

# **ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**

## **Topical Bulletin, June 2023**

This month's subject for consideration will prove useful in clarifying what are proper Christian views and practices concerning judging. Our topic is: **right and wrong judging**.

As usual, the Holy Bible will be our source for absolutely true and authoritative information, showing us there are indeed right and wrong types of judging.

**"If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7:23-24)**

**"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour."  
(Leviticus 19:15)**

**"Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." (Deuteronomy 32:3-4)**

*Comment: Observe there is right judging: that judging which is in full accord with God's Word, for the Lord is the great God of truth who is always just and right. On the other hand, there is wrong judging: that judging which sinful human beings do in accord with their own thoughts and opinions, frequently based on mere appearances and favoritism toward people who possess worldly wealth and titles, or those who do not.*

**"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:15-23)**

*Comment: Note well that the Lord Jesus instructs us Christians to judge prophets – preachers – by their fruits. The main fruit of preachers is what they preach and teach. Therefore, we are to compare what is preached and taught with what God's Word – the Holy Bible – says, to make sure the correct and proper message is being proclaimed and imparted. Sadly, there are folks who simply smear Jesus' name on whatever they choose to say, even when they speak contrary to God's Word; such preachers are to be judged unfaithful and are to be rejected, for it is written: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak*

not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20) “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:11)

*Let us never forget that we Christians today are to be like those in Berea of old, for, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11) Yes, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1) Indeed, we are to judge preachers righteously in accord with God’s Word.*

**“Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” (Deuteronomy 16:18-20)**

**“If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.” (Deuteronomy 25:1)**

**“And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.” (Ezekiel 44:24)**

**“When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.” (Luke 12:58)**

*Comment: Notice that civil authorities of the past had, and of the present have, the duty to judge; but, they were, and are, to judge righteously in accord with God’s Word— not according to their own whims and opinions, nor are they to accept bribes, or twist and pervert the facts.*

**“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)**

**“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but**

perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." (Luke 6:37-42)

*Comment: Note well that Jesus forbids double-standard hypocritical judging of one's fellow human beings. We are not to judge and condemn others while committing the same sins they commit. We are to clean up our own act by striving to live in full accord with God's Word, honestly confessing to the Lord as did the Psalmist: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105)*

**"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."** (John 8:1-11)

*Comment: Observe the example of wrong judging being done by the scribes and Pharisees in the case with the woman taken in adultery. Consider all that Moses said in the Law: "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 20:10) The scribes and Pharisees judged the woman and wanted to kill her; but, where was the man who had been with her? The adulterer – the man – was just as guilty as the woman, but the scribes and Pharisees did not bring him to Jesus. Additionally, the Pharisees were themselves sinners, possibly lusting after that very woman while condemning her. The scribes and Pharisees were not the civil authorities at that time and place, for they were actually under Roman governmental rule. Furthermore, it was ultimately God's business to judge the woman and the man, for Holy Writ clearly states: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."* (Hebrews 13:4)

**"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. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto**

them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.” (Romans 2:1-11)

*Comment: Again, hypocritical judging is forbidden to all sinful human beings – which we ALL are – “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20) God does not play favorites. God will do the judging!*

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” (Romans 14:1-15)

*Comment: Judging others by ones own opinions and free choices is forbidden. Better it is for all of us to be loving toward others; and, to remember that we will all one day stand before the Lord to be judged by Him, for He is Ruler of all!*

Excellent advice and commands follow.

“These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.” (Proverbs 24:23-25)

“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every

man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:3-7)

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4:11-12)

*Comment: We are not to play favorites, nor are we to lie and call evil good and good evil. Wickedness is to be rebuked, not approved of. However, we must remember that God's Word determines what is actually good and what is actually evil. We must be careful not to play a big-shot judge, when the fact is that **THE LORD GOD IS THE HIGHEST JUDGE WHOM WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE!** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)*

God grant we keep the afore considered Scriptural facts in mind, that we only practice righteous judgment, when and where it is our place to do so in accord with God's Holy Word.

m.e.l.