

Audio Transcript of Sermon
October 22, 2022
Evaluating and Judging

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. We are moving well into fall beyond the time of the Holy Days given in the Bible and I hope all who are listening had a joyful Feast of Tabernacles. Moving back to our routine where we find ourselves living in the reality of the here and now as we look forward to the Kingdom of God, we probably look around and see many things that completely bother us. We hear of wars and rumors of wars, but unless we are living in an area of armed conflict, what probably bothers us every day is the people who are our neighbors, who live in our cities, or who become the focus of news stories.

Maybe our neighbors keep a messy yard and that drives us nuts, or maybe they had a recent late night party. When we live in close proximity to other people there are certain things about them that we either like or dislike. We walk by a person's house and with our eyes we evaluate them. Maybe we don't like the paint color they chose for their house, or maybe they have lawn decorations that we find tacky. We might pass their car parked on the street and see that it needs to be washed or that it is messy inside. Maybe we notice that they could sweep the debris off their sidewalk and rake the leaves. These are all ways how we evaluate our neighbors, and we tend to evaluate those things we can see with our eyes. What we evaluate we can also judge, and that is where we must be careful.

But then there are those things about our neighbor that are a question mark, things about our neighbor we are really not sure about, but to match those things what we can see about our neighbors, we tend to fill in the gaps through our imagination. In essence, our minds are wired to evaluate the world around us and even judge others even though we are given many examples in the Bible of not judging others. We'll revisit a recent example that we looked at right before the Feast of Tabernacles, let's look at John eight verse two.

John 8:2-11

2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

- 3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,**
- 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**
- 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?**
- 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.**
- 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**
- 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.**
- 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**
- 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?**
- 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that those who were without sin among them should cast the first stone at the woman who was taken in adultery. Jesus never told the scribes and Pharisees not to stone the woman, he just told them that those who were without sin should go first, and eventually everyone left. Sometimes when this is explained we walk away thinking that Jesus was talking of sexual sins, but Jesus didn't reference any particular type of sin in the passage. He just mentioned being without sin, and eventually the collective conscience of the scribes and Pharisees got the better of them and they all left. None of us is without sin, and when we look at judging others today the message to us should be very clear-don't judge others.

And yet we judge all of the time without even thinking about it because that is how our minds are wired. We live within our environment and are constantly evaluating the world around us. If we see something that looks strange or different, we should be cautious until we can evaluate it to be of no danger to us. Just because somebody rings the doorbell to my house does not mean I'll open

the door for them, I will first evaluate any potential risk, and only open the door when I have determined there to be no risk.

Evaluation moves into judgment when we ascribe motivations to actions, such as, “That jerk rang my doorbell to ruin my enjoyment in watching the game on television.” With that little pivot of thought I’ve moved from evaluation to judgment. It’s one thing to evaluate risk to yourself, your family, and your possessions. It’s another thing to judge others and we typically judge others based on only having partial access to information, and our biases. Sometimes biases come from religious beliefs that are linked to the Bible, but are only linked through tradition of men. Jesus and the disciples ignored these traditions of men as Jesus focused on what is important to God, and because of this often found themselves butting heads with the scribes and Pharisees. One such occasion was when the scribes and Pharisees noticed a disregard for ceremonial handwashing. Not going through the entire routine was a big deal for them, because according to their tradition, not going through this ceremonial handwashing defiled a person, because of the dirt on the person’s hands.

I’m a big fan of washing my hands before eating a meal and encourage everyone to eat food with clean hands, and if you followed your local health department’s recommendations for hand washing prior to each meal, you probably would still be considered to be eating bread with defiled hands, because even with modern science that would not match the tradition of the elders of frequently washing hands. Today, if we saw a person frequently washing their hands we would evaluate that situation and probably in an effort to fill in the gaps in our mind wonder if that person had OCD, obsessive compulsive disorder, even though virtually all of us wouldn’t have credentials and licensure to make that diagnosis. Let’s read Mark seven verse one.

Mark 7:1-9

- 1. Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.**
- 2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.**
- 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.**

4. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Concluding the discussion with the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus concluded that these people reject the commandments of God to keep their own traditions. Jesus could make this determination, this judgment, as the Son of God. The lesson for us is not to reject the commandment of God so we can keep our own tradition. When the disciples returned to the house with Jesus they asked him to explain what he had just taught to the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus then explained that what defiles a person is not what goes into the body, but the evil thoughts and actions that come from the body. Verse seventeen.

Mark 7:17-23

17. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

19. Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Sometimes what comes from the heart of man leads the person to commit sin, and sometimes what comes from the heart of man rests with man judging man. We live in a world that has developed many of its own traditions and in the months ahead there will be many holidays centered around these traditions, and we believe some of these traditions reject the commandment of God, and as we abstain from these traditions, we will also be considered strange. The interesting thing about the law of God and sin is that any sin is a violation of the law of God, and James tells us to be focused on the law of liberty, through which mercy comes. If we live our lives without mercy, mercy will not be extended to us. James two verse one.

James 2:1-13

- 1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.**
- 2. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;**
- 3. And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:**
- 4. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?**
- 5. Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?**
- 6. But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?**
- 7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?**
- 8. If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:**
- 9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.**
- 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.**
- 11. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.**
- 12. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.**

13. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

In the days and months ahead we will see celebrations we know are based on the traditions of men, that reject the commandments of God. We can evaluate all of what is happening around us having mercy in our thoughts knowing that most people have not yet been called by God. We will have no need to participate in what they are doing, while also not judging them.

Jesus used the theme of mercy to explain what was meant by loving your neighbor as yourself. The parable of the good Samaritan was taught to define the term neighbor for a religious attorney. If you have read civil law, there is typically a section given for definitions, and the lawyer wanted to know what Jesus meant by the term neighbor. This lawyer asked for this clarification to justify his actions in his mind, meaning this person probably showed love only to a few. Jesus then used the parable of the good Samaritan to show that the term neighbor could even apply to a group of people who is looked down on. Samaritans were looked down on in the time of Jesus. Luke ten verse twenty-five.

Luke 10:25-37

25. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Jesus told the religious lawyer that this Samaritan acted as a neighbor by showing mercy to a victim of crime when the priest and Levite did not. Sometimes people are victims of crime because of bad decisions they made, and sometimes people are victims of crime because of time and chance. The criminal is still responsible for the crime. The criminal still made the decision to commit the crime. Just because something bad happens to a person is not an indication of spiritual problems.

Jesus explained this concept to a multitude of people who gathered around Him, reminding them of Galileans who were killed by Pilate and had their blood mingled with their sacrifices and the eighteen people who died when the tower of Siloam fell and crushed them. Jesus told the crowd gathered around Him that even though bad things happened to these people they were not worse sinners because these bad things happened to them. He then told them to repent or they would also die. Luke thirteen verse one.

Luke 13:1-5

1. There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

When bad things happen to others instead of judging others for what happened, we need to remember that what happened to them can happen to us, and should God show us mercy, we need to be grateful for the mercy that God has shown us. Conversely, we cannot look to physical attributes of status as an indication of righteousness before God. Righteousness is not defined by physical wealth, but through spiritual wealth, having the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained on another day to the crowd following him then that they should take caution regarding those who outwardly appear righteous while also tossing widows out of their homes. Luke twenty verse forty-five.

Luke 20:45-47

- 45. Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,**
- 46. Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;**
- 47. Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.**

Jesus then went on to compare the sacrifice of the poor compared to the rich in support of the faith. At that very moment, Jesus looked up and saw rich men giving their gifts to the treasury of the temple while also seeing a poor widow give a very tiny amount. Jesus explained that the widow gave a larger gift than the rich men because it represented the near totality of everything she physically owned. By comparison, the rich gave a much smaller percentage. Luke twenty-one verse one.

Luke 21:1-4

- 1. And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.**
- 2. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.**
- 3. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:**
- 4. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.**

When it comes to those who are poor, we honor God when we have mercy on the poor. Proverbs fourteen verse thirty-one.

Proverbs 14:31

31. He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

When ancient Israel, God's nation, was taken into captivity with its tribes scattered abroad, oppressing vulnerable people was part of the reason. Instead of following God's requirements to not oppress these people, oppression of these people happened. Some of the people of Israel refused to obey God, others turned their back to the problem of oppression, while others ignored the cries and pleading for justice. Zechariah seven verse eight.

Zechariah 7:8-14

8. And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying,

9. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

10. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

11. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

13. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts:

14. But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

Having just recently celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, we celebrated a time when oppression will not occur. Imagine a society where no person is oppressed-ever. Isaiah fifty-four verse eleven.

Isaiah 54:11-14

11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

14. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

David wrote that God preserves justice and equity for those who are oppressed, and is merciful to us not having rewarded us according to our sins. All that God requires of us is an awesome reverence of the majesty of God. Psalm one hundred three verse one.

Psalm 103:1-11

1. Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

Knowing that God has not rewarded us according to our sins, knowing that God has not paid us according to our shortcomings, and instead has mercy on us, we should never look at others who have gone through a difficult time in their life and reduce their difficulties to probable sins.

Avoiding judgment on others and ascribing difficult events of life to sin is something we are to avoid, just as we are to avoid sin itself. If we allow wicked people to control our lives, we will have a difficult life, and instead should be living our lives so that others honor us as we live our lives in tight control of who

we are, what we do, what we think, and how we act. Proverbs twenty-five verse twenty-six.

Proverbs 25:26-28

26. A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.

27. It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

28. He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

We are to trust in God with our entire heart not leaning on our ideas, acknowledging God in all we do as we depart from evil. Proverbs three verse five.

Proverbs 3:5-8

5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

8. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

We are to do good as we cede control of our life to God, knowing that if we refuse to do good, that is sin in our life. We are also not to speak evil of others. Using modern language, we are not to slander others. We slander others when we make false and damaging statements about other people. James four verse eleven.

James 4:11-17

11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

13. Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

- 15. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.**
- 16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.**
- 17. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.**

Doing good to others does not mean we surrender what we have and become like other people. The children of Israel were specifically told not to learn the ways of the heathen. In the modern era, we need to understand practices that are ways of the heathen, including indigenous religious practices that are incorporated into religious practices. In the modern era, some of these blended religious practices are so widespread and accepted that we can easily miss the example, even though the secular history of some modern religious practices is well-documented. When we think of a tree that is cut out of a forest, and fastened so that it can stand upright and is adorned with silver and gold, the image that comes to most our minds is a Christmas tree. Yet this image is given to us in Jeremiah in a passage that tells the reader to not learn the ways of the heathen. If you study the history of the Christmas tree and Christmas itself, you will see that what is celebrated as a religious holiday has a secular history and that the passages regarding the birth of Jesus were appropriated to that secular history. Jeremiah ten verse one.

Jeremiah 10:1-5

- 1. Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:**
- 2. Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.**
- 3. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.**
- 4. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.**
- 5. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.**

That passage from Jeremiah also tells us not to be fixated on astrology and signs from heaven. Aside from practices of Christmas what other practices have been allowed to creep into faith? I know some would rebut with the concept that those pagan practices were Christianized, and yet Jeremiah tells us not to do that, to not learn the way of the heathens. Have these pagan practices been Christianized

or has Christianity been paganized by these practices? Remember, Jeremiah tells us to not learn the way of heathen.

Paul writes of the gentiles, and how we are not to walk in the vanity of our minds. Paul is telling us not to be self-absorbed by what we think and do, and instead to be renewed by the Holy Spirit which God is creating in us in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians four verse seventeen.

Ephesians 4:17-24

- 17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,**
- 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:**
- 19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.**
- 20. But ye have not so learned Christ;**
- 21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:**
- 22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;**
- 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**
- 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

Jesus taught his followers a different manner of praying than the heathen used. Jesus showed that the prayers of the heathen were long and wordy. Jesus then gave an example prayer which is by contrast, very short in length, focusing on praising God and other focus areas. Let's read Matthew six verse seven.

Matthew 6:7-13

- 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.**
- 8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.**
- 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.**
- 10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**

- 11. Give us this day our daily bread.**
- 12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**
- 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

To the children of Israel, God explained that when they took possession of the promised land, they were not to even consider how the people before them worshipped their gods, or to worship the God of Israel as they worshipped their gods. Deuteronomy twelve verse twenty-nine.

Deuteronomy 12:29-32

- 29. When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;**
- 30. Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.**
- 31. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.**
- 32. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.**

To the Corinthians, Paul wrote to flee from idolatry, and to not follow the religious practices of the gentiles. Instead we are to give glory to God in all that we do, offending no other person, so that the highest number of people can be saved. First Corinthians ten verse fourteen.

1 Corinthians 10:14-33

- 14. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.**
- 15. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.**
- 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?**
- 17. For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.**

- 18. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?**
- 19. What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?**
- 20. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.**
- 21. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.**
- 22. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?**
- 23. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.**
- 24. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.**
- 25. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:**
- 26. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.**
- 27. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.**
- 28. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:**
- 29. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?**
- 30. For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?**
- 31. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.**
- 32. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:**
- 33. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.**

Finally, as we focus our faith in all that God expects of us, not doing what the heathen and gentiles do, we need to focus our faith on Jesus Christ. As Christians we do celebrate the Holy Days that are given in the Bible, we celebrate the Sabbath on a weekly basis, and unlike many others we are aware of the calendar that God used to teach Israel about the Holy Day. When we compare the Holy Days, the Sabbath, and God's Calendar to Jesus Christ, these are all by comparison

of lesser importance. We don't disregard these, but these are not as important as Jesus Christ. Paul writes that these are all shadows of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Think about it, when you reconnect with a relative or close friend you haven't seen in years, do you embrace the person or their shadow. I've never once tried to embrace a shadow, and I'm guessing you probably haven't either.

As we embrace Jesus Christ in our faith we do so with full awareness of what the Sabbath and Holy Days portray and how these help us to understand God's plan for salvation. We focus our faith on Jesus Christ and not on other elements, and we do not measure our faith by the standards of the Old Testament. Colossians two verse sixteen.

Colossians 2:16-20

16. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

We cannot escape the world in which we live, and while we look to Jesus Christ as the author and finisher of our faith, we know that the world in which we live can be dangerous to us and others. While we have confidence in God's ability to protect us, we also will evaluate the circumstances around not only for our safety but for the safety of others, knowing that God allows time and chance to happen to all, as did those who died when the tower of Siloam fell and killed people. In evaluating the world around us, we will refrain from judging others knowing we do not know all of the details.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.