficiencies and their own worries and fears and we need to be cognizant of that to the extent that we are willing to give others a benefit of the doubt and not look upon people with a prejudiced eye but recognize that you are the only one who really knows what these people are dealing with whoever they are.

and we are called to be of encouragement and support one to another. And we recognize that there are people who will take advantage of our generosity but that's between them and you and we cannot discern that very often so we leave that to you and to your wisdom.

Thank you for these gracious people and for their generosity in times past that's enabled us to reach out to others with love and care and we pray that it may continue so. We bless you for it in Christ's wonderful name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.