

We all have times in life that we get snappy. Each of us has certain stressors or situations that might bring out the worst in us. We all have buttons and sometimes they get pushed. When they get pushed out...we usually will start to judge the person who pushed them. This can be little things or big things. But they never end well.

I got back last Sunday from 9 days on the road with the students from our church. This was a wonderful experience, but it turned into an experiment on patience that last day. I was ready to be home. When I get tired I turn into a little bit of a bear. It is the opposite of my usual joking self.

During a gas station visit, I clumsily tripped over a caution wet floor sign. When one of the youth made a comment about it...my heart showed, and it didn't show in a nice way. I quickly realized I needed to apologize and my being tired wasn't a reason to treat someone I care about like that.

During this summer we have been reading the sermon on the mount and realizing what a view of the kingdom looks like from our end. We have learned the kind of things that God is asking for us. The way we live our lives both reflects our belief in what God has done for us as well as gives future witness to the eternal kingdom that is coming. We are winding down to those last few laps in the scripture and Jesus is focusing more on what our lives reflect.

Today, we look at a familiar piece of scripture about judgment and prayer. Two things that we wouldn't at first put together. But Christ shows us they are deeply woven together.

There is an overarching idea in our passage, a lesson I learned when I accidentally snapped at the student last week; Our actions show the true state of our heart. They are the lie detector of the soul.

In little ways and in big ways.

The problem with judgment is that we don't often realize how we are acting in sin when we judge. Just like when we talk about how we try to hard and it shows our own places of sin..judging often comes from a place of insecurity and inadequacy. We judge because we are nervous about being over taken.

Scripture is pretty clear that is is up to God to judge, not us. Christ, in his perfect life, is the only one worthy to judge. IF we want to be a judge, then in God's eyes we have to be willing to die for those very same people. I don't think thats a check we want to cash.

To become a disciple of Jesus is to learn to see and accept the world as God's world. We are not called to be God, but rather we are called to learn to be a creature of God.

It is only through a tenacious dependence on God's graciousness we can deal graciously with those who provoke us. The call to not judge is not a call to moral or ethical indifference, but it is a call to see with the eyes of Christ and the love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit.

If I have to think of a catch phrase for Jesus in the sermon on the mount it would be "let's flip this". Or "let me turn your whole idea of the world upside down on itself".

When we see a speck in someone else's eye. Do we decide to willingly judge, through outright confrontation, passive aggressiveness or a snarky facebook post, or do we start desiring for a hunger and thirst for righteousness to spring up in that person's life. Do we heed the call of the psalms and Jesus to pray for those who are against us? Do we want them to experience the same saving grace that we have?

Jesus is dismantling cycles of judgement and condemnation. A.W. Tozer describes that faith is not a description of life, but instead an operation. We don't own it but we work in it. To not judge is to live alongside the upside down life Jesus presents to us.

To take serious the amazing task given in the sermon on the mount we must take serious God's promise to be with us and assist us. We approach our life with Christ and our life in this world with intensity and passion...expecting different things to happen. Our involvement and actions tell God if we have faith...either in him or a false faith in

ourselves. Our actions begin to show how our heart is being changed and redirected towards goals of Gods kingdom instead of ours.

To be a kingdom people-to live a beatitude life-of mercy, humility, holiness, being poor in spirit and seeking righteousness means truly asking God to change us. TO live beyond judgement and our insecurities and needs to place others beneath us. To be made the kind of people that see planks in our own eyes and to ask for help removing them. God promises to always answer when this is what we are calling for.

There is no better place to begin a life of plank removal, of flipping things upside down than at this table....