

Who Am I To Judge?

continued

God's Verdict on Sexual Immorality

In Leviticus 18, God specifies a number of sexual practices that are immoral. Verses 1-18 lists all the forbidden familial relationships: sexual intimacy with parents, siblings, grandchildren, aunts and uncles, in-laws, and other close relatives. All these are sins. They are rebellious acts against our Creator and Judge. We have no authority to change these judgments, and nowhere in the New Testament is there any suggestion that God changed his mind about these practices. In 1 Corinthians 5:1, Paul mentions the specific sinful act of "a man sleeping with his father's wife" and in 6:18 he emphasizes, "Flee from all sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body." Clearly, God had not changed his mind about the prohibitions listed in Leviticus 18 when he inspired Paul to write a letter to the Corinthian Christians in the first century. God has not changed his mind to accommodate sexual immorality among twenty-first century Christians either.

God's Verdict on Same-Sex Relationships

Included in the list of immoral practices recorded in Leviticus 18 are sexual relationships between members of the same sex: "Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable" (v. 18). God's censure of same-sex sexual intimacy is clear in the New Testament too. Romans 1:26-27 says, "God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another." The words natural and unnatural refer to God's created design and order. Therefore, engaging in unnatural same-sex sexual relationships is rebellion against God.

Speak the Truth

It is not my place to judge others. But if I care about their relationship with God, I will tell them the truth about God's love for them and about his verdict on sin—not just the sins I condemn but all the sins he condemns. I'm not helping anyone grow in their relationship with God by withholding the truth about sin. The loving response is to speak the truth: "Therefore, rejecting all falsehood [whether lying, defrauding, telling half-truths, spreading rumors, any such as these], speak truth each one with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:15 AMP). God will give us the grace and wisdom to do so if we ask him.

Familiarity Breeds Contempt

continued

Christians that love the Lord and are watchful in prayer today know that we are long overdue in this nation for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as in the book of Acts! I truly believe this is why the teachings on the "Fear of the Lord" in many venues of the Church are becoming more and more widespread. It is the call of God Himself getting His Body ready to be fiery lovers of righteousness, deeply in love with Jesus, and bold as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah Himself. I believe we are living in the times we will see the church in unity of purpose, glorifying God. Remember Jesus prayed that "we would all be one as He and the Father are one." God will answer that prayer and the prayers of the Body of Christ.

I close with this verse from Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 "¹³When all has been heard, the end of the matter is: fear God [worship Him with awe-filled reverence, knowing that He is almighty God] and keep His commandments, for this applies to every person. ¹⁴For God will bring every act to judgment, every hidden and secret thing, whether it is good or evil."



A Word for the Body

A deep Reverence
A deeper "Fear of Me"
Always in the back of your mind
This alone will urge
You on, to heights in Me,
You'll no other way, find.
So search Me out, says God,
Pursue, Pursue,
Pursue, yes, chase
After Me, as I've done to you
And you will find
Encounters, New
Visitations that will make you shine
With experiences in Me
Even too Holy to share.
But your heart will be
Ever in awe of Me
Ever knowing My gracious care.
THE HOLY GOD/pd

Jesus spoke always came to pass, for he told his servants to just tell Jesus to "say the word, and my servant will be healed." This was a Roman centurion, someone the Jews normally hated, but he had befriended some of them by constructing a synagogue for them. He was not one of God's chosen people. Yet, he had so much faith in Jesus' spoken words, he knew his servant would be healed by those words. This moved Jesus to say, "I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" Jesus doesn't care what walk of life you come from. He is not about religion but relationship. He will extend His heart of healing love and mercy to anyone who is willing to receive and embrace it, as this centurion soon discovered

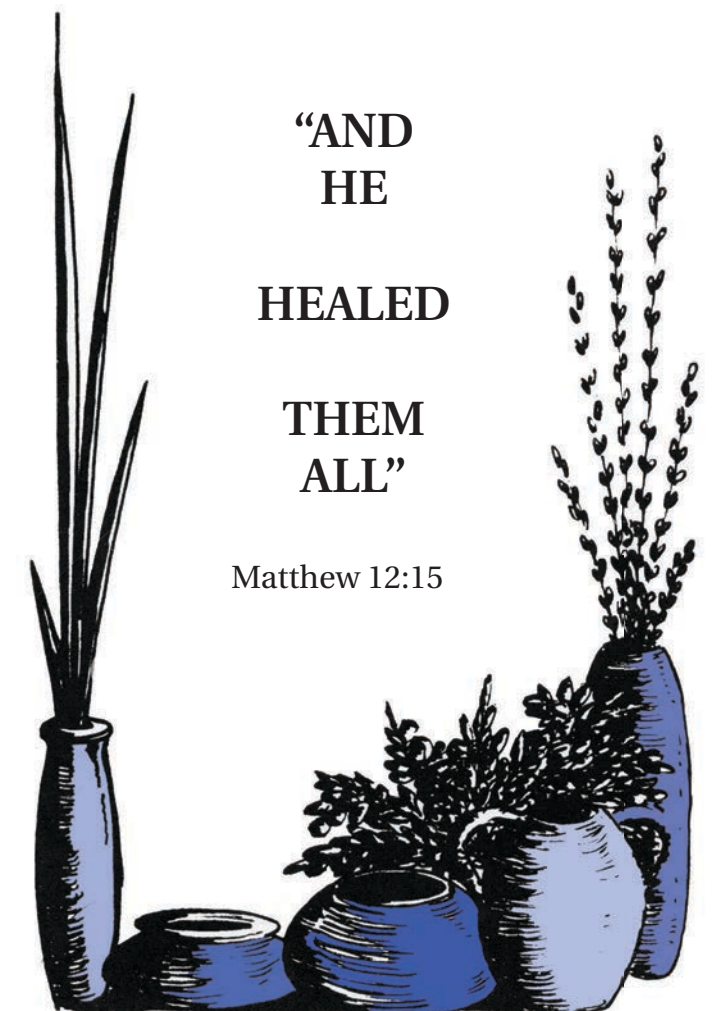
In Mark 3:1-6 Jesus heals a man with a withered (faded, dry, and shrunk) hand; and, He did this on no less than the Sabbath. Remember, according to the religious Jews, you weren't supposed to do ANYTHING on the Sabbath. Modern Judaism has specified 39 categories of prohibited work on the Sabbath. I'm sure there were just as many, if not more, in the time of Jesus. Jesus called them on the carpet for their foolish misrepresentation of His Word by asking them if it was permissible to "save a life" on the Sabbath. Their hearts being hardened, they refused to answer Jesus. Did you notice in this story that the sick person was in church and was not being ministered to by any of the leaders until Jesus showed up on the scene. Religious laws, fear, unbelief — pick your poison — kept this man from being ministered to right then and there by the religious leadership. The man obviously need help but was so stifled by the church that he didn't ask for help — in the church. This didn't phase Jesus in the least. He saw the need for ministry and ministered to the man. Once again, Jesus gave instructions to man, who, in spite of the animosity surrounding him, obeys Jesus' instructions. Whether he stepped out in faith or fear is of no matter. He obeyed Jesus and was instantly made whole. This only angered the religious leaders more. My friend, when you obey Jesus, it is just liable to infuriate some leaders who refuse to do what Jesus did.

In Matthew 15:21-28 Jesus heals a gentile woman's demon-possessed daughter. As I was reading this healing/deliverance account of Jesus, I was amazed at how many people Jesus ministered to who were not religious or who were gentile idol worshippers — as was the case with the Canaanite woman. The immensity of God's heart of love is quite beyond comprehension. All He is looking for are hearts that are crying out to Him, surrendering to Him. Such actions move the heart of God like none other. These types of hearts not only get the attention of God, but — in this particular instance — even changed the mission and calling of Jesus. Jesus' mission and calling to the Jewish people did not phase this desperate woman. All she knew was this was someone who

could help her demon possessed daughter. She was not about to let this encounter with Jesus pass her by no matter how little He was willing to minister to her. Jesus was so impressed with her tenacity that He remarked: "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. You have got to love Jesus' method of ministry. No lengthy prayers, pleadings, groanings, or commands — just the simple words, "Let it be to you as you desire." When you meet with Jesus, as this Canaanite woman did, ALL that the Kingdom of Heaven has to offer is available.

In Matthew 9:27-30 Jesus encounters two blind men who did not seem to adhere to the principal of asking once and then thanking for the results. They repeatedly cried out to Jesus, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" Only Jesus knows how many times they echoed those words in His ears. But, you know, it didn't seem to bother Jesus. When Jesus finally stopped to talk to them, they only thing He asked was, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Jesus is still asking the same thing today; but, not only is He able to do it, but WILL He do it? Praise God, they came up with the right answer, "YES!" It is a good lesson for us. We need to be able to answer YES to

(Continued on page 5)



**"AND
HE
HEALED
THEM
ALL"**

Matthew 12:15