

## Be Careful How You Judge, Pt. 2

Ronald Weinland

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We are continuing in the series *Be Careful How You Judge*. This is *Part 2*. I intend to get through this particular series today.

And of course, this is a follow-up to the last series, and largely because God has continued to reveal matters that need to be addressed in the Body, in the Church, that became manifest because of Covid and some of the things that we have done as far as discussion about the shots, the jab, whatever you call it. Different countries call it a little bit differently, but I think Europe, every place except maybe the states, it's called a jab. Good... It's a jab alright.

Anyway, those things have come to the surface, and we've talked about that in past sermons, which they needed to be discussed. But I always marvel how God uses physical things we live through in life to bring things to the surface in ways that we have to examine and think about to learn spiritual lessons from. This has been my experience in the Church ever since I've been in it. Different things have happened at different times that have a very physical nature, but there are spiritual lessons in it and spiritual things to be learned. We think we know where we are, we think we would do certain things under certain circumstances, and yet when it comes down to it we realize that's not always the decision we'll make in a particular instance, and so, we have to dig a little deeper. God uses that to help us to see ourselves in a clear way, in a mirror.

So, when it comes from learning from mistakes that have been made over the past year concerning things given to the Church because of Covid, the wearing of masks, the jab, and so forth, different guidelines and admonitions, there are mistakes we make at times, but we can learn from those. We all make mistakes and there are times we sin in our life, and if we can learn from something and repent from it, that's what God asks. It's a growing process. It's when we resist and don't want to change, well, we've been called to change. Everything about us, our minds have to be changed. It's a transformation.

We should hope to and be reminded of the need to yield our self to that process, to realize the value of change. Because we need to change. We're selfish by nature. It's ugly. The more we can see that and fight against that, the better off we are indeed.

So, today we're going to begin in a section here of scripture that really brings some of these things to light. But it's a different context that's used in scripture here, but in Romans 14, and it's addressing a different matter, but it can be applied in so many ways in our lives and in the Church. There is much to learn in this in our lives, truly.

**Romans 14:1** it says, **Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.** Now, judging, and most judgment, when I talk about judgment, is talking about matters of our attitude toward someone else and judging in the sense of condemnation, putting down, looking down upon someone. Those are the kinds of things we have to get out of our life. Because we have to judge everything around us in our lives constantly, I don't care what it is, but we have to learn to do it God's way, and therein is the struggle because we have to have God's spirit to do it that way. So, we have to stay close to God, we have to cry out to God for help to be able to do that kind of thing.

And so, this verse here is a two-way street. You have to be careful because even in this one can judge improperly. "Receive one who is weak in the faith," becoming weak, as the word is, or without strength. They are at a moment of weakness in their life of a particular area of something they don't see yet or haven't come to grips yet. Our desire within the Church should be that everyone, when something comes along within the Church, that we are unified, that we see it, whatever it might be that God reveals, but we may have some experience in our life that makes the battle a little more difficult in some subjects more than others.

Sometimes then we can look at a person and judge them, as it says here, and if we're not careful we get lifted up and think, "They're weak." Someone else is weak. They just don't understand, they're weak in the faith. You have to be careful how you judge because you can't think like that. To understand perhaps that someone is having a struggle with something, that's fine, but not to look down upon someone and then think that they're weak in all other areas of their life. Because the reality is sometimes we just have one area of something that we don't see as clearly because maybe some experience of our past, but in other areas we're strong. And if we're not careful we could be judging someone about something that's small, that we have a large, much larger problem in some other area.

It's like this splinter or beam in the eye, you know, what is it? Do we have a beam? How are we judging? So, there are always things to learn here and to become wiser in how we do it.

So, in this case here it says, **Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.** That's the New King James. The King James says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations." Now, this isn't a real good translation.

A better translation is, "Receive anyone who is weak in the faith." So again, doesn't mean in your whole life, but in a particular area of what it is you believe. Sometimes we have to address things that are maybe given to us in sermons, and in a particular area because of something of our past it may be difficult to believe something immediately, quickly. That's a process. We all come through different things.

I think of things that God's revealed at different times and sometimes it can take a while for all of a sudden, "Now I understand what you're saying." Because we don't all think the same. That's just in one particular area. Whereas at another time maybe we're right on top of it quickly. But that's what this means, "in the faith." It doesn't mean in all that you have as far as what you believe, it means in this particular area, in this particular situation.

He gives an example to help clarify some of this, of what he's talking about. It doesn't mean in everything in your life, but it means on this one thing it's something you need to address. We all have things in life that are different that we have to address, and God reveals them at different times. We're not all the same.

So, it says, "Receive one," in this case, "who is weak, but not to doubtful disputations." Now, these two words, "doubtful" and "disputations," don't really add to a better translation unless you know what they mean, unless you know what their definition is. So, I'm going to take a little time to go through part of this.

"Doubtful" - "human reasoning; opinions." So, if we have an opinion about something and we're using human reasoning about a particular situation in judging someone else you have to be careful because very possibly you're very, very wrong in the process you're using and how you're thinking. Human reasoning—and this is apart from God—is by definition not a very good thing.

It's like today in the media. News is not news. They have people on a panel and they're discussing things, "What do you think about this?" And sometimes, maybe, they have someone else with an opposing opinion. You don't find that very often, but sometimes they have someone who thinks differently and so they give the other side of this, of what they think. It's opinions, judging how people think, and we think so differently as human beings, we really do. But in the Church we're God's people and we're striving to come into a unity and oneness as far as the things He reveals to us. This takes time, and it takes work. It takes thinking about it and praying about it.

The last thing you want to do is to look down upon someone else in the Body of Christ, to judge, to condemn. Because if you do, you're sinning already. That's what God reveals. If we think like that we're sinning because that isn't our part in life.

To judge if somebody has done something wrong and they've done something wrong? Yes. You look at something, you realize something is definitely wrong, "That's a sin to do that." Well, that's not a hard thing to grasp and understand. But even there it's not a matter of looking down upon them or condemning them, it's a matter of a desire that you hope that they're able to see and understand what they're doing, depending on how it's addressed, maybe because you say something to them, go to them alone, or maybe you discuss it with the ministry because it's so serious, you realize the seriousness of it and you realize that the

ministry may want to be involved in this, may need to be involved in this and it's up to them then in a particular matter as to what's going to be done. You have to make that judgment. But not to condemn.

Because in the past, in the history of the Church, there's been far too much of that, where people have condemned others, talked badly about others, spread it around. That's where gossip and things begin. I've experienced that so much in times past in the Church, and it's an ugly thing. Those things are very wrong. To begin finding something wrong and then spreading it around to others, what point is there in that? Is there a desire to see someone saved? Is there a desire to see someone be able to be helped, to be pulled out of the fire, if that's the case?

Because that's what should be in our heart, not to see anyone go by the wayside, to see if they can be helped. That's a different mindset than one that just finds fault and condemns and basically writes someone off. That's happened way too much in times past.

So again, "doubtful - human reasonings; opinions." This would be like, again, getting into taking sides from all the different reasoning, all the different ideas. So, taking sides and someone else who's not on your side or in your thinking. This is what I hate about people that get on the internet with certain things and they have a certain idea about a matter and they're holding on to this. Someone who doesn't agree with them or take their side, then they're looked down upon. It's like, "Well, no hope for you." We can get pretty ugly with our human nature sometimes.

So, it can be based on things about wearing a mask or not. I've heard this already. I've been through this in times past when this all began, all the controversy. It's still going on out there, whether to wear a mask or not to wear a mask. Well, I wear a mask if basically, if it's required, in a community, in an area, in a city, in a state, whatever it is. You strive to abide by those things to not be defiant because of your ideas or your opinions about whatever it might be. Sometimes people have health situations and so they have to try to do something different, like the shield that's in the front. Some places allow for that if a person has a health situation with breathing or whatever it might be. So, there are legitimate things and that's why people have to be careful how they judge.

Whether people get a jab or don't get a jab, get a shot or don't get a shot. Whether people get the next one, the booster. So, don't look down upon others for their choices and decisions. There are some legitimate things out here sometimes that people have had to deal with. I know of some health situations out here where it's very iffy. I understand that, but nevertheless, I still had to make choices and decisions about what's best for the entire Body. I hate for someone not to be able to come to the Feast because of that, if they can't because

of their health do something. But we have to have that in order to try to protect everyone in the Church at a festival site, a Feast site.

And if you've heard anything from some of the other sites, some of you maybe have connections with some of those areas, it's been disastrous in some of the sites where people came together in some of the scattered groups out there. We were very, very blessed. It was very contained, what did happen. Awesome!

The word "disputations" - "the act of judgment; making judgment." This is akin to "your own personal judgment about such physical things to the point of setting yourself in the position of being opposite of those who think differently," who have a different opinion. That's where people get into disputes sometimes. It's over how they're judging.

We've already gone through in this series there's one way to strive to judge, and it's God's way. Whatever He has shown us is a right way and a right thinking toward others, that's what we should strive to do. So, it's always a matter when it comes to this matter of "disputations," and there shouldn't be disputations among us anyway in the sense of getting into, you can call it an argument, you can say, "Well, it's just a friendly debate. It's just a friendly sparring here about differences." But sometimes those get carried too far.

So again, an even better translation, **Receive anyone who is weak in the faith**, in this specific area. It's not judging them about their entire life and their relationship with God. If you start doing that you've taken on something that is only God's. ...and do not engage in **divisiveness involving acts of judgment**. That's what it's saying.

"Do not engage in divisiveness involving acts of judgment that result from human reasoning," opinion. And yet it's so easy to do. It's the natural thing we do. "My opinion." We don't think it's our opinion. Sometimes we can even think we're in agreement with God. But we have to be very careful because it better agree with what God says.

**Verse 2—For one believes they may eat all things, but one who is weak eats only vegetables.** Now, what's he saying? Someone because of something in their past, there are religious organizations out here who are vegetarian. When they first come into God's Church sometimes it's very difficult for them to eat meat because they feel that it's a sin. In their mind they grew up believing this is a sin. And so, it's very difficult for them then to deal with that and it takes time sometimes. Other areas? They may have gone through with flying colors the Sabbath, Holy Days, other truth that God gave, but this one here is a bit of a stumbling block. It takes some time for individuals to work through this.

Like people who are Baptist. They come into the Church, they see people drinking a wine, drinking a beer. In their mind? I've known plenty of people like this in times past, and sometimes this is what they have a struggle with because they see others drinking and they

think this is not right. Yet God shows that there is a right use of things in the world, if they're not sin like something that's unclean or whatever, and just because our attitude is wrong we're going to do it anyway. But in a matter like this, just like meat. God shows very clearly in the Old Testament they ate a lot of meat. They like lamb. They like goat. They like the birds when they were flying into camp, too much so. Their attitudes were rotten at that point in time.

But again here, it's looking at some of these things and realizing that there may be something of someone's past in a particular area. Give people a chance. Give people a bit of benefit of a doubt of certain things and thinking in your own mind and certain things that maybe there is something back there that is harder for them to address because of what they've experienced. You don't know people's minds. You don't know what they're coming out of.

To make a judgment about something, put yourself in a position that's not healthy, because the bottom line is, as it tells here, we're God's people and God has called and accepted every one of us. If He's given us the truth, what an awesome thing. He's given us the truth and we receive one another because of that, being God's children, and we learn to love one another in that regard and want to see us unified and at one. So, that puts everything in a kind a light that it needs to be for judging, and it won't be one of condemnation, as a whole, from us.

So, we're willing to give people time. What does God do to us? I've been in the Church since 1969 and He's still giving me time, time to change. I'm still addressing things and changing. I'm still repenting of things. You get certain things refined and what's He do? The good thing - He shows us more. "You're not done. You've got something else." Because you can become more refined in this, and you can see something else now. Actually, you get to a point where you're digging deeper into self. You're learning about the motives of why you do the things you do in the first place. It's not just addressing the matter of a sin, it's a matter of addressing the motivation. And that's the goal, where does it come from? Why do we think this way? What needs to change in our thinking? Awesome!

We grow in those things. To me, it's an awesome and beautiful process, of what God's taking us through. I think of that often in prayer, just thanking God for the fact that I can change, I have the blessing of being able to change in various things and to grow and to get rid of these things that are really quite nasty as far as human beings are. Human nature, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life," the selfishness of what we are, the more you grow the more you realize this is really disgusting.

Then you come to see even more so it's a mind of a being who went against God very early on, the first son of perdition, the first being of sin, and the author of it. It's because it's about Lucifer who became Satan. God has created us as human beings to have that kind of nature, one that resists God by nature. How dumbfounding it is! You think, what an awesome

thing when the world gets to learn that, when they come to understand it's our nature that has to change.

Politics can't change anything. Governments can't change anything. Education can't change. It might try to address certain things in the best way it can as far as human beings, but it's not the answer, God is. The change of the mind that can take place. Because until we have a change of mind we can't live right, we can't think right toward one another. It's a beautiful thing what God's doing with us as human beings.

So again here, here is an individual who's having a difficult time because they just can't eat meat and they haven't come to the conviction yet, the ability to see something, God says it's okay. God says it's good. It's fine. You're not sinning. But if they were to do that early on, especially at the beginning or whenever this happened (but generally, this is toward the beginning of certain things), if they go against their conscience, that's sin. Because you're hurting your mind, you're doing something for the wrong reason. So, you want to be in agreement because you're convicted of it.

That's something that's really awesome to understand too. In the Millennium and in the Great White Throne, what people have to come to is not just change because everyone else is doing something. This happened a lot in Worldwide where individuals would come along and they would live in the sense of changing how they approached various things to blend in, to be a part, but weren't convicted of those things in their mind. I hope that makes sense.

Conform is perhaps the best word to use. They would conform. But conformity doesn't mean you're convicted of a certain thing in your mind, in your life, if you conform to certain things within the Church. Conform to perhaps having been a Baptist and then you come into the Church, but you're not convicted yet because there is still that past back there that gnaws at you, but you see everyone else around you when they're together, some, maybe not everyone, but some that at a gathering or whatever has a beer, has a glass of wine, and so you start drinking. Not because you're convicted of it but because you're just conforming. That's not the right reason to do something like that.

To obey God in other things if you're conforming, Holy Day offerings. It used to be the basket would go up and down the aisle at the Holy Days. Well, we quit doing that a long time ago, but it used to be on a Holy Day, a High Day, there would be deacons on the sides and in the middle if you had the aisle, and they would have baskets very much like what churches in the world do. It would be passed around because God says to collect a Holy Day offering or to give a Holy Day offering to God. When that basket goes by you're going to feel the need, if you're not convicted of a Holy Day offering, you're going to feel the need to conform. Why? Because of the person next to you, and if you don't put anything in the basket and you pass it on,

everyone is going to see it so what do you? Oh, I want to have something here to put in the basket. You think that didn't happen? Absolutely, it happened.

So, to do it because you're convicted of it, that's what God desires. Because you see it, you understand it, and that's the beauty of conviction. You're doing it for the right reasons. Some perhaps, which was addressed to me in one case, took the shot but not out of conviction of unity and oneness and what was being given, the purpose of why it was being said. Anyway, it can be for the wrong reasons.

We have to address those things in our life but God helps to bring them to the surface so we can see ourselves in a spiritual mirror. But no one else is to be condemning us in those things in the sense of looking down and judging us to the point of condemnation, of being lifted up by it and saying, "Well, you're wrong."

It goes on to say, **Do not let him who eats despise him who does not eat, and do not let the one who does not eat judge another who eats.** It's two-sided. Both have to be careful how they're judging the other. Someone that sees someone else taking a drink who is a Baptist and won't change in that area because they feel like it's wrong and they judge someone else, "Oh, you're having a second?!" Maybe they're small pours of wine because there are different pours of wine, and somebody maybe, they had a third! Can't believe it. They had a third glass of wine! They've been sitting there for six hours, but they had a third glass of wine! Condemnation.

Did the other person sin? No, you can't say that. Guideline's been given, two, fine, so be it. That's good. But just because it might be a smaller portion that someone has, who is the one measuring this out and judging how much an individual can have and can't have in those things? Guidelines are given for each one of us to take in to judge ourselves by, and we have to be careful then when we judge another.

Now, if someone drinks too much and they're slurring their speech, you know, and can't walk right, now you have to make a judgment. It's pretty simple, they've gone way too far. That might be a good opportunity where an individual might go and talk to their brother alone. "Hey, you know. Look how you're walking here. You can't even walk right. We shouldn't be doing this in the Church." Now, if you can't do that take it to a minister, tell them what you have witnessed. There's nothing wrong with that. It's not tattling on someone. You want to see someone get help. Because if this keeps up and if they're doing it in other areas of their life, which you don't know, but you want them to be aware.

I like being aware of various things that go on. So, if something comes to me from another witness somewhere else then I may have two witnesses or three witnesses, and then I may have the need as a minister to discuss something with someone to say, "This has happened." That's what the guideline is, two or three witnesses. I have the information, which happens



oftentimes, that comes from different parties because they don't know how to deal with this or they don't know that it's their place, they don't feel it's right and their place. That's a judgment.

It's far better to bring it along if it's a matter that you are very convicted of sin, that it's a sin. And if it's not? I'll give you another example. Perhaps you know of someone who isn't married who's bringing someone to their home on a regular basis and they're not leaving that night. So, what do you do? "Hmm, I'm going to judge this. They're probably sleeping in different bedrooms." No, we have all been told in the Church that there are certain things we don't even give the appearance of evil. Why would two individuals of different sex like that be staying all night together? It's not that you have to go and find out, but the appearance of it is enough that it needs to be addressed. Because everything about it isn't good, doesn't sound good, doesn't look good.

Things like this have happened in God's Church, and not that long ago, see. So, we have to judge. If we come to a point we realize and you believe this is sin, if it's happened in front of you you may address it right then and there. If you don't know how to or whatever, discuss it with a minister. There's nothing wrong with that. It's not tattling. It's a matter, "I have concern. I saw this. I'm not sure if what I saw is really right. But if it is I don't want to see my brother leave the Church, be taken out of the Church."

**Do not let him who eats despise (look down upon) him who does not eat, and do not let the one who does not eat judge another who eats.** So, you've got to be careful because it's on both sides of the issue.

**...for God has received them.** That's what I said a minute ago. They're God's. If God has received someone, He has a purpose for them and He desires that they're able to come to repentance. They're going to go through some things and maybe it's going to take some time because sometimes we don't address something immediately in our life. It may go on for months. It may go on for years before all of a sudden it hits us what we're doing. Then we're able to see ourselves and come to repentance before God.

What a beautiful thing that God works with us, draws us to repentance at some point, whatever that might be. It might be over a long period of time; it might be quick. But as long as we're a part, as long as we're striving to repent and draw close to God, who is any one of us to judge someone opposite of that or that that isn't happening in their life? That's why the responsibility of judging is exceedingly important in our lives, that we do it right according to God's will. Because if we don't we're sinning and our sin so often in those cases is far worse than what the individual has done. God wants both parties to come to see their sin - the one who condemns and judges and the one who has actually committed a sin.

So often in a lot of these things it's a matter, a question I often ask someone, "Is there sin? What was the sin?" Because sometimes we see something, and we think it's sin. Well, how do you know that was sin? See? You have to go through those exercises yourself. Because otherwise then, it's your opinion, it's your reasoning. If you don't know, you don't know, but our tendency as human beings is to categorize someone and put them in a spot and judge that they've sinned.

I'm going to go through some things here. This is a good spot for it. Just wrote down some quick things here that have happened. They happen oftentimes on a regular basis, it seems like. They just go in circles, different things that take place. There are many. But if we can see these maybe we can begin to learn from them and understand some of these things.

Marriage in or out of the Church. There are people who still judge those things. "Oh, it has to be in the Church. If you marry outside..." But if we look around a little bit we ought to learn from that. After all I've said in sermons ought to know better than that. But still, these things go on. Sometimes people are condemned, and so, you have to be careful how you judge.

I've always found that individuals who are totally open? Look at the Church! We're so scattered. So, what do we do, just bring individuals in into one area and have singles get together? We used to do that in the Church. Not such a good idea. Throw them together and somehow they're going to find that one! Because the idea and the pressure was it has to be that way and it can't be any other way. Bull! God calls people out of the world, one who is and one who isn't called. We're to learn from that. God allows both, in that respect, to have a type of sanctification. One for being called, one for having the opportunity for changing and growing. The other perhaps maybe even by what they see and by what they witness, God giving them an opportunity, may be drawn to and choose, have that opportunity. What a beautiful thing!

Sometimes that isn't offered by God, but as long as people are open about where they stand. So, the main thing is that you don't compromise. But is marriage bad? Is marriage wrong? You know, Paul had this discussion... Well, I don't even want to get into that one there. But there are some scriptures in there that indicate very highly of what he said he had the right to do, and some were condemning him for it.

But anyway, these things still go on sadly. I hear of different things at different times, and someone wants to give advice to someone and different from what I've given in sermons, different than what I've explained in sermons. You think, "I hope that individual or those individuals," or wherever that might be, "that they come to see what they're doing because what they're doing is sin." Because first of all, they're speaking against what I have shown the Church is from God and is balance and soundness of mind in relationships, and that it's

fine to date and to marry outside the Church. You do it God's way. Everything you do should be done God's way.

Because I'll tell you what, I've known a lot more in God's Church who have married and haven't done it God's way, have sinned. Those have been some of the most hideous relationships. Just because two have come along and they're in the Church for a time doesn't mean that their marriage is going to be successful. So, whether it be in or out it's a matter of how you choose to live your life and are you striving to live it God's way—which someone who is called is supposed to do—then you can have God's blessings and God will work with you and help you.

Sometimes you just have to stand your ground as well even in those relationships because sometimes there is no creating, having peace with someone else who begins to go in a different direction. Sometimes people have a struggle there too because, well, whatever the reasons are in people's background. But everyone has to judge for themselves what they're going through and how they're dealing with it.

I hope that makes some sense in all this because none of these things are easy and none of them are exactly alike. Things are different. That's something I learned very early on as a minister. There is no black and white in a marriage relationship that's absolutely clear. Counseled with lots of people over time and it takes a lot of time to work through various things. But ultimately everything backs up to each one of us, of what we're going to do because we're going to obey God no matter what anybody else does. That's the conviction. And if people have that in their heart and their mind they're going to come through whatever it might be. It might be a rocky road, might be difficult, but that's a part of growing and we learn from those experiences, good and bad in the world.

To have children or no children. I've known of people who condemn people because they look down upon someone because they're having children, or have too many children, whatever, or not enough. Where is the sin? It's a choice. Just like marriage. Marriage is a choice that God offers all human beings. Now, if a person compromises and were to begin worshipping someone else's, with someone else in their religious beliefs, obviously that's sin. But marriage is fine, marriage is good; it's beautiful before God.

Having children. If you choose to have them, it's good with God. Not having children is good with God. It's a choice. Awesome! But I have known of people in times past who have judged others for that. Well, who's business is it? Is it your business that you should judge someone else for what they're doing and how they're doing it in their life?

Sometimes how people spend their money, what they bought, what kind of a house they bought, where they bought it, whether they buy it or not or whether they should rent. Whose business is it? Is that your business? Now, these are legitimate things that happen and have

happened in God's Church, where people decide what's right and wrong for somebody else. You think, "Are you making these financial decisions for them? Are you bringing in the money and giving it to them and then you have a say in it? If you don't, shut your mouth!" But if we're not careful, things like that happen.

So, whether a person buys a home, whether a person buys a car, whether it's a used car, whether it's whatever, what kind. I've seen everything in the Church. What color? There was a time when people were looked down upon, basically, if they had a black car. There are ministers or elders in the Church who found fault with someone if they bought a black car because "You shouldn't have a black car. That's evil. That's the color of evil."

I'll tell you what, it wouldn't have been too long ago, and this would have been looked down upon by quite a few in the Church: "You're wearing black, a black shirt? You're not even wearing a tie!" Well, we're past that hopefully. But black was looked down upon, of wearing black. You think, where does this come from?

Paisley. It used to be paisley ties. I don't know where some of this stuff came from, but they used to have paisley in the worship of other gods. And you think, well, they wore shoes too; they wore pants. Are you not supposed to do that? Where do you draw the line? Just because they had something does it make it wrong? But that's some of the kind of thinking that some had. It was very physical and very judgmental in the Church. I'm so glad we're so far past that.

So, if you want a black car, you can have a black car. Okay? If you want a truck, you can have a truck. It's like, "A woman, you know, she shouldn't be, she shouldn't own a truck because that's a masculine thing to have. If you have a pickup truck, a 'pick-em-up' truck (sorry), you shouldn't be a woman driving a pickup truck. That's just not feminine." Anyway.

Motorcycle? Oh, I've heard that in the Church. "You know, you shouldn't have a motorcycle." "If you're a woman, you really shouldn't have a motorcycle." Anyway. It's crazy what we can judge people over and look down upon them for and get involved in people's lives. You think, totally missing the mark here of what life is about.

Why someone was removed as an elder or why someone was made an elder. I've been questioned often in these things by people. It comes around, why someone was ordained, why someone wasn't ordained, or why someone was removed. Yet there are decisions that are made that aren't their decisions to make. Learn from it.

If you look at various things that are done in the Church you know what happens in time, if you look and you want to understand something, you listen closely and you pray and there are times that God will help you to grow in understanding.

Where someone chooses to attend the Feast. I mean, these are things that come up. “Why are you going there? You should be going there.” You think, “What business is that of yours? Is it your second tithe? Is their tithe, second tithe your second tithe? Did you put something in there to help them in making that decision?” I’ve known of people that get upset about the direction and the way people travel to get to a Feast site. There are a lot of different ways to get there. They’re free to choose whichever one and none of it is sin.

Again, some of these things may seem frivolous and stupid, and they kind of are, but they’ve happened a lot in God’s Church. If we can learn from these things, like the wine, the drinking of something and someone else has a problem in their thinking, eating of flesh, eating of meat or not eating, they’re small in one respect, and yet they’re very big because we judge as human beings. If we’re not careful we condemn others whom God has called. That’s what basically is said here.

Same thing has happened to the shots and wearing masks and people getting into debate. You think, why get into something that Paul just talked about here, into divisiveness or into debate about something, talking back and forth. “Well, yeah but I’ve done a lot of research in this particular area and if you would go to this site here you would find out what I’m talking about, of why this is good,” or “why this isn’t good. And you will learn all about it.” I’ve had people send me stuff to help me to change my mind about decisions that are made.

I don’t go by what’s out there. I learned that a long, long, long time ago. I pray about it, and I look to God to help me to make the choice and decision and I know how God works with me.

So again ...**for God has received them. (Verse 4) Who are you who judges another’s servant?** That’s so powerful. Who are we to judge someone else that God has called? They serve God. They don’t serve you. Who are you to judge them, to look down upon them?

So again, these are areas we can all look at in certain things in our life and learn from. Because we all have done it, and at different times we all may be doing it from time to time.

**Verse 5—One person esteems one day above another while another esteems every day.** Now, what’s this talking about? Well, it’s kind of awkward language. Let’s take a fast for an example, a day of fasting. Someone may choose to fast, and especially amongst the Jewish people at a particular time. So, they had a lot of influence. Paul had a lot of battles he had to fight because of Jewish people living in the area and intermixing at times here with gentiles, so they were having a battle when they were called into the Church. Their battle was unique because they had a Jewish background and had to come out of various things.

They might have fasted twice a week, which some of them did, and when they came into the Church they continued to do that. Then gentiles who didn’t have that as a part of their background who might choose to maybe fast once a month, once every three months,

especially in the beginning, not knowing about fasting and needed time to grow in a personal relationship with God about how often they chose to. But it's like the individual who fasted twice a week was more righteous than the one who wouldn't choose to fast.

This is a part of what's being discussed here, when they ate and when they didn't. That's what this is about.

**One person esteems one day above another.** So, in other words, maybe in a Jewish background a person had a routine of fasting on Tuesday, maybe every week. These things have happened. Maybe Tuesday and Thursday. Maybe Monday and Thursday, and on those days they fasted. That's a lot of fasting. But anyway, if it's for the right reasons and so forth, that's awesome. But again here, it's talking about judging someone else and the ability then of looking down upon someone else because you know that someone isn't fasting like you are. The tendency can be to what? "Well, they're just not motivated." That's just a natural thing that happens too much in people's lives if that's their background. "I'm fasting twice a week," and "I'm fasting once a week and I don't know, this person, I don't know whether they fast once a year except on Atonement." Have they sinned? Especially what Paul, what he's asking here, "Have they sinned?"

If a person fasts one other time in a year besides Atonement, have they sinned? That's between them and God what they choose to do and what they choose not to do. They may be at a particular place in their life where they'll come to understand more that it's healthier, it's good spiritually to do it more often, but there's not sin involved there.

**One person esteems one day above another while another esteems every day alike.** In other words, every day is fine. Between them and God, it's a great day and I'm not fasting. So, it's talking about what they choose.

**Let each be fully persuaded in their own mind,** in other words, their own thinking and decision making. Because it's between them and God. So, it says here, **One who observes a day, observes it to the Lord; one who does not observe a day...** What do you mean? It's about setting aside a day for fasting. "I observe..." "I'm going to..." You know, someone may say, "On Friday, I'm going to fast. I want to observe that day before God as a fast day." Well, that's between you and God.

**One who observes a day, observes it to the Lord; and one who does not observe a day, to the Lord they do not observe it.** In other words, by their choice. **One who eats, eats to the Lord, for they give thanks, God thanks.** It's showing here that an individual, who are you to judge someone? They have chosen to continue to eat day-by-day and they thank God for everything they have.

We have prayers like that. It doesn't mean you have to pray at every meal. It's not talking like that. It's revealing something here that we learn to be thankful for the things we have, which includes our ability to have food, our ability to have shelter, our ability to have clothes, all the blessings of life that we have. Sometimes those become part of a general prayer, maybe sometimes specific because of something unique that happens in your life at a particular moment.

But just like yesterday, I was very thankful that this morning I'm there with my wife. Do I say that every day? Not to the same depth of conviction and feeling that I did this morning, you know, in prayer. Because we're together all the time. Do I give thanks at different times? Yes. But I'll tell you what, this morning it was a little more intent with a lot more feeling because I'm thankful to be here. I'm thankful to be here in Rancho Cucamonga today. If I wasn't, if I was dead, what a downer that would be for everybody today. What a horrible Sabbath, the feeling of learning this on the Sabbath worldwide. It's like, I don't want to see the Church to have to go through that. But some day they may. Everybody will learn from it. I'm just thankful it wasn't today, and I get a chance to keep going on.

So again here, we have to be careful how we judge others in these kinds of things. Fasting can be one, prayer life can be one, different things that people think about or do, that they might know about someone else. Which how they know, I don't know all the time. But sometimes people do. Here's a case he's making here. In other words, a person who doesn't set aside a day for fasting like you do every week, they thank God for their life, they thank God for what they have and the food they're able to have every day. They're thanking God for the day, the life that they have; who are you to judge them?

So, "one who does not observe a day to the Lord, they do not observe it by their own choice." We're free to make choices. That's not a sin, it's a blessing.

**One who eats, eats to the Lord, for they give God thanks, and the one who does not eat, to the Lord they do not eat, and yet give God thanks.** Both in the Church. Both thankful to God for everything they have.

**For none of us lives to themselves, and no one dies to themselves. For if we live, we live to the Lord.** We're God's. Each one of us belongs to God. If we could only remember that; we belong to God. "Judgment is upon the house of God." Who is judging? God. Now, sometimes that judgment comes down through the ministry into the Church because that's how God works, just as He gives truth to the Church. That's how God functions and works within the Body, within the Church. We learn that through time and how that works.

**Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.** That's beautiful. We are God's. What an awesome thing. Just like, I'll be candid about it, I talked to the children yesterday, and I was very blunt. It's very matter of fact. I came through this, but please know some day this is

going to happen. It's just a part of life, and we go on. That's just the way it is. It's not morbid, it's not unthankful, it's not feeling sorrowful, it's just the matter of a fact. The more we understand we're in God's hands and if God's called us and working with us, has a purpose, that's where we're going.... What other place would you want to be, to know that your life is in God's hands? And if one dies, you're in God's hands, and the next thing is going to be a resurrection. What could be more beautiful, wonderful than that? Because that's what we're all working for.

It's kind of like the world. They don't understand. They're so mournful, so lost of hope and sometimes have such a hard time when people die. And yes, it's a sorrowful thing because your routine is going to change, but you understand they have it made! What an awesome thing if someone has lived this way of life, continues in this way of life, is blessed in this way of life, in God's hands, what more could one want?

**For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that he might be both Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. God, we're answerable to God and Christ. We have to be careful in these matters, areas of judgment, that we do it according to God's will.**

**Verse 12—So then each of us shall give account of ourselves to God.** It's between us and God. None of us are made judges of one another. We may have to be involved in some judgment from time to time to do our part, of seeing something, of knowing something is wrong and counseling about it, or whatever, but then our heart and desire should be to see individuals come through all this, to be saved.

**Therefore, let us not judge one another, but rather judge this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall,** means "a snare." A word that's "to bait the trap for someone else to fall into, to get caught by." **...don't put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in your brother's way.**

Sometimes debate can get that way. That's why I loathe things that come off the internet sometimes where people make choices and decisions by their "expertise" because they know, and they've studied this, and they know what is right. Well, no, you don't know what's right. That's your opinion and that's what you have studied and researched and come to, and there may be some right in it (depends on what the situation or matter is), but that's something you have to decide. You're responsible before God, but you're not responsible for teaching others in the Church about it. You're not responsible for going to them and trying to convict them of your conviction, of what you think, especially if it hasn't been given by the Church yet. If it does and that conflicts with it, that decision should be really easy: "I'm going to do what God has given in the Church." Simple.



**I know and am fully persuaded by the Lord Joshua that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.** Some of the language that Paul uses sometimes in the way he communicates is a little bit different, and a lot of it comes through because of sloppiness in translations. Because they don't even know how to translate a lot of things and so they go word by word, and that doesn't get it because that doesn't convey the meaning and the thought in a different language of what was said in the language it was written in.

So again, difficult to grasp how it's written and translated but a person needs to know how Paul speaks when he is saying what he is here in what he's describing. Because when saying that "nothing is unclean of itself" he's not saying that it's okay to eat pork or shellfish, as some interpret some of these things in the protestant world out there. "See, nothing is unclean unless you feel it's unclean, and then that's your conscience. But everything is okay to eat." No, it isn't. God's given guidelines. We're not to eat shrimp. We're not to eat the catfish. We understand what the guidelines are and on it goes.

He's not saying that adultery isn't unclean in itself. We know what God says. Yes, it's not right, it's a sin. He isn't referring to things that God says are either lawful or not lawful in this case. That's not how he's speaking.

The word translated as "unclean" here is not the Greek word for "unclean." The word is best translated as "common." That's what it means. If you know how the word is used in the gentile world at that time and how Paul is using here what is common or within the Jewish world, people had different concepts of something here. That which might be considered common has to do with each person's own thinking, their perception, their reasoning, their own judgment.

So, what's common out here? Well, depends on who you talk to. Depends on what's acceptable. What was common amongst the Jews was not common amongst the gentile world, and especially when they came into the Church. There were things that people judged by what they considered was good and what they considered wasn't good, but it wasn't a matter of sin.

I want to read a couple scriptures how this is used. First is **Mark 7:1—Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to him, before Christ, having come from Jerusalem.** So again, Pharisees and scribes coming before Christ. **Now, when they saw some of the disciples eat bread with defiled...** it's the same word here. See, it was by their judgment, by their tradition, if you will, by what was common amongst them to do or not to do. They found fault with something that wasn't a matter of scripture, it wasn't a matter of something that God says you're to do, but it was by their own custom, by their own ways of judging something and what you had to do.

We do this sometimes in society. I don't know if I ought to go into some of that or not. Someone goes into a bathroom, and they don't wash their hands when they come out? People judge them. Some people go in and wash their hands first, and then they come out. You may have to think about that for a little while. But they have judged in their own mind, in this particular case, as I've read about different situations and learned from, that there are people who judge from some of these things.

It's like, if you know you're clean and you go to the facilities, you want to make sure you're really clean when you come out, you wash your hands. So, people do that. But on the other hand, there is the thinking that, no, I want to make sure that when I go in to use the facilities I'm clean by washing my hands first. There are people who think that way. Anyway, so what's common to one person is not common to another. Mull some of those things here.

**Now, when they saw the disciples eat bread, again, his disciples ate with defiled,** as it goes on to talk about here, **what was common...that is with unwashed hands.** So again here, they had a judgment, the Pharisees and the Sadducees because of what they considered common. So, some incorrectly translate this as unclean or defiled and that's perhaps in their thinking, but the point is it's common, **that is with unwashed hands.** So, that's what their judgment was. You can't eat food with unwashed hands.

Well, who said? Because people have, sometimes get into this religious ceremony. That's basically what they had, that they had to wash to a certain point. There are certain other religions that before they go pray they have to wash certain areas of their body, their feet, and whatever. The Jews had some of these ideas of what they had to have as far as how they washed, and to do otherwise wasn't right in their mind.

So, sometimes it's necessary, it's good to wash your hands before you eat, but they made it more of a ritual. But is it wrong if you were to pick up your McDonalds sandwich and you don't get out of the vehicle because you have a drive-thru?

Let's say you get Chick-fil-A, you didn't go in and wash your hands and you went through the drive-thru, and you wait in that line for about an hour (because that's the way it is with Chick-fil-A or the In and Out), and you go ahead and take your chicken nuggets and you put it in the Chick-fil-A sauce, and you dare not have gone inside to wash your hands first? Well, I do it. I've done it. Somebody want to find fault with that? Well, fine. But some people feel that way, that they have to do it. Well, that's between you and your thinking and your choice.

The point is you have to be careful of what you consider right and wrong. Sometimes we can judge the smallest of things in the world, in society and find fault with others for why they do or don't do. They didn't put down the lid in the toilet. They lifted the lid up and left it up. Or they whatever. People get upset about these kinds of things and look down upon someone else because they do it different than them. Is it sin?

This may seem frivolous to some of you, of going through some of these things and thinking about them, but there are things in your life that you do that are frivolous when it comes to judging and looking down upon someone else. No one is without guilt in this in their life, of looking at certain things that happen in the world that we might or might not do and then looking at someone else.

I've seen this in society so much, where people tend to look down upon others for doing something different, of how they address something. It might be about eating. It might be about their dress. It might be whatever it is, and people judge them accordingly—what a horrible thing—over some of the simplest of things. But to lift ourselves up and to look down upon others to me is sick. It's really sick how human beings can be sometimes.

So again here, **Now, when they saw that some of the disciples eat bread, that they eat bread with common, as it talks about here, that is with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way holding the tradition of their elders.** Did it come out of scripture? Does God say it has to be done that way? No. But this is something they learned so they continue to do it and they come into the Church, and they continued to do that. Is it wrong if they still feel like to be clean they have to wash all the way up to their elbow or whatever? I can eat, I can have been outside in the yard working and then come inside and to get some of the dirt off I may wash my hands, but I don't have to go up to the elbow like some feel like they have to. Do people look down upon one another for such things? That's absolutely what we're talking about here.

**Mark 7:4.** So again here...**by the tradition of the elders.** So, it goes on to talk about here, it says, **When they come from the marketplace...** Again, that's mistranslated. The word "marketplace" here is "the assembly." So, **from the assembly, they do not eat unless they wash.** This is talking about when they've done something together as an assembly, whatever that might be at this point in time, and it's still in their minds this religious format that they have to go through. "When they come from assembly they do not eat unless they wash." It's not talking about the marketplace. It's not talking about what people think in the gentile world or whatever other religious groups here. They try to make it about different foods.

Going on here, **Also, there are many other things which they have received and hold on to, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches,** whatever that means. **Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him...** So, in other words, they have different things that they go through, rituals of cleaning the things, the utensils they eat from, and if they don't do it that way it's like someone who doesn't do it that way, a gentile comes into our midst and doesn't do it that way, they've committed some kind of a sin. You know, there's something really wrong with them and they look down upon them and judge them.

So, we have to be careful how we judge people in the Body, in the Church. Sometimes people judge by what people wear. That's happened a lot in God's Church. Looked down upon someone because of what they're wearing.

**Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?** This is an amazing thing here because this is not even in the gentile world yet. This is something that's happening before Christ died. He's telling them, here are his disciples and they're not following these traditions because they're not steeped in them. That's not what Christ's example has been to them. He's doing something different. **He answered and said to them, Isaiah did prophesy well of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.** That's what we have to be careful of, that our heart doesn't drift away from God in how we judge and judge one another and look upon one another. People judge from their own perspective, popular, peer pressure, what's popular, something that's a matter of peer pressure and acceptance.

**Verse 7—In vain they do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** Sometimes we're not careful, we get wrapped up in some of these things and we latch on to something that we think is right that someone else is saying out here as how we should think, what we should do, what we should wear, what we shouldn't wear, mask, no mask, on and on it goes, and then judge one another for how we're doing things amongst ourselves.

**For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men.** Sometimes that's why I get a little stronger in some things I've said because I have run across this a lot in the last year, where some people will hold to what some government agency has said, from what some health group has said somewhere out here, what something is written in an article on the internet, and on and on it goes. Well, we don't go by that. We don't have to live by that. So, even I have been judged by some of those things.

**He said to them, again, all too well because of your own traditions.** So, we have these things in our mind of what's right and wrong and we decide for ourselves.

**Romans 14:12—So then each of us shall give account of ourselves to God.** That's what the bottom line is. We're all responsible before God what we choose to do and not choose to do. **Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather judge this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall, again, "a trap or a snare" in your brother's way. I know and am fully persuaded by the Lord Joshua that there is nothing common of itself; but to the one who considers, determines, in other words, reasons or reckons that something is common, to them it is common.**

It's saying here that people come to their own decisions and judgments of things in the world, and that's fine that you make your own choices and so forth by your own reasoning. We all

have to do this until it comes into a matter of something that's given by God to the Church to be in unity in, and then it no longer falls in these areas of things that are able to be judged.

Because we have to be able to judge things about the Sabbath, what we do on the Sabbath, what we do when Covid starts getting around, whether we come to services or not. Because we should be a little more on guard anymore if we have a cold or something like that, and just not say, "Well, this may be an allergy." Well, if it's an allergy and it's distracting, it's better to stay away because you don't really know for sure. You may be at a point where you may be a carrier of something that is going to be hard on other people.

I think of a couple of situations I know of where some knew they had Covid, and they got on a jet plane and went home. Wrong. Perhaps to come to Sabbath services with Covid earlier on or to have a temperature, to be sickly and to come into the environment of God's people. That doesn't reflect God's love. Yet we have to be careful in how we judge matters. But there's some things you can judge.

Matter of fact, I'm going to relay the story to you. Knew an individual because on a particular island in the Caribbean, that had Covid, and he was from Great Britain. So, he didn't want to stay on that island and be quarantined so he snuck on, got on to the plane anyway, flew up to Canada and caught a flight, went on over to England so he could be back home. All the while knowing he had Covid. Now, when I first heard that story I thought, that's horrible that anyone would do something like that without regard of anyone in community. To have covid and willingly go into an environment out in public.

I've known of people that know they have Covid, and they go on out in the public, go to the shopping mall, go to the store. Nothing is going to stop them. They're supposed to be in quarantine, and they won't stay in quarantine. And you think, what's wrong with this picture?

I've known of these things in the Church. What's wrong with that picture? If it looks like it's really, really horrible, and sick in the world how could anyone in God's Church do that? So, you see, if you're not sure whether something is sin you can talk about it, you can ask about it. But I'll just say it very clearly, that's sin. It's not love toward a brother. It's not love toward neighbor, people around us, and not wanting to see others be able to be protected. It's total disregard. It's about self. Whatever the reason was, it was wrong.

Some know of those situations that happened. Sometimes things get addressed that are wrong, they get addressed here because too many know. Sometimes it's best to address it from up here. So, I'm sure those individuals will repent of what they did, if they haven't already, because it makes us weaker if we do things that way that hurt ourselves.

But again, are we all able to judge something like that? We should be able to, to say that's wrong. Sometimes we judge things and it's just our opinion.

So again, it's a matter of how you judge. What are the principles that God has given, whether something is right or wrong, whether something is sin? If it's hurtful to others, if it's harmful to others, total disregard for others there are things we should be able to see and learn from. So, if we hadn't thought about something like that now is a good time to do it.

The point being in all this in the sermon series has been that a lot of these things continue on in God's Church. They've continued on in God's Church. A lot of people have been judged. Candidly, I've been judged a lot. That doesn't bother me. In one respect it does bother me for the individuals who do it because I know then that they're hurting themselves. Because I know how God works and how God's spirit works within the Church. If we resist that spirit as God molds and fashions us, seeks to teach us and helps us to be in unity and oneness, and there's one primary way that happens, and understanding the importance of something that's bound here on earth.

You know, a decision. I think of some decisions Herbert Armstrong made that weren't even a matter of something that was right or wrong, it was an administrative thing. Some who didn't want to go according to that and did something opposite of that, though it was an administrative thing and in itself was not a right or wrong, individuals who went against it, they sinned because they're judged by what is given in the Church. God has given a lot of leeway in some of those things for the sake of unity and oneness and so forth, that certain things may be said and guidelines given that may seem small. But if we don't like it and we want to do something different and we do something different or maybe we're vocal about it, that causes divisiveness. God hates division. He wants us to be at one, to be unified.

So, going through this exercise, learning some of these things, if we can grasp it, judgment is one of the most important things you can learn in God's Church, how to judge. If you can learn to judge in the small things, much easier to judge in the big things. It's like if a small amount has been given to us and we use it wisely God can give us a lot more. Because if we have a certain way of thinking about matters we will use the same kind of thinking and that same kind of mind toward the bigger and more important things in life.

So, if we can learn these in little things and realize these aren't just frivolous little things. If it affects our thinking and our attitude toward another brother or sister, that's wrong. So, if we can learn to judge in these things and always keep God in the picture, what is right before God? If we strive to do that we'll always do that in the more important things. It's an awesome thing to learn. I can tell you, we're not all able to grasp that on a spiritual plane on the same level yet. But the hope and the desire of this kind of a sermon that God gives to us is that we can grow in that and recognize this is one of the most important things we can learn to do as members of the Body of Christ, learn how to judge righteous judgment.