

CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

Sermon 9- Charity Contrary to a Censorious Spirit

“Love...is not...resentful” 1 Cor. 13:5

Doctrine-“That a Christian spirit is contrary to a censorious spirit; or in other words, it is contrary to a disposition uncharitably to _____ others.”

“It (a censorious spirit) consists in a disposition to think _____ of others, or to judge ill of them with respect to three things, viz. of their state, of their qualities, and of their actions.”

1. **A censorious spirit will be quick to judge the state of the souls of others-** “That is, to pass a censure upon those who are professors of religion, and to condemn them as _____.”

“Persons are guilty of censoriousness in condemning others’ state when they will do it from things which are no evidence of their being in bad state. As when persons will condemn others as hypocrites because of God’s providential dealings with them...or when they condemn them for those failings which they see in them, which are no _____ than are often incident to God’s children; and may be no greater, or not so great, as their own, though they think well of their own state. Or when persons will condemn others as those who must needs be carnal men for differing from them in opinion on some points which are not fundamental.”

2. **A censorious spirit overlooks the good in others and only focuses on the negative-** “A censorious spirit appears in a disposition to judge ill of others’ qualities; to overlook their good qualities, and to think them destitute of them when they are not, or to make very little of them, or to _____ their ill qualities and make more of them than they are, or to charge them with those ill qualities which they are free.”

3. **A censorious spirit will be quick to judge the actions of others-** “A suspicious, jealous spirit, whereby persons are apt to be _____ of others, of their being guilty of such and such things when they have no evidence of it, is an uncharitable spirit, and contrary to Christianity.”

“Very commonly persons show a very uncharitable and censorious spirit with respect to others by being forward to take up bad reports of persons...when they hear that others have done or said so and so, they conclude it is so at once without further inquiry...some stand ready to catch at ill report. It seems _____ to them to hear something very ill reported of some other; they have a spirit which is greedy of it.”

“Another way in which a censorious spirit, with respect to men’s actions, discovers itself is in a disposition to put the worst construction on men’s actions...this is a kind of censoriousness and uncharitable judging as common or more common than any other. Thus it is very common with men, when prejudiced against others, to put bad construction on those actions or speeches of others which are seemingly good, as though they were performed in _____.”

Edwards then discusses how not all judging of others is wrong as in the case of judges in society and also for others when there is an actual cause to judge. He writes, “Christian charity is not a thing founded on the ruins of reason; for there is the most sweet harmony between Christianity and reason. And therefore we are not forbid to judge ill of persons when there is _____ and _____ evidence of their being chargeable with evil...and so some men’s actions give such clear evidence of the badness of their intentions that it is no judging the secrets of the heart to judge that their designs and ends are naught.”

However, we must be on guard and make sure that we do not find pleasure in judging ill of others. “Persons may judge ill of others from clear and plain evidence which constrains them to it, but it may be to their _____, that they are obliged to judge as they do...But very often judgement is passed against others in such a manner as savors of being well pleased in such a judgment...Such a well-pleaseness in judging ill of others is also manifested in being forward to declare their judgments, and to speak as well as think ill of others.”

This type of attitude that is resentful, keeps a record of wrongs, and wrongly judges others is contrary to a Christian spirit.

1. **This type of attitude is not in line with the command to love thy neighbor**

“We see that persons are very backward to judge ill of _____...and therefore if they loved their neighbor as themselves, love would have the same tendency with respect to them.”

“We see that persons are backward to judge ill of those whom they love...they are much more backward than others to take up ill reports of them, and slow in believing what is said against them. They are forward to put the most favorable construction on their actions, and the reason is because they _____ them.”

“We see also that it is universally so, that where _____ and ill spirit against others most prevail, there a censorious spirit does most prevail. We see that when persons fall out, and there is a difference between neighbors, and anger and prejudice arise, and an ill will contracted, there is a forwardness to judge the worst of their neighbors against whom they have a pique, and an aptness to think the worst of their qualifications...And very common there is a forwardness to think ill of their condition, to censure them as graceless persons.”

2. This type of attitude is simply a manifestation of pride

“A forwardness to judge and censure others shows a proud disposition, as though they were _____ from such faults and blemishes themselves with which they are busy and bitter in charging others, and for which they are censuring and condemning them.”

“There are the _____ heads of corruption in one man’s heart as another; and if those men who are most busy in censuring others would but look inward, and seriously examine their own hearts and lives, they might generally see the same disposition, and the same things, the same kind of behavior at some time or other, for which they judge others, or at least things very much like them.”

“It has a show of persons’ setting themselves above others, as though they were fit to be the _____ and _____ of their fellow servants, as if it were fit that they should stand or fall at their sentence.”

Application

1. **Reproof-** “If to think evil be so much to be condemned, surely it is yet in a higher degree to be condemned when persons not only allow themselves in thinking but in _____ evil of others, and backbite others with their tongues.”
2. **Warn-** “How often when the _____ comes fully to appear do things appear far better concerning others than persons were at first ready to judge?”

“Let it be considered how little occasion there is for us to pass our sentence on others with respect to their state and qualities and actions which do not concern us. Our _____ concern is with ourselves...it comparatively concerns us little how it is with others. And there is little need of our sentence being passed; for this business is in the hands of another who is infinitely more fit than we, viz. God’s hands.”

“Consider how God has threatened that if we are forward censoriously to condemn others we shall be _____ ourselves.”