

Dogs, Pigs, Specks, and Planks.
The Way of Jesus
Downtown & Lexington
November 15, 2020

Jesus' teaching here is about what the Christian life looks like when lived out in community. If you ask the average guy on the street to quote 2 verses from the bible he will almost definitely bring this up. Let's go through it once to get the big idea and then we will pick back through for more insight.

Matthew 7:1-2

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

Don't judge me, man! The bible says don't judge. Fits right in with our cultural belief that religion is subjective and morality is relative. Picture Jesus wearing a tie-dye t-shirt, wearing Birkenstocks, on a pilgrimage to Colorado because weed is legal there. "Do whatever you want...God is love!"

Ok, well. I don't think that verse means what people think it means because Jesus keeps talking.

Matthew 7:3-5

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when there is the log in your own eye? 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.

This teaching is about how to present someone with corrective truth. That's the goal. Presenting needed, corrective truth to another person.

We know that from verse 5:

Matthew 7:5

So that you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

That's the goal. Your brother has a speck of sawdust in his eye. If you've ever had sawdust in your eye you know that it hurts. Jesus would know, growing up a carpenter's son.

- Obviously, Jesus is not saying we should never tell anyone that they are wrong. Jesus did that all the time. The Sermon on the Mount is full of examples of Jesus giving correction.
- He is not calling civil authorities to abdicate their role in upholding justice. If you are a courtroom judge hopefully you won't misapply this and go to court tomorrow and say "I know you killed that guy but who am I to judge?!"
- So Jesus is not teaching here that we should just all mind our own business and be individualistic relativists. The whole point of his teaching here is "your brother has something in his eye. He needs your help."

So this is a specific scenario that he is speaking into.

Jesus says "brother" 3 times here. He is referring to a fellow follower of Christ.

The scenario is, brother or sister has sin in their life. What do you do?

There are two unhelpful responses we can have. Being silent or being judgmental.

I am stealing candy from babies.

Silence. Who am I to judge? He's gotta do what's right for him. Maybe he was born inclined towards stealing candy and this is just him being himself. He seems happy. If it works for him, whatever. I just think God wants people to be happy.

Or judgment.

Jesus here is not talking about discerning good from evil, right from wrong. He's talking about dismissing someone because of it. He's speaking about a judgmental posture. Condescending, Superior. We are also judgmental when we assume the worst of others and cast a verdict over them because of it. When we believe you have all the information when we don't actually have all the information so we pronounce condemnation onto people. We conclusively summarize who a person is. And then I will gladly tell other people my conclusions because I am right and you are wrong and the world needs to know. When the whole time I had a plank in my eye that deterred my vision.

Jesus speaks against both here and offers a better way. Because nobody wants a judgmental community, but equally unhealthy if we are all running around with sawdust in our eyes and no one is willing to help because it might get awkward or uncomfortable.

Listen, everyone is born with disordered desires as a result of our fallenness. Our natural preference, because of sin, is not to worship God in spirit and truth. So the very starting point for how God comes to us and interacts with us is that of loving confrontation. From the very beginning. He does not affirm all of our desires, preferences, and experiences. So this means that there will be things that I am inclined towards, prefer, things that come naturally to me that are sinful and not in line with how God created life to work. Things that will not lead to my long-term joy, whether I can perceive that or not. And it is loving of God to confront me with this and call me to repent, which means I forsake what I prefer and walk in line with what he calls me to. When God confronts me and saves me, he begins in me a process of growth called sanctification. And he saves me into his spiritual family, with intentions that in walking with other believers we can all help each other as we grow. That's the plan. So when you judge or withhold helpful, loving correction from a fellow believer you shortchange the sanctification process in their life. You fail to play the part God has given you. You fail to love.

That's the point of this passage. Help each other, don't be silent, and don't judge each other. Helping seeks to build up, judging seeks to tear down.

Then, verse 6.

Matthew 7:6

Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

What in the world is this? What does that have to do with anything?

When a pig or dog is hungry, what do they want? Food. Not a trick question.

A pearl is of great value. It can buy years of pig meals, but a pig doesn't know that. They can't perceive it, so you throw it out there to them and they're like "I can't eat this!" So they come after you because at least you are edible.

Jesus is saying, "Be smart. Dogs and pigs don't appreciate pearls. Don't give them that." Jesus once told a crowd "Many things you're not ready for yet."

Jesus is saying you can't simply push things onto people in a way that they can't digest it. What you have to say to them might be great and valuable stuff, but that doesn't mean it's what's best for the person you're correcting/rebuking. Pearls are great and very valuable, but they're wasted if they're given in the wrong context

In other words, we have to be patient with the pace of God in someone's life.

I need to say to some of you that this describes you. You like to think of yourself as a truth-teller. You value speaking truth to others, which is good. But at times you do so in a way that is insensitive to the pace of God in the lives of those to whom you are speaking. So they bristle and often cannot receive what you are saying to them. You tend to blame them for not being able to handle the truth, but Jesus here is saying it could be that it's your fault because you are undiscerning and therefore pushy.

So the overall idea of the teaching is that Jesus intends for us to be a community that doesn't remain silent but instead speaks truth into each other's lives, not in a judgemental, superior way, but in a humble, helpful, skillful, sensitive way...so that we help each other grow in Christ.

Ok, now let's look back through the passage and see if we can get a little more insight and help.

Matthew 7:1-2

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

If you are self-righteous and judgmental, you will lead others to be the same. If you never, ever speak truth into a fellow Christian's life...you will lead others to do the same. You can either cultivate a gospel culture in your relationships or a sinful culture in your relationships. You are sowing into one or the other. If you know someone who is always critical, pointing out what is wrong, everyone is an idiot, they tend to bring the community around them into that. And then there are people who you have an unspoken agreement with where you both know if I don't bother you then you won't bother me and we both just live however we want. And vice versa. When someone is humble about their own sin, helpful to others in their sin, doesn't condemn and reject but instead forgives...this works to create a beautiful, safe, transformative community to be a part of.

Matthew 7:3-4

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

...It is easy to spot a judgmental person unless you are looking in the mirror...

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?

Judgmental 101. Other people's sin is a bigger deal to you than your sin. Other people's sin bothers you more than your sin.

Speck – a small fleck of wood or hay; sawdust

Log – one of the main supporting beams of a building. It's a joke. He is saying that you are so concerned about the sawdust in your friend's eye but don't care about the telephone pole in your own eye.

This is probably the biggest problem in your marriage that you are not actively on the lookout for. You are more concerned about your spouse's sin than your own. Their sin feels more harmful than yours does. It will change your marriage altogether if you both begin to be more concerned about your own sin than the other persons.

If you get two people pointing fingers you have a war. If you get one pointing a finger and the other owning their sin then you have a bully. But if you get both people owning their own sin you get something beautiful and sweet and compelling.

- the truth is, for me, I tend to be more judgmental towards sins I don't struggle with. If your sin struggle is like me, then I have all kinds of patience for you. the struggle is real bruh. But if you sin in

ways different from me then you must not really love Jesus and you're just not trying. We all have a list of acceptable sins and unacceptable sins. This is part of the problem and why we need each other.

Here is, I think, part of why we do it. In verse 5, Jesus says "You hypocrite" and as we've discussed in this series, it's the word for an actor.

Actors used to wear masks. It hid who they really were. They had happy masks and sad masks. The part is not the same as the heart. What you present outside does not necessarily represent what is inside. There is an inclination in the human heart to divert attention away from what is really going on. We want to get into image management. We don't want people to see what we are really like. Let's hide what I am really like by focusing on everyone else. Whether you say it or not. We love to use specks in other people's eyes to avoid having a look at our own planks.

I feel so much better about me as long as I am focused on what's wrong with you.

Can you even imagine if the two political parties in our country began to apply Jesus's words here? Let's bounce out of the church just for a second. And see how smart Jesus is by realizing the breakdowns that happen at a societal level when his teaching is disobeyed.

How rare is it to find a shred of what Jesus teaches here in our politicians and parties these days? Everyone is so arrogantly confident of their own righteousness and so quick to pounce on any potential error in others. The whole thing is one big finger-pointing game where the other side's wrongs are the "real" problem.

What's the solution? **How can we be helpful instead of silent or judgmental?**

First, take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

Jesus says the solution is for us to point the finger at ourselves first, and then help each other. That's the solution.

To be more concerned with my sin than I am concerned with your sin.

We have plenty of sin to care about in our own lives. Here is what we've gotta get. Jesus knew all about our sin. **He knew all about our sin, all about our planks. And what did he do? He was nailed to them.** He didn't sit by silently, he didn't move to condemn us. Instead, he lovingly died to free us from the power of our sin.

And when we are humbled by our own sin, then we have the posture and humility and gentleness necessary to approach and help our friends. We have plenty of planks to worry about first. Then we can deal with sawdust.

Until you are honest about your own sinfulness and need for Jesus. No longer finding your inner confidence from proving your own goodness, but instead receiving your self-image from God himself. Until then you can't be helpful to others. You will always be dangerous to be around, because you will be using pointing out the specks in others eyes to feel better about yourself, as a way to divert attention from your own plank. The solution to silence or judgment is to see that God has lovingly confronted your sin for your salvation.

Here are some questions for us and then we'll be done for today:

- In your relationships, whose sin is the bigger deal to you? Marriage? Roommates? If the answer isn't "mine" then you are a dangerous person.

- Are you receptive to correction? If no one can challenge you and call you out, then you will not grow. Listen, they have to be allowed to call you out in ways you don't care to be called out in.

- Are you withholding correction from a brother or sister in Christ? Is there someone you need to talk to? Is there anyone that you know you need to humbly speak with about some sawdust in their eye, but you've been avoiding it?

Just to reiterate. This isn't about what bothers you or what you would like to change, this is about sin and what the bible speaks into. A huge difference between being motivated by frustration and motivated by wanting more of Jesus for someone. If you are motivated by frustration, then what you are really saying is "you bother me and I think if you would change then I could be happier."

So, let's reject silence and judgment, and let's help each other grow.

Whatever amount of understanding you would want others to show to you, show to them. Whatever amount of grace you would want others to show to you, show to them. Whatever amount of helping you grow to become more like Jesus you would want others to show to you, show to them. Whatever amount of prayer you would want others to pray for you, pray for them.

Whatever amount of love - real love - that seeks the best, love that sacrifices, love that says the hard stuff, and stands by you all the way through - whatever love you would want others to show to you, show to them.