

Judged

Freedom Writers was a movie willing to break down barriers that divide people up. The clip you just saw sees a class full of prejudice, divided by different gangs based on nationality. They hold judgement so close to them because of outward appearances. **Prejudice goes hand in hand with judgement. Fear and hatred towards others was instilled into their life.** Love was never shown and nobody made an effort to understand them as people. The young girl in the back had so much passion towards judging others, she even judged her teacher because of the colour of her skin. Her voice was full of desperation for answers, for the truth that nobody until now was willing to help her with.

With the theme of prejudice and judgement highly presented in *Freedom Writers*, I want to ask you some questions:

- ❖ What is the first thought you think when you see a teenage mum walk past you on the street? Would it change your mind if it was your best friend? Would it change your mind about me if you knew my birth mum was a teenage mum?
- ❖ What is the first thought you would think if you found out someone you knew had an abortion? Would you ever think to ask why they chose to have one? There could be so many reasons we don't know about.
- ❖ What is the first thought you think when you see girls dressed provocatively outside clubs? Do you ever wonder why they dress the way they do? Maybe they don't have a family who loves them, so they dress that way to get attention.
- ❖ What is the first thought you think when you see a homeless person on the streets, reeking of alcohol? Do you ever put yourselves in their shoes?

If we were to look at any of the situations I just read out, **would our reaction or judgement be the same if Jesus was standing right next to us?** Just because we can't see him, doesn't mean he's not there. **It starts with a drawing, a look, a word, an action and it ends up in an emotional battle for the person on the receiving end.**

- ❖ The bible tells us not to judge, so why do we?
- ❖ A war started from judgement, what's stopping it from happening again
- ❖ Our judgement may not result in physical scars, but there will be emotional ones
- ❖ Satan hates when people give their lives to Christ, he will do anything to stop us from following God
- ❖ Judgemental thoughts are Satan's way of messing with our head and stopping us from the great things God has planned for our life
- ❖ As a victim of judgement, I know what it's like to be judged. I know what it's like to have words spoken over your life, so much you start to believe them
- ❖ As a person who makes mistakes, I know how easy it is to slip into a judgemental mindset

I **see a world full of judgement**; from the colour of one's skin, to what you look like and even to your beliefs. I **see the Church as a whole full of judgement**; from your orientation, to your view on sex before marriage, to the type of church you attend and even your view on abortion. As Christians, we have no right to judge others based on the life they choose to live. What we do have the right to do is make a stand against judgement!

Tonight I'm going to be talking about judgement and the effect this has on people and how it can affect our walk with God. I mean we all judge, were human, we make mistakes...but it's being able to identify a situation, admit our thoughts and then changing them.

There are three points I want to unpack tonight, that are important in the area of judgement and in our walk with God:

- ❖ Speak life, not death
- ❖ Give love, don't judge
- ❖ Changing mindset

Speak life, not death

Psalm 141:3 says *'Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips'*. We need to speak words of encouragement and hope into people's lives, not words that dishearten and put people down. Words are powerful tools, and when used incorrectly can have a massive affect on someone's life. The power one word holds is incredible. When you start speaking judgement into people's lives, they start to believe it. **Instead speak words that instil faith into their lives. Jesus sacrificed his life for our sins and judgements. We don't need to judge as God doesn't judge us.** Galatians 5:1 says *'It's for freedom that Christ has set us free'* He took everything to the cross, so we could be set free.

I want to take you back to 2001: this year unknown back then, became one of the most significant years in history. The September 11 attack on the twin towers, an act of terrorism and judgement towards the Americans. 2001 was also a significant year in my life. I was faced with one of the hardest issues I will have to face in my life. I was the victim of racial harassment. I was in year 6 and it was a Monday like every other, until a group of boys started to call me all sorts of names. Ranging from flat nose to prostitute and slut, these words had more affect on me than those boys would ever know. Do you know why they started this attack on me? From a segment about Asian call women on 60 minutes. They saw I looked like them and assumed because I looked like them that I was one. The affect those simple words had on me was incredible, I began to feel different, like people were staring and pointing. I felt unworthy and even though I knew I wasn't any of those names they were calling me, my mindset changed, my whole life changed from those words.

What I experienced in 2001, is something that I will always remember. It had a major affect on my life. I shared it with you because I want to highlight that any word spoken over someone's life, plays in their mind. Even though they may not think anything of it at the time, if it is repeatedly spoken over their life, subconsciously they will start to believe it and it will hinder everything they try to accomplish in life. **We need to be careful about what we say. Would you want the same thing spoken over your**

life? Just like Freedom Writers, Erin Groell was the first teacher to give room 203 a chance. She believed in them. She encouraged and motivated them. She spoke words that would inspire them to be all they can be. **She changed their lives with the positive words she spoke.**

James 3:9 *'With the tongue we praise our Lord and father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers this should not be.'* This scripture really opened my eyes. With our words we will praise God and in an instant we may judge another. **If were made in God's image and then we judge another also made in God's image, does that mean were actually judging God?** God gave us speech for encouragement, to speak faith and hope to people's lives. Let's use our mouths for positive not negative and help them get to a place of freedom, were they feel and no they are not being judged.

What you sow you reap, what you put in you get back. If we judge others, we may also be judged ourselves. 2 Corinthians 5:10 *'For we must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.'* While Christ took our sins on the cross so we could be set free from condemnation and judgement, judgement day is when we will be judged accordingly. Matthew 7:1 says *'Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'* Remember that when we judge others, on judgement day we will also be judged and the judgement we may have used on others, will be used on us. This message is to help people be set free from judgement, but we do need to be serious about it. **The Bible is full of scriptures warning us not to judge,** and if we do, we will reap what we have sowed.

Give love, don't judge

John 13:34 says, *'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'* This really is simple; love one another as Christ loves you. Love one another as you would want to be loved. Treat one another as you would want to be treated. Speak to one another as you would want to be spoken to. Encourage one another as you would want to be encouraged.

Before you think about saying something, ask yourself **'What Would Jesus Do'?** Would Jesus say a bad word against anyone? Would Jesus judge and discourage people? Or would Jesus love and encourage people? 1 John 4:19 says *'We love because he first loved us. If anyone says I love God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command; whoever loves God must also love his brother.'* God loves us so much that he gave his only son for our lives, so we could be free to live a faith filled life. Now im sure you all love God. So if we love God, but judge our brothers and sisters whom God created, does that mean we're judging God? Does that mean we don't love God?

1 Samuel 16:7 *'But the Lord said to Samuel, do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'* Don't be concerned about people's clothes, their height, how they speak, what they say, the colour of their skin, the shape of their eyes, how big or small their nose is. God doesn't concern himself with these outward appearances. He concerns himself with their heart and how they are as a person.

Just like in Freedom Writers, Erin Groell didn't judge her students appearances, what gangs they were in, what they said, how they acted. Instead she went to a place of faith and loved and encouraged them. God does the same with us, he doesn't judge or dishearten us, he shows **unconditional love** in all situations.

Have you ever thought that when God created every single person, perfect the way they are; perfect in his eyes. **When we judge, we are in fact criticising and judging his handy work, his pieces of art, his creation.** How disappointed would you be if someone criticised your art work? I know I would be upset if someone criticised my work without thinking about it and not knowing the background behind it. Imagine how disappointed God would feel when we judge and criticise people, his creations without thinking?

Changing mindset

When we judge others, our mindset and attitude are different. We may hold pride close to our heart and don't show what the Bible encourages us to show which is forgiveness, mercy and love. God has really laid this on my heart. I'm passionate about seeing people's mindsets change. It is vital for living the life God has planned for you. When our mindset begins to grow dark and judgemental, Satan tries to weave his way into our life, into the life God has planned for us. **Don't let Satan control your thoughts!** Ask God to help your thoughts remain pure and Christ-like. Mindsets can so easily change our life and so easily put us into a negative way of thinking. **Our judgements were taken on the cross**, so our mind could be renewed, so our life could be one of faith and freedom.

Romans 12:2 says *'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.'* When our mindset is in a judgemental state, we may find that the favour God has for our life will momentarily stop. This may seem extreme, but God wants what is best for us and our life. **He has set before us a life of freedom, so Satan will try everything he can to stop us from enjoying life and what God has planned for us.** That's why it is so important that we ask and seek God in all we do. Ask God to reveal bad habits, ask God to help change your attitude, ask God to bring you to a place of faith and freedom within your mindset and life, praise God through all situations and seek God day and night. Like Romans 12:2, don't conform to what the world thinks, what the world sees and what the world says, but have a fresh and clear mind, renewed by God.

2009 for the church is a new day. **It's a new day.** It's a new day to change our mindsets. It's a new day to speak life into people's lives. It's a new day to love one another. It's never too late to ask God to forgive us for the things we've said in the

past, for the thoughts we've had, for the actions we've carried out. So our future with him will be faith filled and righteous.

So as I finish tonight, I want to ask you some questions. Are you willing to change your mindset? Will you speak life, not death into future situations? Will you show others the compassion and love God shows us? Are you going to make a stand against judgement? What are you willing to change in your life, so God can carry out what he has planned for yours?

Let's set an example for this world. Let's be the light of the world. Let's show the world when mindsets change, so will lives. **Make a stand against judgement.** If you're in a situation where people are gossiping and judging someone. Ask yourself is this right? Is this how God would want me to act? Is this what Jesus would do? We may not agree with how people choose to live their lives, but that gives us no right to judge them based on that. We don't know them personally; we don't know what is going on in their life.

Let's be examples of love, of unconditional love, showing love to everyone we come across in our walk with God. **The time is now to change and make a stand for God, what are you going to choose?**