

Sunday School
May 17, 2020

-Read: Matthew 7:1-6, 12. These verses all focus on our interactions with others.

-Questions to consider and discuss:

- Vv. 1-4 deal with judgment. Jesus states that the level of judgment that we levy against someone else will be imposed on us by God (much like Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:14-15 that God will forgive you your trespasses if you forgive others).
 - Jesus employs some very intentional hyperbole, using the imagery of a speck of dust in a person's eye, and a plank of wood coming out of a person's eye (a pretty humorous image). The hyperbole is simple, but effective. Jesus is saying that you need to make your own bed before you try and fix other people's problems. If your life affairs aren't in order, who are you to give someone life advice or tell them that they are living in a sinful manner (especially if you do the same thing!)?
 - Read: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. Not all judgment is bad. We are called to correct fellow believers (but not in a hypocritical or overly harsh manner). We are *not* called to cast judgment on those outside the Body of Christ (leave that to God).
- Dogs were considered by 1st-Century AD Jews to be unclean, nasty mongrels (they certainly didn't let them sleep in their beds!). Pigs were unclean according to the ritual purity laws of the Old Testament. It would not be uncommon for a Jew to refer to an enemy or outsider as a "dog" or a "pig". Pearls symbolize something of great value, especially the gospel message.
 - While we want to treat others well and make honest attempts to evangelize and show the love of Jesus Christ, there can come a point where the person being changed is you (and not for the better). Some people are just nasty, mean, and vindictive. *You* are also valuable, much like pearls, and God doesn't want you just getting run over and trampled, sacrificing yourself to try and win someone over. You have to know when it's time to move on.
 - "Believers are to be merciful, forgiving, and slow to judge, yet they should wisely discern the true character of people and not indefinitely continue proclaiming the gospel to those who adamantly reject it, so that they can move on and proclaim the gospel to others" (ESV Study Bible, 1833).
- V. 12 is frequently called the "Golden Rule".
 - Many ancient cultures have some form of the Golden Rule. However, the sayings from those other cultures are almost always phrased from a negative perspective: "*Don't* do to others what you *wouldn't* want done to you." That makes perfect sense, right? Don't hurt somebody if you don't want to be hurt. However, Jesus' teaching goes above and beyond the teachings of the world. He says that we need to *do* to other people the things that we want *done* to us. That's very proactive. That means going out of your way to show love and compassion, taking care of people who are marginalized or on the outside looking in.
 - Read James 4:17 & Micah 6:8. It's not enough just to leave other people alone, mind our own business, and not intentional harm people. We actually have to seek to do good to our fellow human beings.

- What is one takeaway from this teaching from the Sermon on the Mount that you can apply this week?