

February 2

Scriptures: Read Matthew 7

Key Verse: “For with what judgment you fudge, you will be judge...” (Matthew 7:2)

Overview

He knows that it's as natural for humans to judge one another as it is to breathe. And every one of us is guilty. Every one of us is making judgments of others, as hard as it may be sometimes for us to admit it.

Jesus simply reminds us that when we are judging others we are, in a very interesting way, judging ourselves. Or at least He suggests that the intensity, the zeal, the inflexibility of our judgments will somehow be used against us. He is also suggesting that we often judge people for the very things of which we ourselves are guilty. So, in a sense, when we are judging others, we are judging ourselves. Maybe that in itself lends some intensity to our words. He reminds us that relative to other people's faults, our own faults are much larger, or at least appear to be much larger. Whereas a speck is simply a speck in someone else's eye, that same speck looks and feels like a plank on our own. And so as we scrupulously attempt to help our brother to improve, not only is our judgment thrown off by the fact that we can't see clearly due to the imperfection in our own eye, but we are also acting hypocritically if we don't remove that plank first.

Now it may seem rather strange that in this context Jesus then says, “Do not give dogs what is sacred. Do not throw your pearls to pigs.” It seems like He is making some judgments or encouraging us to make some judgment right there, in calling some people dogs and pigs. I'd like to think that at this point in time, some little stray mutt came walking among the disciples and Jesus just keyed in on that by saying, “hey, in this area of judging others, be discerning. Don't bare your heart to everyone. Don't give your treasure to everyone because not everyone can understand or appreciate where you're coming from or what it is you're giving them. Be discerning, be wise, be gentle.”

Sometimes, in attempting to show our magnanimity and vulnerability, we merely invite hurt and misunderstanding. So, rather than being torn to pieces, be discerning in whom, and with whom, you share your heart, and save yourself a lot of sorrow.

Prayer

Help us, oh God, not to be judgmental toward others but to carefully judge ourselves to see how our lives line up with Your Word.