

Is God Tolerant or Judgmental?

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***Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." John chapter 14 verse 9 (823)
Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you.... Romans chapter 15 verse 7 (868)***

Scene #1

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: "I thank You, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give You a tenth of my income." Luke chapter 18 verses 10-12 (800)

But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, "O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner."

Luke chapter 18 verse 13 (800)

Then Jesus said, "I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Luke chapter 18 verse 14 (800)

Lessons learned from scene #1

- God hates pride
- Pride blinds you to your own faults
- Pride makes you believe you're better than others
- Pride blinds you to your need of God in every area of your life
- God has no patience for proud people, especially people filled with religious pride!

Scene #2

As Jesus was teaching, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do You say?"

John chapter 8 verses 3-5 (816)

Some observations...

- This married woman was caught with another man
- She's guilty of adultery & doesn't deny it
- This woman was set-up by the religious types (*where's the guy??*)
- Religious law said she was to be stoned. If Jesus went along with this, he would be viewed as all the other religious leaders...no grace, no love, no hope
- If Jesus let this woman go, he would be guilty of breaking the religious law
- This woman was simply a pawn, being used to get Jesus. Nobody really cared about her

They were trying to trap Him into saying something they could use against Him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with His finger. John chapter 8 verse 6 (816)

They kept demanding an answer, so He stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" Then He stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

John chapter 8 verses 7 - 8 (816)

When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. John chapter 8 verse 9 (816)

Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”
John chapter 8 verses 10 -11 (816)

Lessons learned from scene #2

- God loves it when I show true repentance & humility for my sin
- God loves to extend forgiveness, because it gives me the ability to start off in a different direction
- The crowd wanted to condemn her, but couldn’t
- Jesus, the only one qualified to condemn her, didn’t
- This scene really helps me understand what it means to accept each other as Christ accepts us

Scene #3

A certain landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country.
Matthew chapter 21 verse 33 (752)

At the time of the grape harvest, he sent his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers grabbed his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. *Matthew chapter 21 verses 34 - 35 (752)*

So the landowner sent a larger group of his servants to collect for him, but the results were the same.
Matthew chapter 21 verse 36 (752)

Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, “Surely they will respect my son.” But when the tenant farmers saw his son coming, they said to one another, “Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!” So they grabbed him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. *Matthew chapter 21 verses 37 - 39 (752)*

“When the owner of the vineyard returns,” Jesus asked, “what do you think he will do to those farmers?”
Matthew chapter 21 verse 40 (752)

The religious leaders replied, “He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest.” *Matthew chapter 21 verse 41 (752)*

For a day of anger is coming, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. He will judge everyone according to what they have done. *Romans chapter 2 verses 5 & 6 (858)*

Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that His kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?
Romans chapter 2 verse 4 (858)

This talk is based on a talk by the same name first taught at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., by Gene Apple, one of their teaching pastors. Bill Hybels is the Sr. Pastor of this dynamic church that God is using to challenge tens-of-thousands of churches around the world, including Bethel. You can visit Willow Creek at www.WillowCreek.org