

Crossroads Community Church

Ahh? what warmth greeted us this morning, the sun was shining and the Lord met with His children. Worship was vibrant and joyful; Pastor Don shared announcements and prayer needs. We pray for those in recovery from accident injuries and for those suffering of depression, May God restore their strength and fill them with joy. Pastor Don prayed just before teaching a valuable lesson,? Dear Father God, we humbly come and praise you for your grace and ask for your forgiveness, help us be obedient, in Jesus name, Amen.?

This morning what if I talked about Justification ; God's pardon for sin, Regeneration, a new life through Jesus', Adoption, God choosing us as His children, and Progressive Sanctification, where the Holy Spirit helps us grow day by day. These words may seem a little alien to some of us if we aren't familiar with church, we hear many complaints that the church is out of touch, it is full of hypocrisy and it is judgemental. This is what I want to address this morning, the dangers of judging people. The most common verse we have all heard is ?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. In other words what goes around comes around, the law of reciprocity. Sometimes we feel we have the right to judge, we justify it by saying well they just keep doing me wrong over and over again, their sin is worse than mine, but it is not God's way, even in the book of Amos we see that God is merciful when his people were committing the same sin over and over again. He forgives but He also reprimands and punishes when needed. When their punishment came they could not excuse their sin just because the sins of others were worse. In God's eyes, sin is sin. He determines everyone's wrongs impartially and distributes correction accordingly. Some may say, ?Wait a minute wasn't John the Baptist judging the Pharisees in Matthew 3:7-8 when he called them a brood of snakes?? In this case it was God's reprimand to the Pharisees , they were judging people unfairly when they themselves hadn't repented, God was examining their hearts, they were not living what they professed. It certainly is not our place to judge, we should however examine our actions if they match our words.

There are Spiritual dangers to judging others, so why do we do it? We may think we aren't as bad when we compare our sin to others, trying to minimize the severity of our sin or trying to justify it making it somehow less unforgivable. It is a false sense of security; God judges sin equally and we can't escape its consequences,(2:1-4). Just because we come to church on Sundays doesn't prove we are sinless, everyone struggles with sin in one form or another but God's kindness and mercy can help us overcome sin. Paul taught not to judge, not to be arrogant, self-righteous and hypocritical. Paul wasn't talking about moral judgements, we all know that some are sinful attitudes, he is saying that God doesn't want us to knit pick about appearances, the way one dresses or certain worship or event traditions from one church to another, rather we should be tolerant, loving and caring with humility of spirit. Pride is never the way to help each other, but humility and wisdom will,(Proverbs 11:2). When it comes to moral issues, Jesus says in Matthew 7 to suspend judgement and examine ourselves first. We all know God's Commandments and before criticizing others, we ought to see if we are following them to the letter too. When we cast judgment we are trying to exalt ourselves above another, it is a wrongful attitude. If someone is treating us wrongly remember God sees each of our motives and only He can judge justly, and we too as Jesus can entrust ourselves to Him without retaliating,(1 peter 2:23).

Judging others has the potential to blind us to our own faults, we become stubborn and hard hearted and we begin to take God's forbearance for granted. God may not punish right away but make no mistake, eventually consequences of sin catch up with us, remember the law of reciprocity? (Romans 2:5-6, John 12:48). Being judgemental is a subtle trap; we can fall into ?Playing God? mode. We think we are above reproach, we are untouchable assume we are shielded from God's judgement. Inevitably we risk bringing God's judgment upon ourselves without even realising it.

Beloved we ought to ask ourselves, where do we want to be on judgment day? Do we want God's mercy and forgiveness and humbly enter His grace or do we want irrevocable judgement and be cast out of His presence? We can choose today to be loving, kind, and forgiving, this doesn't mean we need to agree with and practice every whim of human philosophy but we can be compassionate and tolerant without compromising God's commands. We should remain humble and caring being sensitive to the needs of others all the while praising God for his undeserved mercy and admitting that we all need Him. Have a wonderful week seeking His grace, Asherey Shalom! To learn more visit www.shelburnecrossroadschurch.ca