

Why We Must Judge a Righteous Judgment

When you start throwing golden calves into the fire—when you expose false doctrines, false gods, destructive heresies, false prophecies and anything else that perverts the Word of God—some people start gnashing their teeth at you.

Most are grateful that more prophetic messengers are lifting their voices against the heresy in hopes that innocent sheep won't fall prey to wolves in disguise. But deceived believers work to discredit prophetic voices publicly—and even send threats privately. Yes, I've received threats for my recent columns about rock-star preachers spewing false gospels and my follow-up on naming names.

Of course, that's not going to stop me from throwing golden calves into the fire. The public character assaults and the private threats only confirm the need to expose false doctrine and reveal truth. Jesus put it this way: "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12).

Thou Shalt Not Judge?

One of the most common outcries against calling out false doctrines insists, "Thou shalt not judge." That's actually not one of the 10 commandments Moses brought down from Sinai when he found the Israelites worshipping Baal and got so angry that he took the golden calf they had made, burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it (Ex. 32:19-20).

"Thou shalt not judge" isn't actually in the Bible. Jesus did say, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1), but this

was in the context of the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle. Jesus was talking about judging your brother in a wrong spirit. He actually went on to say that we *should* judge—but not until we deal with our own hearts (the speck in our eye). We have to speak the truth in love. Sometimes the truth sounds harsh to one in deception or sin. But our motive is never to cut. Our motive is always to heal.

Jesus also said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with a righteous judgment” (John 7:24). What is a righteous judgment? Sometimes things look spiritual. Some things smell holy. Some things sound godly. The Pharisees are a good example. But the Pharisees, as a group, were among those Jesus judged most harshly—even pronouncing woes on some of them! In fact, Jesus does more judging than any other figure we find in Scripture. His motive in judging is to expose the sin and deliver people from evil. Again, that should be our motive in judging.

Think about it for a minute. Let’s say there’s a patient sitting in a doctor’s office awaiting test results from a biopsy. The results clearly show that cancer is killing him, but the doctor doesn’t want to point out anything negative so he tells the patient everything looks fine and sends him on his merry way. The cancer progresses, and the patient dies. That’s called malpractice. It’s also called carelessness. The doctor didn’t care enough about his patient to tell him the truth. That’s not love.

Jesus Didn’t Tolerate False Doctrine

It’s the same way with righteous judgment. When we judge in the spirit of Christ, we are obeying Jesus. We are pointing out the cancer. Exposing error in the church is an expression of Christ’s love and grace. We are sounding the alarm so that people can turn and run in the other direction. Jesus commended the church of Ephesus for calling out the false apostles (Rev. 2:2) and rebuked the church at Thyatira for

tolerating a false prophetess called Jezebel (Rev. 2:20).

Judging a righteous judgment is not about judging ministries whose style you disagree with. Judging a righteous judgment is not about finding a point of contention over a small difference in interpretation—like the timing of the rapture or even the infilling of the Holy Spirit—and trying to mark someone as a heretic. Judging a righteous judgment deals with flat-out sin or false doctrine that is leading people away from the truth.

Jesus didn't preach a message of tolerance for false doctrine, nor did John, Paul, Peter or Jude. Paul said he would continue to "cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:12-13).

Paul also taught Titus to do the same, noting "there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:10-13). Paul also taught Titus, "Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you" (Titus 2:15).

Remaining Loyal to Jesus

We must remain loyal to Jesus. That means we must remain true to the Word of God. We must abide by the doctrines of Christ. We must be faithful witnesses in this generation. We must sound the alarm, hoping and praying that the ones who preach false doctrines will repent and the ones who have bought into

false doctrines will find deliverance. We must judge a righteous judgment. In order to do that, we must be students of the Word and sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Just as Jesus prophesied, false prophets and false teachers are rising. Many will be deceived. The love of many will grow cold. And many will fall away. As much as we want unity, we can't compromise truth for the sake of unity. That's really not unity at all. We cannot stand by—like a physician who doesn't want to tell his patient he has cancer because he wants to stay positive—while so many in the body of Christ worship another Jesus centered on a different gospel. That, my friends, is not love, and it's not biblical. And I won't take part in it. Amen.

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