Article

• “The pointing of the finger…”
We find this phrase in Isaiah 58:9:

Isaiah 58:9-12
«If you take away the yoke from your midst, THE POINTING OF THE FINGER, and speaking wickedness, 
if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, 
then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. 
The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; 
you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 
Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; 
and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.»

Many are the promises of the Lord to those that will do the things written in verses 9-10. 
Of those things, the one that draw my attention recently and I would like to consider today is «the pointing of the finger». 
This phrase brings to my mind a judge who, speaking in the court, points his finger at the one against whom is the case, accusing him. 
As it is obvious from Isaiah and as we will see later, the Lord does not approve this.

1. Matthew 7:1-5

There we read:

Matthew 7:1-5
«Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own
eye? Or how can you say to your brother, «Let me remove the speck from your eye;» and look, a plank is in your eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.»

Many, instead of looking at what the Lord has made us to be in Christ, we are looking at the weak points, at the «specks» each one of us carries. Instead of seeing our own weaknesses, that sometimes may be whole planks, we are pointing at the specks of the others…… Probably because in our own eyes we are perfect, as perfect was in his eyes the Pharisee of Luke 18:

Luke 18:9-14
«Also He spoke this parable to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, «God, I thank you that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.» And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, «God be merciful to me as a sinner!» I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled. And he who humbles himself will be exalted»

When, as the Pharisee, we put our trust in ourselves, we will despise the others. We will look at them from the high position we have exalted ourselves. However, Jesus didn’t do this. When they brought to Him a woman caught in adultery, asking Him to approve her stoning, He replied:

John 8:7
«He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first»
and then, when her accusers left, he said to the woman:

«Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more»


God’s desire is not the condemnation of the sinner but his repentance. To «go and sin no more».

Turning to us now: how do we see our neighbour? As ourselves or from a high position as the Pharisee was looking at the tax collector?

2. Romans 14

In Romans 14, the Word of God speaks again for the judgment of a brother from another brother.

Romans 14:1-4
«Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let NOT him who eats DESPISE him who does not eat, and let NOT him who does not eat JUDGE him who eats; for God has received him. WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ANOTHER’S SERVANT? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand»

Again we see the word «DESPISE». The Pharisee despised the tax collector. Similarly, many times, when we think that someone is not as strong in the faith as …..«we are», we despise him. Even if we do not express this aloud, we do it through our thoughts, our «doubtful disputations», that sooner or later will be manifested in words.
Conversely, when someone is not behaving within what WE – not the Word - consider as acceptable, we JUDGE him. An example of this case is found in Mark 6:1-6. There we find Jesus coming to his hometown:

Mark 6:1-4, 6

«Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. AND MANY HEARING HIM WERE ASTONISHED, SAYING, «WHERE DID THIS MAN GET THESE THINGS? And what wisdom is this which is given to him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! IS THIS NOT THE CARPENTER, THE SON OF MARY, AND BROTHER OF JAMES, JOSES, JUDAS AND SIMON? AND ARE NOT HIS SISTERS HERE WITH US?» SO THEY WERE OFFENDED AT HIM. But Jesus said to them, «A prophet is not without honour except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.»… And He marvelled because of their UNBELIEF»

The people of Jesus’ town found it very hard to accept how the one that till yesterday was working there as a simple carpenter and used to go to their synagogue as the others, now returned AS A TEACHER, AS THE MESSIAH THROUGH WHOM GOD WAS PERFORMING GREAT MIRACLES. «He ought to stay as all of us. Teaching is only for the Pharisees. What is this that he is doing?» we can hear them saying. Because He didn’t …. eat vegetables, those that ate JUDGED HIM AND REJECTED HIM.

What happened to Jesus happens today as well. My heart goes to all those servants of God that have been abused physically (Medieval times) and emotionally (today), nad have been the subject of bitter criticism and rejection, even by the very brothers with whom they fellowshipped for years. The reason? When God called them and they obeyed, the others could not accept it. «How can you do this? You do not have the credentials? How can you teach or run a fellowship or do this and that when you do not even have a theological degree and you haven’t followed the so and so …..seminar
or «ordination course»?» If Jesus was a Pharisee, going to a rabbinical seminar, the people of his town would have no problem. But now? They could not tolerate the extraordinary things God was doing through someone that was moving out of what they considered as normal (vegetables).

We may wish that it was not true, but the words of the Lord testify it: «A prophet is not without honour except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.» When God calls you for something new, extra-ordinary for the others, it may be that those that you fellowship with – your own «home» - will be offended and reject you. Remember then my friend the words of the Lord; trust your heart in His hands. Forgive and forget any bitterness, and pursue what HE HAS CALLED YOU. IT IS HE THAT HAS ORDAINED YOU.

Closing this parenthesis and returning to Romans, the Word replies to any judgmental behaviour with one question: «WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ANOTHER SERVANT?» and it continues:

Romans 14:10-13

«But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you set at nought your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. For it is written: «As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD. THEREFORE LET US NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.» (NKJV-KJV)

And James 4:11-12

«Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ANOTHER?»
Thus, the next time that we feel our finger gets the pointing position, let’s make to ourselves the following questions:

*Who are you to judge another’s servant?*
*Why do you judge your brother?*
*Or why do you set as nought your brother?*
*Who are you to judge another?*

I believe they are enough to put out finger back to its place.

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