

# CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

## Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn\*

for the

Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity

-WEDNESDAY-

*Judge not!* – Matthew 7:1a

To judge is to form a judgment or an opinion of someone or something. Here in Matthew 7, Jesus instructed us **not** to judge, **not** to keep on judging. In John 7, Jesus instructed us concerning both **forbidden judgment** and **commanded judgment** when He said to His unbelieving enemies who had just falsely accused Him of having a devil: *“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment”* (v. 24). Is Jesus contradicting Himself in this verse? Absolutely not! He is warning His enemies and us not to judge falsely by forming a judgment or an opinion strictly by appearance, by the way **we** see a person or a situation **without** facts, **without** the truth. When Jesus spoke the above words, *“Judge not,”* to His disciples” (Matthew 5:1b), He added the following timely instruction: *“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete [measure], it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote [sliver] that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Of how wilt thou say to thy brother, ‘Let me pull out the mote of thine eye and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?’ Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye”* (vv. 1-5). A few verses later in this 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew Jesus gives this changeless counsel: *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”* (v. 12). Do we want others to judge us falsely, without knowing the facts and the truth about us or about our situation in life? Oh, no! Then we should strive, with God’s help, to avoid judging others falsely, without knowing the facts and the truth about them and their situation in life. God’s commandment is clearly set forth for us in Exodus 20: *“Thou shalt not bear **false** witness against thy neighbor”* (v. 16). Does this mean that we are **never** to judge a person or a situation? Oh, no! When necessary, we are *“to judge righteous judgment”* (John 7:24), using the Word of God, *“It is written”* (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10), as our *“lamp”* and *“light”* (Psalm 119:105) in our judging, so that the judging is really God’s judging, with His Word, and we serve only as the mouthpiece for such true, proper, and God-pleasing judging. Jesus teaches us such right judging in Luke 17: *“If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him [rightly judging him with the Law of God]; and if he repent, forgive him [rightly comforting him with the Gospel of Christ]”* (v. 3), *“even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven [us]”* (Ephesians 4:32b).

**PRAYER** – Oh my gracious God, help me more and more to avoid false judging and to carry out right judgment on the basis of Thy Word of truth, Comfort me with Thy full forgiveness in Christ Jesus for the times when I have falsely judged a person or a situation. Amen.

**Scripture Reading for Wednesday: Hebrews 12:5-11      Theme this week: Cross and Comfort**

\* Adapted and revised from original publication

