

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

January 13, 2019

“Judging”

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King’s Kid’s

NEWS

15th Annual Church Meeting January 20th

Manly Men, Doing Manly Things, in a Manly Manner, January 26th 6pm

Potluck on Superbowl Sunday, February 3rd

Valentine’s Party, February 9th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com

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1) What’s significant about the wording “The way you judge” and “Your standard of measure”?

2) What way and what standard do you hope God uses?

3) What is the metaphorical log?

MATTHEW 7:1-5 ~ ¹NASB“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ²“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. ³“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? ⁴“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? ⁵“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

We have a postmodern notion that all humans are legitimately doing what is _____ by their own truth. That makes it impossible to _____ them.

“We won’t tolerate intolerance,” is _____.

Judging others is a human problem. There's the other extreme, where people actively justify narrowly judging others. One of the main criticisms leveled against Christianity, is that Christians are so _____.

Jesus starts abruptly with a terse, negative command. It is just two words, μή κρίνω (mā křē-nō). Technically, "Not judge." The word κρίνω, is very much like our word judge. The core idea is that of selection or preference. To prefer one thing over another means that you've made a _____.

The implied others were originally, fellow Jews. For us today, they are primarily other _____.

There's no other way to interpret the command except, never judge, period. Unless Jesus narrows His meaning. In the same verse, He immediately follows up with a three-word _____, which serves to clarify and narrow His focus. It is, ἵνα μή κρίνω (hē-nä mā křē-nō).

"Do not judge" is primarily about the kind of judgment God will render when the time comes. A judgment concerning category or class. God will judge _____.

Verse 2 _____ His reason, with two different, but parallel phrases.
 The passage is _____ to the Old Testament Holiness Code. Leviticus 19:15-18, tells us that when God's children need to judge, they must do so with, and because of, _____.

The Bible uses four Greek word families that mean love - ἔρως (ě-řōs), φιλία (fē-lē-ä), στοργή (stōř-gā) and ἀγάπη (ä-gä-pā). ἀγάπη describes an ideal... It is the highest ethical concept possible. It is an intellectual _____ one makes, to elevate someone else to a place of value, regardless of their actual value for that person.

That idea of covenant in ἀγάπη is important, as it can't be unconditional unless it is without limit, and so it is an unbreakable and endless love regardless of the actions of the one _____.

God judges with Agapê, because He is Agapê. No human can do that. Unless, the Holy Spirit judges through them...

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Jesus banned all judgment that belongs to God. That is, the judging of people as to their _____ in God's eyes (Romans 14:4).

Biblically, some judgment is _____. As you judge what must be judged, do it with caution, humbleness and love, knowing that you will likewise be judged by the One "Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28b).

Notice, the word "Eye," is used six times. It draws your attention back a few verses to having a "Clear eye," with which to see the light of _____.

The criticism of verse 3 gives way to corrective action in verse 4. Verse 5 gives us the practical application. You can help the person with a speck, if you first remove the thing that completely _____ you.

The log, plank or beam is _____.

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

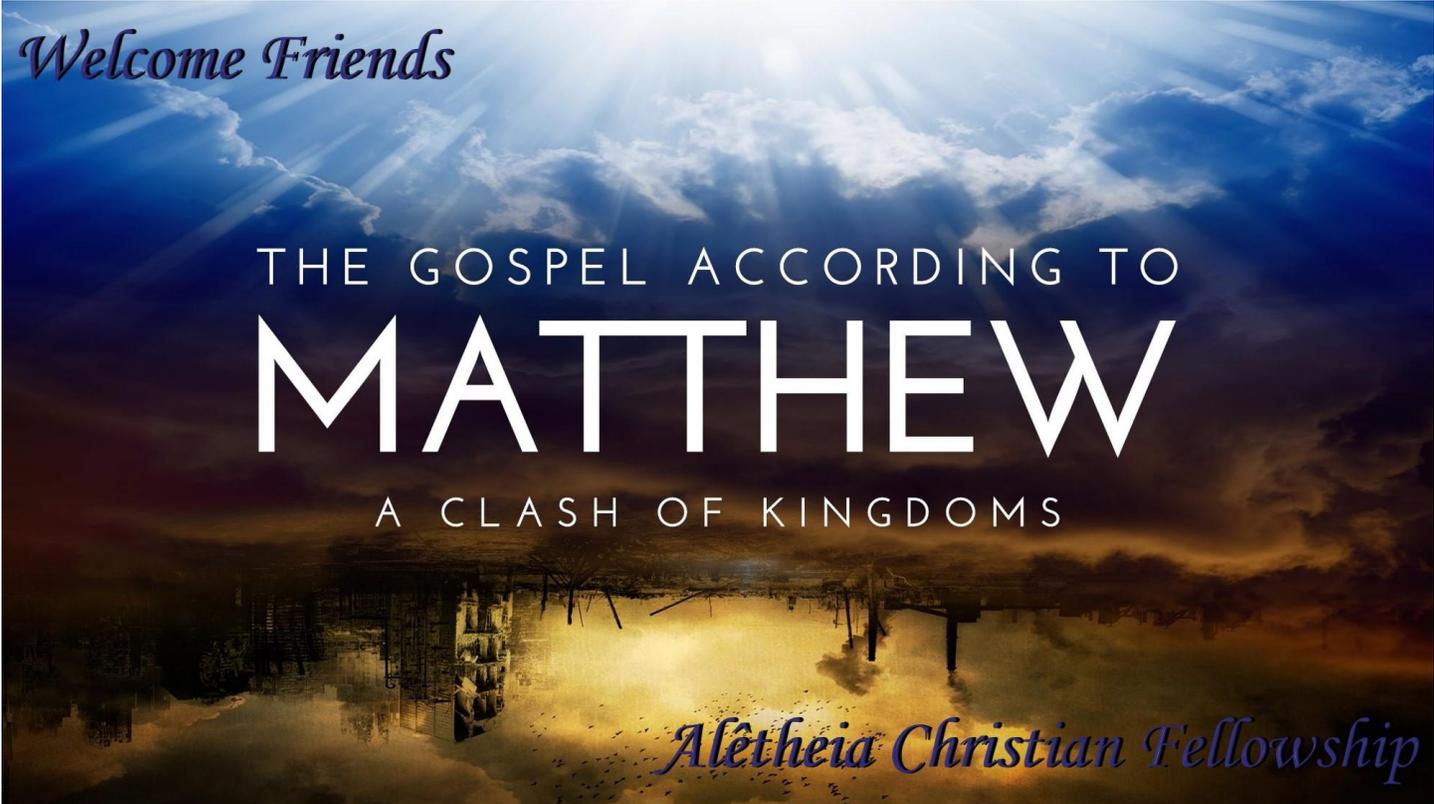
_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 7a ~ 011319

Welcome Friends



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

Last week we were talking about the radical demands of Jesus and the anxiety, concern and worry that could cause.

Jesus answers those fears by simply commanding us not to worry.

We learned, that while Jesus didn't mean that we couldn't think, plan or work to care for ourselves in this world, He did mean, that it should never cause us stress, or anxiety.

The reason is that any degree of fear-driven worry amounts to a corresponding lack of trust in God.

That sounds bad, but it's really worse than it sounds. Jesus said, our Heavenly Father knows what we need, Jesus said, that the Father loves us. Jesus said, that if we seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, that all the things we need would be given to us by God. So, to worry about those things, is to call Him a liar.

I know it is very difficult, especially when it comes to your Isaac. Your spouse, or your children, or your health, or your looks, or your financial position, or your career, or your self-image... Whatever your Isaac may be.

It is so difficult to fully trust God with every detail, but, my friends, with a true desire to trust, and with earnest prayer to trust, and with actual effort to trust, you open yourself up to the work of the Holy Spirit, conforming you to Christ. Christ Who always perfectly trusted the Father.

As He said, "Yet, not My will, but Yours be done." No matter how horrific it seems, no matter how much I want to avoid what comes next, You, my Heavenly

Father know all things, You Almighty God have all things in hand and You Holy and Perfect One will work all things for the supreme good and so, I trust You.

Chapter 7 opens up on a new topic then switches topics at verse 6, switches again with verse 7, switches for the fourth time, in verse 12, then again, in verse 13, more topic changes take place in verses 15, 21, 24, and 28. Or, do they?



I was going to read a lengthy section to give you the contextual flow, but you can do that at home. As I've mentioned before, there is tremendous value in reading large passages straight through, and sometimes it's

better to just listen to someone else read. But, alas, we have limited time.

So, you'll have to trust that those seemingly unrelated or loosely related topics are nothing of the sort. Jesus isn't just shot gunning a few random concepts to finish His sermon.

There is a contextual flow that is important to see. Just like the last 10 verses of chapter six answered a concern brought up in the preceding material so, here the concept of judging is directly related to worry in the last chapter, and also directly related to treating everyone the same way you want to be treated in verse 12.

In that same vein, verse 6 is not a new, independent thought, it ties directly to the first 5 verses and on and on we go throughout the remainder of Jesus's great sermon. For now...



Matthew 7:1-5 ~ 1“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3“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? 4“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

Discover, then honor your truth



So, judging others. It's controversial to say the least. We have a postmodern notion that all humans are legitimately doing what is right by their own truth.

In the Pirates of the Caribbean movie, Jack is betrayed by his crew and he says. "They done what's right by them. Can't expect more than that."

The common notion is that no one can judge anyone else. You can't judge another person's thoughts, words, or deeds, at any time, or in any place. That is the mantra of our culture. "How dare you judge someone else with your truth?" They never seem to realize that saying that, is itself, a judgment.

We won't tolerate intolerance is, in point of fact, intolerance. The fact is, "tolerant people" are every bit as judgmental, as the so-called "intolerant people," they judge, convict and condemn.



That's important to realize, because judging others is a human problem. We all do it. Believe me, we all do it, all the time. We do it for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways. Some of us are much better at disguising it, and some, through the Holy Spirit, do it less, but if you think for a moment, that a sermon on judging others, doesn't apply to you...

Well, let me put it this way... If you are that person, along with the thought that this subject isn't addressed to you, you also thought, I'm glad so and so is here, because they really need to hear this. Do you see my point?

Our cultural aversion to judgmentalism, no matter how discordant and incongruent it really is, comes with good company. In the Early Church there were many who believed this passage condemned any sort of judgment at all, by anyone, even church leaders and secular court judges. There has always been Christian groups, throughout time, that have held that belief.



We then go to the other extreme where people make evaluating others an art form. For such people in the Christian community, they do all they can to minimize passages like this one, and emphasize those passages where good judgment is assumed. All to give justification for their proclivity for being extremely judgmental.

Which is to say, openly human. One of the greatest criticisms the world levels against Christianity, is that Christians are so judgmental. Part of that is overblown and part of it comes as the result of misunderstanding, but a very large part, is completely legitimate.

I have been around a lot of incredibly judgmental Christians, I'm sure you have too. How many times have Christians turned on their own, when they discover weakness? The saying that Christians shoot their wounded, is not without basis. Some of the most vicious persecutions of Christians have come at the hands of other Christians. I can honestly say that in 15 years as the pastor here, I have been attacked, betrayed and undermined many times, and in every case, it was by a fellow Christian.

We need to get this judging thing right. It is, once again, a direct command from the Lord Jesus Christ. It is something we all deal with. It is hugely important. We should work to get it right and then pray for the strength to obey.



First, Jesus starts very abruptly with a tersely simple, negative command. It is just two words, μή κρίνω (mā křē-nō). Technically, “Not judge.” The inflected and contextual meaning in English expands out to, “I command you all not to pass judgment on others.”

The word κρίνω, is very much like our word judge, in that it also has a wide range of meaning. The core idea is one of selection or preference. To prefer one thing over another means that you’ve made a judgment. You have weighed some evidence and come to a value decision.

It runs all the way from very negative criticism and condemnation associated with judgmentalism, to very positive discerning of what is destructive, dangerous or deadly.

The plural you, or y'all, demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of the problem. Like worry, judging others is something that applies to us all. Not only is it our natural human tendency, it is also a necessary survival tool.

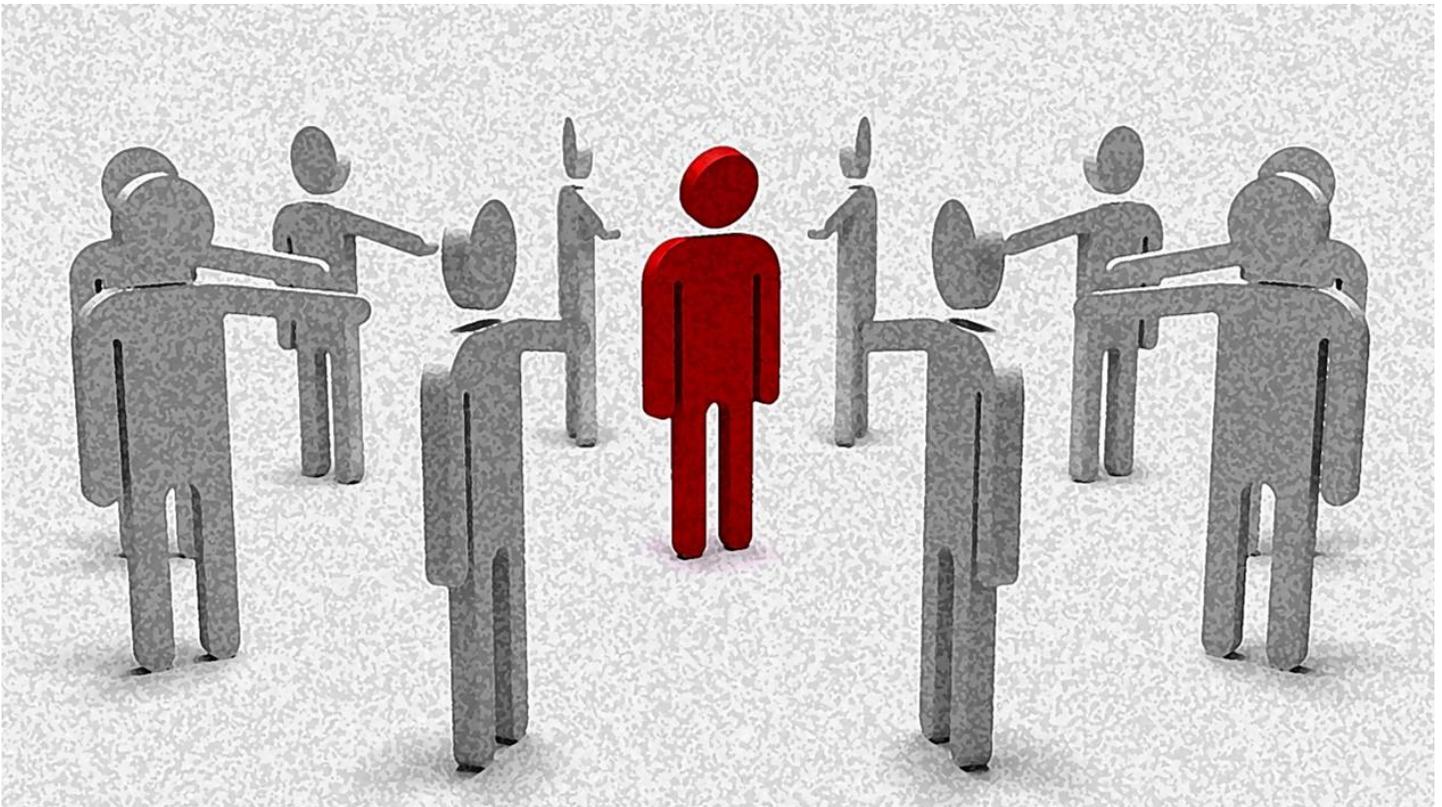
It's hard enough to avoid something when you can completely avoid it... Here we have to avoid something that is part of life.

Who are the implied others? Originally, fellow Jews. For us today, they are primarily other Christians, but legitimately family and friends, colleagues and countrymen. It could be extended to all human beings, but again, they are primarily other Christians, starting here and radiating out.

Remember, we know that Jesus is talking about being Kingdom of God people in this sermon and so the command primarily relates to our interaction in God's family. The repetitive use of the word "Brother," in

verses 3 through 5, make that glaringly obvious. This, then, is first and foremost about interpersonal relationships in the church. This is about church unity.

The command is, as I said, blunt. Not any other way to interpret it except, don't judge in any way, ever, not for any reason, at any time, at all. Never judge, period, is what this means. That is, unless Jesus narrows His meaning.



He does. In the same verse, His command is immediately followed by a three-word reason. That reason serves to clarify and narrow His focus. It is, ἵνα μὴ κρίνω (hē-nā mā krē-nō). ἵνα, means “In order that,”

“So that,” or, “For this reason,” followed by “Not judge,” again. μή κρίνω, ἵνα μή κρίνω. Actually, Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε. The inflected meaning of the second part in English is, “So that judgment will not be passed on y’all.” The translation is good. Jesus is saying to us, “I command y’all not to pass judgment on others, so that judgment will not be passed on y’all.”

Some try to make this about present world karma - what goes around comes around - actions have consequences - or Biblically, you reap what you sow. They think if you’re a judgmental jerk, you will end up being judged the same way by other people. There’s truth to that, of course, but Jesus is not interested in a tit for tat reason.

This is clearly talking about God’s eternal judgment. That, in and of itself, limits the scope. “Do not judge” is primarily about the kind of judgment God will render when the time comes.

Ultimately, that is a judgment concerning category or class. Child of God or child of Satan. How often do we try to do God’s job for Him and judge whether another person will inherit Heaven or Hell?

What that means in a more general sense, is that God will judge people. He will determine what they are and what they are not.

Verse 2 then expands His reason. Again, the English translation is good. What Jesus is talking about is the type of judgment you use on others will be used by God on you. He gives two different, but parallel phrases to drive home His point.

Make no mistake about it at all - your heart, your motivation, your deeply-rooted and often-hidden intention, along with the care and quality with which you judge others, will be the same as that used to judge you. As I've said many times, this has nothing to do with particular sins. It doesn't mean that if you judge a person for stealing, God will judge you for stealing. It is if you judge a person harshly at their weakest point, God will judge you harshly at your weakest point.

When you judge, is your goal pure justice, or do you have room for mercy? Do you take all the facts into account with meticulous impartiality? Do you consider extenuating or mitigating circumstances? Is it your desire to discipline or to punish? Do you love?



The passage is deeply connected to the Old Testament Holiness Code - we've seen it before and here it sheds a great deal of light. Leviticus 19:15-18, from the Jewish Bible. 15CJB“Do not be unjust in judging— show neither partiality to the poor nor deference to the mighty, but with justice judge your neighbor. 16“ ‘Do not go around spreading slander among your people, but also don't stand idly by when your neighbor's life is at stake; I am Adonai. 17“ ‘Do not hate your brother in your heart, but rebuke your neighbor frankly, so that you won't carry sin because of him. 18Don't take vengeance on or bear a grudge against any of your people; rather, love your neighbor as yourself; I am Adonai.

We don't have time to study that passage in depth, but the main thrust is God commanded that when His children needed to judge, they were to do so with, and because of, love.

They were to judge as they themselves would like to be judged.

When we get to the fuller revelation of the New Testament, Jesus plainly and repeatedly commands us to love one another.

It isn't just one command among many commands - it is the command that everything else hinges upon. It is the basis, framework and litmus test for everything else.

That love is Agapê. The altruistic, selfless, unconditional, God love. God is - He exists as - pure Agapê.

The Greeks were philosophers and they created special words to convey philosophical concepts. Agapê is such a word. When Leviticus 19:18, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" was translated by Jewish

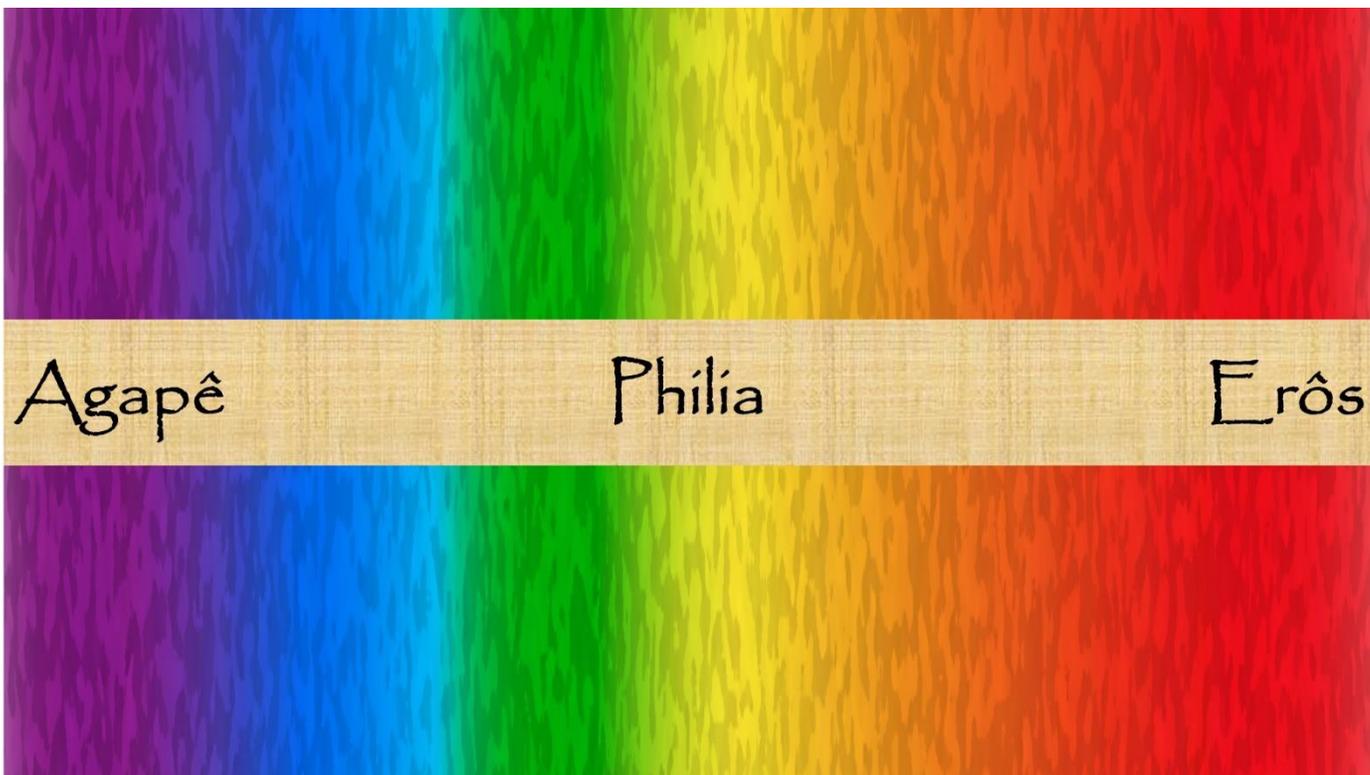
scholars into Greek 300 years before Jesus was born, they used the verb form of Agapê.

The Bible has four Greek words that mean love - ἔρως (ě-řōs), φιλία (fē-lē-ä), στοργή (stōř-gā) and ἀγάπη (ä-gä-pā).

ἔρως is sensual love... φιλία is the love between close friends... στοργή is the love between close family members... ἀγάπη is a considered choice to love another without respect to their lovability.

It describes an ideal... It is the highest ethical concept possible. ἀγάπη love is an intellectual decision one makes, to elevate someone else to a place of VALUE, regardless of their actual value FOR that person.

It's valuing someone because you choose to value them, NOT because they deserve that position. NOT because they once performed, will continue to perform, or may one future day perform to some acceptable degree or standard... But simply because you made a commitment to love them no matter what.



Let's think about the three primary love words - ἔρως, φιλία and ἀγάπη, in a different way. If we think about love as a spectrum based on how much the activity serves the lover and the loved. We would put ἔρως on one end and ἀγάπη on the other end, φιλία would fall directly in the middle.

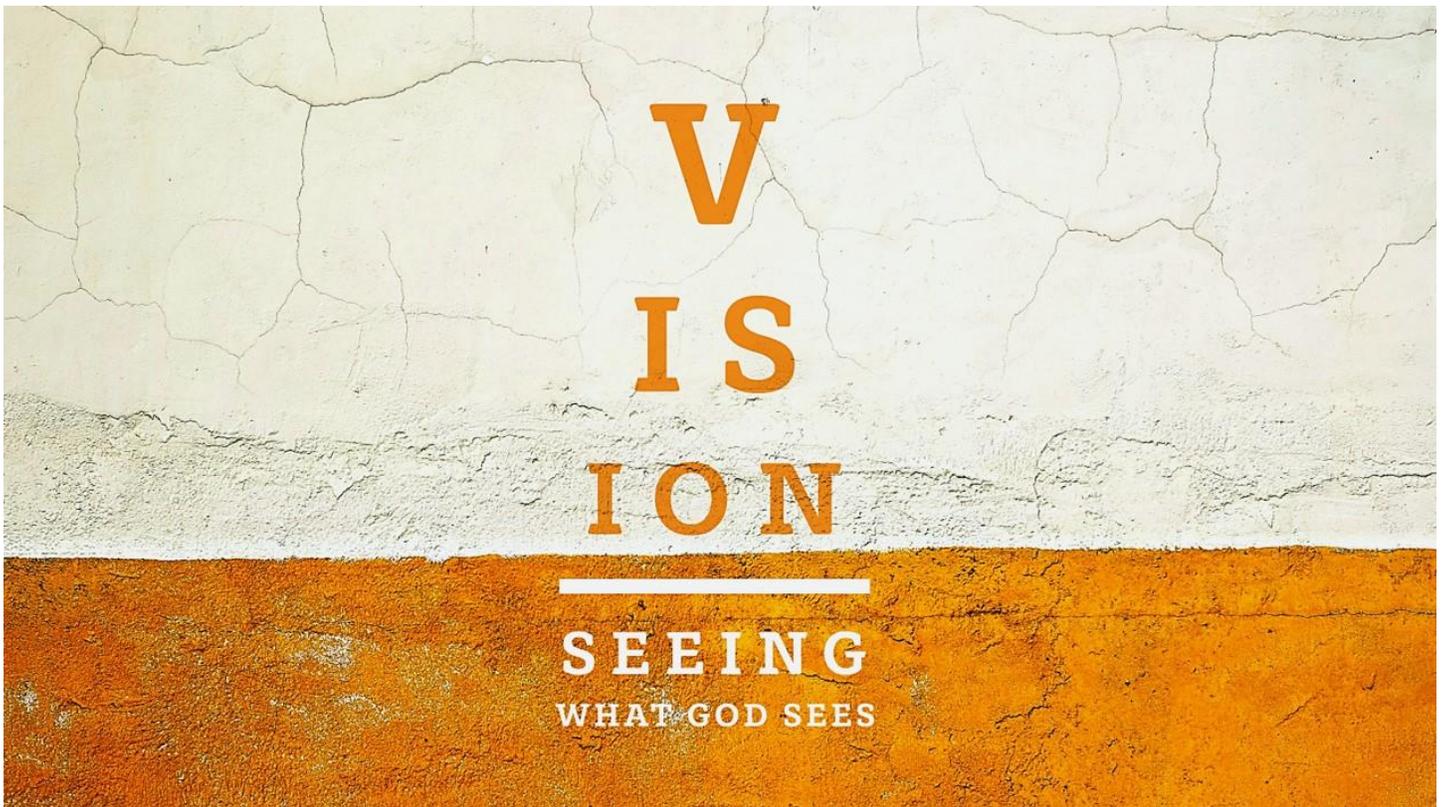
Pure φιλία is a reciprocal love, and what that means, is it's a 50-50 love. In such a relationship, I give love and affection to my friend and I receive love and affection in return. My friend is edified and so am I. It is a mutually beneficial relationship.

On one extreme end of the spectrum, I have ἔρως. It is a sexual attraction. It is lust. It is instinctual, primal, and chemical. Pheromones and hormones run amuck. At the furthest extreme of that concept, the other person only matters as the object of my desire. It is 100% about me. 100 for me and zero for the other person.

On the other end is ἀγάπη, which is, as you would expect, the opposite. In its perfect form, it is 100% about the other person. 100 for them, and zero for me. It is not about me at all, except that I choose to commit myself to continuously pour out my love upon someone else to serve them.

That idea of covenant in ἀγάπη, is important as it can't be unconditional unless it is without limit and so it is an unbreakable and endless love regardless of the actions of the one loved.

Just so you know, a good marriage embraces all three kinds of love and rolls it all up in στοργή, the fourth kind of love, which is family devotion.



This is essential to our understanding of the passage. God judges with Agapê, because He is Agapê. No human can do that. Unless, His Holy Spirit judges through them. Please think about what that means.

Considering the bluntness of the opening, followed immediately by the reason, we can see that Jesus was banning all judgment that belongs exclusively to God.

That is, the judgment of the category, class, or eternal destination of human beings... More broadly, judging people as to their value and worth in God's eyes. We are told not to judge another man's servant and the

sense intended is no one can judge how a servant is seen by his or her master (Romans 14:4).

As I've alluded to, some judgment is necessary, and the Bible confirms that reality. As you judge what must be judged, do it with tremendous trepidation knowing full well that you will likewise be judged by the One "Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28b).

When you must judge, always do it in God's perfect love. That's where the next three verses come in.



In these verses Jesus sets up a scene that transitions

from criticism to correction. Notice, the word “Brother,” is used three times, as I mentioned earlier, and the word “Eye,” is used six times. It draws your attention back a few verses to having a “Clear eye,” with which to see the light of Truth.

First, we have a rhetorical question. “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?” This refers to criticism.

It shows a disturbingly selective methodology of criticism. How a person can notice a small issue with someone else and evidently be oblivious to their own glaring imperfections.

I saw a man in his 50’s, give a girl in her 20’s, so much grief about her smoking cigarettes that she was in tears. His reasoning was that he was concerned about her health - God’s temple and all that. Yet, he was at least 40 pounds overweight.

Even though that’s an obvious part of the argument, it’s not the main point. What Jesus is getting at is the true nature of the log.



The log is actually a building's center beam that carries the entire roof structure. It is a dramatic, attention getting twist. How could you possibly see a speck in someone else's eye when you can't see at all?

The criticism of verse 3 gives way to corrective action in verse 4. Ostensibly, the only reason you would point out a speck, is for the purposes of helping remove it, but how can you do that if you can't see?

Verse 5 gives us the practical application. Of course, you can help the person with a speck if you first remove the thing that completely blinds you.



Now, once again, how can you notice and how can you attempt to interfere when you can't see at all? Jesus is hinting at a blindness not recognized as blindness by the one afflicted.

It is a self-delusion that makes one believe they see clearly, but in fact are standing in the darkness.

What can do that - what is the log in the example? The log, plank or beam is un-love. It is a lack of Holy Spirit Agapê. It makes Godly judgment impossible.



This brings it all neatly together. Only a person who has eradicated self and embraced Agapê can judge and assist in correcting another.

For them the other person is their dearly loved brother or sister and through the Spirit of God, their only desire is to help the other for no reason other than giving 100% to them and receiving zero in return.

If you are truly motivated by Agapê and the person you try to help rejects you, why would that sting? You see, any negative feelings related to the outcome only serve to prove that your motives were not pure.

Remember the Holiness Code and the multiple times it is quoted in the New Testament: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Remember that, that command from Almighty God is summed up in the Golden rule. Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you.

Well, only judge and correct others as you would like them to do the same thing to you.

That is what verse 6 is about. In God’s perfect love, led by His Holy Spirit do your best for others and leave the results where they belong... Between God and them.



You might say, I don't see that - we'll talk more next week...