



The Gospel of Matthew

6:25-7:6

St. George Adult
Sunday School Class

May 4, 2008

^{ESV} Matthew 6:31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Previously, Jesus had contrasted the way Gentiles prayed, "And when you pray, do not...as the Gentiles do....for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." vv.7-8. "Gentile" is anyone outside the community of God's people. They are the ones who set their heart on possessions and security for they do not know nor trust in God, and life is very uncertain. In place of faith they exert themselves in seeking to secure their life.

"strive for"
or "run
after"

Vs. 33 is the climatic verse of this section of Scripture (6:19-34). "Make it your priority to find" God's kingdom and God's way of living your life. The disciple of Jesus has a different orientation, a higher purpose in life than those who do not know God. "Righteousness" is used in Matthew to mean "living the way God requires". Our deepest wish and resolve is to live God's way. To seek his kingdom is to resolve to live under God's direction and control. This is the disciple's priority and he/she can trust God as Father to supply the basic needs of life so that he/she need not be diverted from what is most important.

“Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.” I Tim. 6: 6-8

What about the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel?

^{ESV} Matthew 6:34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

This is not about avoiding planning for the future; it is about avoiding worry about the future since such worry is fruitless.

"Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

A Jewish prayer called the Amida, which seeks from God a good harvest, states, "Whoever has a morsel in his basket and says What shall I eat tomorrow? is among those of little faith."

► Money, wealth, and possessions have at least three primary purposes in Scripture:

A. To give appropriate care for one's own family and prevent them from becoming a burden to others (I Thess. 4:11-12; II Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 5:8)

B. To help those who are in need, especially the family of faith (Proverbs 19:18; Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-27; II Cor. 8:1-15; Gal. 6:7-10; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:3-7)

C. To encourage and support God's work in spreading the gospel of Christ both at home and around the world (I Cor. 9:3-14; Phil. 4:14-19; I Tim. 5:17-18).

But they are never to be the objective or driving force of our life pushing God's kingdom and righteousness to "second" place.

^{ESV} Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.³ 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?⁴ 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?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.

One of the most quoted but misapplied and misinterpreted passages of Scripture.

This is not a prohibition of the use of our critical and discerning faculties, as vs.6, 15-20;10:11-15; 16:6-12, and 18:15-17 make clear. Christians must discern/judge.

“Judge not” here is in reference to a Christian being critical of someone else’s failings, sins, behavior.

Judging other Christians is a contradiction of the 5th Beatitude and the 5th petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

“Therefore, you are without excuse, whoever you are, when you judge someone else. For on whatever grounds you judge another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things.” Romans 2:1

Principle of reciprocity: if you do not forgive, God will not forgive you; if you want to become a judge of others, God will use your standards/criteria that you used on others to judge you. “For judgment is merciless for the one who has shown no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment.” James 2:13

“What right do you have to judge your neighbor?” James 4:12

7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.³ 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?⁴ 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?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.

The critical issue is the lack of self-criticism. It is a law of human nature that we undervalue the size of our own faults and overvalue the size of others. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart." Proverbs 21:2

Sometimes we can have the eye of an eagle when it comes to seeing the faults of others but blind as a bat when it comes to seeing our own.

Remember, we all have "blind spots" which others can see but we cannot.

This is a metaphor from the market place; the same scale or weight you use for measuring out some commodity will also be the one used for you. Again, the principle of reciprocity.

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The scenario is intentionally ridiculous, to the point of being humorous.

The metaphor may have come from Jesus own background as a carpenter's son.

The contrast between the "speck" and the "log" expresses the insignificance of the accused's problem compared with the fault-finder's own shortcomings. The fault-finder cannot possibly help anyone else because his spiritual vision is impaired by his own "sins/faults" which he does not see or refuses to see.

"Hypocrite" because he judges others by standards he does not apply to himself. None are so blind as those who refuse to see. This Christian was unaware of his the inconsistency of his behavior (judging), note "but do not notice" in vs.3.

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Note the “first” and “then”; the Christian who wants to judge and correct another Christian should first examine himself. He/She needs to bring God’s healing and forgiveness to his own sins and failings before he can even know or see what is wrong in other disciples’ lives.

The Greek word for “notice” in vs. 3 simply means “to see” but the one in vs. 5 means “to see clearly” and more importantly, it will be for the purpose of helping others, not hurting or condemning them.

The best healers are the wounded ones.

“After self-criticism takes place, relationships are based on redemptive empathy rather than condemning detachment.”

Why We Should Not Judge One Another

- ▶ 1. We take for ourselves a prerogative that belongs only to God. Only God is qualified to judge. "There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and destroy. But who are you that you judge your neighbor?" (James 4:12). "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls." (Ro.14:4)
- ▶ 2. Our knowledge is always limited; we know only in part and never fully understand all the issues involved nor the motives of the person. If we cannot know the motives or a person's heart, then how can we judge?
- ▶ 3. We are seldom impartial and our judging often arise out of impure motives rather than love for God or for the person we are judging. "Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins."
- ▶ 4. Judging is hypocritical; there is usually a double standard. We rationalize our acts or attitudes while condemning those same or similar acts or attitudes in another person. "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things." Ro.2:1-2

^{ESV} 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.

This is a proverbial statement which points out that Christians are to be discerning about what is good/bad, right/wrong. We have to make evaluations, even about people.

The statement is clearly a mismatch: sacred things given to dogs and pearls cast to pigs. See Proverbs 11:22 for another example. Typical of wisdom sayings.

What are the "holy things", "pearls" and who are the "pigs" and "dogs"?

"dogs" in Palestine were half-wild animals, scavengers, despised and often not fed and thus their hunger was proverbial.

"pigs" were regarded as unclean animals, though prized by the Gentiles as a source of food.

We can only speculate as to their reference but it would be safe to say it refers to those outside the community of faith, nonbelievers.

But what about the "holy things" and "pearls"? They refer to those things that are sacred and precious in value. Here, probably the deeper teachings of the Christian faith.

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Possible Interpretation

Some teachings of the Church are for “insiders” , those who committed followers of Christ. To offer these teachings to those “outside” is to lay them open to abuse and to put yourself in harm’s way. Some are incapable of receiving God’s word and will not only misunderstand it but will respond in a hostile way. Be discerning!

Example of Jesus: Matt.13:36-52; 15:15-20. Jesus did not try to explain all of his teachings to the crowds; some were reserved only for the disciples.