

Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

August 11, 2024

I. Introduction

A. **Matthew 7:1–6**, “Do not judge so that you will not be judged. [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. [3] Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? [4] Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” [6] Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

B. Once we cross from chapter **6** into chapter **7**, it is easy to lose sight of the continuity within the Sermon on the Mount and begin seeing things as separate, almost unrelated teachings to what has gone before and what comes after. Therefore, I want to remind you of where we have come from and show you where we are going in order to help you see how today’s portion fits into the whole.

1. Jesus began this sermon with the Beatitudes, which form the foundation for all the rest. They point to the character qualities, desires of the heart, thoughts, and actions that make for the best possible life – mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.
2. In urging us to spread these truths to those around us, Jesus says we are His salt and His light in the world, and to live in a way that honors Him. He concludes this section by reminding us that our righteousness must surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven.
3. In the rest of chapter **5**, Jesus shows us what true righteousness looks like in the various kinds of relationships that we can have with those around us – from family members to enemies. He concludes this section by calling us to love others as perfectly, or as completely, as He loves us and everyone else in the world.
4. In chapter **6:1-18**, Jesus continues His teaching on relationships, only in this section He talks about what a proper and spiritually healthy relationship with God looks like – and included a teaching on prayer.

5. Because we are prone to treasure the benefits, pleasures, praise, and adoration from those we relate to in the world **more than** the benefits, pleasures, praise, and adoration that come from pleasing God (*in how we love those around us*), Jesus urges us to consider three things: (1) the value of heavenly treasure (*in the form of praise*) over earthly praise, (2) the importance of being single-minded, and (3) the reality that, try as we might, it is impossible to serve two opposing masters.
6. Jesus concludes chapter 6 by calling us to stop being anxious or fearful over having enough to meet our daily needs. Instead, we are to live according to His teachings, while trusting God to make sure we have what we need each day.
7. This brings us to chapter 7, where it seems as if Jesus sets aside the continuity in chapters 5-6 and begins to teach separate, almost unrelated topics. However, though the continuity may be harder to see, His teaching on judging is built on rightly relating to those around us, which in turn leads us further down the path of having a spiritually healthy relationship with God. In other words, He is still dealing with our relationships with those around us and with God.
 - a. **Matthew 7:6**, cautions us about being naive or foolish in how we relate to others. This ties in to vs 15-20 which call us to be both cautious and wise in who we listen to and follow.
 - b. Jesus' summary of vs 7-12 affirm the relationship theme by calling us to treat everyone in the same way we want to be treated.
 - c. And vs 21-27 bring Jesus' sermon to a conclusion by clarifying how God will judge us at the end of life in relation to what we have done with Jesus' teaching.
8. Today, we are looking at **Matthew 7:6**.

C. Pray

II. Discriminating conversations

- A. **Matthew 7:6**, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."
 1. Though this may not be the easiest statement to understand, and though it isn't perfectly clear on how to apply it, and though it isn't said in a politically correct way, there are several other scriptures that can help us figure out Jesus' purpose in saying it and how to apply it in realistic and practical ways.
 - a. **Proverbs 1:7**, The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; **fools despise** wisdom and instruction (*Fools treat wisdom and*

knowledge with contempt, and reject them with disdain – which often includes an element of hostility with their contempt and disdain when confronted with wisdom and given instruction.)

- b. **Proverbs 9:8, Do not reprove a scoffer**, or he will hate you (*Do not waste your words or jeopardize your well-being with someone who mocks you, ridicules your beliefs and life-style, and shows contempt for God and the Bible, because he will either detest you and want to harm you himself, or he will want evil befall you.*).
Reprove a wise man and he will love you.
 - c. **Proverbs 23:9, Do not speak in the hearing of a fool**, for he will despise the wisdom of your words (*Keep quiet about your beliefs, values, and convictions when around foolish, close-minded, opinionated, often irrational thinking people who have no interest in hearing what you have to say, because they will treat you with contempt, and reject with disdain what you say.*).
 - d. **Matthew 10:23**, “But whenever they persecute you in one city flee to the next (*If people go beyond contempt and disdain to seeking to do you serious harm, get away as quickly as possible.*); for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.”
2. We can draw several lessons from **Matthew 7:6** and these four other scriptures.
- a. **First lesson:** when you can, speak about (1) the truth of God’s word, (2) the goodness of God, (3) the truth about living a Christian life, and (4) the wisdom of believing in and obeying God. But be wise in what you say, when you say it, and to whom you say it.
 - (1) This requires looking for opportunities in your daily conversations to bring up such things – and especially so if you converse with certain people on a recurring basis.
 - (2) Such opportunities may mean responding to comments made, defending God and the scriptures against misguided perceptions or false accusations, or answering questions. Regardless, love calls us to seek the good of others by injecting godly truths into conversations when possible, yet without forcing our beliefs and values on others.
 - b. **Second lesson:** be discerning, so as to determine if the person or group to whom you are talking will (1) be driven off (*close their ears*), (2) or become angry and verbally combative, (3) or become physically hostile in response to the truths you are presenting.

- (1) In other words, **beware** of saying things that needlessly offend or close the ears of those you are talking to, because that is a loss – not just for you, but for them too, and not just in the moment, but likely in the future as well.
 - (a) Unbelievers do not want us to push our Christian beliefs, values, and convictions on them any more than we want them to push their worldly, self-serving, ungodly beliefs, values, and convictions on us. So listen as well as speak.
 - (b) Show them the same respect you want to receive. Avoid words or phrases that are commonly heard as offensive. Do not attack their character or intelligence, rather talk about the differences between what the Bible teaches and their beliefs, values, view of God, and way of life. And when possible, show the long-term consequences of love and God’s ways in contrast to their way of thinking and living.
 - (c) To sow seeds of truth, you need them to keep listening and thinking. Closing their ears and mind through careless words or a condescending attitude works against all that you hope to accomplish.
 - (2) **Beware** of starting or getting pulled into a combative argument or outright verbal fight about beliefs, values, and the truths of God’s word.
 - (a) If you think you won, it is probable the other person goes away despising you and your views.
 - (b) If they think they’ve won, they go away feeling like their views are vindicated, and they are that much more committed to them.
 - (3) **Beware** of needlessly jeopardizing your well-being by upsetting or angering someone who you know is hostile to godly beliefs, values, Biblical truths, or Christianity in general, because it can bring serious harm upon you and possibly those you love.
 - (4) Therefore, speaking godly truths and wisdom to those who oppose such truth and wisdom, and who will mistreat you, persecute you, punish you, imprison you, or even kill you, is foolish **if** you have the opportunity to remain silent or **if** you can flee **without** denying your faith in God.
- c. **Third lesson:** whatever amount of time you spend on someone, or group of people who are determined to despise God, and who want nothing to do with the beliefs, values, and convictions you hold, and who will hate you all the more for trying to convince them

otherwise, is time you could spend on those who will listen, possibly repent, and come to saving faith or change their ways.

- d. Therefore, being intentional and faithful in speaking about God to others is the right thing to do. Being careless in what you say or being foolish in who you say it to is unwise and gains nothing for God and His kingdom. So be wise, be discerning, and pray for wisdom – even while you are in these kinds of conversations.
3. You may be wondering, what is to be done with those who fit the description of a dog or swine? How are they to hear the gospel message if we don't force it on them?
 - a. Like all of us, they have the revelation of God in nature, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, access to a Bible, and the ability to reason and think. They are not trapped by the influences of their culture, the power of their sinful passions and longings, their own evil inclinations, or their view of life and the world.
 - b. Also, though our voice may be silent, we can speak by living the kind of life that mirrors Jesus' teachings, and in so doing, let our love-filled, godly living speak where our voice is silent.
 4. On an historical note, one of the ways **vs 6** was applied by the early Church was in relation to Communion.
 - a. According to the instructions given in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which is a manuscript dating back to 100 A.D., church leaders were told to "Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized into the name of the Lord; for, as regards this, the Lord has said, 'Give not that which is holy unto dogs.'"
 - b. According to church history, many churches began the Lord's Supper with the announcement: "Holy things for holy people." In this way the early Church tried to be careful who they allowed to join them in sharing in the Lord's Table, not because they saw themselves as superior, but for the sake of those who would eat and drink in an unworthy manner, because doing so brings God's judgment on them.

B. I want to conclude today's teaching by going a step beyond Jesus' intent for **vs 6**, and talk about our use of Christian cliches, religious jargon, and spiritual sounding phrases, for such things are of little value – especially when talking to unbelievers, or younger, immature believers, or hurting, suffering believers.

1. Christian cliches and religious jargon may sound good and offer some measure of hope or encouragement, but in my experience, those who

use them and those who hear them have very little knowledge of what they actually mean.

- a. It is not that they don't know what they mean in some shallow, generalized, almost nondescript kind of way – but that is not enough when someone is new to Christianity, or immature in the faith, or in serious pain, or facing a crisis.
 - b. When people are hurting, they need (1) meaningful comfort and genuine hope, (2) and if possible, realistic and practical ideas of how to move forward or find contentment with what is, (3) and they need to be assured that God and you know how they are feeling or what they are up against. You are not likely to touch a person in this deeper, more meaningful way with cliches.
 - c. A few examples of Christian cliches are: (1) When God closes one door, He opens another. (2) Everything happens for a reason. (3) God won't give you more than you can handle.
 - d. The point is not that Christian cliches are bad, but that they are not helpful. So look for ways to say something wise or comforting with words that show that you understand who God is, what He does, how He will enter into the hurting person's situation, how they can move forward with God, and why this is the best way.
2. Maybe this example will help you understand what I am talking about.
 - a. If you are talking with someone in a bad marriage who wants a divorce, and you tell them God is against divorce – that is good, but not enough.
 - b. You need to explain that, though it will be hard and they probably won't be happy with the current situation, there are godly options and ways to remain in the marriage and still be okay emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. And they need to be shown how they can find true contentment in spite of the circumstances.
 - c. People need hope. Real hope is built on God, **and** a realistic faith in God that acknowledges the situation, **and** practical ways of dealing with the situation, **and** ways to move forward without abandoning God or forsaking godliness.

III. Conclusion

- A. Be discerning about how you relate to others, and who you relate to. Do not give what is holy to dogs, do not throw your pearls before swine, and do not toss Christian cliches and religious jargon around as if they will give the kind of help, hope, comfort, and a way forward that is needed by those who need help, hope, comfort, and a way forward.