

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Matthew 7:1-76 for our scripture reading today...Matthew 7:1-6...As you turn there, I would just like to thank all those who faithfully serve on Sunday morning...Thank you...We are in Matthew 7:1-6...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ² For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and ^[a]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 ^[b]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.

Please be seated...”

Introduce Yourself:

Good morning...It is an honor to be here with you this morning...If you don't know who I am, my parents named me Byron Bradshaw and I am privileged to be the pastor here at Calvary Bible Church...

On a personal note...Brynn my one year old daughter just figured out how to walk...Although she's a bit top heavy and unstable...And yes she is getting into everything...But it is quite fun...

I am excited to share the Word of God with you all this morning...Teaching God's Word to be is like savoring a good entree...It provides energy, fulfillment and enjoyment...

Before we dive in today, I'd like to pray and ask the Lord to be with our time in the Word this morning...

(Pray)

As we are about to enter the text in Matthew 7...I'd like to first lay the foundation for our discussion today...

Today's passage is found in the Sermon on the Mount section of Matthew... The Sermon on the Mount discusses various issues regarding practical Christian living...The beginning of Matthew 5 provides us an image or picture then later in Chapter 5 it reminds us that the Christian life should not be focused on following the letter of the law but more on the principle of the law...And finally, Chapter 6 reminds us that the Christian life is facilitated by practicing proper spiritual disciplines and to truly trust God for all of our daily needs and worries...

And then we come to today's passage, Matthew 7:1-6...And In today's passage and also in the passage next week, Jesus gives us three things to value in our Christian life...

And as I was reflecting upon the passage this week, I happened to notice a pattern in my life...I've noticed the pattern in my life that I sometimes discount value for imperfections...

I've noticed that is easy for me to discount the value of a relationship, the value of an informative documentary, the value of a helpful email...all for the sake of an imperfection...

This has been a pattern and struggle even since my childhood...Let me share a quick story from my childhood to illustrate...

ME:

Growing up my family had a long running tradition that before each trip, each of us five children were allowed to go to Kroger and get a disposable camera...

I remember before any trip such as AWANA scholarship camp, before any school trip, before any family trips...All of us kids would eagerly barge into Kroger and grab our disposable cameras...I am talking about the ones that had crank wheels and had to be developed at the photo labs...Yes I remember those days...

However, my four sisters and I would take very different pictures...Oftentimes my sisters would take pictures with friends...Pictures with someone they met at AWANA scholarship camp, pictures with friends, leaders...Pictures that would show relationships and friendships...

Yes as a young lad, I didn't see much use in taking pictures with friends...I'd always take pictures of scenery and nature...I remember my sisters one time teasing me that all of my pictures were of nature and none were with people...

And On one school trip, we went to Dauphin Island in the Mobile bay area...And of course I had my disposable camera in hand...I remember we took a ferry ride to the island while the sun was setting...

I still remember the view of the sun setting in Mobile Bay...So, of course, in my eager pursuit to show my sisters the value of my landscape pictures, I quickly whipped out my camera and started reeling off picture after picture of this beautiful sunset from the top floor of the ferry boat...

So when I got back, I eagerly took it home and took it to a one hour photo development lab...
...And I got all the pictures back and every single picture looked just like this...

(Show the picture) – Every picture on the whole disposable camera had a big finger in the picture...

Discouragement instantly swept over me...I imagine my sisters never let me live it down...But I remember only being able to focus on the imperfections...only focused on the finger smudges in the corners of each picture and I completely ignored the beauty in the rest of the picture...

I remember being so frustrated with all the imperfections that I completely discarded the entire stack of pictures...I discarded the **value** of the pictures and the **value** of the good memory and even beauty that was in the picture itself for the sake of the imperfection...

My sole focus was the imperfection despite the colorful beauty...

Transition: Yet, Isn't that true life? Isn't it easy in this life to discount the value in face of an imperfection?

WE:

It is easy to discount an informative email for the sake of a misspelled word...It can be easy to write off someone else's helpful email for the sake of grammar or even a misspelled word...

It is easy to discount a good valuable resume for the sake of a typo...Right? I was warned in college to make sure my resume was perfect having no typos...Why? Because a single typo will cause a recruiter to throw your resume in the garbage...College warned me that You can have the greatest resume in the world...You can be perfectly suited for a job but if you have a typo then you may never get an interview...

It is also easy to discount a movie when we notice an imperfection...Right? If we notice a historical inconsistency or a camera shadow...That small imperfection can sometimes change or even ruin a movie...

Yet...it is sometimes even easy to discount people for a mistake or even a weird quirk...It is easy for us to latch onto one's rude comment and then use that as justification to discount and ignore them...It is easy to discount a spouse, a pastor, a church member or even a child for an imperfection...

Yet, what is God's standard for judging another person? What is God's standard for discounting and judging another person based on a mistake?

GOD:

As we enter Matthew 7:1-12...we realize there this passage is essentially three different proverbial statements...

One proverb is discussing judging others, the other is discussing not putting what is holy before dogs whatever that means **and the last value which we will discuss next week** discusses prayer...

Yet, any student and learner of the Bible must first ask the question...“What is the relationship between these three random proverbial sections?” What is the relationship between not judging another, Not putting something holy before dogs, and then the prayer section?

One must then propose the thought that surely Jesus would not randomly pile three unrelated proverbs together back to back...That there must but some silver lining or binding...

In order to answer this question, one must step back and ask the question...What is the entire Sermon of the Mount about? What is its purpose? Its purpose is to instruct us on kingdom living...Or, to put it another way...It is giving us practical guidance to Christian living...

So, the connection between these three passages is that they each carry the central idea of giving us very practical advice on Christian living...And to be more specific...In this particular section Matthew 7:1-12...I believe Jesus is discussing three areas that Christians should value...Three areas of the Christian life that we should value and not discount in our pursuit of Jesus Christ...

Transition: So, with this in mind, let us look at the first value for Christian living...

Read Matthew 7:1-5, ““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.”

Point #1: Value Others Over Judging Others...Value Other Over Judging Others...

Essentially, we are to value others rather than to discount others based upon a flaw...Because if we are looking to always find a flaw or to judge another person then we will be judged...

Look back at verse 1-2, ““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”

Who will judge us? God, right? It is not explicitly mentioned but God will judge us if we are constantly are constantly judging others and discounting them for a flaw...If we are always using a magnifying glass to find a flaw and judge others then the Lord will judge us by that same measure...

Friends...Instead of looking for flaws, let us find valuable in what God finds value...God knows each one of us have flaws yet still loves us...God knows we each of us sin but instead of annihilating us...He gives us the chance to believe in Jesus Christ to be eternally redeemed...

God finds us valuable despite mistakes therefore we should find value in others despite mistakes...It is often easy to be like myself when I was a child...In the same way that I discarded a beautiful picture and memory for the sake of a flaw we often can do the same way with another...

Value Others Not Judge Others...

But I want to go a little deeper for a second... There are many, many, many unique observations from this section to point out but for the sake of getting everyone to lunch on time or even early... I'd like to point out three key observations...

Observation #1:

In order to find the first observation let us look back at verses 3 and 4... Notice with me verse 3 and 4 again, "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?"

The Greek adds so much color to this verse... Because What we can't see in our English translation is that the word speck and log are of the same substance...

The word "speck" is the Greek word "κάρφος" which is literally a speck of "saw dust"... and the word "log" is the Greek word "δοκός" which literally means a "tree"...

Notice with me that a speck of saw dust and a tree come from the same substance.... Wood...

So, what is Jesus saying? That often we judge another person based on something we struggle with ourselves... We often discount another person's value based upon something we ourselves struggle with...

Let me give you an illustration: In seminary, you meet lots of unique people and personalities... You meet some very humble people but also some very prideful people...

There was one student that was maybe the most prideful person I ever met... He would always pay the tab at every restaurant although he was broke, He would find a way to be superior in everything he did... In academics, in music, in ministry... His personality was a sheer act of superiority...

And I remember him completely discrediting a seminary professor for finding the professor to be to prideful... Huh? Didn't make any sense to me... Because here this student was having a tree of pride growing out of his eye and yet discounted a seminary professor for what he perceived as a speck of pride...

But isn't that true of life? Often we judge another for something we struggle with ourselves...

We discount another for being prideful when we are prideful...
We discount another for bitterness when we struggle with bitterness...
We discount another for passivity when we ourselves struggle with passivity...
We discount another for a temper when we ourselves have a temper...
We discount another for gossip when we can ourselves struggle with gossip...

Friends, instead of focusing on another person's flaw...rather value them as God values them...God knows each and everyone of us have flaws...Yet He still saves us...God knows each and everyone of us continually sin...Yet He still gives us His Holy Spirit...God knows each and everyone of us take for granted His grace and creation...Yet He still allows us to populate the earth that He created...

Transition: So, not only do we often discredit someone else for something we struggle with ourselves but there is a second observation I'd like to make regarding the speck in someone's eye...

Observation #2: How hard do you have to look into someone's eye to notice a small speck of saw dust?

Illustration: As a kid, I remember my dad wood working underneath the carport building beds, headboards, clocks and various other things such as mahogany and pine...I remember the loud noise of the saw and that the carport would be completely covered in this fine saw dust...Sawdust is almost as small as a grain of sand...How close would you have to look in someone's eye to see a grain of sand?

In order to see a grain of sand in someone's eye, one must look purposefully and intently...

Listen friends, to find a flaw in someone else we often must look intently and purposefully... Yet, Jesus is saying...Set aside the magnifying glass, value them and then most importantly notice the tree branch in your own eye...

Friends, let us lay aside the magnifying glass and notice that which blinds us...

Finally there is a third key observation I'd like to make on this section...Look back at verse 4-5, "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."

Think about something with me...How hard would it be to see if you have a tree growing out of your eye? It is nearly impossible...

If you have ever walked through a densely forested area...It is so disorienting and almost impossible to stay directly on course...It is almost impossible to truly follow a path while being blinded by leaves, trees and limbs...

Similarly, it is difficult to follow the Christian path if we have a tree growing out of our eye...

So what am I saying? In order to live this Christian life...We must stop for a second and take the tree out of our eye...Instead of judging another for something we struggle with ourselves...we must follow verse 4...

As it says in verse 4, "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."

Before we judge another, we must look in the mirror and take the tree out of our eye...Without first addressing our flaws and inconsistencies we truly cannot address another's and truly can't follow a clear path to walking with God on a daily basis...

Transition: But then we come to the really tough part...verse 6...Now, it not so much tough to apply but rather to interpret...

Look at verse 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."

Now, I know what you are thinking...What in the world is it talking about? If you are asking this question then you are asking the exact same question I asked...

I have wrestled this verse 6 all week and then some...And it is tempting as an exegetical preacher to skip over verses like verse 6 instead of really addressing them...But I owe it to someone to explain it...

I had someone in staff meeting say "Byron don't skip verse 6...We have to talk about the dogs... So, let us read the verse again then discuss it..."

"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."

Now there are three main interpretations to this verse...

Interpretation #1: The first interpretation is found among more liberal scholars...They propose that verse 6 is encouraging Jesus' disciples to withhold secret teachings from outsiders...

Scholars who propose this position defend it based upon Gnostic texts and so this interpretation is less than adequate and completely false...

Interpretation #2: The second interpretation is one I was leaning toward earlier in the week...That it means that we should not discount the provisions of the kingdom of God...That the pearls and “what is holy” are the kingdom of God to which should wholly value and not throw it aside to the dogs and pigs...

Transition: Yet the more and more I thought about it...the less and less likely it seemed best...The best interpretation is interpretation #3...

Interpretation #3: The third interpretation is probably the most popular amongst scholars and Bible interpreters...

Yet, in order to interpret this verse properly...One must decide the symbolic meaning of “What is holy” and pearls and then the dog and pigs...Due to the proverbial nature of this text...the pearls and what is holy refer essentially to the same thing...

So, what is meant by “what is holy” and “Pearls”? In order to truly gain an understanding of its reference one must do a word study...The only other metaphorical use of “pearls” is found in Matthew 13:44-46...and these verses give us the key to understanding the meaning of pearls and what is holy...

Listen to Matthew 13:45-46 as I read, “Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls...And upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it...”

Pearls in Matthew 13 refer to the kingdom of heaven so it seems best to interpret the pearls in Matthew 7 as the kingdom of heaven as well...

So, if the pearls refer to the kingdom of heaven and it says...”“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine” then who or what are the dogs and pigs?

In order to understand who the dogs and pigs refer to...We must first understand the Biblical cultural significance of dogs and pigs...

In America, dogs are man’s best friend...We love our dogs...Laurel and I for several years substituted a dog for children and we loved our little beagle named Lucy...Then we somehow pawned her off on our parents when we went to seminary...

Yet a number of years ago I went on a mission trip with Calvary to Guatemala and I saw a completely different cultural view of dogs...Dogs in Guatemala were almost as a pest...Dogs were not so much house hold pets but rather they were more scavengers and pests... There were dogs everywhere, they were wild and somewhat dangerous...They weren't domesticated but would attack other animals or even humans to gain trash and food...

Jews viewed dogs similarly...Jews did not have the American love for dogs...In fact, to them dogs and pigs were the lowliest creatures on earth...Dogs and pigs were lowly unclean creatures bent upon scavenging and tearing into anything that is prized and valuable...

So, when it says in verse 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.” What does it mean?

To put it all together...Jesus is essentially saying do not put the value and provisions of the kingdom of God before genuinely evil people that will trample it under foot...Do not put the kingdom of heaven before people that will maliciously attack it and then “turn and tear you to pieces”...

Jesus is protecting His disciples and followers against naivete...So, in verses 1-5 Jesus is protecting His disciples from being overly judgmental and here He is warning them against being overly naïve...

Friends, Jesus is saying to them and to us in verse 6 not to present the provisions of the kingdom of God...before people that will be completely evil against it... Do not present the provisions of the kingdom of God such as the holiness of God's word, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or even the imminent Return of Christ before people that will tear it into shreds..

But there is still a question with this interpretation? What about the Gospel? Should we present the Gospel to all people regardless of their attitude?

When you factor in all the passages such as the Great Commission and even earlier in the Sermon on the Mount such as Matthew 5:14-16, when you factor in all these text...Jesus seems not to be restricting us from sharing the Gospel but rather restricting us from sharing the Gospel with naivete...

Point #2: Share the Kingdom and Gospel without Naivete

When you present the Gospel and the provisions of the kingdom, first attempt to understand if they will attack it as a dog and pig or if they will at least hear it out...

So, let's talk about situational wisdom when it comes to sharing the Gospel and the provisions of the Kingdom...

Situational Wisdom:

Should we present the Gospel to someone who is asking about it? Absolutely
Should we present the Gospel to someone who seems disinterested but not militant?
Absolutely...

Should we present the Gospel to someone like Richard Dawkins and to others that seek to devour it and you for sharing it? Maybe Not...But should we do instead? If someone is completely against and militantly against hearing the Gospel let us change our strategy...

If you encounter a dog or pig, then remember Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father who is in heaven..."

Let us remember, that Biblically speaking the greatest witnessing tool is not what comes from our mouth but what comes from our feet...Our Greatest witnessing tool does not lie in the latest Gospel tracks or the newest strategies to reach millennials...

No, according to the Scripture, our greatest witnessing tool is our actions...It is how we live...It is the day to day decisions that we make that either shine the light of Christ or hide it under a bushel...

If someone is militant against the Gospel, do not seek to find the cleverest way to share the Gospel but rather share the Gospel with your life and over time those militant against the Gospel will be then open to the Words and the Truth of the Gospel which we share...

Even the hardest of hearts can be softened and believe in the Gospel...Think about Saul to Paul, or Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel...Those who seek to destroy the Gospel can still be won...

YOU:

Now is our time of application...We answer the question every week..."So what? How does this passage truly apply to my life?"

Based on this passage I'd like to give you three practical insights to our daily lives...

Based upon Matthew 7:1-5

Rather than noticing the speck of saw dust in another's eye...

Insight #1 Notice or Examine Own Imperfections... - Before you look for other's

imperfections and issues rather look for your own imperfections and issues...Because unless we first realize our own brokenness and sinfulness...Unless we notice our own imperfections and inconsistencies then we will never extend grace and love to another...

It's hard to put make up on while you are looking at someone else...It is hard to work on one's self while looking at others...

Let's us be honest, it is often hard to notice your own imperfections...Sometimes the tree in our eye blinds us so much we can't even see it...So, if you want to notice your own imperfections...Then I am sure your spouse will be glad to tell you...

Seriously, if you want to know the tree in your eye...Go ask a spouse, go ask a best friends, go ask your elders or pastor...Because listen friends, without noticing your own imperfections then we will never be able to perform insight #2...

Insight #2: Extend Grace- After one notices their own imperfections, then we must extend grace to others

Extend grace to others...Grace is essentially undeserved favor...Yes we are all broken and many of us may not deserve "grace" from another person...But if one has a clear picture of one's own imperfections then we are much more likely to extend grace to another...

Transition: Then insight #3 based upon Matthew 7:6-

Insight #3: Cherish Kingdom Promises- Cherish the kingdom of heaven so much that we do not throw it before someone to get devoured or trampled but rather we meditate on the scriptures and the promises of God so much that it changes the way we behave...Ultimately shining the light of the Gospel to even the militant through our actions...

WE:

Friends, let us be as Christians marked by grace and truth...Let us be Christians that share the Gospel with the inquisition and determination to win even the militant with kindness and action...

Because the people of this world are watching us...Let us as I have heard so many times..."Let us kill them with kindness..."

(Pray)