

Sermon: Mirrors Not Windows

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Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

I don't know if you've noticed, but a lot of the things that we've talked about are very common in today's language. Like, for instance, blessed are the peacemakers. Or the Lord's Prayer, which is something that's often quoted.

Or the Golden Rule, which is a part of Matthew chapter 7. Or tonight's passage is one of those that we hear all the time. But one of the things that we've been looking at is understanding these passages in context.

Because going verse by verse through a section, understanding what Jesus is teaching, rather than kind of what gets quoted in the culture. And so tonight's passage is one that's very, very important.

[1 : 38] Hopefully this records. It's online because I've never asked you to do this before. But I encourage you to share the link to go to the message online.

Because this is a message I believe our culture needs to hear. We need to hear. And churches need to hear. And so hopefully this is something that you will spread around.

And I trust those even who are gone this weekend will catch up online. So let's read Matthew chapter 7. And you'll understand why I got this in my hand. If you're able, please stand as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Matthew chapter 7. And let's look at 1 through 6. Very, very familiar passage. Judge not. That you be not judged.

For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that's in your own eye?

[2 : 39] Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there's a log in your own eye? You hypocrite.

First, take the log out of your own eye. And then you'll see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Do not give dogs what is holy.

And do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample underfoot and turn to attack you. This is God's Word.

Some of you are like, should have skipped tonight. Why didn't I go up north? This is going to hurt. And it is. Let's pray. God, thank you for all of your Word, passages that convict.

I pray that you'll teach us tonight. I pray, God, that I will teach this faithfully as Jesus meant it to be taught, both when it was originally said and tonight as well.

[3 : 37] So, Spirit of Truth, guide us to the truth. Help us see our own hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. And God's people said, Amen. You may be seated.

They said that the king was so full of sorrow that he never smiled again. It's the old famous Welsh fable about Llewellyn the Great, the Prince of Wales in the 13th century.

My guess is some of you probably remember the story. Llewellyn is given a dog named Gellert from the King of England, King John. And this dog is known for his loyalty, for his ability to protect.

And so, the prince puts the dog in charge of guarding the room where his baby boy sleeps. And every time the king would return to his son's room, the dog was always on guard, gaining him the nickname, the Fateful Hound.

But on one particular day, when the king returned from a hunting trip, he went to see his son. And when he did, he discovered that the cradle was overturned.

[4 : 49] The bedding was on the floor. And the ground was covered in blood. His child was nowhere to be found. And then Gellert appeared, his mouth covered in blood.

The king couldn't believe it. Enraged at the dog, he pulled out his sword and he plunged it into the dog, immediately killing him.

As the dog gave his final whelp, the king heard a cry from over in the corner. It was his baby boy. The king ran to the corner and discovered his son unharmed, but lying next to the boy was a dead wolf.

That's when the king realized the blood on the dog was not the blood of his son. It was the blood of the wolf. The dog had not harmed the child.

He had saved him. And they said that the king was so full of sorrow, he never smiled again.

[6 : 03] Faith family, let me ask you tonight, have you ever misjudged a situation? Have you ever been in a situation where you were absolutely certain of something, but then you discovered, perished the thought you were wrong?

Never happened to you, has it? That maybe you didn't have all the facts. Maybe you didn't know all the story. Maybe you had arrived at a conclusion just a little bit too soon.

Why are we so quick to judge? And we do it all the time. We see examples of this everywhere.

We judge people based on their hair color. Oh, well, she must be wild. Or their skin color. They must be fill in whatever stereotype. Or someone's child's behavior.

Oh, they must be a bad parent. Or how much money they have. Oh, they must be greedy. Or how much money they don't have. Oh, they have to be lazy.

[7 : 02] Or what other people have said. Oh, it must be true. After all, it's on the internet. Or we judge people based on their gender. They must be a bad driver.

Okay, that's a joke. Oh, that's a joke. All right. Or politics. It's like, oh, the other side must be evil. Or someone's accent. Or what part of the country they're from.

Oh, they must be ignorant. Or their weight. They must be really undisciplined. Or their willingness or unwillingness to wear a mask. I didn't know how that one would quite go over here, right?

They must be uninformed about the issue. Or their occupation. Oh, they must be racist. Faith family, isn't it interesting that when someone cuts you off in traffic, you know everything about them, including the identity of who they are a son of?

If you catch my drift, you know everything about them. And you judge. Judging is something that happens all the time.

[8 : 13] And not only do we judge others, my guess is there's a few of you here tonight that have been judged by others. What's your problem? What you got against the whole world anyway?

Huh? Look, I'm not the one with the problem, okay? It's the world that seems to have a problem with me. People take one look at me and go, Ah, help! Run! A big, stupid, ugly ogre.

They judge me before they even know me. That's why I'm better off alone. They judge me before they even know me.

I'm certainly not looking for sympathy tonight, but I can certainly relate to you if you've ever felt judged. I think pastors sometimes are some of the most judged people on the planet.

One of my favorite songs called Bottles and Bibles says, It's a hard way to go on the straight and narrow when everybody in town points a finger at you.

[9 : 14] But they ain't had to walk with the weight that you've hauled. They don't know you at all. But they think that they do. Every one of us has judged and been judged.

And I need you to listen to me tonight. This kind of behavior or should I say this kind of heart condition is inconsistent to and antithetical of the kingdom of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is exactly what Jesus is teaching us here in the Sermon on the Mount. Look at chapter 7 verse 1. Judge not that you be not judged.

Jesus starts this section here with a command not to judge others. There is no question as I mentioned earlier that this verse is one of the most overused and misinterpreted verses in the Bible. All of us have heard people say don't judge me and they usually do it as a way of dismissing their decisions or their behavior so it'll you know don't judge me for eating an entire cake.

[10 : 36] don't judge me for wearing flip-flops to a wedding. Don't judge me for drinking at 10 a.m. I just thought she was a raging alcoholic. Dumb and dumber, right?

Whatever it is it's some type of way of kind of dismissing someone's behavior but that's not what Jesus means here when he says not to judge. So let me start by giving us three biblical things that judging is not.

Three biblical things that judging is not. Number one judging is not identifying right or wrong. I mean Jesus has already been teaching there's a right way to live and a wrong way to live.

The Bible calls things sin. It's okay to say that's wrong that's right. You're not casting a judgment on somebody by calling something right or wrong.

Second judging is not using discernment. Jesus frequently warns against the teaching of the Pharisees. The Bible teaches us we have a whole book like the book of Proverbs that teaches us to walk in the way of wisdom which means there's times that we need to say whoa not going to have that relationship not going to go down that path or whatever it may be.

[11 : 48] Discerning judging is not judging. And thirdly judging is not having opinions on issues. For example hockey is a boring sport.

Too soon too soon like don't give that illustration after game seven right. But listen I grew up nobody played hockey. I don't understand hockey to me hockey is boring.

I'm not judging I'm just saying right. I think country music is great. I think rap music is awful. Now all of that happens to be true but I'm not judging anybody. I have opinions and you have opinions.

Correct? And we're free to have those opinions on things without being judgmental. Judging is not identifying right or wrong. It's not using discernment. It's not having opinion on things.

Listen judging biblically judging biblically is casting a final verdict on someone. Drawing a conclusion about someone in a way that condemns them.

[12 : 53] Now let me give you the biblical support for this. James 4 11 and 12 says do not speak evil against one another brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks evil against the law and judges the law.

But if you judge the law you're not a doer of the law but a judge. there is only one lawgiver and judge he who is able to save and to destroy but who are you to judge your neighbor?

Luke chapter 6 this is the Luke's equivalent of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Luke 6 verse 37 says judge not and you will not be judged and then look what it parallels condemn not and you will not be condemned.

Romans chapter 14 verse 10 why do you pass judgment on your brother or you who do not despise or you why do you despise your brother for we will all stand before the judgment the final verdict seat of God therefore verse 13 let us not pass judgment on one another any longer but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

Judging is condemning it's casting a final verdict on someone and we do this all the time listen to me faith family we will reduce somebody down to a single action we will reduce someone down to the way they look we'll reduce someone down to something from their past we'll reduce someone down to an issue that we disagree on and why are we not to do that because regardless of how well you know the person you don't have all the facts you don't know the entire story thought about what you said to me the other day about my painting stayed up half the night thinking about it something occurred to me I fell into a deep peaceful sleep and haven't thought about you since you know what occurred to me no you're just a kid you don't have the faintest idea what you're talking about why thank you it's alright you've never been out of

[15 : 24] Boston nope so if I asked you about art you'd probably give me the skinny on every art book ever written Michelangelo know a lot about him life's work political aspirations him and the pope sexual orientation the whole works right I bet you can't tell me what it smells like in the Sistine Chapel you never actually stood there and looked up at that beautiful ceiling seen that if I ask you about women you'd probably give me a syllabus they're your personal favorites but you can't tell me what it feels like to wake up next to a woman and feel truly happy you're a tough kid

I ask you about war you'd probably throw Shakespeare at me right once more into the breach dear friends but you've never been near one you've never held your best friend's head in your lap and watch him gasp his last breath looking to you for help I ask you about love probably quote me a sonnet but you've never looked at a woman and been totally vulnerable known someone that could level you with her eyes feeling like God put an angel on earth just for you who could rescue you from the depths of hell and you wouldn't know what it's like to be her angel to have that love for her be there forever through anything through cancer and you wouldn't know about sleeping sitting up in a hospital room for two months holding her hand because the doctors could see in your eyes that the terms visiting hours don't apply to you you don't know about real loss because that only occurs when you love something more than you love yourself

I doubt you've ever dared to love anybody that much I look at you I don't see an intelligent confident man I see a cocky kid but you're a genius no one denies that no one could possibly understand the depths of you but you presume to know everything about me because you saw a painting of mine you're an orphan right do you think I know the first thing about how hard your life has been how you feel who you are because I read all of the twist does that encapsulate you do you think I know how you feel who you are because I read something about you because I heard something about you because someone said something about you because of one encounter with you does that encapsulate you faith family

Jesus is saying that we must be very careful and cautious how we approach treat and assess other people and this issue of not judging is now one more mark for what kingdom minded Christians ought to live in a world differently after all Jesus here is forming a group of disciples he's shaping an entire new kingdom that has new habits and new hearts that reflect the king as we've already learned we're a people marked not by riches of the world but by poverty of spirit we're a people that shine in suffering because we are motivated to glorify God not self that we're not just concerned with what we do with our hands but also what's in our hearts that we have realized how far the bar of righteousness really is and we could never jump it and so we have gone all in on the one who has fulfilled the law and we give and we pray and we fast not because we want to look good but because we love

God and we treasure heavenly things not earthly things and we don't worry we're not anxious we don't get all caught up in the world because we relate to God as father and now as we enter chapter 7 we're a people different from the world who treat others with grace and mercy not judgment and condemnation this is an entirely different kingdom you are a new people and you have been placed to be light in the world so don't judge don't act like you know or have the final word only God has that and so Christians who understand the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus is teaching here leave the judgment of others to God and we approach them with grace and the mercy of God let me give you an example of how I think this can work because I want this to be practical and helpful to you [21 : 28] I want to teach this well some of you are like you're still in verse 1 you have five verses to go to which I say you came to the last service you should know I'm in no rush so here's an example let's say you hire somebody to work for you and they show up late all the time so I'm just a very practical example so what would it mean not to judge them okay number one you are allowed to say that lateness is wrong okay you're allowed to say it is wrong to be late that's not judging secondly you are allowed to discern that the best thing for your business is to fire them I don't want employees who are always late that's not judging them thirdly you're allowed to have an opinion that being late is disrespectful what you are not allowed to do is determine a final verdict on their life because you don't know their story even if you think you do and you don't want others defining you based on your worst moments that's what Jesus means here when he says do not judge and why are we even motivated to judge people in the first place why is this something that do you know how many like

I came up with that list earlier in the message and since then I've thought of like 27 more because this kind of thing is everywhere in life why is it so common let me give you three quick reasons number one is personal insecurity the reason why I am I talking about me I am critical of others because it makes me feel better I love hiding my own issues by exposing yours right there's insecurities in us and we can hide those or feel better about those by shining the light on someone else secondly is not just personal insecurity but religious morality we're critical of others not only because it makes us feel better but it makes us feel righteous I don't know if you know this about you but you have a little hidden Pharisee inside of you and if you grew up in church you probably have a big Pharisee hiding inside of you and it loves to come out and call out other people so you can feel more righteous about yourself it goes like this can you believe he spent so much money on a car

I would never be so foolish I would have probably given that money to the poor no you wouldn't have or can you believe she dresses like that I would never can you believe those kids I would never parent like that stop it first of all don't ever say I would never parent like that until you are a parent I assure you there were a lot of things I said I will never do as a parent did as a parent and so it is easy for you to cast judgment when you never walked in their shoes that little Pharisee inside of us is looking for every opportunity it can to feel righteous a righteousness of our own rather than a righteousness from God and then thirdly why I think we're prone to judge is desired deity

what I mean here is that ever since the garden of Eden humanity has wanted to be God we've wanted to be on the throne we've wanted to have the final say we've wanted to be the ultimate judge over our own life and the lives of others but notice this on the screen here when you judge others you are claiming attributes that only belong to

God like in five seconds when he cut you off in traffic and you know everything about his story so much to assess God you never met the guy you don't have a clue where he's going what he's come from and yet you know his entire story yet you'll cast things at him or her when the reality is you're claiming an attribute that isn't yours you're not God and you don't know which means it is not yours to judge now Jesus here we've only gone through one verse I hope verse two now Jesus is going to push this even further now that we know what it means judge not that you not be judged look at what he says next for with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged and with the measure you use it will be measured to you so now not only do we see the command not to judge but Jesus shows us why judging is a how listen listen it's revealing how you think God ought to judge when you're saying listen I believe they ought to be judged based on their past I believe the measuring stick we ought to use is what you've done in your past or how you've treated me or whatever it is that you've done that's the measuring stick here's what you're saying I think the measurement that God should use is works that's a very very dangerous approach to life that I assure you brother and sister you don't want because what is Jesus already been teaching us in the sermon on the mount how does the whole sermon start blessed are the poor in spirit blessed are those who realize they're spiritually bankrupt that are undeserving they know that if

[27 : 15] I stand before God's judgment I don't have a chance I got nothing I'm bankrupt and so the only way I am able to stand before the judgment of God is grace blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy that is I extend mercy to others because I'm very aware of God's big buckets of mercy that he's poured down on my life he's taught us to pray forgive!

others as we have been forgiven that is we want to relate to other people with the forgiveness that God has given to us so when you turn around and you say yep I'm going to cast a final verdict on you because of something you did or something you said what you are saying is this I believe I hope you're listening I believe that God's measurement shouldn't be grace but should be works and when you say that functionally and practically you are a contradiction to the very gospel you have come to know and you are essentially saying God I think you should judge me the same way and nobody wants that none of us want God's judgment to be based on works amen and so what Jesus is saying here is there's a concern that you ought to have of your heart when you're seeing your heart being really judgmental towards other people notice this on the screen people who know Jesus has absorbed their judgment are the last ones to cast judgment!!

stop judging pastor or more importantly Jesus you're teaching this sermon on the mount help me to not judge verse 3 why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye but do not notice the log that's in your own eye or how can you say to your brother let me take the speck out of your eye when there's a log in your own you hypocrite take first the this is the corrective to judging others and it's simply this isn't

Jesus amazingly wise that's a good place for an amen if you don't amen anything else you might want to amen that Jesus is so wise do you know what he's saying here it's hard to pass judgment on other people's junk when you're aware of your own junk you're going to have a hard time making a huge deal out of everybody else's sin when you're aware of your own sin it doesn't mean you don't call it that it just means that you're not casting that final verdict on them it's why Jesus uses the word hypocrite and we've talked about this before a hypocrite is not somebody that has issues a hypocrite is somebody that acts!

[31 : 52] is used for actor so what Jesus is saying here is that you notice everybody else's speck everybody else's issue but you act like you don't have big problems as well and so the corrective is the more aware you are of the stuff in your life of the sin in your life of how much God has been gracious to you in your life the more gracious you will be towards someone else I love this being so consumed with somebody else's speck that you avoid your own plank is like a dentist without teeth casting judgment on people who don't floss that's what we look like y'all really ought to brush your teeth how about you buddy like last time I looked in your mouth you got issues too and yet we sat there like a dentist without teeth saying you know the world really ought to be better at flossing how about you look at yourself how about you look at the log the plank in your own life it's interesting here somebody say preach preacher the

Greek for plank and speck have the same root that is the same root in this is the same root in this in terms of the Greek which means this I think this is so helpful the only reason you can identify problems in others is because those same problems exist in you you're able to spot that you know why because you got that so you're so so That's junk, because you know what junk looks like.

Notice this on the screen, right? If you're able to spot it in them, you probably got it in you. I didn't figure you'd amen that. You're like, I hate this sermon, because it's too correct, right?

If you're able to spot it in them, you probably got it in you. So the more aware you are of your own sin, the more merciful you're going to be when you're dealing with others.

Notice this on the screen. If you're poor in spirit, then you won't be quick to pass a sentence. You know what it's like to be bankrupt. You know what it's like to need God's grace.

[34 : 23] You know what it's like to need his forgiveness. And so that's how you want to approach others. Notice this here. The gospel-centered approach to life is always mirrors before windows.

Mirrors before windows. That is, what do I need to learn about myself? What do I need to grow in? What are issues that I need to address?

Rather than staring in everybody else's window, pointing out all of their problems. This is how disciples of Jesus live in the world.

Now you may be thinking, does this mean I never address an issue? Does this mean I never? No, we've already talked about the fact that judging doesn't mean saying something is right or wrong. There may be a conversation you need to have.

There may be an issue that you need to address. But notice what Paul says in Galatians 6 verse 1. He says, That is, you don't go in saying, I can't wait to have this conversation, Neil.

[35 : 32] I am going to beat the tar out of you. No. That's not a gospel-centered approach to someone. Paul is saying that you're going to address the issue.

You're going to talk about it. You're going to have the conversation. But you're going to do it with what? A spirit of gentleness. Because you are aware of your own sin.

Lastly, Jesus has one final warning. I always love it when I have props. It's just like fun, right? One final warning that Jesus has for us in this passage that I think is very relevant to us and to our culture.

Verse 6. Look at what he says. Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

I love that last part. We'll get to that in a minute. The fourth thing here is the caution of judging others around others. The caution of judging others around others.

[36 : 40] On the surface, verse 6 seems hard to understand. It's like Jesus went into fortune cookie mode again, right? He's just like, and don't play with dogs.

And don't throw your pearls to pigs. Well, I wasn't planning on it. It's like, I don't know what Jesus means here at all. What does he mean by don't put what is holy before the dogs?

Well, first, let's step back and understand our world versus the ancient world. In our world, when we think of dogs, we think of pets. We think of, you know, cuddly dogs that are ten times better than cats.

Amen. And all God's people said amen because that's in the Bible. Dogs are sweet and cuddly and they're man's best friend and whatever. That is not how dogs were known in the ancient world.

Dogs were very vicious, pat animals. In fact, if you've ever been to a third world country, this is more of the image of dogs that just roam around. They're looking for something to eat.

[37 : 36] They're wanting to attack something. This isn't, you know, Fido. This isn't a little lap pet. These are vicious animals. The same thing with pigs. When you think of pigs, you think of cute little piggy that goes oink oink.

Or maybe you think bacon. Or whatever it is that you think of when you see that. That's not the ancient world. In the ancient world, pigs were things that would devour.

I mean, they still are for that matter. They would devour whatever it is that you would give them.

These were vicious animals. In other words, get the way you think about dogs and pigs out of your mind and get into the ancient world of thinking about these are two metaphors, examples of groups that can't wait for you to throw them some meat.

Can't wait for you to give them fresh meat to devour. So what is Jesus saying? He's saying this.

When he says, do not give to dogs what is holy, he's warning you, I hope you're listening, that you not only not judge others for yourself, but that you don't judge people publicly and cause even more

harm.

After all, Jesus has been teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that you're to love your neighbor and your enemy. That's what's new of the kingdom.

[38 : 55] So here's the point. As if it wasn't bad enough that you judged them, you went and threw their judgment to the hounds and caused more damage. It wasn't enough that you judged them.

You had to put it on Facebook. You had to let the world judge them. You had to send out the email. You had to tell everybody in the office, listen, that's not how God's people treat people.

This is not how it works in the kingdom. It may be how it works in the culture. It is not how it works in the kingdom. We do not throw image bearers of God as fresh meat for the hounds.

It isn't enough that you don't judge, but it's also that you don't judge before others.

Jesus here is saying something very important for us as followers of Jesus Christ living in an age of rage.

[39 : 59] Here it is. This is your opportunity to shine. This is your opportunity to be very different than the world.

So what is Matthew 7, 1 through 6? Here's my paragraph summary. It's this. First, don't judge others. That is, do not cast a final verdict of condemnation on people.

Why? Because you're not God and you don't know the entire story. And after all, if you call yourself a Christian, you already know that the measurement of judgment isn't works, it's grace.

So spend a little more time exercising poverty of spirit and not public sentencing by realizing the plank you carry around. And finally, don't make your judging worse by using image bearers of God as fresh meats for the dogs.

That heart condition has no place in the kingdom. That's Matthew 7, 1 through 6. So what's some application as we leave?

[41 : 03] I'll give just four quick application points and we're done. Number one is a social application. As I mentioned, Faith Family, we live in an age of rage, do we not? Amen. Are you kidding?

Like, our world, our world, just, amen, amen. Our world can't wait for fresh meat to cancel and destroy forever.

And my pastoral caution to me and all of us is avoid the trap of negativity and destruction. If there was ever an opportunity to be salt and light and shine bright in a world, it's this.

That's a social application of this. Number two is personal, a personal application. And here's what I mean by personal application. This isn't for somebody else. It's for you.

Because what some of you will do is you'll walk out and you'll be judgmental of judgmental people. I am so glad you heard that sermon, honey. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

[42 : 06] I'm pretty sure you're just doing the very thing we said don't do. Like, the point here is not to judge somebody else. It's to look at your own life. So my question is, what's the plank work that you need to do?

What's the heart work that you need to do? Take this personally, not upon someone else. Here's a third one I want to say quickly is generational. Because I see this all the time, particularly in the church.

If you're an older person, stop being judgmental of the younger generation. Don't spend the last years of your life being angry and bitter.

Those young people, they don't blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Stop it! Is that really what you want to be known for? Listen, I guarantee you, 70-year-old, you don't have a flipping clue what it's like to be 17-year-old in this culture.

Don't act like you do because you don't. So leave the judgment. And by the way, if you're 17, don't act like you've got a clue on how the world works. Those 70-year-olds, they're so out of date, blah, blah, blah.

[43 : 14] Stop it! What ought to happen? Here's what ought to happen. People look at faith family and they say, How in the world do 70-year-olds and 17-year-olds get together and worship?

They don't judge each other. They don't sit around, pull your pants up! Or whatever it is, right? I just came out. It's not in the manuscript. I had no plans. There you go.

But it's just like, you're not doing it the way... Stop. Stop. And what would it look like if the 70-year-old generation approached the 17-year-old generation with grace?

And what would it look like if the 17-year-old generation approached the 70-year-old generation with grace? I'll tell you what it would look like. The kingdom of God. Lastly, is missional. Missional. My point here is just to say, remember that our mission in the world is not to condemn it, but to save it. We quote John 3.16, rightly so.

[44 : 25] Let me give you John 3.17. Church, that's your mission.

Not to go around and condemn everybody, but to go around and help people get to a place where there's no condemnation in Christ Jesus. That's the mission God has given His people.

So be very careful. And very cautious. How you approach, treat, or assess other people.

Let me remind you that 2,000 years ago, there was a man that everybody was absolutely certain was a blasphemer. They were convinced he was a heretic to the Jewish faith.

And they were so enraged by him that they took their swords and plunged it into his side. And as he laid there, crucified to a cross, covered in blood, some of them began to realize that he had not come to harm the world.

[45 : 37] He had come to save the world. And three days later, the world was taught a valuable lesson. One I hope you learned tonight.

And it's this. The world doesn't get the final verdict. God does. So let's leave the final judgment to God.

And let's instead focus on the mission of God. A mission that isn't out to condemn the world, but save it. And God's people said, Amen.

God, help us tonight. Help us. Yet not I, but Christ in me is the only way we're living this verse out. I pray that you'd convict us and challenge us as to what it means to belong to this kingdom that looks different than the culture.

And not just the culture, but even churches. Like help us, God, be the fragrance of the gospel as we are aware of our own poverty of spirit.

[46 : 53] To the point that we're merciful. We forgive others as we've been forgiven. And we judge not. Because we wouldn't want that measurement judged on us.

This is the kingdom of God. Help us taste it. See it. And by your strength and help, live it. In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.