

Man as Judge

Man as Imago Dei – Part Three

1 Corinthians 11:27-34; 5:1-13

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I. Man as Imago Dei

Jesus, out of love for His Father and His image bearers, took on our humanity, died and rose from the dead that He might rescue and redeem us, that He might transform us from *covenant breakers* into *covenant keepers*. In order to accomplish this, one of the things that Jesus teaches us to do is to learn to _____ righteously, to “*judge with righteous judgment*” (Jn 7:24). Man as the image of God acts as a _____; this is part of our glory as human beings and one of the ways we image God (Ps 75:7; 82:2).

II. Judging Ourselves Lest We Be Judged (1 Cor 11:27-34a cf. Mt 7:1-5)

When God created Adam, God endowed him with the ability to judge right from wrong. If Adam would *judge rightly*, then he would avoid God’s judgment. If he *judged wrongly*, then he would face God’s judgment. The same is true of us. Recall what Paul wrote to the Corinthians who were mistreating some of their brethren at the Lord’s Supper:

²⁷Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. ³⁰For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. ³³Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment... (1 Cor 11:27–34a)

Note that the Corinthians were failing to _____ righteously. When they *came together to eat*, they were refusing to *wait for one another* (33 cf. 11:21). Rather, they were *eating and drinking in an unworthy manner* (27). *For this reason*, many of them were suffering, and some had even died (30). They were failing to *judge themselves*; consequently, *God was judging them* (32). So what does it mean to *judge ourselves*? First and foremost, it means that we are to engage in personal judgment.

¹“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. (Matthew 7:1–5)

We are to judge others *according to the judgment we ourselves wish to have measured back to us*. So we must be ever humble, praying, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Ps 139:23-24)?

III. Ecclesiastical Judgments

But there are other senses in which we are to *judge ourselves*. Our Lord Jesus teaches in Matthew 18 that if there are members of the flock who fail to judge themselves, who live in unrepentant sin, then the church (acting through her elders) is to _____ / discipline that person. Paul applies our Lord’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 5:

¹It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! ²And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. ¹²For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? ¹³But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.” (1 Cor 5:1–13)

Paul contrasts the way the Corinthians *have responded* to this situation, with the way they *ought to have responded*. They have been *puffed up, proud* (1); they should have *mourned* and *judged* this man (2-3). Our responsibility is not to _____ *those outside the Church* (13) but *those inside* (12). When someone names the name of Christ and refuses to depart from iniquity, they are to be disciplined. If the church _____ *faithfully*, then she will avoid God’s judgment; if she *judges unrighteously*, she invites God’s judgment. The WCF teaches:

30.3 – Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offences, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

IV. The Process of Ecclesiastical Judgments (Mt 18:15-18)

If this is the case, then the Church needs to exercise such judgments wisely and rightly. As we learn to do so, we will image God more fully. The WCF explains the basic process:

30.4 – For the better attaining of these ends [of church censures], the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

The basic procedure is threefold: *admonition, suspension, excommunication*. As our Lord teaches:

¹⁵“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. ¹⁸“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:15–18)

A. Admonition (cf. 1 Thes 5:12; Mt 18:15)

B. Suspension (1 Cor 5:8, 11 cf. Mt 18:16-17a; 2 Thes 3:13-15)

¹³But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (2 Thes 3:13-15)

C. Excommunication (1 Cor 5:4-5; Mt 18:17b-20)

V. Conclusion