

## THINE OWN EYE

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There are many court shows on television. *Divorce Court*, *The People's Court*, *Judge Judy*. *Judge Judy* is one of the most popular shows on television, and recently began its twenty-third season. People like court shows. They like to watch the plaintiff make his case and the defendant make his defense. Most of all, they like to watch the judge render his verdict. People like these shows because they have a strong sense of justice. They like to see wrongs righted and justice served. There is another kind of show that is more like a lynch mob: the so-called "tabloid talk show," shows like *Geraldo*, *Maury*, and *The Jerry Springer Show*. Five months ago, the Jerry Springer show came to an end after twenty-seven seasons. Some people like court shows for the same reason they like "tabloid talk shows:" they like to sit in judgement of people, and to feel superior to them. They should not be this way, however.

Jesus said:

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out 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. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Of all the things that Jesus taught, this may be the most abused. He did not forbid all judging one of another. In fact, He commanded Christians to judge each other sins. He taught that if one Christian sins against another, then the one offended must tell the one who offended him. If the offender will not, in the end, repent, then the Church must excommunicate him. (Matthew 18:15-20) Saint Paul, following the teaching of Jesus, told the Corinthians that they ought to sit in judgment of their brother who had taken his father's wife, and to expel him because he would not repent. (1 Corinthians 5) Jesus commanded Christians to judge each other for their sins. However, He was concerned with the attitude of the one judging. He said that one should not judge hypocritically. That is to say, one should not condemn in others what he does not condemn in himself. He should not criticize a brother for sinning, while pretending to be something he is not. So, Jesus was concerned, not with actions merely, but with the heart. Moreover, Jesus disapproved of those who would judge censoriously, that is to say, severely and uncharitably. The Pharisees were the greatest hypocrites. They were proud of themselves, and they loved to sit in judgment of others. They were eager to cast stones at sinners, as they were with the woman caught in adultery. (John 8:1-11) They sanctimoniously condemned, for example, Jesus's disciples for not washing their hands in keeping with the tradition of the elders. Yet, they violated the commandments of God for the sake of their traditions. They honored God with what they said, but they dishonored Him in their hearts. They made a great show of religious forms, but they were murderous and covetous. Jesus said to them, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. *Ye* blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a

camel.” (Matthew 23:23, 24) He warned the people of the Pharisees’ hypocrisy. He said, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.” (Luke 12:2, 3) The Pharisees may have hidden their black hearts from the people, but they could not hide them from God. “For *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) The Jews in general were no different from the Pharisees. They fancied themselves as the people of God, and as an example to the heathen. Yet, they were in fact the worst sorts of sinners. Their pride and hypocrisy was so great that the heathen did not praise God because of them; rather, they blasphemed Him. Saint Paul wrote to the Romans, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” (Romans 2:1)

Even the best men are fallible judges. They sometimes make mistakes, and they sometimes judge unjustly. There is one who is an infallible judge, and who always judges justly: the Lord Jesus Christ. His judgment is just because He always judges according to the will of God, and not according to His own will. He said, “My judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:30) God sent His Son into the world for this very reason. Jesus said, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.” (John 9:39) One day, all will be made manifest. The secrets of men’s hearts will be revealed. All men will be judged, Saint Paul wrote to the Romans, “in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” (Romans 2:16)

Let everyone first judge themselves, before they judge another. Let us judge one another with wisdom and mercy. Let us leave final judgment to the one God has appointed judge of all, the Lord Jesus.

Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. *Amen.*