

Matthew 7:1-6

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[0 : 00] Good morning, my name is Mike. This thing seems to be cutting out a little bit. My name is Mike, and I'm one of the elders here at Shoreline. We're so glad that you're all here this morning.

A study done several years ago found that drowsy driving causes one million crashes, 500,000 injuries, and 8,000 deaths each year in the US.

Just one sleepless night can impair performance as much as, get this, an alcohol level of 0.1%. So that's beyond the legal limit.

Rob's going to help me out here. Sleep deprivation also impairs judgment, similar to alcohol. As the prefrontal cortex, I'm no scientist, but the area near the front of our brain responsible for logical reasoning and complex thought is particularly vulnerable to sleep deprivation.

Now, I'm sure at one time or another, probably everyone here that can drive has experienced driving when you are extremely tired. You, you know, slap your face, or you roll down the window to get the air going through, or you blast Life is a Highway by Rascal Flatts, or I feel like classics maybe, Ain't No Mountain High, or better still, maybe the latest Hillsong Worship album.

[1 : 21] Basically, you do whatever it takes to stay awake, right? I've been, had to drive, you know, from Chicago to Ohio for college, and there's a lot of flat, boring roads in the Midwest, and I've driven from here to Chicago a couple times, times where I was definitely doing whatever I could to stay awake.

And this, this next part, this is free here. I, the best trick I ever learned on how to stay awake is from, some of us know Brian Bean, and his, his trick was this. You hold, it's best if you, if you put your car on cruise control, so you have both legs available to you, you hold the steering wheel, and then lift your legs in the air, so you're basically doing like an ab workout.

I promise you, like that will keep you awake, because your abs are going to be burning, you're not going to fall asleep. So you, you don't fall asleep, and you get an ab workout at the same time. So, next time you're tired and you're driving, try that out.

It, it will definitely help. And, and so just like sleep deprivation impairs our performance and our judgment, sin does the same thing, right? See, when there's sin in our lives, our ability to see clearly and to make right judgments is negatively affected.

And, and so that's what we're going to be talking about today. We're going to be talking about making right judgments. Now, a few weeks ago, summarizing the portion of the Sermon on the Mount that we've been in, Pastor Dave said this, Jesus tells us that though we are the light of the world, we must be careful where we shine that light.

[2 : 51] It's not a spotlight on us. We must not practice our Christian faith in order to make ourselves look good. We are salt and light to the degree that we point to Jesus, not ourselves.

If we use our faith to serve ourselves, to make ourselves look good, who's really being worshipped there? And I thought that was a very helpful word for our passage today.

And so let's get back into the text. We're going to look in at Matthew 7, verses 1 and 2. So now, is Jesus, is he talking about suspending all judgment, period?

Now, some have taken what he says here to actually mean that. And many people like to use this verse to say, don't judge me. You know, they feel justified in saying that because of what Jesus says right here.

Like, is that the way that this text is supposed to be taken? It's so important for us to understand what context Jesus is talking about and which we are not to judge, right? Or what kind of judging we are not to exercise.

[4 : 03] So first I want to note what Jesus is not saying when he says judge not. He's not saying don't think critically, okay? He's not telling you to give up your ability to make critical assessments of

people and of situations.

We don't have to go far to understand how that's true. If you look down at verse 5 in your Bible, he says, 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.

So we're going to talk about this more later, but if we were to spend all critical thinking and assessment, then we wouldn't have a way of performing the precise work of helping our fellow brother and sisters to see clearly.

Okay? And even one verse later, verse 6, and we're going to talk more about this later too. But Jesus is calling us to make an assessment of people who continually reject the treasure of the gospel. This requires critical thinking, right? It requires using judgment and discernment. And then even further in the chapter, verses 15 through 20, where Jesus talks about false prophets, he's calling us to beware of false prophets, and that requires making an assessment about them by their fruit.

[5 : 11] Right? So similarly, this would be impossible to do if we were to suspend our critical thinking. So Jesus is not saying don't think critically, okay? He's also not saying don't confront sin.

He's not telling you to overlook the sin of other believers, to stop holding one another accountable. And how do we know this? Again, going to verse 5, we find some evidence. So removing the speck from my brother's eye means I actually have to confront him for his sin, right?

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul urges the Corinthians to actually judge one another. He says this, Now he's speaking in the context of the sin of sexual immorality within the church, and he's calling believers to judge those who willfully continue on in their sexual sin.

He wants us to confront one another and to plead for repentance. And then Galatians 6, 1 and 2, Again, we see the exhortation to hold one another accountable for sin.

Restoring believers from their sin involves confrontation necessarily, right? It involves speaking the truth of God's word directly into their lives. So Jesus isn't saying don't use critical judgment and discernment, and he isn't saying don't confront other believers for their sins.

[6 : 44] So what is he saying? And to answer this, I think we should also consider what we've been learning in the Sermon on the Mount so far. And that is one of the main thrusts of the Sermon on the Mount, and we've been driving this home, I think, is that the motivations of our heart matter, right?

That in his kingdom, we ought to live our lives with this heart-deep righteousness. And so here he's applying this in our attitude towards others. So in this passage, Jesus is calling us to hearts of love and care towards our brother, rather than hearts of criticism and condemnation.

And so that's our first point today. Toward others, care, don't condemn. Now what Jesus has in view here, what he's forbidding, is the kind of fault-finding, sin-magnifying judgment that our human nature loves to do, right?

We love to do this. The harsh, destructive, hyper-critical, condemning judgment of others that we do in our pride and selfishness. It's a judging that puts others down and then builds ourselves up.

So that's the kind of judging that Jesus is forbidding here. And I think we all know the difference between this kind of judging and the kind that is motivated and metered out in love, right?

[8 : 05] I think we all know the difference. But in case we don't or just don't want to admit to ourselves that we do, here are some tests to determine if we possess this sort of hyper-critical, condemning spirit towards others.

I think this will be up on the screen. The first one, do I tend to think the worst of others? To see the negative sides of the people around me, you know, never giving anyone the benefit of the doubt? Do I mostly point out the faults of others rather than their strengths? Are you someone that mostly criticizes rather than encourages and build up?

Do I keep a tally book of wrongs? You know, like you're keeping count like, oh, well, you've said this seven times and I've only done that six times, so I've got a leg up on you, you know? Are you someone that holds grudges easily and for a long time?

Like you just can't get over something and it affects the way that you treat somebody because you have that in the back of your mind and you haven't forgiven them and so now every time you interact with them, you don't show them the love that you should be showing them.

[9 : 14] How are we doing so far? How about this? Am I constantly comparing myself to others? Do I reduce people's lives to choices they made in moment decisions?

You know, like the entirety of someone's life, you boil down to this one bad thing they did towards you, and so now you view them on that one thing. You know, do I make sweeping generalizations about others, you know, saying you always or they always?

Do I focus on things that are not very essential and make them essential? Right? Like we take things that really in the grand scheme of things just don't matter and then we blow them out of proportion like they're the biggest thing in the world.

I'm probably the only one that's done that, right? So if you answer yes to any or all these questions, it's likely that your attitude towards others is one of hypercritical condemnation rather than the love and care that Christ calls us to.

So it's likely that you're doing the thing that Jesus is here forbidding. And at a deeper level, what's going on when we make these kind of judgments towards others is we're actually trying to play the role of God.

[10:25] There is only one who is capable of making righteous judgments, right? It's the one who doesn't judge, as it says in 1 Samuel, based on outward appearances but on the heart.

He's the only one that can see down to the heart level of anybody. And he's the only one that can make right and true judgments. And all of us are going to face his judgment someday.

Paul says in Romans, So we trust him to do that.

We trust the good and perfect God to judge good and perfectly. That's one of the things Jesus is getting at in verse 2. And see, we're all going to be judged by the judge.

And as John Stott put it, if we pose as judges, we cannot plead ignorance of the law we claim to be able to administer. You follow? Or as Paul says, this is helpful in Romans 2, 1.

[11:37] And I think the principle Jesus says here that with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, I think we see that that is true not just in an ultimate sense but also in a present earthly sense.

I think we see both of those. Because in a practical way, we see how a biting, condemning, hypercritical demeanor towards others is met back with the same, right? Like people are going to respond back to us in the same way, which just continues to cause division and divisiveness.

John Calvin put it this way. Our Lord means that there will be no want of executioners to punish the injustice and slander of men with equal bitterness or severity.

And if men shall fail to receive punishment in this world, those who have shown undue eagerness in condemning their brethren will not escape the judgment of God.

Now this is a sobering reality. And it ought to be a sobering motivation to love and to forgive and to exercise generosity towards others rather than destructive, condemning judgment.

[12:57] And an even greater motivation than that is that God has every right to judge us for our sin, right? But he chose instead to lavish his love on us by sending Christ to take that judgment upon himself.

And so instead of divine wrath, we get divine love. Amen? Give one more opportunity. Instead of divine condemnation, we get divine care. Amen? So may we extend love and care towards others rather than condemnation and criticism.

So that's the first point. Toward others, care, don't condemn. Now in these next few verses, Jesus provides for us the well-known comical example of a person with basically a sequoia sticking out of their face, trying to take a piece of sawdust out of the eye of another.

So let's read verses 3 through 5. 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? Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when there is a log in your own eye?

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. Now I don't think we need to think too deeply about this to understand what's going on, because I think we see this at play all the time.

[14:21] We're constantly pointing out the minor faults in others, all the while ignoring our own glaring, obnoxious sin. Now as long as that glaring, obnoxious sin goes undealt with in our lives, then we don't have the clarity of vision to be able to help our brother with his sin, right?

And we're also living in hypocrisy, because we're acting as if our lives are perfect, like we've got it all together, so let me help you out. You obviously don't have it all together like me. But instead, this is the attitude we need to have towards sin.

Execute, don't excuse. And that's the next point. Toward my sin, execute, don't excuse. Now in the fall, we talked from Colossians chapter 3 about putting to death the sin that exists within us, right? About ruthlessly making war against our sin nature, which constantly fights for control. Now how are you doing at that? Are you seeing victory over sin in your life?

Are you seeing the strongholds and the patterns of sin broken, right? Are you seeing that you're overcoming them in the power of the Spirit as you battle them? And can you say, as a former pastor of mine often said, I'm not who I could be, I'm not who I should be, but thank God I'm not who I was. [15:39] In other words, I'm being changed. I can see how my sin is being removed and I'm going from where I was to where, and I'm headed this direction, and even though I'm not perfect, I'm changing by the power of God.

Can you say that? Now if not, maybe it's because you're excusing your sin rather than fighting it. You're minimizing it rather than viewing it properly in light of God's perfect holiness.

And back in the fall, we talked about six steps to take in waging war against our sin. We won't go into any detail, but I just wanted to put them up there again. Step one was name it. And there's scripture references too if you want to write them down.

Naming our sin, repenting of our sin, and then claiming freedom from our sin, right? Romans 8, 1, there's therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We claim that. And step four, which we really hit on then, was renew your heart and mind by the Spirit and the Word, right?

As we delve into God's Word, as we spend time in prayer, the Spirit uses that to transform us, renew our minds and our hearts that work together so that we can live righteously. Point five was approach the Father's throne of grace, right?

[16:50] We need His help to overcome sin. We can't do it on our own. That's why Paul goes to great lengths to prove this in Romans. Finally, believe that victory over sin is yours in Christ.

God wants us to have faith that these things are true. He works through our faith. See, in this way, the deeds of our flesh are destroyed and the cataracts that cloud and blur our vision are removed. So then we can see clearly, right? Yet how often do we let the weeds of our sin go unattended and then in hypocrisy we tell others how awful their gardens look, right?

It would be like this. It would be like if the U.S. men's national soccer team was to criticize, you know, a team like Spain or Brazil or Portugal who just lost, right? If they were to criticize and say, well, you really should have done that and you should have done that and your passing was kind of poor.

For those that don't know, the U.S. didn't make it to the World Cup this year, right? Like, we're not really the ones to be telling Spain how to play soccer, but that's what we do, right? We all need to stop and evaluate and repent of the sin in our lives before we go confronting others about their sin.

[18:03] One commentator writes that this kind of hypocritical and hypercritical judgment is, he says, a very cheap way of attaining moral superiority.

That's exactly what we do, right? We minimize our sin. We maximize others' sin. And so we seek to elevate our standing. We seek to gain an advantage over them and appear more righteous than them.

Jonathan Edwards famously wrote a series of resolutions. I think there were like 70 of them. Really neat to read through. If you ever get a chance, you can Google it and they'll come up.

One pastor summarized a few of them in relation to this passage. It says this, Does that make sense?

Does that make sense? You know, sometimes we see the sin of others and we think, I would never do that. But you probably could, right? I mean, we're all liable to sin and to wander from the Lord and to get into things that we didn't think we were ever going to get into.

[19:19] And so we need to keep that in mind. It's not my strength that gives me righteousness. It's the strength of the Lord, right? And giving him the credit for that and realizing that without him, I'm just as likely to fall into sin.

So we need to see our sin first. So the classic example of a hypocritical judge is actually King David.

So if you could turn with me to 2 Samuel chapter 12. You can see I'm not making any of this up. I'm writing God's word. 2 Samuel chapter 12.

As you're turning there, the context here is that King David has coveted after a woman named Bathsheba, right? Committed adultery with her. Gotten her pregnant.

And then trying to cover up what he did, he calls her husband Uriah back from battle where David should have actually been. Back from battle. Tries to convince him to sleep with his wife to make it seem like it was his baby, not David's.

[20 : 24] And when he wouldn't do it, he sends Uriah to the front lines to a certain death, right? That's the context here. And then he allowed Bathsheba a period of mourning and then took her to be his wife.

So God sends Nathan the prophet to David. So 2 Samuel 12, 1-7. The Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.

The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.

Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guests who had come to him. But he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.

And what happens? David's mad, right? Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity.

[21 : 34] Nathan's response, You are the man, right? David was blinded to see that Nathan was actually talking about him, but David's sin was covering his view.

He couldn't see anything clearly, and it took an act of God literally to draw David down to his knees in repentance. Now, the great thing is that he got to use that for David to pen the greatest known prayer of repentance that we have, which is Psalm 51, in which David cries, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

And in Psalm 139, David prays, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Church, may these become our prayers, right? Seeking God's help to identify and destroy the sin within us. And that's the second point, that towards our sin, towards my sin, execute, not excuse. So when we care for others, rather than condemn, and then when we execute our sin, rather than excuse it, what's the result? And we see this in verse 5.

[22 : 51] So back to the text, Matthew 7, verse 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.

See, the result is that we are able to lovingly correct our fellow believers for their good and for God's glory. And that's the next point that we have here.

The result, lovingly correct for others' good. Now this is what we're called to as a church, as fellow believers in Christ. Not to sit idly by as believers around us, indulge in sin, but to lovingly confront them to turn from that sin, and live according to their profession of faith.

See, we're to help and encourage one another to grow in the new life that we have in Christ.

Hebrews 10, 20 forces, and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.

See, this is evident in Matthew 7 because in verse 5 there is an implication that we will take the speck out of our brother's eye, right? And consider the analogy that Jesus is using.

[24 : 02] The eye is a delicate and sensitive part of the body, right? Removing a little speck from the eye must be a very precise and delicate operation. Otherwise, it's going to do more harm than good.

Has anybody ever had like an eyelash stuck to their eyeball? You know? Like you wouldn't just like do like, if it's on your arm, you kind of just like brush it off like that. If you did that to your eye, I don't think that would feel very good.

I haven't tried that. Now how many of you wear contacts? Contacts wears, I wear contacts. We've got just a few. So for those that don't know, there's hydrogen peroxide in solution these days. It's like 3% hydrogen peroxide. And you have to have a special case to use it that like there's some sort of chemical reaction that goes on. Chris, you probably read a white paper about it, so you can tell us all about it later.

But the problem is, I'm actually meant to bring it in. Because there's like big red writing on it that says, Do not insert directly into eye. Do not use to wash your contact lenses off without special

case, whatever.

[25 : 07] Well, I must have been tired one night, and I wasn't thinking, and I put the hydrogen peroxide solution in a regular contact case at night. And I go in, you know, to put my contacts in in the morning, and like I didn't know what was about to hit me.

But I put the contact in, and like instantly I thought like my whole body was on fire, because it burned so badly. And then my eyes, like I can't get my eye open to like get it out, so it's just like staying in there.

It was horrible. Don't do that. Like do practical things to make sure you don't do that. I don't know what it is. Get rid of regular cases, or just don't buy it. Now, people use it because it like cleans your contacts better, and if you have sensitive eyes, it's good for you.

So, oh, there's that. And then, well, so that happened a few years ago, and I had to wear glasses for a few days. And then a few weeks ago, Brittany and I were in Florida, and I don't know, maybe just not part of the norm.

I had taken two travel-sized regular solution and like mixed them together. Apparently that's a no-no. I didn't know that. You shouldn't mix different brand solutions together, because then the same thing happened. And we didn't, I couldn't figure it out at first, because I'm like, well, I didn't use the hydrogen peroxide stuff.

[26 : 16] Don't mix regular solution together. But the point is like, we need to take extreme care of our eyes, right? Because they're sensitive. They're delicate. And in the same way, we need to use extreme caution when we're dealing with approaching brother, sister, and sin, right?

We don't just recklessly approach them and confront them. We do it when we have clear vision, and then we approach them with sensitivity, right? With the precision of a surgeon, right?

With love and with care and with wisdom and with discernment. Now, earlier we read from Galatians 6, 1 and 2. We're going to have it on the screen this time. Paul says, Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. You see, we are called to loving correction, right?

We're called to loving correction with our spouses, right? Now, before you get all excited, I'm like, yes, an opportunity to tell my wife or husband what he's been doing wrong. Don't forget the first half of this sermon, right? Like, don't forget that.

[27 : 31] We were just talking about how we approach one another with love and with care, and we were talking about how we execute our sin, right? We don't excuse our sin. And when we're in that frame of mind in the spirit, then we can approach our spouse, right?

Now, I was, this morning I was reading from Romans 12, and highly recommend reading through Romans 12, 13, and 14, like, regularly. I think I might start doing it.

There's so much practical wisdom there on how to act towards one another. I mean, I was just struck by the commands here. Verse 10 says, Love does no wrong to a neighbor.

Therefore, love is fulfilling of the law. That's in chapter 13. Going back, chapter 12, verse 10. I'm sorry. I think I got this all confused.

Yeah, verse 10, chapter 12. Love one another with brotherly affection. How about this? Outdo one another in showing honor. Chapter 14, Paul is talking about not passing judgment on one another.

[28 : 34] People were judging each other for the things they were eating and drinking. And Paul says, Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? See, they were despising one another. They weren't just holding one another accountable.

They were despising each other. And further down, he says, For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

In other words, you guys are making a big deal out of this eating and drinking stuff, but you need to be making a big deal about righteousness and peace and joy and being in the Spirit. That's what you need to make a big deal about.

And then he says, verse 19, So then, let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building. Now, if we keep all those things in mind, then we can approach one another in love, right?

So we're called to lovingly correct our spouses. And actually, I want to stop and I want to talk to husbands for a second, because I just want to commend the husbands and exhort you.

[29 : 36] You are the leaders of the household, right? And you should be the first one to show that you're not just excusing your sin. You should be the first one to confess your sins to the Lord and then confess it to your spouse or to your children or to whomever and to lead spiritually in the relationship and then show your spouse that you love and care for her.

And when you do approach her, she's going to see that you've been destroying your sin and you've been on your knees before the Lord and it might be more well received and you can care and love for one another in that.

But we need men of the church that are going to fight their sin and they're going to stand and be the leaders of the household that God is calling them to be.

Community group members. We have a great opportunity within our community groups. We like to put plugs in for community groups. Join a community group if you're not in one. It's a great thing for a lot of reasons.

We'd love to talk more. If anyone's not plugged into a group, you can see me or Matt or Jordan.

Jordan, raise your hand. Or Dave with the shorts. But we have a great opportunity to kind of do life together and to hold one another accountable.

[30 : 48] And so if you know that there's somebody in a community group who isn't seeing something, right? Who is living in sin and doesn't see it, you have an obligation actually, if you love them, to approach them and confront them for their sin.

We do this with family members, right? Believing coworkers. Also, leaders of the church. As elders, as deacons, other church leaders, your community group leader, we need you to actually hold us accountable as well, right?

We're not superior to you. We are just as reliant on the Lord as anybody here. And so you're actually called as well to hold us accountable.

We need that. We have blind spots. And Lord knows we're not perfect at all. And so we should be holding our church leadership accountable as well and confronting them in love and in care.

And you see, so in this way, we help one another along the process of sanctification. And by bringing loving correction to our fellow believers, you know, devoid of selfish desires, but for their good, we reflect our Savior.

[32 : 02] Now, it's not usually comfortable to confront others, right? Sometimes it's awkward. And we, you know, we ask ourselves different things like, well, what if they don't like me after this? Or, you know, what if I lose a relationship over this?

It's awkward and uncomfortable sometimes, but God calls us to it, right? And for the person who needs the correction, it may be difficult to receive at first. But it's rescuing them from the greater pain they might experience by leaving that foreign speck in their eye, right?

By letting their sin go unattended and then cause destruction in their lives. And see, Jesus fully understands the severity of sin. And he fully knows the pain and the brokenness that results from sinful choices.

And out of magnificent love, he chose to take on the immeasurable discomfort of the cross and of bearing our sin on him so we would not have to.

Now, if you're here this morning and you haven't embraced Jesus Christ by faith, you haven't entered into a personal relationship with him to receive this new life, you're unable to do the things that we're talking about.

[33 : 11] You're unable to choose selfless care over hypocritical condemnation. You're unable to bring loving correction for others' good in the way that God desires because your sin is still blinding you.

See, you don't just have a log in your eye. You have bad eyes if you're not in Christ. And only Jesus can heal them. Only Jesus can make them new. And so in this moment, you know, don't consider how to better care for others rather than condemn.

Consider how today you can receive salvation that Christ offers. You can begin a new life in Christ, empowered by God himself. If anyone's in that position, we would love to talk with you.

You can come forward. Again, the same people, you know, come talk to one of the elders. We'd love to pray with you and just talk through things with you. So finally, we're going to turn our attention to this cryptic last verse.

Verse 6. Jesus says, 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.

[34 : 20] Dogs and pigs and pearls, like what in the world is going on? Jesus is imposing a limit on our loving correction. He's actually, he's providing a counterbalance here. Now, in those days, a domesticated dog was kind of a foreign idea.

Dogs were scavengers. Now, if you've ever been to a third world country, you've probably seen a lot of mangy looking dogs running around. These are kind of, these are the dogs Jesus is talking about right now.

And what is, he says, do not give dogs what is holy. That what is holy would likely be for the Jews an allusion to the sacrificial meats that would be offered to the Lord.

And now, no, no unclean person, much less a dog, was allowed to touch these. And pigs, pigs are unclean animals to the Jews, not to mention how much they love rolling around in the mud and not listening.

I was talking to the Tysons last week, and they've got some pigs, and they're having extreme troubles corralling those pigs. So if you want like a real good visual illustration, talk to the Tysons about their pigs.

[35 : 19] Now, the best interpretation for pearls comes from Jesus' own words later on in Matthew, where he says, the kingdom of heaven is like a pearl of great value. So in other words, what is holy and pearls are the things of God.

They are, they represent the gospel. They represent God's word, his truth. And Jesus' point here is that, unfortunately, some people are not going to receive your loving correction, right?

They won't hear your words of truth and instruction. And when we continually hold out the truth before them, to someone that has decisively or even defiantly rejected it, what we're doing is giving them an occasion not to cherish and treasure the gospel, but to trample on it.

Now, it's important to realize Jesus is not and cannot be talking about all unbelievers, right? That would totally contradict the Great Commission in which he calls us to go to the nations, right?

And to make disciples. We are absolutely called as individuals, as a church, to evangelism, to spreading the gospel to the unsaved. That's undeniable. Another thing to note is we are not called to judge the unsaved in the sense of lovingly correcting them.

[36 : 38] We're not called to impose on them our Christian standard because they have no desire or ability to live by it apart from Christ. So we don't judge them. We call them to repentance, right?

That's what we do. We call them to repentance. So Jesus is not talking about all unbelievers. This is who he's talking about. He's talking about supposed believers and unbelievers who, having heard the message of the gospel, reject it.

Time and time again, reject it, reject it. In Matthew 10 and Luke 9 record Jesus sending out the 12 apostles and he gives them this instruction. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet as testimony against them.

And we see an axis gets applied in a few different situations. One of them, Acts 18, 5 and 6. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, Your blood be on your own heads. I am innocent. For now on I will go to the Gentiles.

[37 : 48] Now here's a principle for us to remember today. The gospel is to be treasured, not trampled on. The gospel is to be treasured, not trampled on. John Stott summarizes, If people have had plenty of opportunity to hear the truth but do not respond to it.

If they stubbornly turn their backs on Christ. If, in other words, they cast themselves in the role of dogs and pigs, we are not to go on and on with them. For then we cheapen God's gospel by letting them trample it underfoot.

Can anything be more depraved than to mistake God's precious pearl for a thing of no worth and actually to tread it into the mud? But then he gives this word of caution.

At the same time, to give people up as a very serious step to take, this teaching of Jesus is for exceptional situations only. Our normal Christian duty is to be patient and persevere with others as God has patiently persevered with us.

And so we do hold out the gospel, right? We do hold out the gospel to unbelievers. We do call them to faith and repentance. We do bring loving correction to professing believers.

[38 : 57] But in those times when the response is continued, even defiant rejection of truth, and this takes prayerful consideration, right? This takes wisdom and discernment from the Lord.

But in those times, our job is to actually give them up to their own desires, right? Now we don't stop loving them. We don't stop showing grace towards them.

And that's just like God bestows his common grace on everybody, right? The sun came up today on everybody. The rain a few days ago came down for everybody's gardens, right?

God gives health and relationships. God gives a whole bunch of things to everybody across the board. And so we still bestow the common grace. But we stop sharing the gospel with them.

We stop holding it out for them, holding out what is holy so they can just trample over it. See, in the same way Paul describes in Romans 1 how God gives people over to their sinfulness and wickedness when they refuse to repent.

[39 : 55] And that's precisely what all of this can be boiled down to. It's treating others the way God has treated us, right? Treating others the way God has treated us.

And that is the way we want to be treated. We're going to talk about the golden rule in a few weeks here. Treat others as you want to be treated, which is how God has treated us, right?

And how has God treated us? He's treated us with undeserved love and favor even when we were his enemies. And so we patiently persevere with unbelievers, right?

We patiently love them. We patiently call them to repentance and to faith in God until they prove to us time and time again that they're never going to listen, that they keep rejecting it.

Now how does God treat us now as his children? With the tender care of a father. Not excusing our sin, right? But correcting us for it out of love and a desire to see us grow and mature.

[40 : 57] And so we execute our own sin rather than excuse it. And then with the resulting clarity of vision that we have with wisdom and care rather than condemnation, we lovingly correct our fellow brothers and sisters when they're in sin, right?

And not for our own selfish gain, not to make ourselves appear superior to them or more holy, but for their good. And when a whole community of believers is living this way, when we're caring for one another, when we're putting to death our sin, when we're correcting one another in love, when we're calling on believers to faith and repentance, we actually bring heaven forward.

We bring heaven forward into the here and now in the power of the Spirit. That's what happens. We reflect the heart and the character of God, which is being salt and light to a desperate world that needs that so badly.

And in this way our King is magnified. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, this is a difficult word to live out, God, because, God, our flesh just doesn't like this.

It wants to lash out. It wants to make itself look better. It wants to minimize the sin that we have and maximize the sin of others and so appear superior, God.

[42 : 20] That's what we want to do in our flesh. And so, God, we need, we desperately need a movement of your Holy Spirit. God, we need for our hearts to be transformed.

We need for our minds to be renewed. And these are things that we can't do on our own. I mean, we can read your word, we can pray, but the resulting growth in life that happens, it only happens by you.

And so, God, we come before you acknowledging that and asking, Lord, that you change us today, that you give us a renewal of our minds, that we can see clearly, God. We thank you that you have forgiven our sin on the cross.

Lord, you have sent Christ to die for us. You are ungodly and enemies, God, and wicked. You sent Christ to take on our sin and our shame and to give us your righteousness.

So, God, help us to live out that righteousness, Lord. Lord, if there's anyone here this morning that doesn't know you, Father, I pray, God, I pray that you would move towards them, God, like never before.

[43 : 27] Father, I pray that you would show them their sin, that you would show them that there is a Savior who has borne the penalty for that sin, Lord. God, I pray that they would embrace Jesus Christ by faith and they would get a new life today, Father.

Lord, I pray that as we go from here, God, that you would help us to apply these words, God, that we would be destroying the sin that exists in us by your Spirit, God. And that we would be filled with love and care for one another and not condemnation, Lord, embodying the love that you have given to us.

Lord, then I pray that with that attitude and that mindset that we'd be able to call one another, Lord, to living out the profession of faith that we have, Lord.

That we'd be able to build one another up, Lord, to encourage one another towards sanctification, Lord. That we would be built up as a church, Lord, and not for our glory, Lord, for your glory, God. God, we pray that your kingdom, that your glory is brought forward, Lord. That your will is done in this world. God, we pray this all in your matchless and powerful name.

[44 : 38] Amen.