

# unchristian

## SERMON STARTER

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## WEEK 2

### JUDGMENTAL AND ANTI-HOMOSEXUAL

*The following suggestions are given to help you begin your preparation. Of course, your own personal stories, illustrations, and application to your context are vital.*

*Bottom Line of Message: Jesus did not come to be our Judge, but our Savior. As followers of Christ, we must follow his example.*

#### INTRODUCTION

- The two greatest perceptions of Christians by young outsiders today are that we are judgmental and anti-homosexual (unChristian, p. 28). Interestingly, these are the same perceptions that young churchgoers have of Christians as well (unChristian, p. 34).
- Being anti-homosexual is just being judgmental applied to a specific issue.
- Why do people perceive Christians this way?
  - Is it our stance toward legislation—we're known more for what we are against (and therefore judge) than what we are for?
  - Is it because we suggest to people that they have to change their sinful behavior before God will love them and accept them?
  - Is it because we say that we hate the sin and not the sinner when people that are homosexuals see their behavior as an aspect of their identity (and so what they hear is that we hate the sinner)?
- Are we really following Christ's own example when we judge the sinful behaviors of others?
- During Jesus' own ministry, he was often put in the position of judge.
  - The rich, young ruler wanted Jesus to "judge" him as someone who was good and would inherit eternal life (Lk 18:18-23).
  - Martha wanted Jesus to "judge" Mary as not having done the right thing (Lk 10:38-42).
  - The man who wanted Jesus to tell his brother to split the inheritance with him (Lk 12:13-15). Consider Jesus' response: "Who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"
- But did Jesus accept this role of "Judge"? Let's look at a defining passage.

#### BIBLICAL TEXT: JOHN 7:53–8:11

- Be sure to give qualification about how this text isn't in the oldest manuscripts, but we have no good reason to think it wasn't an authentic story.
- The scene looks like a courtroom with the teachers of the law and the Pharisees as prosecutors, the woman as the defendant, the crowds as the jury, and Jesus positioned as the judge.
- The religious leaders think they have trapped Jesus. Under Jewish Law, it appears the woman should be executed because of her sin. But the Romans wouldn't allow Jews to execute people—that was only Rome's prerogative. So how will Jesus respond?
- In verse 7, Jesus implies that if he is to take the role of judge, then everyone will stand guilty—no one is without sin in their lives.
- Everyone leaves; no one is left to judge or condemn her except Jesus.
- Then Jesus says something incredible: "Neither do I condemn you." He does acknowledge her sin and call on her to change her ways, but he doesn't condemn or judge her.
- Refer to John 3:17-18. Jesus did not come to condemn or judge and if someone stands condemned or judged before God, that is not our responsibility. Our responsibility, like Jesus', is to offer love and grace without condemnation.

#### CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

- What if we applied this truth as followers of Jesus?
- Isn't this how we want to be treated? None of us is without sin in our lives; all of us are in need of God's grace and we are so thankful that Jesus loves us and accepts us in spite of our sin.
- Like the woman caught in adultery, our sinful ways and lives will only change when we have first received, accepted, and experienced the unconditional love of Jesus. If

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that's true, then shouldn't we be people who are focused only on showing unconditional love and grace, and not judgment and condemnation toward others?

- What if Christians and local churches became places known for their grace and love and not for their judgment? Do you think that would be attractive?
- Who have you judged in your life and what can you do to change your posture, and consequently, begin to change the perceptions?
- All of this does not ignore the complex issues surrounding such topics as homosexuality. But it does mean that we have a new and different starting point for our attitudes and actions: love and grace. Why? Because "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). Are we willing to follow his example?