05/18/25 - Luke 6:37-49 - "In His Likeness"

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Date: 18 May 2025 Preacher: David Suarez

[0:00] Please open your Bible to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 6. We'll be reading verses 37 through 49.! He also told them a parable.

Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? 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 that is in your own eye? 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 the speck that is in your brother's eye. 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 thorn bushes, 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.

[2:03] For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like.

He is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose and 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.

This is the word of God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good morning, Steel Valley Church.

If you don't know my name, my name is David Suarez, and it's so wonderful to see all of you. Since Brent and Carmen are out at D.C., I have decided to make sure I dress like a Baptist preacher for today.

[3:20] I have to fulfill the role completely, so don't worry. I also have three points, so everything is going to be very standard. I think Brent will be very proud, especially if you're watching right now. I'm really thankful to be blessed with the chance to preach on this chapter and this sequence of verses.

As a matter of fact, when Brent had chosen to have me read from and preach on this section of verses, I don't think he knew the very long history I have with this exact section of Scripture.

This exact section of Scripture—this is God's providence, it's amazing— has been something that has been thrown around at me for years and years and years. And of course, that's the verse that Brent has thrown at me today, which is exciting.

And I think a lot of us can relate to this verse being used. Let me know—I'm going to read this very specific situation, definitely not a personal one at all— let me know by any type of head nods as I read through it, those head nods that all pastors hope for from their audience, if you can relate to this scenario right here.

Speaking to an atheist at a coffee shop, and they say to you, you Christians are wrong for judging the things that other people believe in and what other people do.

[4:36] Even according to the Bible, Jesus says judge not somewhere, right? And love your neighbor. So it's wrong to judge, and you Christians are unloving for doing it. Now, has anyone ever heard something like that?

Judge not, don't judge, right? Look at that. I see the head nods already. This is going to be a great sermon. Okay. This is perfect. Very timely. That's exciting. Now, obviously, especially if you're one of my students or if you're any of the young adults in the young adult ministry, you probably know what I would first try to say to that person in this totally hypothetical scenario.

I would say, hey, you're judging me for judging other people, which makes you a judging of a judger. That means that you're even more unloving than I am, apparently, right? And yet, while I did say that, I started to think, what is it about the word judge and the word love that they understand differently?

Because obviously, there's some sort of misunderstanding, right? After all, elsewhere in the Scripture, in John, Jesus says to judge righteously. So now I'm starting to think back then when this happened, and as you've probably figured it out, it's not a hypothetical scenario.

This has happened at least 20 times. I spend a lot of time at coffee shops talking with random atheists, so this is just kind of life. Yeah, some people, you know, read for fun and whatnot, and I just talk to random atheists at coffee shops.

[5:53] It's exhilarating. I started to realize, you know what? There's a difference in definition. And one of the first things I always tell my students in class is to make sure you have the same definition as somebody else so that your conversation really matters.

What does it mean to judge? What does it mean to love? And what on earth is context? Nobody knows that anymore. So what we'll be doing today is we'll be reviewing this passage that is often quoted against Christians to show what Jesus means when he says to judge not, condemn not, why he gives this very strange story about somebody with a log in their eye versus somebody with a speck in theirs and a house.

It seems like a random assortment of parables and stories, but I can guarantee you these are all very related and all very deeply tied together. The three sections of this sermon will be section one, loving like Jesus.

That'll be the first two verses. The second section will be becoming like him. And the third section, when we speak about building a house on a rock, will be enduring with him.

And so, before I move on, I hope that you'll all join with me in prayer. Father God, thank you so much for your wonderful grace, your mercy, your goodness, all that is true and good in you, which is all that is true and good.

[7:27] I pray that you would lead us into wisdom and understanding as we pursue the scripture. Allow us to define those words, which are so often undefined, and understand your heart so that we might be more loving, more peaceful, and more true.

We pray all of this in your mighty name. Amen. Amen. So, turning with me to section one, loving like him, that's verses 37 through 38.

This is where Jesus says, judge not, and you will not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 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. So, just to be very clear, this is not about money. I think a lot of churches have made that mistake. And perhaps it's an honest mistake, or perhaps it's not.

That's not my place to say right now. If you want to know my personal feelings on that, talk to me after. But, I think many churches have made this about money. And it's not. Okay?

[8:35] It's about forgiveness, about mercy. It says it in the passage. Now, you might think, oh, well, that makes it easier. That means I don't have to give to a church.

Well, I wouldn't, you know, go so quick right then and there. What I'm saying is, the focus is forgiveness and mercy. And if you forgive other people readily, if you show them mercy, you will, in the final judgment, before God, likewise receive forgiveness and mercy.

Now, you might be wondering, well, it still says, judge not, condemn not. That's kind of confusing. Well, let me give you a quick story. I'm sure any of my students, especially if they're watching online right now, hello, are wondering why I might mention my high school students.

They're just so interesting. High school students are very, very strange. And as a result, you get a lot of good, interesting stories out of them, especially as a Bible teacher. As a Bible teacher, you get a lot of interesting stories.

And this is one that was very intriguing to me. I heard the most wild conversation with some of the freshmen in the room next door. Us Bible teachers are put into the trailers in the school, so our walls are very thin.

[9:41] And I heard them speaking with the other Bible teacher, and they were explaining how they wanted to fight other students. And they were asking, why is that wrong? You know, they pushed me, they hit me in the shoulder, or they spoke about something they didn't understand.

They were gossiping about me. I want to fight them. And she was so wonderful. She was saying to them, no, Jesus has to turn the other cheek. And Jesus says, don't repay evil with evil, but repay it with good.

And they said, that's stupid. And I was like, whoa, I did not expect to hear my high school students, the freshmen, say that. And they're like, if someone's talking at a turn, somebody's got to put them in their place. And I was like, what are you talking about?

And they would say this every day. Now, most of these freshmen are just kind of, you know, they puff out their chest, and they're trying to pretend like they'll fight. But I've heard the same two students pretending to fight for about two weeks now, so I don't think there's anything that's going to happen there.

But it still makes me wonder why they're so averse to turning the other cheek and forgiving. And so, one of the last statements I heard from them before they tried to leave the room to go to the bathroom in anger was, well, they should ask me for forgiveness first.

[10:48] They should say sorry first, and then I'll forgive them. And I thought, wow, these freshmen are vicious. I mean, these are some ferocious freshmen.

They are very, very wild. And then I thought, I do that. There are so many times in my life where I have not shown mercy, where I've judged people at their worst moment.

So many times. And you might be thinking, wow, these freshmen sound wild, but it might apply to you as well. You judge people before getting a chance to know them, and judge them not in the right way.

Some of you might be thinking, oh, well, it's all about giving them the truth and telling people how it is, and if they get their feelings hurt too bad, so sad, that's often how I was. So don't worry. I'm in your boat.

But then you might be saying as a way to defend yourself, well, Jesus says in John 7, 24, do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. And Zechariah 8, 16, where it is written, these are the things which you should do.

[11:50] Speak the truth to one another, judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. Is there a contradiction in the Bible? Is this it? Is Christianity over? Should we all just apostatize?

Obviously not. Okay? Don't worry, Brent. It's not that kind of sermon. Jesus does say to judge. But the word judgment is confusing to us modern American audiences because we always assume that judgment is a negative term only.

That's not what the Scripture has. No, that's not a contradiction. The word judgment is neutral and it becomes positive or negative depending on the context. And specifically, your intent for judgment.

To judge is to evaluate. So, if your intent of evaluating someone's sin is to bring them low, to shame them, to speak ill of them, to make yourself feel better and puff yourself up as a hypocrite, then that judgment is wicked.

That's why Jesus says in the same passage, judge not and then right after, condemn not. If you have a condemnatory judgment of somebody just to make yourself feel better and just to make them feel worse, that is sin.

[12:59] That's not loving. Loving, according to the Scripture, is desiring the good for another. It's choosing to will what's best for somebody else. It's not a feeling. It's actually a choice.

If that's the case, then what kind of judgment is righteous? Well, the kind of judgment, which we'll see very soon, where you can correctly see someone's sin and try to help them to overcome it.

That is the difference here. Jesus is not saying judge not, condemn not as a way to call us to be anarchists, to get rid of the government, the legislation, judicial system, get rid of all the judges, fire them, they don't need jobs anyway, and just have people living without any type of judgment or law.

That's not what Jesus is calling for. He's not an anarcho-capitalist. What Jesus is calling for is a change of intent. Don't judge so as to condemn.

And this is actually pretty clear. Jesus tells you to forgive. Well, what do you have to recognize in order to forgive someone? You have to recognize that they've done something wrong, which means you have to have judged or evaluated the fact that they sinned.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be able to forgive them. Right? It says to give, as in to give mercy. Well, you can't give mercy unless they've done something that would require you to give mercy. So, it's calling us to evaluate correctly.

Yes, they've sinned against me. And more importantly, they've sinned against God. But my response should be mercy. My response should be forgiveness.

It's not just freshmen that need this. It's all of us. But, you might be thinking, why this message about good measure, you know, pressed down, shaken together, pouring over?

Well, this is actually a farming metaphor that a lot of Jewish people would have understood at the time. A measure would have been a small cup or a scale used to see how much somebody should be given out of your grain. But, if you just get a measuring cup and pour some grain into it, and that's it, there's usually little air pockets in between, so you haven't really filled out the measure to the fullest.

So, what would you need to do? Well, you'd have to shake it down and then press the grains in so there's no air pockets, shake it down again so that there's nothing left, and then keep pouring on until you've really reached the top.

[15:18] So, it's actually a process to fill this measure as a farmer would. Now, Jesus, after explaining this whole process of pressing down and shaking together, then says, and then keep on pouring it until it's overflowing.

Which means it is a choice, it is an effort, it is a purposeful act of sanctification to desire to forgive someone. And you should forgive them abundantly, pouring out over and over.

Why on earth would Jesus call us to forgive people who have wronged us? The world doesn't say that. In the world, mercy and forgiveness are tense amounts of weakness and being pathetic, letting people walk all over you, just forgiving them forgiveness.

Why do we do this? Why does he call us to do this? It's because Jesus does that for us every single second of every single minute of every single hour of every single day. Always for us.

His mercy is never ending. It is abundant. If it was not, then we'd all already be in hell, okay? He is already expressing his mercy, not just to us believers, but to the unbelievers too. He's patiently waiting, as it says in the scripture, right?

[16:24] He waits for people to come to him. God is patient. He is merciful, and we are called to be like him. Why are we called to be like him?

Well, pretty clear in the second section, becoming like him. Verses 39 to 45, we see very clearly that Jesus gives his parable about a blind man, and he talks about a blind man at the same time that he talks about a log in someone's eye at the same time that he talks about a tree bearing good fruit.

It seems really unrelated and to be completely honest, when I was preparing this sermon, I was perplexed as to why Jesus would do these three things. You know, just kind of one flows into the other and then goes back to a tree.

What's going on? But I started to realize he speaks about a blind man leading a blind man. Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Jesus is setting an important premise. Whoever teaches you, you will become like them. Which calls into question, oh wow, I should really be careful who my teacher is.

[17:30] Really careful. Why should you be careful? Well, Jesus then, seemingly out of nowhere, goes into this metaphor about a log and a speck. 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?

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, first take the log out of your own eye, and this is the part that nobody ever quotes for some reason, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

That's really, really important, and I'll get to that in a second. Jesus compares false teachers and bad teachers who teach against the teaching of Christ and of our Lord, both in the Old Testament and even now through his words, that those who go against him are like blind teachers, and their students are blind as well.

It's the blind leading the blind. Will they not fall into a pit? And then he speaks after talking about these people who are blind. What does he say? Someone who's blind. He's got an entire log in his eye, right?

Which I hope you can find the humor in the metaphor that Jesus is making. This is supposed to be humorous. You've got a guy who's got an entire log sticking out of his eye, and he's trying with only one eye, so he doesn't really have any depth perception at all, to get close to somebody, close enough, to say, oh, you know what?

You should really get that checked out. Imagine if somebody walked up to you and their arm had been cut off, they're bleeding out, and they see that you have a paper cut on your finger, and they're like, you know, that's really irresponsible.

You might get an infection. You would think they're ridiculous. It's like, you're going to die and you're going to critique me. That's wild. But that's the type of metaphor he's presenting right now.

It's supposed to be ridiculous because that's how these false teachers are, especially the religious leaders in Israel. at the time. A lot of the Pharisees, as he says elsewhere, you know, you sift out a gnat and swallow a camel.

That's what Jesus says to the Pharisees, which means you're so focused on taking care of these little things, but you're the one swallowing a camel, something that you're not supposed to eat at all. You have this huge issue and you're going to critique people about these little things, sifting out a gnat?

Jesus is making a critique of hypocritical and condemnatory judgment seen in these religious leaders and teachers. But it's not just them.

Anybody can be a hypocrite. Anybody can. Now that you see it's about the blind leading the blind and how ironic it is, a lot of people, even an atheist, who somehow know these random bits in Scripture but never really the context too much, and fair enough, you know, they're not in a church so that's not on them, but in the Scripture, right after this, they'll say, hey, take the log out of your own eye, you know, when they think I'm judging people.

When all I'm trying to do is go to them and help them recognize the sin, the problem they have, and to take it out. Jesus, after telling the Pharisees and hypocritical religious leaders to take the log out of their own eye, what does he say next?

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. He's saying, no, you should confront people's sin. You should, in a loving way.

Again, judging for the purpose of helping someone to get over their sin. But you have to do it after you can see the situation clearly. Sin is like a miasma. It's a shadow.

It's darkness, right? Not only, according to the book of Isaiah, does it make it a separation between us and God, but it also impairs our ability to see reality clearly. You can see this in any conversation with people who have suffered from addiction.

[21:04] Addiction makes it difficult to see reality the right way. It impairs your vision. It impairs your reasoning. And as a result, you can't see how things should be and so you don't know the right way to act.

He's saying, get rid of the thing that impairs your ability to help other people, i.e. your sin, so that you can go to them and help them overcome their own struggles. If you're trying to help somebody while you have this huge log sticking out of your eye, then that's actually an issue of pride.

Fun fact, if you actually cared about sin, you would have taken care of this log and attended to it. What is this religious leader that Jesus is making a metaphor for here?

What are they doing? They're trying to avoid thinking about their own sin. So what do they do? They look for all the little bits of sin they could see in someone else. That's the way that they can avoid dealing with their own sin and struggles.

Don't just judge. Judge rightly, which includes yourself too, by the way. I know in our modern culture we don't like the idea of correct self-evaluation. My students have made that very clear to me. Right?

[22:13] The thought of having to self-reflect is actually terrifying because what will you see when you look in the mirror? Exactly what you get. And that is a terrifying proposition. Most people would rather spend most of their life looking for something wrong with somebody else that's minuscule just to feel superior.

Saying, look how kind I am for helping you with your sin. Look how helpful I am. Well, probably hitting people in the way with their own log while they're trying to do that. Judge rightly.

Understand reality. But how can you do that if you have a false teacher? How can you do that if you don't have a teacher who shows you how to see the world rightly and clearly? You become like your teacher.

If your teacher is blind you'll always have that stuck in your eye. What you need is a different teacher. What you need is Christ. As they would call him Rabbi, teacher.

He is the one that we should follow. He is the one that we should become like so that we can remove this sin from our lives and see things clearly so as to help other people as well. It doesn't say ignore the speck in somebody's eye.

[23:18] Notice how it still says it's there and it says go help them out. Just take care of your own sin first. So, as we're thinking about that all these false teachers and all these false leaders in hypocrisy we want to become like Christ.

How can we do that? Well, one act is to recognize the beauty of Christ. This is something that I've seen as a struggle with my students is they just haven't seen the value of Christ in many cases.

They don't see the beauty of Christ. They don't see the wonderful goodness of a God who would willingly take on human flesh with all of its ailments and difficulties just to live amongst us to show us the right way to live and then knowing the sins that we would do to willingly offer of himself as a sacrifice being tortured in a horrible horrific way so that just as much as the grain is overpouring and abundant in the measure for those that he feeds so too is his blood as a covering for us.

His blood is more than abundantly sufficient to cover all of your sin. Shaking down, pressed together and pouring over in good measure.

But why? Why then should we do that? Is it just to feel better? Is it just to fix up our life a little bit, get rid of some struggles that we have here and there? Is that the reason that we pursue Christ?

[24:45] Is he just kind of a fix-me-up-now self-help book? No. Christ actually calls for us to live a life with him. And that's why the third section is called enduring with him.

We endure with Christ to the end. Right? In this final section he says, why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like.

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.

But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation and the stream broke against it. Immediately it fell and the ruin of that house was great.

Right? So just after learning that first section where Jesus is critiquing those who claim to be forgiving, right? And he calls them out for being foolishly judgmental and condemning those.

[25:50] And then in the second section where Jesus critiques those who claim to be religious leaders and calls them out for their hypocrisy, here, Jesus claims that there are people who claim to be Christian.

They even call Jesus Lord, Lord, which by the way is a Greek translation or reference to the name Yahweh in the Old Testament. So these are people who would be recognizing Jesus as divinity, at least in terms of their words, perhaps it's just lip service, yet they do not truly live out what they have heard.

They believe in God and they might even say, or maybe they do mean it, that they believe that Jesus is God. But that doesn't mean that they're truly believers in Jesus Christ and it doesn't mean that they love Jesus at all.

I'm always reminded of this verse when we speak about people who claim to follow Christ and to believe in him. Well, fun fact, from James 2.19, James states, you believe that God is one, you do well.

The demons also believe and tremble. Believing that God exists and believing that Jesus is God is actually not enough. You have to love him.

[26:54] That's what you need to do. You have to actually love Christ. Love the one who pours out mercy and forgiveness abundantly day after day, hour after hour, second after second.

love the one who loved you first. Build your house, your entire life, on the one who is the foundation.

And Jesus isn't just calling himself a rock as a random statement, a random metaphor. He's actually making a very clear reference to Psalm 18 here, where David says, the Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. David says that the Lord is his rock, and Jesus calls himself the rock.

He is the foundation of a house that will make it through temptation and the storms and, of course, final judgment. He's the only rock that's worth building anything on.

[28:05] Guys, I teach worldviews and ethics to my students. Of course, my master's degree was mostly in atheistic philosophy, but I can tell you there is nothing in any other worldview that will ever be so steadfast and stable and beautiful and valuable and powerful and endurance as the one built on Christ.

The world can barely define anything at this point. The secular world, the atheistic world, it can't offer definitions, and if you really listen to atheist philosophers, they recognize like Michael Ruse and Paul Draper, well-known atheist scholars and philosophers, they recognize that life has no intrinsic meaning or value.

If you're a parent, according to atheism, your kids are more just like a genetic byproduct of some sort of natural selection process and they aren't creatures created in the image of God, and neither are you.

Your life is basically like a weird mechanical robot. You're just a flesh robot reacting to things in your environment and one day you'll die and that's it. Your goals are just byproducts of evolution as well, your genetics were just pre-programmed, so all of your dreams and desires and hopes are meaningless and technically deceptive.

That's the atheistic worldview if you take it to its logical conclusion. Now most atheists don't do that because they don't want to, and I can understand that, it's kind of scary. But consider the other worldview, the Christian worldview.

[29:29] There is a God who made everything, and more specifically made you. And he didn't just make you as some sort of genetic accident as per naturalistic evolution, no, he made you on purpose.

He loves you and loves the way that he formed you and desires that you be united with him so that you can be sanctified and be with him forever. Your name is meaningful, your body is meaningful, your thoughts are meaningful, your life has a purpose, and you will not find that anywhere else.

Everything else is shifting sand. Your house will crumble so fast in any other worldview. But Jesus is the rock.

He is the foundation that will not move because he has been here since before time was a thing, and he will persist long after. The unmoved mover, the uncaused cause he will always be.

And if you want to build a house, build it on Christ for you and your children. Not just to believe in him, but to love him.

[30:42] He died for you. There is no greater thing to do than to live for him. And so, with all of that being said, I hope to give an example real quick before the end here as we wrap up, on an instance where I did not judge rightly.

I condemned somebody. I was at Stone Fruit Cafe, and I was talking to an atheist, and they said, oh, you know, all you Christians, I've studied Christianity for years, and I know all of the arguments you've got.

And I said, all right, well, explain one to me. Maybe this will be new. And he said, oh, well, you guys believe that everything has a cause, and the universe began to exist, so the universe has a cause, and that cause must be God, right?

And I'm like, cosmological argument? You got it wrong, technically. And he said, no, I didn't get it wrong. I said, well, no, you misstated the argument. It's weird. For somebody who studied Christianity for all these years, I thought you could have gotten a simple argument right.

The actual argument was everything that begins to exist has a cause. The universe began to exist, therefore the universe has a cause. And he said, well, I didn't know that. I'm like, well, that's strange, though, because you very confidently went up to me and said that you knew everything about Christianity.

[32:01] I'd feel pretty pathetic if I were you. That's really sad. And after that day, I think, that was two and a half years ago, wow.

After that day, I think about that all the time. All the time. I judged him so harshly, and I thought that the best thing to do would be to show him that his pride means nothing to me, that I'll break him down, because surely breaking him down means that I'm building him up, right?

No. I knew my heart. I didn't want to help him. I was just angry. And that is wicked. And I live with that. Again, that was about two and a half years ago.

I live with that every day. The fact that I was so foolish and prideful that I couldn't have just explained the truth of Christ to him. Heard him speak and responded with love, with righteous judgment, which is to say, brother, you've understood the argument incorrectly.

Let me explain it to you. No. I live with that every day. And I pray that God, if that man's watching, somehow, he'll that he would know that I'm sorry for what I've done and that I've represented God incorrectly.

Please understand how important this is. Judge righteously. Love God enough to love people and to tell them the truth of Christ in a way that they'll understand.

Don't push them away. Please. God doesn't push us away. He forgives us abundantly with mercy over and over. He calls us early in Isaiah to reason with him. I reasoned that man love people enough to tell them the truth and be the first person in a crowd to forgive somebody that's wronged you or started with pride.

Abundantly merciful. If we are building our house on Christ, we would be merciful like he is to us. We would be patient like he is to us.

And we would love the way that he loves. And if you build your house on Christ, then you will stand before God covered in the sinlessness of Christ.

And you will know not by your own good works, but by the perfection of Christ that you have been saved. Don't be a fool like I was. Be merciful.

Be loving. And live for Christ. And please bow your heads with me. and see you again. Do you see him again? Do you see him again?

Do you see him again? Do you see him again? Do you see him again? Do you see him again?