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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

The Kindest Possible Way ~ November 19, 2016

Jesus teaches us how to judge others carefully and lovingly.

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Do you take a person's words and actions in the kindest possible way? That's how God wants us Christians to judge others.

I've heard many people say that Christians are not supposed to judge others. Yes, this is true, if by judging we mean a hypocritical judging that holds others to higher standards than we hold ourselves, which often happens when we tear others down in order to elevate ourselves. That is the type of judging Jesus forbids when he says, **"Do not judge, or you too will be judged"** (Matthew 7:1).

But Jesus is not forbidding all judging. In fact, without taking a breath, Jesus immediately continues to say, **"For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you"** (Matthew 7:2).

Many people have only heard the first part of what Jesus said, and not his whole teaching. If this is new to you, keep reading further into Matthew chapter 7. For example, Jesus teaches in verse 6: **"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs."** The Master Teacher uses strong illustrations to show us that it's useless to share the sacred pearls of the gospel in circumstances when the gospel is being trampled into the mud of mockery. And this begs the question: *how do we follow Jesus' words if we can't judge which people are dogs and pigs?*

So the question is not about whether we Christians are given authority to judge, we are. The question is about how to judge properly, with a Christ-like attitude. And that's where Dr. Luther, in his Small Catechism, summarized the scriptures in his famously succinct way: "We should fear and love God that we... take another's words and actions in the kindest possible way." Which is what Eric Gaines needed to do, and did do.

Officer Gaines, of Baltimore, was on patrol in his usual area when he saw a group of teenagers passing a homeless man lying on the sidewalk. One from the group, a boy about 16-years-old, approached the homeless man while the rest of the pack kept walking toward a bus stop. Officer Gaines is doing his job of protecting the community when he's aware and alert, which is why he took notice of the developing situation.

"I originally thought he was patting him down to steal something and so I was ready to jump into action," explained Officer Gaines. "But once I saw him bow his head, I realized what was actually going on," he added, which also explains why Officer Gaines quickly snapped a photo. The teen...

got down on his knees and started praying for about five minutes. "I couldn't believe what was going on in front of me," Gaines said. "I've never seen something so powerful before." When the bus arrived, his friends tried to get his attention, but he wasn't stopping until he got through the prayer. Luckily for him, the bus waited for him to finish for about 25 seconds. "I wanted to tell him how moving that moment was for me, but he vanished before I had a chance to go over to him," Gaines said.



I can almost hear Jesus saying from heaven to Officer Gaines, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." And even more, what would Jesus be saying about the teen? How many of us would have hurried by the homeless man, perhaps wrongly judging him to be unworthy of our interaction?

If we take the teen's words and actions in the kindest possible way, we'll be led to thank Jesus for using that teen to be the light Christ shining into this dark world. And we'll be strengthened by his example to "take words and actions in the kindest possible way."

And for all the times we've failed to take words and actions in the kindest possible way, with repentant hearts let us confess this to Jesus, who assures us that our sins were paid in full at the cross. Restored in his forgiveness, then let us joyfully seek to change whatever needs to be changed, so that we judge like Officer Gaines and that teenager did, who have learned well from Jesus.

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)
[Police Officer Shares Powerful Photo](#) @ Today.com

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

