

Is Christianity Judgmental? #3

Matthew 7:1-6; Proverbs 15:31-32

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From our text, Jesus teaches that there are two truths about judging others that are at opposite ends to one another. First, Jesus condemns all of our sinful judging of others when He commands, “Judge not” i.e. “Stop judging sinfully” (Matthew 7:1). Second, Jesus approves our judging others in certain circumstances when He commands, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6). How can this second command be obeyed if we make no judgment as to when people act like dogs and swine? People that are behaving like dogs and swine do not go around with signs on their foreheads. We will only know by judging their behavior by God’s Word.

Jesus is in no way contradicting what He had previously prohibited by way of sinful judging, but now He makes clear that all judging of others is not necessarily sinful judging. Christ does not mean for this to be viewed by us as the opportunity we have been waiting for—finally we can judge others by calling them dogs or pigs. We can finally unleash all of our vindictive bitterness toward people who act like dogs and pigs. Dear ones, that would not be righteous judgment, but sinful judgment proceeding not from the right standard (God’s Word), nor from the right motive (love for God and neighbor), nor from the right goal (God’s glory).

Exercising this righteous judgment from our text today will require much wisdom on our parts to know when people are behaving like dogs/pigs. The outline for Matthew 7:1-6 that we are following is: (1) The Command to Stop Judging (Matthew 7:1a); (2) Two Reasons to Stop Judging (Matthew 7:1b-5); (3) Two Commands That Require Judging (Matthew 7:6).

III. Two Commands That Require Judging (Matthew 7:6).

A. In this verse there are Two Commands and Two Results.

1. **Two Commands in the Form of Prohibitions (“GIVE NOT that which is holy to dogs, NEITHER CAST YE your pearls before swine”).**

a. **“Give not that which is holy to dogs.”**

(1) Jesus did not forbid all judgment in the previous verses. In fact in Matthew 7:5, He preaches first to remove the beam from our own eye (i.e. judge ourselves and our own sins), AND THEN we will see clearly to remove the mote (the piece of sawdust) from the eye of others (i.e. judge/correct the sin of our neighbor out of love for him).

(2) But what if your neighbor will not allow you to remove the mote from their eye even after removing the beam from your own eye? What if they resent you for even suggesting it? What if they show great hostility and contempt for any instruction in doctrine or godliness or for any reproof for some error/sin that they have embraced? What if they spew forth the venom of threats, anger, and violence? What does Jesus teach that we should do? What Jesus commands us to do is stated in the form of two commands in Matthew 7:6 (“Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine”). That is the import of this verse and its connection to the previous verses.

(3) In the first command, **what is not to be given?** “That which is holy.” This language takes us back to the Old Testament where anything or anyone that was set apart unto the Lord for His use was declared to be holy (whether the tabernacle and all of its furniture, whether the priests that served the Lord, whether the sacrifices offered on the altar, whether the congregation of God’s people, or whether the Sabbath and other holy days appointed by God). Thus, in the language of the Old Testament it would be a sacrilege and desecration before God to take a holy sacrifice and to give it to unclean animals (like

wild dogs). In this context that which is holy refers to the judging, correction, and reproof of Matthew 7:5; for it is the truth of God's Word that is found in the reproof that is called holy (set apart to God for His holy use). Is that how you receive correction (Proverbs 15:31-32)? Jesus says it is holy.

(4) **To whom is that which is holy not to be given according to Jesus?** To the dogs. Dogs in the ancient world were not domesticated pets, but were mean, vicious scavengers that hunted and haunted in packs like wolves or coyotes. There are those who act like untamed dogs in tearing apart the truth of Jesus Christ that is taught in God's Word that is brought to them for their reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Thus, just as it would be a great offense to God to take His sacrifice from the altar and throw it to dogs to tear apart and devour, so likewise Jesus teaches that to give reproof, correction or instruction in righteousness to those who act like vicious dogs in tearing God's truth apart is desecrating that which is holy.

(5) Jesus is not saying that we ought to stop praying for those who hate and tear apart God's truth. God even shows His unfathomable mercy to those who act like dogs (the Persecuting Saul became by God's grace the Apostle Paul). Continue to pray for those who act like wild dogs in hating the truth of Christ, but do not force it down their throats. This was practiced by Jesus and the apostles in certain cases (Matthew 10:14; Acts 18:5-6; Romans 10:1). So Jesus is saying that when others viciously attack the truth with a hatred or when it is clear that a family member, friend, co-worker, or stranger does not want to hear the truth from Scripture, then don't force feed them. Forcing the truth will only antagonize and draw out that vicious dog-like attitude toward that which is holy (Proverbs 9:7-9; Proverbs 15:12). How often do we respond to correction from others acting like a wild dog. We will not be corrected. We become defensive, easily offended, and attack what is given to us by way of criticism. One who will carefully listen to criticism and not go into attack mode, but will seek the wisdom and understanding of the Lord in his/her response truly evidences a new heart.

b. **"Neither cast ye your pearls before swine."**

(1) Whereas wild dogs are noted for their viciousness, swine are noted for their filthiness in wallowing in the mud. Whereas to act like a dog is to attack the truth of biblical doctrine that is holy, to act like a pig is to live in the immoral filth, wickedness, and corruption of the world.

(2) Just as one who casts a pearl of great price into a pig's pen will find that the pig prefers its filth to the priceless pearl, so will one who is mired in the wicked living and moral slop that is portrayed so often on TV and in movies. Sadly, Hollywood (rather than Scripture) is the standard of most people's character/lives. No matter how many priceless pearls you cast before a pig to coax it out of its corruption, the pig will grunt as if the pearl is worthless.

(3) So are those to whom you may bring the gospel of Jesus Christ or the reproofs of life. They love their immoral filth more than God and His good and holy commandments. The Word of truth not only sets us free from hatred of the truth, but also sets us free from the love of the corruption of this world and the lusts of the flesh. The pig is addicted to its filth and mud—it loves to wallow in it. May the Lord deliver us by His Word and Spirit from a love of the filth in this world. May we see it as Jesus sees it—as filth. And may we see His holiness and righteousness as He sees it—a pearl of great price. What you watch for entertainment will reveal whether you love the filth or the pearl.

(4) Should you continue to try and beat the door down and open the windows to those who love to live in darkness? Should you continue to throw the priceless pearls of Christ's purity and the promise He makes to remove the filthy heart and to give a clean heart to those who are willfully mired in their addictions, lusts, worldliness, and self-worship? Jesus says that there is an appropriate time to make a righteous judgment in not casting Christ's priceless pearls of purity in the gospel and in His commandments before them. To do so only tends to make them hate the holiness of Christ more and more. Having heard the truth and rejected it, what they need is the effectual work of God's Spirit in bringing a new heart. There is a time to speak, and there is a time to be silent and pray (Ecclesiastes 3:7). None of us can talk

or preach someone who is obstinate in error or wickedness into the kingdom of Christ. We must understand that our part is to sow the seed by speaking the truth in love. It is God's sovereign work to bring forth the seed to harvest.

2. **Two Results ("lest they trample them under feet, and turn again and rend you").**

a. **"Lest they trample them under feet".**

(1) This would be the result of casting pearls before swine who love their filth—they will snort at the pearls and may even take it up in their mouth but will spit it out. They do not know, love, or appreciate the value of these pearls of God's wisdom. That is exactly the outcome of those who are family members, friends, strangers who think it is just great to live for themselves and what they can see in this world—they will trample upon and bury the glorious pearl that they can be pardoned and set free by Christ from their addictions, sins, and lusts that have enslaved them.

(2) Have you treated the pearl of great price—Christ's grace, mercy, forgiveness, faith, repentance, love, and holiness— as of great value or of little value? How do you tell? Are you trampling upon it and burying it, or are you holding it and treasuring it as of infinite value? Do you receive correction and criticism, or do you trample it?

b. **"and turn again and rend you".**

(1) After the pig tramples the pearl as something worthless, Jesus gives another result: it will turn on you and rend you. After it has attacked the reproof and correction of life from God's Word, it will then turn again to rend and tear you (verbally and bodily).

(2) This refers to the persecution that often follows from those who hate to be disturbed from their filth and darkness.

B. How often have we acted like pigs in attacking a family member or friend who dare disturb us from our worldly lusts and pleasures by casting that pearl of God's Word our direction?

1. We have resented it. We have retaliated in anger. If you are truly converted, you will hate it when you respond like a pig rather than responding like a sheep in following Christ.

2. We have all responded like pigs to the truth, but the sheep of Christ repent of it and turn to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. That pig-like response is the old man that has been crucified with Christ. However, if we are Christ's sheep, we will hate the remnants of the pig and love the nature of the sheep in trusting, loving, and following Christ in taking up our cross and denying ourselves daily. If we are Christ's sheep we will want to spend time with our Good Shepherd, for to spend time with Him in His Word and in prayer is to become like Him. If we are Christ's sheep we will love righteousness and hate the filth of this world. We will separate ourselves from that which is filthy. We will cleanse ourselves of it when we fall into it through the Pearl of Great Price—our Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

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