

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:

14 CR 3240, at the intersection of FM 1402 N. (Mailing Address: P.O. Box 523), Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455, (903) 572-0859

Church Website: www.churchofchristoakgrove.com or, www.ogcoc.net

David A. McCain, Gospel Preacher & Bulletin Editor, (903) 577-1540 (H), 285-1756 (M)

Volume VI Sunday, March 04, 2018 Number 9

Judge Righteous Judgment (#3) - Unfair Comparisons

We've had a couple of articles recently wherein we discussed various aspects of one of the Lord's most misunderstood injunctions: "Judge not, that ye be not judged..." (Mt. 7:1-2). In our first article we noted the danger of making unwarranted assumptions and two weeks ago we talked about man's inability to judge another's motives. Today let's explore another danger zone in making judgments. We might label this hazardous area - "unfair comparisons." In order to follow another of the Lord's admonitions, "judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24), we must make fair and proper comparisons when we're doing evaluations of someone or something.

We might call it "human nature" to make unfair comparisons when we judge the value of human abilities or accomplishment. However, like all human behavior, it's not inbred but imbibed. In other words it's learned. We come into the world as free-will agents. We're a blank slate until teaching, learning, and human experience mold and shape us into who we really are as individuals (all the more reason for us getting an early start on imbibing the life-changing Word of God).

The Bible tells us to "examine (or judge) ourselves to see if we are faithful" (2 Cor. 13:5). But how do we usually do that? Do we compare ourselves with Jesus, or Paul, or do we pick the worst person we know who claims to be a member of the body of Christ? When I compare myself to other preachers do you think I lay my abilities, successes and failures alongside Johnny Ramsey, Mike Vestal, or Jack Orbison, or is it more likely that I think of brother Doofuss, who preaches at Podunk, Arkansas, or brother Softsoaper, who weekly "waxes the elephants" (waxes eloquent) at Circus, NV (James 5:16)?

Remember that Judaism of the first century was highly sectarian, much like the American political system is today. Though there were four or five sects of Judaism in the first century, the two main parties were the Pharisees (conservative) and the Sadducees (liberal). An easy way to remember one of the great inconsistencies of the Pharisees is that they were typically harsh in their judgments, because they were often unfair in their comparisons (they were un-Fair-U-see). The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection or eternal life, that's why they were (Sad-U-see), but I digress.

Likely, the classic example of the Pharisees unfairness in judgment is found in Luke 18, in Jesus' parable of the two men who were praying in the temple, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector (Lk. 18:9-14). Listen to just a part of the Pharisee's prayer "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector" (18:11). According to Jesus, the great problem of the Pharisees was they "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:" (18:9).

We must strive to do better in our judgments. Please remember that the Lord Jesus said, "... except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:20). When we make unfair comparisons to the lesser rather than the greater we are guilty of not exercising righteous judgment, and the great danger there is stated for us by Jesus, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt. 7:2). Do we want God to apply our stronger standard of judgment against us at the last day?

When we are guilty of unfair comparisons, it means we have a double standard of judgment. Such duplicity or wishy-washiness in judgment is to be abhorred. Think of all the passages we have studied in the book of Proverbs, wherein the word of wisdom condemned unfair comparisons and corrupted judgments. Are we guilty in excusing in ourselves, our family and our friends things we would not allow in others who we do not love to the same degree? Judge righteous judgment!

David A. McCain