



THE BEATITUDES, PART 2

Part 25 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 6:37-49 | April 25, 2010

Luke 6:37-49

³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² 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.

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

INTRODUCTION

All righty Mars Hill, as you’re finding your place in Luke 6:37-49 in your Bible, iPhone, laptop, whatever, one quick announcement—the latest book is out: *Doctrine*. Really excited about this book. It lays out the framework for Mars Hill, what we believe, and why. So if you’ve got questions, this would be a great place to start. It also looks like the Metallica *Black* album, which is very important, and I praise God for that as well. It’s the best thing I’ve been able to write to date by God’s grace, really excited about it. And it lays out our membership curriculum now as well, as there are community group questions at the end, and so some will, in the future, be going through this book for membership. And so you’re welcome to pick one up, and as always, if you pick one up at Mars Hill, any profits go to the church, not to me. I always say that just so you know.

Here’s what we’re gonna do today as well. Jesus preached a long sermon, and it was written down, transcribed, and we have the summary of the transcript with some of the portions of that sermon given to us in Luke 6. We looked at the first half of Jesus’ sermon last week. We’ll look at the second half this week. And Jesus had a large crowd, and to give you some idea of the setting, let me show you the rough location where Jesus was teaching Luke 6. It’s just up from the Sea of Galilee, rolling hills, up into some very beautiful farmland. And it was in this rough area, tradition tells us actually in this area that Jesus preached the sermon that we will study today. So you need to envision this. Jesus has been preaching and teaching in small town synagogues, fifty, a hundred people living in those communities. They would come out to hear Jesus preach and teach, and now his fame has grown, and many, multitudes, maybe thousands are coming out to hear him preach and teach. And so they’re walking, multiple days’ journey. They’re coming from long distances, and they’re all sitting on the grass as Jesus is preaching and teaching.

And so we’re gonna look at, frankly, more Scripture today than we should. This should be five sermons instead of one. But we want to get through Luke before we see Jesus face-to-face, so we’re taking large chunks and gonna hammer through the book. And so what we’ll look at today are a series of principles that are going to be, I pray, I hope, I trust, used by the Holy Spirit in your life. These principles come from the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of Scripture, and the teaching ministry of Jesus, and he will then take some of these principles for you, and he’ll highlight certain principles. He’ll bring to mind certain people. He’ll bring to mind certain things. Even if you’re not a Christian, don’t resist or fight those. Go with those, those are God’s gift to you.

1. FORGIVEN PEOPLE SHOULD FORGIVE.

And so I'll give you principles from Jesus' teaching, and the Holy Spirit will give you the particular application of them, the first of which is this: "Forgiven people should forgive." Jesus says it this way in Luke 6:37: "'Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.'" Even if you don't know any Bible, you know this verse. All right, this is the American, non-Christian life verse. "Hey, thou shall not judge," right? And people will use this verse all the time, and what's amazing is in using it, they're judging you, which I think is curious. "Hey, I think that's wrong." "Hey, thou shall not judge." "Are you judging my judging 'cause that's a party foul right there. You're judging my judging. That's very judgmental of my judgmentalism."

And so there's really no way around judging, but what does Jesus mean by this, that "thou shall not judge"? Now in one regard, I think what he is talking about is that person who lives their life as a judge, they're always judging people. This is the moral cop, the neatnik, the nitpick. This is the person who is always criticizing. They take that disposition of a critic. Some of you are like that. You always find fault, flaw, failure. You're always looking for what's wrong, and you make sure to let someone know. I have a friend, almost a former friend, they're working on it, that every time the phone rings, or I get a text, or an e-mail, I just say, "Ah, here we go again." "Dear Mark, I have a problem with," fill in the blank. I know you do. I don't get a birthday card, attaboy, nothing. If you say anything, it's bad. That's just how this person is. They have the spiritual gift of discouragement. There's never anything that they have to say that's very encouraging. And I think what Jesus is pushing against is saying, "Don't be like that."

The truth is the Bible is filled with laws, that our lives are filled with sin, but if sinners are gonna coexist, a couple things need to happen. We need to be humble, prayerful, careful, biblical, merciful, gracious as we approach people, so that when we judge them, as Jesus says, it's not in a condemning way. "I have no hope for you. I'm done with you. You're worthless. I'm sick of it, we're through." That is judging, and then condemning. And the truth is we don't know what God has for people, and just so you know, the job of capital "J" judge, that's taken by Jesus. Jesus says in John 5, "The Father's entrusted all judgment to me." He's the judge.

So here's the bottom line: Christians don't decide who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, God does. Heaven belongs to God. Hell is ruled by God. God decides who goes where, not me, not you, not us. We don't condemn anyone. What we can do is share Jesus, the truth of the Bible with people: "Hey, here's what Jesus says: 'I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.'" So I love you, here's the bottom line. Jesus says if you're connected to him, you get to be with him. If you're disconnected from him, you're gonna give an account to him. That's what he said. I don't determine who goes to heaven or hell, but that's between you and him. That's what he said."

People come up to me all the time: "Pastor Mark, my uncle died, is he in heaven or hell?" I don't know, that's totally above my pay grade. That's not my job. I don't know, I don't know. I do believe in heaven, I do believe in hell, and I do know that it's not my job to decide who goes where. But to tell people about Jesus, and let Jesus decide who's in, who's out, that's his job.

So he's saying here, don't have that critic, moral cop, negative, difficult, discouraging disposition, and don't just judge people and then, "That's it, you're kindling, good-bye," and just leave them there. In fact, instead, what we should do is judge people, but not only judge people. And we should primarily judge Christians, not non-Christians. A little while later, a guy comes along, his name is Paul. He's well aware of what Jesus taught, and he's got a situation in a crazy church called Corinth. And in chapter 5, one guy, we don't know the story. It's either his mother or mother-in-law, but he has an intimate romantic relationship. Whatever it is, it's a total mom fail. And then in chapter 6, there are a couple Christians who decide, "I don't like to work, so I'll just sue other Christians. That'll give me enough money to retire."

And so here's what Paul has to say about these two issues in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside." Here's what he's saying: look, Christians should judge one another, and when it comes to the non-Christians, we shouldn't expect them to act like Christians and say, "You know what, this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong, you really gotta get your life together." The more important thing is you need to meet Jesus, and rather than working on a bunch of behavior modification, want to introduce you to someone named Jesus, so that he can change your heart, change your life, and then the issues in your life will get worked out through his grace, and his power, and his love, and his support, and his forgiveness.

So what Paul is saying is this: Christians need to do what we tend to do in reverse. We tend to let Christian brothers and sisters get away with sin, and then we tend to serve as the moral police, complaining about the behavior of non-Christians. Paul said, "Don't do that." Non-Christians don't know Jesus, talk to them about Jesus. Christians who say they are Christians, and do belong to Jesus, we have higher expectations of them. And if they say they believe in the God of the Bible, then we need to hold them to the standards of the Bible, feel free to judge them, not in a condemning way, but in a discerning way, not to destroy them, but to help them, to show them, "You're stuck here. I'm here to help. We need to get you out. This is a wreck, and by the grace of God, it needs to change."

He says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3. "Do you not know that the saints," those are the Christians, "will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!" Here's what he says, "Dear Christian, you will rise from death, you'll sit with Jesus. You'll be involved in the judgment at the end, and you will assist in the judgment of angels. If that's the case, feel free to keep one another in line, feel free to show in love, in community, 'This is a problem, this is an issue. This concerns me. This needs work. This needs to change.'"

And so what he's saying here is that Christians should judge Christians, and should introduce non-Christians to Jesus. What that means is we should judge, but not condemn. Judge, and then forgive. That's what Jesus is saying here when he says, "Thou shall not judge." Don't judge, and then condemn. Instead what he says is, "Forgive." Forgive, because it would be hypocritical for us to go to God and say, "God, I have sinned against you, and you've sent your son to die on the cross in my place, for my sins, to secure my salvation. And I come to you, Lord God, asking for forgiveness." And then when someone sins against you, to say, "I will not forgive." That's hypocritical. If you're getting forgiveness, you need to be giving

forgiveness.

Now, in saying that, some of you would say, "I thought we weren't supposed to judge?" To forgive someone, you have to judge them, right? You have to say, you have to determine, you have to discern and ascertain what you said or did, or failed to say or do was sin. So you have to come to a judgment about that. And the truth is, we all believe in judgment, not eternal condemnation that we're God and sit on a throne, but we all believe in saying, "That's right, that's wrong. That's acceptable, that's unacceptable." That's why you'd be very bummed if someone broke into your house, took all your stuff, pulled a gun on you, and you called 911, and they said, "Hey man, didn't you read Luke 6? 'Thou shall not judge.' Hey, we're not gonna send the cops, that would be judgmental." You'd say, "No, send the cops with guns and dogs, and if need be, arrest this person, and bring them before a judge because they need to be judged."

We can't get rid of teachers. We can't get rid of coaches. We can't get rid of umpires. We can't get rid of referees. We can't get rid of cops. We can't get rid of judges. We can't get rid of courts. What we can get rid of is self-righteous, arrogant religion that condemns people unnecessarily, has no love or hope for them. And what we can replace it with is a desire among God's people to hold one another to a high standard that is biblical. Additionally, we can judge one another and say, "You know what? That's wrong. That's unacceptable. That's sinful. I do love ya. I'm not trying to be a jerk about it, but I'm here to help," and then forgive.

See, what Jesus is condemning is moving from judging to condemning. He's condemning condemning. What he's encouraging is to move from judging to forgiving. So let me ask this—I'll give you five questions. Here's the first one: discuss in your community group or with your family, who do you need to forgive? Who do you need to forgive? What did they do?

See, if you don't forgive them, you'll become a bitter hypocrite. Bitter, that's what occurs to those who are unforgiving. And hypocrite, you're gonna want God to forgive you, but you not to forgive them. And part of it will be an emotional struggle, because some of you immediately will say, "But what they did was wrong and they never said they're sorry. How can I forgive them?" Let me explain this to you. It takes one to repent, and one to forgive, and two to reconcile. You can forgive whether or not they ever repent and apologize and change.

So you can forgive, and in forgiving, let me tell you what you're not doing. You're not approving. When you forgive someone, you're not approving. You're not saying, "I'm okay with what you did, or failed to do." I'm not saying that. You're saying, in fact, just the opposite. "What you did was wrong, what you failed to do was wrong, and I choose to forgive you." It is also not denying. "Oh, it didn't happen. I don't even know what you're talking about. I don't even remember that." Forgiveness is not denying that sin occurred. Forgiveness is not diminishing it. "Oh, it's no big deal. Nobody's perfect. It didn't really bother me." No, it was such a big deal, Jesus died for it, so it's a big deal. It's not covering sin. Forgiveness is not covering sin. You can forgive someone and still call the police and have them arrested if they've committed a crime. "I thought you forgave me?" "I do, I'm not bitter, I'm not angry, but you committed a crime, so that's justice, and I love you, and I forgive you. And Jesus died for it, and he can forgive you, but just because I forgive you doesn't mean it didn't happen."

See, some of you need to understand the fullness of forgiveness and forgive, and leave those people to God that ultimately he will judge them, and if they don't repent, he will condemn them, so that you can judge them and forgive them, and then leave them to his care. Maybe they'll repent and God'll forgive them. Maybe they won't and God will condemn them. That's his business. For your heart of bitterness, for your life of hypocrisy, and forgive others just like the Bible says as God and Christ forgave you.

Who do you need to forgive? Who do you need to forgive? What did they say? What did they do? What did they fail to do? I'm under no illusion that this is easy or simple. I know, as a pastor, we have a front-row seat for the most painful moments of people's lives. And again, this is a principle, and now the Holy Spirit will give you a name. He will give you a face. Some of you right now are resisting and fighting. "Not that, can we move on? I thought there were more points. Next point." Let's sit here for a moment, and let the Holy Spirit give us that name, give us that face—who do you need to forgive? I feel prompted by the Holy Spirit to even tell some of you that the person you need to forgive is dead. You say, "But it's never gonna be okay." You still need to forgive them.

2. GETTERS SHOULD BE GIVERS.

Number two: getters should be givers. I don't know if getters is a word, I made it up. I do that occasionally. You're welcome. Luke 6:38, "'Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.'" Here's what he's saying: If God forgives you, forgive others. If God gives to you, give to others. That's the way it's supposed to work, otherwise, we're hypocrites receiving forgiveness and generosity, and not giving forgiveness and generosity. And so our relationship with God shows up in our relationship with others, and our relationship to our wealth, and our possessions, and our finances.

So let's me unpack this. What he is advocating here is what I will call **generosity theology**. There are two extremes when it comes to money, finances, possessions, and wealth in the Bible. **Prosperity theology**, which basically says God is a piñata and tithing is a stick. Give him a whack, and watch vehicles with rims fall out of the sky. All right, that's my version of prosperity theology. And basically what it is, it's worshiping money, wealth, possessions, and status and using God to give you your idols. "Oh, if I pray, if I tithe, if I do these things, then God will bless me, and make me rich, 'cause what I really care about is my wealth."

On the extreme other side is **poverty theology**. "I don't need to get a job. I don't need to pay my bills. I don't need to take care of my family. I don't need to leave an inheritance to my children's children, like Proverbs says. I just make no money, and I'm not generous, and I live minimally, and I give minimally." Why? "Because I think the less I make, the holier I am."

We don't advocate either of those. What we advocate is work hard, work smart, work fair. Grow your wealth little by little, like Proverbs says, and first of all, see yourself as a generous steward, that ultimately everything belongs to God. And see, my guess is there's really nobody who's gonna hear this sermon that actually functionally believes this principle, that God owns everything, and that he gives to us, so everything we have is a received gift, and we are stewards. We are to then disperse, dispense, distribute the resources that God gives to us in a way that glorifies him and helps others.

So if you say, "Oh no, no, no, I worked really hard to make my way in this world." And I would say, "God gave us the world. He's a very generous giver. He gave us life and breath. He gave us talent, skills, ability. He gave us intellect. He gave us an education. He gave us a job, whatever it is that we have. He gave us possessions," that everything really does come from God, that our God is a very generous giver, that God gives us his own son, that God sheds his blood in our place for our sins, that salvation is a gift, that the Holy Spirit is a gift, that our spiritual gift is, in fact, a gift, that our church is a gift, that the Bible is a gift, that God's people are a gift, that the kingdom that awaits us is a gift, that no one could ever possibly outgive our God. Our God's a giver. He's a very generous giver. That's why the Bible says, "God so loved the world that he," what? "He gave." We know God loves us. He's a giver.

And generosity theology is, "As God gives to me, I give to others. I give to the poor. I give to the church." And the attitude is not, "God, how much of my money do I have to give you?" but "God, how much of your money do I get to keep?" It's assuming that the first fruits off the top, they belong to those things that God deems to be meritorious. And what he says is for those who are generous stewards, for those who give—that's what he talks about, give, all right, give—for those who do give, God likes to give more to them. This is not prosperity theology. "Oh, so if I give, I get more?" It's not a Ponzi scheme, right? God may even increase your income, not to increase your standard of living, but to increase your standard of giving. What he's saying is this, if God can find a faithful steward, he'll give him a little. If he's a good steward, he'll give him a little more. If he's faithful, he'll give more.

And isn't that the way you would work? Let's say you were very affluent, and you met someone, and you said, "Okay I'm gonna give you this money, and this percentage goes to the poor, and this percentage goes to the church, and this percentage you can spend." And they actually did it. They came back, said, "Okay, I did everything you asked me do with the funds." You say, "Good, I'm gonna increase what I entrust to you 'cause you're faithful, you don't steal from me." The person who came back and said, "I know you gave it to me, but I forgot about the poor, and I never made it to the church, and I blew the rest, and I need some more." You'd say, "I don't invest that way. I don't put water in a bucket with no bottom. I'm not gonna waste anymore resources on you, 'cause you're not a good steward."

And so what he's talking about here is that if you're a faithful steward, and you give as God wants you to give, God tends to—he doesn't have to, and sometimes you get the reward in this life, and sometimes you're storing up your treasure in heaven, so you gotta wait a while to see your reward—but one way or another, God likes to give to those who are giving, so that they can give some more.

And he uses this analogy: "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, put into your lap." Say, "What does that mean?" Well, I'll tell you, give you an analogy, modern-day analogy. Okay, have you been to the grocery store, and seen the glorious aisle filled with all the chips? It's an amazing place, all of these chips, just all kind of things ending in -itos: Cheetos, Doritos, Fritos. It's just ito-tastic. It's amazing what's there. And there are also potato chips and Sun Chips, and it's amazing. And you notice how big the bags are. They're huge bags, like half your size, unless you eat a lot of chips, and then like a third of your size. And have you ever purchased one of these bags of chips and they're full? You open it, you smell it, oh, that's chip-tastic. Then you look in, it's not filled with chips. There are a couple chips at the bottom. It's filled with air and lies.

That's what he's talking about. I'll explain it to ya. The way you would buy grain or corn in that day, you would bring your bucket, or you'd bring your bowl, or you'd bring your container to the market, and you'd say, "Okay, fill it up with grain, or fill it up with corn," or whatever it is. And they'd fill it up and say, "Okay, give me your money." And you'd say, "No, no. Shake it up a little bit. Stomp it down, and then let it all settle. And then put some more in there, and then shake it again, and stomp it again, and then pour some more in there. And eventually when it's totally full, then I'll pay, but until then it's just like a bag of chips." The next time you go to the grocery store, you should open the bag of chips when you are at the checkout line and say, "I'm missing chips. I need more chips in my bag. I would like it to be pressed down, shaken together, running over, and I would like some on my lap." That's where they're gonna end up anyway, so—

And that's what he's talking about, that if you're a generous giver, God may, in fact, give generously to you, so that, you know, his provision is full, and it's overflowing, and the lap here is talking about, actually having extra to put in your pockets. See, and I know we're in the middle of a financial downturn, and people are struggling, and I'm well aware of that, but you know what happens. "God, as soon as you give me more, then I'll give anything." And God would say, "I've already been giving, and you haven't done anything, so how about if you prove faithful with what I've given ya, and then we'll talk about me helping ya out some more."

So this is where I get to tell you how it's going at Mars Hill financially. You're welcome. This is my favorite part of the job: charts and graphs. All right, here is 2009 giving. We have this broken down into categories. The white category is people last year, all year, who gave nothing, about a third of the church. Thirty percent of the people gave nothing. Of those who gave \$1 to \$500, the black section, that is about 38 percent of the church. So 68 percent of the church gave \$500 or less all year, all year. So today, maybe "give" to you looks like \$1. You gotta start somewhere. You can go home, say, "How'd it go?" Say, "You know what? I took my giving to a whole new level today. I moved into a whole new category of givers at Mars Hill with ten dimes, I did it." All of my kids are in that category, so you can join my four-year-old son Gideon today in the black category. In the darker brown category, those are people that gave \$500 to \$1,500 last year, 13 percent of the church. \$1,500 to \$4,000 a year, which is where we're getting into people who have actually been getting somewhere near a certain percentage of generosity, that's 11 percent. Only 9 percent of people at Mars Hill gave \$4,000 or more, all year. That's households, so if there's a husband and wife working, that's both incomes combined.

And I'll tell you it's always interesting for me because—I guess I'll just ask you this question: Has God been generous to us? Has God been generous to you, individually? Has God been generous to us corporately? Has he? It's amazing, Mars Hill, I mean God's been so generous to us it's amazing. I mean, it was amazing to me. Easter came, it's kind of our big Sunday of the year. Thirteen thousand people. Seven thousand people on Good Friday. Twenty thousand people for the weekend. We baptized 376 people. We've had free real estate given to us over the years as well. We're looking at potential partnerships to continue those kinds of things in the future, and pray that I have good news to share with you. God has been so generous to us. Very talented people, lots of people meeting Jesus, lots of good things happening. And it was amazing 'cause Easter was over and I went home. I was kind of like a rung bell, really excited. I was like wow, 13,000 people. You know what, it's not just all about the numbers, but it's amazing that God would be that gracious and generous to bring that many people for us to love, and encourage, and serve, and connect with. And we got killed on budget. We missed budget by a ton that day, and our giving was way down from the year before. And I was like, how is it that more people receive more grace, and they become less gracious? How does that happen? How does that happen?

I love you. I feel about the church, like I do my kids. You see problems, you work on them. You hang in there. You don't threaten them. You don't freak out. You don't get mean. You don't get mad. Just keep praying, keep talking, keep working on it, so we're gonna keep working on it. For those of you that have been faithful, praise be to God. Thank you. For those of you who haven't, what does Jesus say? What's his word? Give. Say, "What's that mean in Greek?" Give. Some of you say, "How much?" Ask him, all right, ask him. Ask him what it is that you are to give. We're not gonna set a percentage and be legalistic. We're just gonna say if you're a Christian and you've received—and everything you have received is a gift from God—give.

God doesn't give just to us, God gives through us. That's what a gal today told me. It was a cool conversation. She said, "I'm a brand-new Christian." And she said, "God's given a lot to me, and now I realize he's giving through me, and I'm getting to love people, and serve people, and help people, and be generous." And she says, "This is a really fun life. I like doing what God's doing and doing it with him." That's what we're talking about. So forgiven people should forgive, and getters should be givers, and again, this is the Holy Spirit looking at you, working on your hearts. What does that mean for me functionally, practically?

3. LEADERS SHOULD LEAD THEMSELVES.

Number three: he goes on to say that leaders should lead themselves. And let me preface this by saying, people like me are leaders, but to some degree we're all leaders. You're a mom or a dad, you're leading. You're a coach, you're leading. You're a teacher, you're leading. Community group leaders, service team leader, obvious leader. Deacon, elder, obvious leader. Husband, father, obvious leader. Mother, grandmother, leader. Everybody's leading someone. Everybody's teaching someone, and before we can teach anyone or lead anyone, particularly those of us who are entrusted with offices of leadership, we need to lead ourselves.

Luke 6:39–42, "He also told them a parable:" which is a little story to illustrate a point, "'Can a blind man lead a blind man?'" Technically yes, but it's gonna go really bad. "'Will they not both fall into a pit?'" Yeah, it's only a matter of time. "'A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log,'" all right, the lumberyard, "'That is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite,'" there's the word, that's the big idea. "'First take the log out of your own eye, then you will be able to clearly see and take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.'"

Here's what he's saying: we're hypocrites and blind guides. And I know some of you are like, "No, I'm special. When I went to Sunday school, they said I was like a snowflake, pure white, and one of a kind." No, you're a blind guide and a hypocrite, and they lied, and so they're blind guides and hypocrites too. And the way it all works is we're all blind to our own blindness. We're all blind to our own blindness, and some of our blindness is self-selected like, "Do you see that?" "Nope, I do not see that" 'cause you closed your eyes.

And we're all hypocrites, and the hypocrite, by definition, here's a hypocrite according to Jesus: You've got a big issue in your life, and you're gossiping, quarreling, nagging, neatniking, nitpicking, moral copping, judging about someone who's got a much more minor issue in their life. All right?

And what he doesn't say is, "Oh, well you can't deal with anybody else, and their sin, and their issues." What he says is, "Hey, first thing's first. Deal with your own lumberyard." Deal with your own lumberyard, 'cause I'll be honest with ya and say—it's not always this way, and I don't want to broad stroke. But some of the worst marriages I've ever seen are marriage counselors. I mean, I'm serious. Some of the worst fathers I've seen teach as pastors about fathering. Their wife and their kids are nothing more than just props. They're not really objects of affection.

Sometimes in our—I've seen it, all this is gonna be controversial—but sometimes the most disturbed people go get counseling degrees, not just to help other people, but because they're trying to figure out their own issues. It's not bad to go get a counseling degree, but before you start counseling anybody else, you gotta figure out your own stuff. Before you start working on their marriage, you gotta get your own marriage under control. Before you start telling people what to do with their kids, you need to get yours out of rehab. First thing's first. You gotta deal with your own stuff first. And what happens is it's easier to see sin in someone else's life than it is your own, and it's easier to tell them what to do than the hard work of doing it yourself. That's by definition, a hypocrite.

So let me say this: all of us, to varying degrees, are blind guides and hypocrites, well aware, more aware of everyone's sin in their life, far less aware of our sin in our life. And the more religious you are, the worse it's going to be for you. That's the way that it works. And so what is Jesus' answer? He says, "Well, students become like their teachers, so you gotta be careful who you pick to follow." What that means is be very careful to pick a church.

Be very careful to pick friends; friends that you say, “I welcome you to speak into my life and give me counsel.” Be very careful which books you read for instruction in life. Be very careful which podcasts, and blogs, and tweets, and RSS feeds, and magazines, and television shows, and radio talk programs that you consume, because when fully trained, you’ll become like your teacher.

If they’re blind, you’ll share their blindness. If they’re hypocrites, you’ll share their hypocrisy, because as Jesus says, when fully trained, students become like their teachers. It’s very important that you decide who to listen to, who to follow. The only way to deal with your blindness is to find people who aren’t blind where you’re blind, and have them love you enough to judge you—back to my first point—and to help you to see these are issues and areas that you really need some work. Additionally, you need people who are not hypocrites who condone your lifestyle and participate in it where it is sinful. You also need people who are willing to lovingly confront you in community, and say, “You are a total hypocrite. You freak out on people who do this, but here’s your issue.”

Again, all of this is principle. God the Holy Spirit will now name it for you. Don’t think about your friend. Don’t think, “Oh yes, they really need to hear this sermon. This will be very good for them.” First thing’s first, before you counsel anyone, deal with your own stuff. I mean, I’m continually shocked at the horrible husbands who want to counsel men on marriage. I’m continually shocked at the horrible fathers who want to counsel men on fatherhood. It’s amazing. Even in the pastorate, even in counseling. Same is true for women—women who quarrel, argue, dishonor their husband, yet want to tell other women how they should live their life, and how they should organize their home. This is what we do, and to some degree we’re all hypocrites.

And here’s the truth: sometimes the myth is laid out there, “you should never judge anyone.” Well, we have to, if we love them, diagnose what’s wrong in their life in a non-condemning, but in a convicting way. And additionally if we really love them, we need to not follow them, we need to rebuke them, and say, “I love you. Stop giving me advice. I’m not asking for it, I’m not looking for it, and the truth is we all see a lumberyard coming out of your head, and that should probably be your first priority.” And if you do that, and someone is humble, they’ll thank you. And if they’re arrogant, they’ll bristle. Proverbs says, “Rebuke a wise man, he’ll thank you. Rebuke a fool, he’ll hate you.” You don’t know who someone is, wise or foolish, until they don’t get their way, or you point out their lumberyard, or you show them their blindness.

But the truth is it’s not just Christians who are hypocrites, non-Christians are hypocrites too. And non-Christians love to throw that line, “All you Christians are hypocrites.” And so are all you non-Christians. Right, I’ll give you one example that I think is funny. Back to my previous point. According to a *USA Today* article a few years ago, the least charitably generous city in the United States of America is? Seattle. See, here’s our deal, we are cause oriented. “What about the poor? “What about low income housing? “What about single mothers? “What about homelessness? “What about the needy? Somebody else should totally do something about that.” That’s Seattle. That’s Seattle. Are you gonna do anything? “Well, hey man, thou shall not judge, right?” I mean here we go again. And so we’re all hypocrites to varying degrees, and we’re all blind in varying ways, and we need each other to point out our blindness, and to help us. Who do you need to forgive? How is your financial giving? What log is in your eye? Third question, what log is in your eye? Say, “Yeah, yeah, this is a big issue. “I’ve not really dealt with it, repented of it, and put it to death.”

4. GOOD TREES SHOULD PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT.

Sort of culminates then in point four: good trees should produce good fruit. Luke 6:43–45, “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

Okay, Jesus here is confronting one of our most precious, deeply held cultural myths: “We’re all good people, and sometimes we do bad things.” You ever seen someone do something horrible, and it’s on the news? Happens all the time. And then everybody gets on there like, “They’re just a really good person. I mean, yeah, they murder people, but deep down in their heart, they’re golden.” Really? Seriously? See, because there’s this deeply held lie, this myth. It’s very pervasive and powerful in our culture that, “Yeah, the world has got some corruption, and I’ve got a little corruption, but deep down in me, there’s purity, there’s goodness.” No, that’s blindness to our blindness. That’s self-selected blindness to our depravity and corruption, that we inherit a sin nature, that we are sinners by nature. It goes all the way down to the roots.

And what Jesus is saying, you can’t say good tree, bad fruit. Doesn’t make any sense at all. “Oh, that’s a fantastic apple tree, and all it produces is grenades.” Really? It doesn’t seem like a fantastic apple tree. “Oh, it’s a very good apple tree and produces grenades. Don’t pick them.” Really? “That’s a very good person, they just produce wickedness, but they’re a very good person.” That’s insane. That’s crazy. But it’s a deeply held myth, and some people perpetuate it, even about their own kids. The kids are horrible. “Oh, they’re just a little angel in their heart.” No, they’re not, they’re evil. And I see girlfriends do this with their boyfriend, “Oh yeah, he’s drunk, unemployed, can’t find his pants, and hits me, but you know deep down, he’s a winner, winner chicken dinner, total sweetheart kind of guy. That’s who he is.” No, he’s not. He’s Satan way down deep in the roots. He’s just a bad guy. “Oh, but you know if we just loved him, and cared for him, and enabled him.” No—what? Worship him as God and let him do it? No.

And here’s what Jesus is saying, we don’t need behavior modification, we need regeneration. That’s the biblical doctrine. You don’t need to become a better person, you need to become a different person. What he’s talking about is uprooting one tree, saying, that one’s worthless. It’s a bad tree. It’s bad to the roots. It has nothing but bad fruit. And then God replants us in Christ as a whole new tree. New creation in Christ, new person, new heart, new mind, new will, new emotions, new life, new appetites, new passions, new pleasures, new affections, new person.

Some of you would come to church and say, “Give me steps to become a better person.” And you’ll be into pop psychology, self-help, self-esteem. “Do these four things, don’t do these three things. Follow these twenty-seven steps.” First thing’s first, life change is good. If you’re an alcoholic, don’t be

an alcoholic. If you're a drug addict, don't do drugs. If you're a sex addict, we don't want you to be addicted to sex. If you got a chronic gambling problem, you need to stop. If you're running yourself into debt and overspending, yeah, you need to get that under control. If you're a glutton, whatever it is, yeah, we want that behavior to stop, but God wants far more than just changed behavior. He wants new people.

And Jesus uses the language of the heart. The heart is the seat, sum, center, essence of who you are. The Bible uses that word, not of the literal organ, but of the metaphorical center. And Jesus is saying, "Life comes out of the heart, words come out of the heart, motives and deeds come out of the heart." And the old heart, the Bible says, the heart you get as a descendent of Adam is a heart of stone. It's hard-hearted toward God, stubborn, rebellious, defiant, foolish, and dead. When you become a Christian, God takes out the heart of stone, he gives you a heart of flesh, not a perfect heart, but a new heart, a heart that is by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the grace of God, increasingly made to be more, and more, and more like Jesus. And God doesn't want you to do better or try harder, he wants you to be uprooted, replanted, born-again, regenerated, new heart.

This is where Christianity is different than every other religion. Some people say, "Well, Christianity teaches some of the same values as other religions." True. And none of them provide the power to obey God. Christianity says God changes us at the deepest level, and gives us the Holy Spirit to live by his power. So God doesn't just tell us what to do, he lives a life through us, and it all starts with coming to Jesus. So that's what I would tell you. If you're not a Christian you say, "I don't know how to get my life together." And some of you may say, "My life's not out of order, it's going pretty good." You're proud and arrogant and independent, and that's sin too. And what you need is to come to Jesus.

So if you're here trying to figure out how to get your life together, let's not worry about the behavior just yet. Let's get you connected to Jesus, and he'll change you from the inside out, instead of trying to make behavior adjustments from the outside in. Give your sin to Jesus, he died for it. He rose for it. Receive from him a new heart, and a new life, so that you can be a good tree that produces good fruit. The fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control, the stuff that Galatians talks about.

I'll give you one analogy, one illustration. It was phenomenally encouraging this week. I'm visiting the various campuses of Mars Hill, as we meet in different locations, and I went to the University of Washington, spent the day there. There was this wonderful, cool, awesome gal who just absolutely encouraged me. She said, "Pastor Mark," she raised her hand, room of people, leaders. She said, "I've got a ministry to gals." And she said, "My ministry comes out of the fact that I lived a certain life. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, whatever it is, I'd get dressed up. I'd go out. I'd get drunk, and I'd let guys destroy me, and then I'd come home and cry. And then I'd do it again, and I did it week after week for I don't know how long, a year, 2, 3 years, whatever it is." And she said, "And I don't do that anymore, and I have a heart for girls that are like that, getting all dressed up, and drunk and abused. So I tell my story, and they come to me, and they want me to pray for them, and talk to them, and help them. So I need a lot more training and biblical counseling." Fantastic. I mean, she's brave, she's bold. She's being honest about her life, fantastic. She got baptized here at Easter a few weeks ago.

So I asked her, I said, "What do you tell them?" She says, "Here's what I tell them, I love the Holy Spirit 'cause he just changed me." That's a great answer. She said, "What I used to do, I don't want to do that anymore. What I used to enjoy, I don't enjoy it. The trap I was stuck in, God got me out. The enslavement that I was beholden to, I've been set free and redeemed." She said, "I'm a new person. I don't think like I used to think. I don't act like I used to act, and it's not me, it's God. The Holy Spirit just changed me." And she said, "Now I'm telling everybody that the Holy Spirit changes people." Great. I said, "How long ago did this happen?" She said, "Two months ago." Two months ago, unbelievable.

And that's what Jesus is talking about. All right, she didn't come to church looking for religion saying, "I have a really bad apple tree, how do I duct tape oranges to it?" She walked in, and God said, "New tree, all the way down to the roots, new person, new life. You get to start over." That's our God. That's our God.

So let me ask you, fourth question, how's your life going? What kind of fruit are you reaping? Is it destruction, death, folly, foolishness, independence, selfishness, self-righteousness, pride, despair, or is there love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control? Some of you may not even be Christians. Some of you may be religious people, spiritual people, moral people, but you may have never come to Jesus, and had him give you a new heart. So you need to go to Jesus tonight in prayer, and literally just ask him, "Jesus, give me a new heart. Before I can change anything, you need to change me. At the depth, seat, sum, center, essence of who I am. Lord Jesus, pull up my old life by the roots, and plant me in you." And he will and he does.

Some of you, that explains your whole life. That's why you have so many problems. You're trying to live the Christian life without Christ, and it's not even living the Christian life, it's Christ living through you.

5. TRUTH PLUS OBEDIENCE EQUALS A ROCK-SOLID FOUNDATION.

And he sums all this up in this great and glorious way, number five: truth plus obedience equals a rock-solid foundation. Luke 6:46, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,'" Jesus says, "'and not do what I tell you?'" That's a good question. "You're the king, you're the boss, you're right, you're perfect, you're true and I disagree." What? With him? Seriously? Every time we sin, that's what we're saying with our actions.

"Everyone who comes to me." So my first thing would be, you've gotta come to Jesus. Would you come to Jesus? Please come to Jesus. "Everyone who comes to me and hears my words," that's truth, "And does them," that's obedience, "I will show you what he is like." And Jesus has a great analogy: "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

Here's what he's saying: there's two ways to build a house, with or without a foundation. And a foundation that is set on rock will be fine. A house without a foundation, or that sets itself on shifting sands, it is only a matter of time before trouble comes and that house is destroyed. That's why if you go right now to the bank and say, "I would like to buy a house that has no foundation, and is on the beach," you will not get a loan. You will get a chuckle, but not a loan. It's only a matter of time before that house ceases to exist.

And here's what Jesus is saying: trouble, strife, turmoil, difficulty, hardship will come. You will lose your job. You will get sick. You will have trouble. That's what Jesus says. In this world, you will have trouble. That's what he says, so don't set up your life in such a way and say, "You know what? Everything will be fine as long as nothing goes wrong." Something's gonna go wrong. That's what he's saying. A storm will come. Hardship, trials, strife, something's gonna hit. And some of you don't pay any attention to the foundation, what you're building your life on. First principles, your church, your friends, your theology, your doctrine, your relationship with Christ, your prayer life, Bible reading, until what? Storm comes, you're floating down the river trying to put a foundation under the thing. It's a little late in the day. We love you. We want good for you, and the truth is, it's your life. You can blame other people. You can excuse yourself. You can pass the buck. You can blame it on your parents. You can rail against culture. You can hope that some elected official just starts giving away free foundations to everyone, or you can, as an adult, take responsibility and say, "My life, my foundation, my responsibility."

Is your problem a truth problem, or an obedience problem? Is your problem a truth problem, or an obedience problem? Jesus says, "Everyone who hears my words," right, that's the truth. Jesus says, "Elsewhere sanctify them by the truth, your word, Scriptures is true." Is it a truth problem? You're not getting a lot of truth. You're not reading your Bible. See, truth comes through the Scriptures. Truth comes from the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Truth can also come through godly friends who give good counsel, people who are willing to show you where you're blind and hypocritical. Truth can come through reading good books, through listening to good teachers.

Do you have a truth problem, meaning you're not inputting a lot of truth? It may be information, but it's not truth. You're reading garbage when it comes to how to fix your marriage, your life. Is it a truth problem? You're believing lies, things that are inconsistent with Scripture. Is it a truth problem? God says one thing, but somebody else says another thing, and you're conflicted. Let me give you a piece of good advice. Don't believe everything you think. Okay, meditate on that. Don't believe everything you think. If you're prone toward blindness and hypocrisy, some of what you think is wrong, so you're gonna need somebody to put truth into you, 'cause you got some folly and error.

Is your problem a truth problem, or is your problem an obedience problem? You know what to do, you just don't do it. James, Jesus' brother, echoing this says, in his epistle bearing his name, "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves, do what it says."

And let me say, counseling can be hard, but pretty much counseling is asking three questions, and enduring awkward silence. I'll tell you what they are. People come into me, first question: "What's the problem?" Then they tell you, and you leave an awkward silence. Then the second question is: "What has God told you to do?" And they'll usually tell you. And then you leave an awkward silence. And then the third question is: "Are you gonna do that?" And then you pray. That's counseling. It really is. I've done a lot of counseling. That's most of it.

I'll give you some examples. Recently, a guy—he's really big. He's out of shape. He's obese. Comes in, look at him, what's the problem? He's like, "Well, I'm big." Okay, agreed. What has God told you to do? "You know, I've been praying about it, reading about it. I think food is an idol for me, and I think God wants me to eat less and exercise more." Okay, sounds good. Are you gonna do that? He says, "I'm praying about it." Really? Praying about what, whether or not you're gonna do it? Okay, just so you know, you're not gonna get smaller praying about it. You're gonna get smaller obeying it. He actually asked me, he's like, "Are there any verses in the Bible on weight loss?" Well, no, there's not like 1 and 2 Dietitians. You know, I think you need to just eat less and exercise more. If that's what he said, do it 'cause that actually sounds like a pretty good idea. You know, you can put acacia berries on your chocolate sundae, but that probably isn't gonna do it for ya, you know?

I talked to a lady, awesome. She says, "We're having some marital trouble. My husband is very miserable. He's depressed." Okay. "What'd ya do?" Just to check. She says, "Well, I nag him a lot, a lot." Okay. Okay, so that's the problem. He's depressed, and you're nagging him, and then he gets depressed, and then you nag him about being depressed, which didn't help, did it? "Okay, so what did God tell you to do?" "God said when he annoys me to first pray for him, and leave the Holy Spirit a little bit of an opportunity to work on him before I start criticizing him. And then if God doesn't get through to him, maybe then I could lovingly say something." That sounds good. "Are you gonna do it?" She says, "Well, I don't know, he really annoys me." Okay, just checkin'. Send him in, I'll hold him. He can cry. We can read Lamentations, but I don't have any plan B for you. It's gonna go bad.

Gal comes in, fantastic. "Pastor Mark, I'm a Christian, my boyfriend's a non-Christian. We're kind of dating. It's getting pretty serious. Sleeping together. Thinking about living together." There's the problem. "Okay, what has God told you to do?" "Well, he told me not to date him." I said, "Okay." Third question, "Well, what are you gonna do?" She says, "Well, I'm praying he becomes a Christian." Really? Seriously? Ahh! "Could you meet with him?" I could, but how about if you obey God, and then I talk to him?

See, this is what we do. You know, we laugh at people, and then the Holy Spirit would right now tell you, "You do it too," and so do I. For some of us it's a truth problem. We just, we don't know what we're talking about. For others, it's an obedience problem. We know exactly what we're supposed to do. And some of you come here and you'd say, "Okay, give me a new verse, give me a new sermon, give me a new book, give me a new this, give me that." Maybe what you need to do is just obey the teaching you've already received, and God can teach you a few things down the road, but right now, you already know what you're supposed to do, so let's knock that out first.

So let me ask you, last question: what has the Holy Spirit highlighted? Truth you need to learn, or obedience you need to enact? What is it? I don't know what it is. The Holy Spirit knows, he'll tell you. He's telling you right now. I trust him for that.

So in closing, we want the truth in you. We want obedience through you. If you don't have a Bible, pick one up on your way out. We'd love to give you one. If you want to study, I'll tell you what, you really need community. You're not gonna make it twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years all by yourself. If you're blind to your own blindness, and you're a hypocrite to your own hypocrisy, you're gonna need some people in community to help get you moving toward Jesus. That's why we have community. Community groups are where we do that, they meet every week, usually following the sermon, doing life together. There are hundreds of them. Some all over the Puget Sound, some down in Albuquerque. Wherever your campus is, wherever you live or work, we'll find one near you.

'Cause here's what we don't want to do, we don't want to just judge you, and point out some things in your life that need work, and then condemn you, and say, "That's it. Good luck, go do it." We want to invite you into community. We want to say come to Jesus, come to community group. Get a Bible. Get some Christian material to help you learn the Bible. Let us help you, we love you. Our goal is not to destroy you, our goal is to serve you. Our goal is not to condemn you, our goal is to come alongside of you, and that's the heart of Mars Hill. And so if you want a free gift, you'd love to get plugged into a group, there's the offer, there's the pitch. We love ya. Get connected. Get connected.

Father God, I do pray for us as a people individually that, Lord God, we would forgive, and be givers, and lead ourselves, and be good trees that produce good fruit, with lives and legacies built on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. I pray as well, Lord God, for those who are not Christian, that you would give them a new heart, to live a new life as a new person. I pray, Lord God, for those of us who are blind to our own blindness, and hypocrites to our own hypocrisy, that we would not feel destroyed by this message, but compelled to receive the grace that we need to make the changes that we need, so that you would receive the glory you deserve. In Jesus' name, Amen.

[End of Audio]

Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.