

26 August 2012

Christ came not to condemn - (Pt 3) of Condemn

This is our third study on the word *condemn* in the Holy Scriptures. In our previous teaching we covered four points:-

1. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world not to *condemn*
2. The lost are *condemned* by the preaching of righteousness
3. The lost are *condemned* because they love darkness more than light
4. Those who believe in Jesus are not *condemned*

In this teaching we will cover four additional points:-

1. When God corrects us He does so not to *condemn* us with the world
2. When a brother corrects us he does so not to *condemn* us
3. When we judge our brother we *condemn* ourselves
4. When we hold a grudge against our brother we *condemn* ourselves

Let us add a little more detail to each of our points:-

1. When God corrects us He does so not to *condemn* us with the world

1Cor 11:32, 34 *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world...And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

The Scriptures teach that God chastises those whom he loves. In the Old Testament the Lord used the analogy of a father and son, where in real life a man chastises his son, as does the Lord (see Deut.8: 5) His children. In the book of Job, Eliphaz suggests that a man should be happy when God corrects him (Job 5: 17) and David in Psalms points out that a man is blessed when the Lord chasteneth him (see Ps.94: 12). And in the New Testament we learn that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth (see Heb.12: 6).

When God chastises a believer He does so that he would not be *condemned* with the world (see 1Cor.11: 32) and we know that Paul is referring to the believer because the book of 1Corinthians is written to the church at Corinth and in chapter 11 verse 17 and 33 Paul sets the context as a church meeting, where he says "when ye come together", and the verses in between refer to the order surrounding the Lord's Supper. So when a believer receives the bread and wine unworthily he drinketh damnation to himself (see verse 29). We can apply this specific chastisement by God to any time we do something that is not pleasing to the Lord and he corrects us, that we be not *condemned* with the world.

What does the word *condemn* mean in our verse in 1Cor.11: 32?

According to the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and the Englishman's Greek Concordance the Greek work *katakrino* can also mean damned. But you maybe asking yourself, how can a saved man be damned, surely that is a contradiction of the verses that teaching we cannot loose our salvation (see Eph.1: 13, 4: 30 & 1Cor.5: 5)?

When a child disobey's his parents, the parents are encouraged to chasteneth the child because they love him. So regardless of what our society says, a parent cannot be a parent and not chastise their children (see Heb.12: 7). Perhaps with God, He shows his love to us when he chastises us, we are blessed when he chastises us, which occurs to every child of God (see Heb.12: 6). But also in chastening us He shows the world that we are not *condemned* with them (the lost, the heathen) because they are not chastened by the Lord during their lifetime on earth. The lost will be judged at the judgement and they will be sent to hell to pay for their sin, and as such are *condemned* to an eternity in the lake of fire (see Rev.20: 15). The Lord does not chasten them as he does the saved (see Heb.12: 8).

Think of when David was chastised by God. The Lord smote the child that was born unto the Uriah's wife (see 2Sam.12: 13, 15). Then you have Miriam who spoke out against Moses (see Numb.12: 1) and in view of all Israel the Lord chastened her and made her leprous (see 12: 10), until Moses besought the Lord for her to be clean and and they shut her out of the camp seven days, then she was clean. And so for David, Miriam and others in the Scriptures the chastisement of the Lord came as a physical rebuke a physical punishment and although we wouldn't expect the same today I know for me that when my pride was visible to all around me I went through something that showed me my haughtiness and looking back I see the Lord's chastisement. He caused me to go through things that were unpleasant to show me what I refused to look at.

Can you remember times when God has chastised you as a believer?

For me I know when I am being convicted of something because I get a gentle pain in my chest. The first time I remember it, I felt this slow pain come across my chest. I realized that it was the Lord convicting me in my heart of my sin. He was correcting me. And I am sure for each of us the experience of chastisement is different. But

whatever the Lord puts us through He does so, knowing that we can endure, and that we would not be *condemned* with the world.

Let us remember the times that God had shown us correction, when He has encouraged us to refrain from things that are not of Him, that we would glorify His name. During the times when the Lord corrects us, or convicts of our sin, He is reminding us that we are not *condemned* with the heathen, who sins without repentance.

2. When a brother corrects us he does so not to *condemn* us

2Cor 7:3 *I speak not [this] to condemn [you]: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with [you].*

The preceding chapter is about a believer separating himself from the heathen, that he would not touch the unclean (see verse 17). Then the start of our chapter begins with “therefore”, let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh...and then in verse 3, I say this not to *condemn* you, then in verse 8, For though I made you sorry with a letter...verse 9 for ye were sorrowed to repentance. So the purpose of Paul correcting his brethren was not to *condemn* them, not to judge them, but that they would separate themselves from the evil and be sorrowed to repentance (see also 2Cor.12: 21). This has been the case for others in the Scriptures, that have taken the time to bring a matter to another believer, they have done so not to *condemn* them, but that they would be sorry and repent of their sin. After David had laid with Bath-sheba and commanded her husband be put in the front line of battle such that he was killed, then made her his wife, the Lord sent Nathan to speak with him (see 2Sam.12: 1). Nathan shared an account of a rich man who had exceeding many flocks and took a poor man's single lamb to dress it for a wayfaring man (see 2Sam.12: 1-5) and following the story David realised he was the rich man and that, he had displeased the Lord. Nathan did not share the story to *condemn* David, but to bring him to a point of sorrow and repentance which is what happened in verse 13 and also recorded for us in Ps.51. And the way Nathan told the story was an example for us today of showing charity to our brethren when we are called to bring a correction to him.

Is that your experience of how brothers have come to you when they have felt the burden of the Lord to share correction?

I know for some, the experience has been completely the opposite and they have been told to leave the church they were in and others have had a more charitable experience. Let us remember that when we are called by God to bring a correction to a brother we do so not to *condemn* him.

3. When we judge our brother we *condemn* ourselves

Rom 2:1 *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.*

Following on from our second point, if the correction we offer our brother is not spoken with charity, is not conveyed like Nathan did to David, or Jethro did to Moses, then such correction can be taken as judgement. Hence our words *condemn*, our words are judgmental and according to the Scriptures we are not to judge our brethren, we are not to pass judgment on what our brethren do (see Matt.7: 1, Rom.14: 13 and Jam.4: 11). To do so is a response of our flesh, a response of *condemnation* where we tell our brother of the mote in his eye whilst we have a beam in our own eye (Matt.7: 3-5 and Lk.6: 41, 42). In the examples from the gospels Jesus teaches his disciples that such men who spend their time judging the smallest things in their brothers whilst forgoing the big issues in themselves, they are hypocrites (see Matt.7: 5). Perhaps that is why Paul says that those who judge another actually *condemn* themselves when they do so.

Judging others has been a trade mark of my character that I have not been happy with since I realised the trait, 3 or 4 years ago. It had been second nature for me to criticize others, whether they be brethren, family, friends or acquaintances. When the Lord, in all his grace and mercy showed me the truth of the bible, that gave me more reasons to criticize my brethren who were not using the right Bible, it gave me more reasons to judge them and in doing so I was condemning myself. Most who criticize or put others down and thereby raising themselves up, generally take a fall. And its during the time of that fall where God in his all his mercy shows us the beam that is in our own eye, the sin in us which *condemns* us when we judge others.

So, how does a man offer correction without judging his brother?

We have the example of Nathan from our previous point, but what can we learn from his example as recorded for us in 2Sam.12, that will help us apply the example? It is all very well to read the Biblical account of Nathan with one

eye and with the other remain focused on the mote that is in our brother's eye. Every time our brother opens his mouth he shows how little he thinks, or how little he knows, so he needs someone like me to tell, him. Isn't that what happens when we are at work, or have too much on or we are tired?

It is for me, I am most powerful, most swift in criticising my brother when I am tired.

So let us first consider what Nathan *did not do* that we can apply in our own lives.

He did not criticise David by sharing or hinting that what he had done was wrong.

It would appear that he did not take a proud stance, a holy than thou stance when he spoke to David.

Now let us consider what we *can* say that he did do, that we can apply in our own lives and pass onto our children, that they, by the grace of God would not make the same mistake as we have.

He told a story, gave an example to David of a similar injustice where a wealthy man who had everything, took from a poor man who had little.

There appeared to be a sense of lowliness and patience in Nathan's approach.

Nathan did not join the dots from the illustration to David's sin, but rather he waited until David made the link himself, until David realized his sin, and his heart was heavy with guilt and he repented, and therefore when Nathan told the story even though he was correcting his brother, he did not pass judgment on him, which would have *condemned* him.

In addition Nathan appeared not to rush in because the Lord had sent him to David (see verse 1), so perhaps he had prayed about what the Lord wanted or simply waited on the Lord for direction. Hence it was unlikely that he was impulsive and running on his emotions.

Lastly, Nathan allowed the Holy Spirit of God to do the convicting, and not his words.

What else can we add from the experience of Nathan that is not evident from the passage, but has support from other Biblical doctrine?

We could encourage the other person, (just like Moses asked the people to encourage Joshua in Deut.1: 38) remembering how fragile the human spirit is, how we our selves respond when someone judges us. You watch the next time you criticize someone; their shoulders sink, any enthusiasm in their voice goes and they get discouraged. Such a response, is exactly what the devil wants. Satan is the only one that wants us to be feel discouraged, Satan is the only one that benefits when one brother judges another, because the one being judged gets discouraged and the other is *condemned* by his words. Is it any wonder there is so much scripture written on the 'tongue' - an unruly evil (see Jam.3: 8), when we so often use it to criticise or judge others.

Consider a child who is spoken to in a harsh tone; again, watch their shoulders and general body language. It will show you how damaging to the person words of judgment can be, where as the example of David was gentle, and the holy Spirit of God convicted him, more that what Nathan's harsh words could ever have done. And Nathan's story led David to repentance. But to share a story with such meaning as Nathan did, can only be done when we are walking in the Spirit of God and allowing the Holy Spirit of God to work in us (see Gal.5: 25).

Let us all ask the Lord for wisdom to share correction with a brother with charity and in love, and for help to judge our brethren less, lest we be *condemned*.

4. When we hold a grudge against our brother we *condemn* ourselves.

Jas 5:9 *Grudge not one against another; brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.*

Closely following on from our third point where we were encouraged *not* to judge our brother lest we be *condemned*, we now find that we are not to hold a grudge against our brother lest we *condemn* ourselves.

The commandment not to bear a grudge against our brethren was established by Moses as part of the Mosaic law (see Lev.19: 18). And is reiterated in the book of James in the New Testament. Given that our verse in James has the words "the judge standeth before the door" indicates that when we hold a grudge against our brother there will be judgment on us, as there is when we judge the mote in our brothers eye. When we consider the teaching of Christ, we see His instruction to be reconciled to our brother before we bring a gift to the altar (see Matt.5: 24) as perhaps pertaining to a grudge that we are to deal with before we bring our gift to God. We suggest from this verse that reconciliation with our brothers is more important than bringing out gifts to the Lord. There is a sense of this also in Matt.18: 15, where we are encouraged to go see a brother if he has trespassed against us, and tell him his fault and if he hears you, then you have gained a brother. In both examples if a person adopted the teaching they would not hold a grudge against their brother.

But what does it mean to hold a grudge against another person?

The on-line Oxford dictionary defines grudge when used as a noun ; “a persistent feeling of ill-will or resentment resulting from a past insult or injury”, and when used as a verb with object; “be resentfully unwilling to give or allow something.”

So when we hold a persistent feeling of ill-will toward a brother we are damned in hell. No, so *condemn* in this application cannot mean, we will be *condemned* to hell. But it could mean, reproved or censured by the Lord.

Let us prayer for our brethren that each would hold short accounts with their brother, as we would ourselves, that we would not hold a grudge against our brother in any way, for any reason, lest we *condemn* ourselves.

Having said what we have said, let us say again. In this our third study on the word *condemn* we have covered four points:-

1. When God corrects us He does so not to *condemn* us with the world
2. When a brother corrects us he does so not to *condemn* us
3. When we judge our brother we *condemn* ourselves
4. When we hold a grudge against our brother we *condemn* ourselves