

Luke 6:36-42

Sermon: **Sermon on the Mount #5**

written by: Danijel Dragaš

2024.



WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO JUDGE

1. We continue with the Sermon on the Mount — entering into the final commandments Jesus gives to His people. After this, Jesus will turn His attention to the teachers — those leading their people to destruction. In Matthew 23:13, we read the moment when Jesus says to the Pharisees:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

1.1. A powerful declaration from our Teacher. In this sermon, we’ll stop right here and try to understand why Jesus said this to the very teachers He Himself had listened to during much of His upbringing.

1.2. But before we get there, let’s finish with Jesus’ commandments.

1.3. **(Luke 6:36–38)** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

1.4. Why does Jesus give these specific instructions to His people — “Do not judge, be merciful, do not measure, give and it will be given to you”? I believe Jesus is warning His people about the “yeast” of the Pharisees — their teaching — and how destructive it can be.¹

1.5. Because of Pharisaic teaching, the people had developed a lens through which they viewed and interpreted the world. From those teachings, received from their instructors, they had come to believe they had the right to judge, to measure, to withhold forgiveness, and to withhold generosity.

¹ Matthew 16:6, 11-12

In other words, they believed this: *“We are the chosen people. We belong to the Pharisaic tradition — the only one with the authority to interpret the Law of Moses, the Law given to us by Yahweh, our God. We go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, we perform the rituals prescribed in the Law of Moses, and because of this, we have the right to judge, to measure; we know who will inherit the kingdom of heaven and who will not!”*

1.6. Perhaps they didn’t always say this aloud, but their fruits revealed it — whom they favored and whom they despised. They loved their own, and they hated the rest.

1.7. Jesus, knowing how His people thought — a people deceived for decades by the Pharisaic vision of righteousness — tells them: *“Do not do this. Be merciful, just as your heavenly Father is merciful — that should be your focus. He desires that you strive to be holy, just as He is holy. Do not be like the Pharisees... forgive! Do not judge! If you see that this is the reality of your heart — if you find within yourself a desire to forgive rather than to condemn — then know that your heavenly Father will also forgive you. When the Day of Judgment comes, He will forgive you. You will become heirs of the Kingdom of God.”*

THE POCKET ON THE SIDE

2. All right, let’s continue. “A good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap.”

What is Jesus telling His people with this metaphor? I believe He’s referring to the cloak that Jews wore every day. As I mentioned before, the cloak shielded a Jew from the desert sun while he rested during his travels, and at night it served as his pillow.

2.1. Also, the way a Jew tied his cloak created a pocket on the side — a fold where he could store food, perhaps wheat, to sustain him along the way. That pocket was essential for survival.

2.2. With that in mind, why does Jesus use this particular image? The answer, I believe, lies in Isaiah 65:1–7. In that passage, Yahweh speaks in anger toward His people because they have rejected Him. He says: *“Behold, it is written before Me, I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will even repay into their laps both your own iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers.”*

2.3. The key word here, I believe, is “laps” — they will receive their due payment into their laps.

2.4. So my proposal is this: Jesus, knowing that Yahweh said this in Isaiah, now tells His people, *“You who listen to Me and obey My commands will receive the opposite of those in Isaiah. You too will receive into your laps — but not punishment, rather blessing from God. You will receive grace, unlike your forefathers who provoked Yahweh with their deeds.”*

2.5. Of course, this is an interpretation — but it aligns perfectly with the context: who will be blessed, and who will not.

YOUR MEASURING WILL COST YOU

3. After this we read: “For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

Recently I spoke with a brother in Christ who told me how disappointed he had become in people from his church. He said that more than once he had heard them criticizing other believers for smoking cigarettes or drinking a glass of wine at a celebration.

3.1. I know that for some of us this may sound absurd—especially to those who were not raised from childhood within a Christian denomination—but we must understand one thing: when you are immersed in the teaching of your denomination from a young age, you begin to see the world through its lens. And in that way, often unconsciously, you even measure your brother or sister from the same church.

3.2. What that dear brother said in response was, to me, profoundly important. He said: *“My dear Baptists, we were raised in paradise. Our parents rocked us all our lives in the moral commandments of God. The walls of our churches protected us from the immorality outside. We have been loved and sheltered our whole lives by our grandparents and elders within the church. Every year we went to Christian camps, spent time together, prayed, and sang to the Lord. What am I trying to say? While we lived in paradise, many people lived in hell. Not everyone had the privilege of living the life that was given to us as a gift. And for that reason, we have no right to judge our brother who smokes—perhaps that cigarette was the only small relief he had while walking through the hell of his life. Who are we to judge him? Can we really say that he is cursed and will not inherit the Kingdom of God just because he smokes? Shame on us!”*

3.3. This story clearly shows how God will measure us when we one day stand before His judgment. The members of that church had no problem condemning another member who did not meet their own standards of righteousness.

— Because of that, they were blind to their own self-righteousness. These were people without mercy in their hearts — their judgment was sharp, cold, and final. —

3.4. And just as Jesus said to His people, *“That is how you will be judged one day,”* He says the same to today’s self-righteous people: *“That is how you will be judged! Because of your self-righteousness you were blind to show mercy and kindness to another human being — and therefore your God will measure to you with the same measure.”*

THIS IS NOT AN EASY TASK

4. Before we continue, I want to emphasize something.

Even though Jesus teaches us not to measure and not to judge, this does not mean we should remain silent about the righteousness of God. On the contrary — that is our duty.

We must gather the courage to stand before others and say: *“This is not right. We must not do this. This is evil in the eyes of our God — cast away that thought and walk in the path of God’s goodness and holiness.”*

4.1. And if, because of that, we are rejected or accused with words like, *“Didn’t Jesus tell you not to judge?”* — and they do this only to shame us — we must still stand firm in what is right. Why? Because what God thinks matters more than what people think.

4.2. This is not an easy task — it must be practiced and developed over many years. The courage to speak what is right in God's eyes does not come naturally; it grows gradually through life's circumstances, as we freely choose to overcome the pressure of the culture in which we live.

JESUS SHIFTS HIS FOCUS TO THE TEACHERS

5. Now we move on to the next verses. **(Luke 6:39–42)** And He also told them a parable: A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher; but everyone, when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

5.1. I believe Jesus now turns His focus toward the teachers. "Can a blind man lead a blind man?" What an image! Imagine a reality in which a blind man leads another blind man — wherever they go, both will surely fall and be harmed. I believe Jesus uses this image to show how destructive Pharisaic teaching was — both for the teachers themselves and for those who followed them. The Pharisee was blind in his convictions, and he passed that blindness on to his listeners, so in time the listeners became just like their teachers.

5.2. Let me pause with you on Jesus' words and say this: a teacher with corrupt values cannot teach a student to live by truths he himself does not believe. If he carries within himself evil ideas — ideas that promote his own welfare: fame, pride, recognition, praise, and so on — those same ideas will begin to take root in his student's life.

Yes, a teacher may sound gracious, well-intentioned, and kind... in other words, trying to hide his true nature, he can easily act holy — spiritual, even. But if we think about it, any one of us can use words to mask our true inner state, can't we? Any one of us can utter the "right" words that will persuade others to believe we are good and righteous.

5.3. So how can we tell authentic holiness from the counterfeit? Jesus gives us the answer: *"You will know them by their fruits."*² Sooner or later — from those teachers as well as from ourselves — it will be revealed who we truly are. We cannot hide forever; life will create the circumstances that bring our real fruits to light.

5.4. I know a story about a priest who served in the town where my friends live. For a time, they were deeply impressed by his kindness. The town spoke of how, during Mass, he would wash the feet of his parishioners, and how beautiful and gracious his words sounded.

But later it was discovered that this priest had been sleeping with the wives of his parishioners, stealing money from the church, and using that money to buy himself a large, expensive SUV. The question is: how was he able to hide his fruits for so long? How did he manage to deceive the church members? Sadly — easily. He convinced them with his false fruits that he was a saint of God. Just because he had washed a few people's feet, just because he spoke gently and eloquently during Mass, he was seen by the congregation — and even by the whole town — as a "holy man of God."

² Matthew 7:15-20

But the day came when his true fruits were exposed — the fruits he had truly believed in all along. As I said earlier, sooner or later, the fruits we nurture inside ourselves will come to light. We cannot hide forever.

5.5. Let's continue: "A student is not above his teacher." What was Jesus trying to explain to His people? The Jews who listened to the Pharisees became like their teachers — self-righteous, condemning, and, sadly, merciless. In other words, if a Jew remained committed to Pharisaic teaching because he liked it, sooner or later he would personally bind himself to live by its principles. He would become a copy of his teacher — in lifestyle, in attitude, and in his treatment of others who live in the same reality as he does.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LOG AND THE SPECK IN THE EYE

6. Let us now reflect on the statement I mentioned at the beginning of this sermon. Read again for yourself Luke 6:41–42, and section §1.

6.1. In Matthew 23:13, Jesus says to the Pharisees: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."*

Who are the people who want to enter? The answer lies in the Gospels. When Jesus began teaching His people, at last the righteousness of God was being preached—and a few heard it. A few truly desired to know how to inherit the Kingdom of God.

6.2. Through Jesus' teaching, the gates of the Kingdom were opened, and the path toward those gates was made crystal clear by our Teacher.

6.3. We also know from the Gospels that those who believed Jesus' teaching were precisely the ones the Pharisees despised: tax collectors, prostitutes, Gentiles, Romans, zealots, ordinary people—and even a few from among the Pharisees themselves. What irony: God gave His blessing to the lowly and insignificant, while the great spiritual leaders fell into certain darkness. What irony indeed.³

6.4. But what about those who desired to enter the Kingdom of God before Jesus appeared? Before His coming, there was no one who could teach the people the true righteousness of God. Yet there were still some who carried in their hearts a longing for that Kingdom—simple, humble souls who sensed that righteousness must run deeper than mere adherence to rules.

The Pharisees, however, knew how to spot such souls. And when they found them, they sought to silence them by every means available—through authority, prestige, position, and influence among the people. Their goal was singular: to recruit them into their own sect. Every sect, after all, needs new fuel—new members to sustain a system built on human glory rather than on divine grace.

6.5. And when they succeeded—when the blind man with a log in his eye, who could not see his own self-righteousness, managed to persuade the man with a speck in his eye to adopt his teaching—then tragedy occurred. The listener himself became one with a log in his eye. He became self-

³ Matthew 11:25

righteous, convinced that he could see clearly, yet all the more blind—judging others while remaining unaware of his own need for mercy.

6.6. Why, then, does Jesus distinguish between the one with a speck and the one with a log? I believe the speck symbolizes those despised by the Pharisees—tax collectors, prostitutes, Samaritans, Romans, ordinary Jews not yet deeply indoctrinated into the Pharisaic system. These people, though sinful, had not yet been deceived by the sweet dessert of Pharisaic righteousness—the doctrine that teaches that God’s favor can be earned.

That teaching is sweet because it flatters the human ego: it offers the illusion that salvation can be achieved by one’s own effort. But that very “sweet dessert” becomes the poison that kills hunger for grace.

6.7. As long as a person has only a speck in the eye—something that stings, irritates, and reminds them of their imperfection—there is still hope. That person still has a chance to recognize truth, a greater chance to perceive grace.

But the one with a log in his eye, who believes he sees clearly, is the most blind of all. He is immune to the Good News: that man cannot earn God’s favor, but can only receive it.

— For it is grace alone that saves. And only when a person acknowledges his speck—when he allows the Lord to heal it—do the eyes truly see. Then the heart perceives a righteousness that does not come from the Law, but from Love—the righteousness of Jesus Christ. —

LISTEN TO THEM FOR THEIR GOOD FRUITS

7. My conclusion about these verses is this: the Pharisees, because of their blind self-righteousness, were people leading the rest of Israel into certain ruin. Having corrupted values—and skillfully acting holy before others—they gained respect and attention even from those who, spiritually speaking, were closer to receiving grace than they were. And when the Pharisees succeeded in convincing them to adopt their vision of righteousness, they fulfilled the very words for which Jesus rebuked them: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

7.1. Because of this, I plead with you: do not listen to teachers simply because they sound intelligent, or because they lead a large congregation, or because their sermons have many views on YouTube. Do not listen to them because they wear white and gold robes, or because they have a gentle gaze, or because others told you they are good teachers, or because everyone in your culture listens to them and it seems “logical” that you should too.

Do not listen to them because they are charismatic, or because they have an impressive résumé or a long missionary record.

Listen to them only if, over time, you have recognized that their fruits are truly good fruits.

7.2. And how will you recognize that? By the Sermon on the Mount.

If they do not reflect the portrait of a person that I have outlined through Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, then they do not deserve your attention. In that case, you must seek teachers who can instruct you in the virtues God wants you to plant in your life.

My personal conviction is that such people are rare and hard to find — I know this from experience — but they do exist, and they exist in every Christian denomination. It is up to you to find them — and to recognize them by their fruits.