

40-07-01.wpd—Clear Vision in Kingdom Living
judgmentalism, discernment, attitude, confession
Matthew 7:1-6

Only with our eyes on the King can we discern where to draw the line.

INTRODUCTION:

–Edwin Markham's poem "Outwitted": He drew a circle that shut me out // Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout // But love and I had the wit to win // We drew a circle that took him in. The virtue of a circle is where it draws the line, and in Kingdom living, only the King can tell us where the line should be drawn.

–The part of the Sermon on the Mount that is the **text** for this sermon contains one of the most popularly quoted phrases in the KJVBible: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." The principle behind it is not that judgment is forbidden, but that judgment belongs to the King, and only the King can give us the ability to make "good judgments" about ideas and about people. **HOM.idea.**

I. Jesus Is Giving Us a Paradox About Discernment

- A. [A paradox is two truths that seem to be contradictory.] First Jesus says not to judge people, then He tells us to make a judgments— v.6, Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces. How so?
- B. Jesus was using a literary style found in wisdom literature from the OT. [Prov 26:4-5, Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes. (Both only seem to be opposite: Answer a fool the way a fool answers us, and we'll be acting like the fool, but if we don't answer a fool by addressing the nature of his folly, he'll remain self-satisfied in his foolishness.)].
- C. The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" gave us independence from God in deciding right and wrong, but its fruit also crippled us from understanding God's **paradoxes**, which are truths about reality that many times must first be accepted by our faith before they can be plainly understood by our reason.
 1. Reason tells us that $1+1=2$, but God's description of marital love between a man and woman says that $1+1=1$ (which is similar to the description of the loving relationship of the Three Persons in the Triune Godhead: $1+1+1=1$).
 2. Math can teach us about the right or wrong relationship between numerical values, but mathematics can't properly inform us in

the realm of human values, which is exactly what a materialistic view of life has tried to do in our society.

TRANS: v.1-2, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." If math can't help us measure correctly, how can we discern when it's time to speak up or to be still? **Only with our eyes on the King can we discern where to draw the line** between right and wrong, correct and incorrect, and that is the key to understanding the paradox in these verses. And the first principle is this:

II. God Wants Our Discernment to Start With Ourselves

- A. There's humor in hyperbole— v.3 (NASB), "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?" [I remember laughing at this, when I was a kid, trying to imagine what it would look like, turning around in a store and knocking everthing off the shelves.] I think Jesus meant this to be silly and serious at the same time:
 1. The contrast is hilarious! It helps us to laugh at ourselves for how silly we look trying to discern problems in others when we're blind to our own.
 2. But the disparity between a speck of dust and a log is so great that it shows us the serious impossibility of having clear discernment about others when we have not practiced it with ourselves.
- B. If we need help for a speck of dust in our eye, what kind of help do we need for a log? We have to have the help of the King, Whose vision is clear, if we want **clear vision in Kingdom living**.
 1. To help others rid themselves of faults in their lives is a gracious service, but not always filled with grace, unless we have a clear experience of God's grace in ridding our own lives of faults.
 2. The point is not to avoid judging because we are inadequate for the task, but God wants us to stop hypocrisy— v.5, You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (He wants us to help others, not with our own measurement of "good and evil," but with our own experience of His grace in Kingdom living.)

TRANS: [I already had a back problem when I entered the nursing field, so when I used to take care of people in the ER with back pain, I had a different attitude from

that of a few of my co-workers who acted as if these patients were pretending their pain to be worse than it really was. If given a choice, from whom do you think they would choose to get their care? People will be open to our help with the faults in their lives, if they see in us the effect of God's grace in getting rid of your own. **But** there are others we cannot help, and that's why...

III. God Wants Discernment to Be Guided By Him

- A. These are strong words— **v.6a**, *Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs*. It's as if Jesus expects us to already know the kind of people these are, that we've already made a judgment.
1. This is dangerous territory, because we can be *mistaken*. Making this type of evaluation about people can never come from our own independent "knowledge of good and evil." We must have our eyes fully on the King to see clearly in this kind of discernment.
 2. What is the key element Jesus wants us to discern. I think it, again, has to do with grace, but NOT the grace we're trying to share with them from our own *spiritual treasure*. It's about their receptivity to loving grace that God wants to share with them.
- B. Grace is free, but not cheap. It cost the very life of God's Son for God to give it, and He does not want His grace to be spurned:
1. If we sense resistance in those with whom we are try to share the Gospel or a story of God's grace in our lives, it's time to turn our eyes upon Jesus. Sometimes (not *always*) I think we'll see Him silently and sadly shaking His head "no" in certain situations.
 2. If we do know the King's will, and try to keep sharing, then it's like tossing beautiful, expensive pearls to pigs who will only trample them under their feet. By continuing to share what is sacred and holy to us with those who resist God's grace, they may turn on us viciously, just as a *mad dog* would do.

CONCLUSION:

–**Kingdom living calls for clear vision, and clear vision comes by keeping our eyes on Jesus**. Remember, life in God's Kingdom is not about us, but about obedience to our King. When we decide to follow Jesus, we must spit out the fruit of an independent "knowledge of good and evil," and be led by the King's guidance in discerning where to draw the lines in life.

Matthew 7:1-6 (NIV)

1“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

2For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

4How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

5You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

6“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.