



Daily Reflections

June 26, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 7: 1-5

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Stop judging, that you may not be judged.

For as you judge, so will you be judged,

and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.

Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye,

but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye?

How can you say to your brother,

'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,'

while the wooden beam is in your eye?

You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first;

then you will see clearly

to remove the splinter from your brother's eye."

Our Scripture Reflection

In this often quoted scripture passage, Jesus teaches His disciples that they are not to condemn others. That's the meaning of the Greek word translated in this text as "judge." Only God can condemn someone. We are all called to live a holy life that serves as an example to others. When we do, we illustrate the difference between right and wrong, good and bad.

Food for your Journey

Lewis Smedes, in his article, "Who Are We to Judge?" (Christianity Today, October 1, 2001), says that "Common sense suggests that if no one ever judged other people, there would be no real human community. In a sinful world, no community can exist for long where nobody is ever held accountable: No teacher would grade a student's performance; no citizen would sit on a jury or call a failed leader to account. And, when you come to think of it, nobody would ever forgive anyone for wrongs he had done; we only forgive people for what we blame them, and we blame them only after we have judged them.

"I would suggest that, in our day and age, we need more -- not less -- judgment. Modern Americans suffer from a fear of judging. Passing judgment on the behavior of fellow human beings is considered an act of medieval, undemocratic intolerance." Biblical traditions may challenge our own food production and consumption. Respect for the animal's life led to the elaborate kosher system, including the most humane ways to slaughter (cf. Muslim halal). Today, very few people have killed the animal that they eat, any more than they have grown the wheat in their bread, and the way in which animals are raised and slaughtered in our culture often is far from humane or respectful. An egregious example is the delicacy foie gras, produced by thrusting a tube down the throat of a duck and force-feeding it for weeks before slaughtering it and removing the liver. Is faith compatible with foie gras?

--Thomas W. Mann, "Not by word alone: Food in the Hebrew Bible," Interpretation, October 2013, 356.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Help me with Your Grace to be the person You created me to be.
Amen.