

Trinity IV

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[0 : 0 0] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen. Please be seated. All of us here today have experienced times when we've judged someone else for doing something that we don't think is right.

Rather than taking an opportunity to offer someone mercy, we would much rather judge someone and harshly reproach them for stepping on our boundaries. We often think that if we are offended, it is someone else who is in the wrong, and they need to know about it.

If you don't believe me, think about the thoughts in your mind and the words that come out of your mouth the next time you're on a busy highway. It's easy to judge other people, and that's the truth.

And this is the case especially for us, who are held to a standard given to us by God in the Holy Scriptures. We can look around at the things happening in our society, such as the violence that happens to unborn children, the attempt to modify or to change the bodies that were given to men and women by God, and the irreverent mocking of God through the manifold idols that are worshipped by our culture.

[1 : 1 8] These things are wrong, and we feel vindicated when we judge those who are doing such things. We feel as if it is our responsibility to condemn those around us who are not living rightly.

And there is a time to exercise judgment against evil. Our Lord is not calling us to turn a blind eye to the horrible things that happen in the world.

It would be cruel to suggest that we shouldn't care about justice and truth. Jesus certainly cared about those things when he drove people out of the temple with a whip and turned over the money tables of the businessmen.

He told them that they were making the temple a den of thieves when it was supposed to be a house of prayer for all nations. We also should stand for the truth.

But when judging other people for their wrongdoing becomes the sole thing in our minds, we will become guilty of taking the speck out of our brother's eye and not seeing the plank in our own.

[2 : 1 9] A helpful antidote to this tendency that we all have comes straight from our gospel text. Be merciful, just as your father is also merciful.

Before we seek to judge others, we should remember that we are recipients of grace first. We received grace because without it, we would have not been forgiven. All of us have gone astray in thought, word, and deed.

Our father is merciful and we know that we are made righteous and just because of who he is. He is the one who sustains us in our weakness.

We do not pull ourselves up by our own moral bootstraps. We are dependent creatures, creatures that have come from the dust. But God is still mindful of us, even though he is so much greater.

When we consider ourselves that we offend God like everybody else and have still been forgiven by him, we are moved to have compassion on others, especially those who we don't think deserve it.

[3 : 25] When we feel the need to rashly judge the actions of someone else, we should first consider ourselves. Have I been guilty of offending God or others around me? If the answer is yes, then we must judge ourselves instead.

A great monk of the faith has made this comment about us judging. Turn thy eyes back upon thyself and see thou judge not the doings of others.

In judging others, a man labors in vain, often errs and easily sins. But in judging and looking into himself, he always labors with fruit.

We frequently judge a thing according as we have it at heart, for we easily lose true judgment through a private affection. If God were always the only object of our desire, we would not so easily be disturbed at the resistance of our opinions.

Judging others easily leads to sin. So we should not seek to judge others. Instead, we should focus upon making God our deepest affection and desire.

[4 : 36] When we make God our deepest affection and desire, we will also be able to practice the teachings of our Lord without seeking to judge or condemn. Judge not, and you shall not be judged.

Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given unto you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be put into your bosom.

For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. Our Lord is good, and he will provide us with the strength, virtue, and holiness, if we honor his commands.

Be merciful, as our Father in heaven is also merciful. At the final judgment, we will not be asked whether we judged or condemned specific people. We will not be asked how many comments we made on social media against the progressive culture warriors of the day.

We will not be asked how often we convinced other people of our own specific beliefs. What we will be asked is if we were compassionate and merciful towards those who are needy, to those who wronged us, and to those who we don't think deserved it.

[5 : 50] Christ was compassionate towards those who were needy, who wronged him, and to those who truly didn't deserve it. Let us put away our habits of judgment and condemnation, and become like Christ.

Let us not be known for being spiteful, but for being merciful and compassionate to all people. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.