

**6 “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.**

The general tendency of human nature, according to the flesh is going to be try to set ourselves above others as a critic, or one who passes judgement as a believer. Now that we have the truth, the tendency is to be condemning of others, judging them harshly, claiming the competence and authority to sit in judgment on others, but forgetting the grace that we have been shown. This is the most common error, so it’s the one that Jesus spends the most time addressing.

But there is another kind of error that can be made. If Jesus had concluded this section of The Sermon on the Mount with verse 5 instead of verse 6, then then tendency would have been for people to be so careful in avoiding the consequences of judging wrongly, that they would refuse to make any judgement whatsoever, even discerning ones. There would be no such thing as confronting heresy or blasphemy, no such thing as helping to restore a brother or sister who is erring by pointing out their sin gently, with love and compassion one-on-one. Because everyone would be so afraid of judging the heretic, more error would creep into the Church than it already has over the past 2,000 years. A lack of discernment can have devastating consequences.

And so how are we supposed to distinguish and discern correctly?

Jesus says in verse 6 **6 “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.**

Some people would try to justify their inaction in sharing the Gospel using this verse as if it’s saying “don’t share the Gospel with unbelievers”, or use it as excuse to judge themselves who is unworthy of the holy things, and who not to share the gospel with by deciding themselves that they are dogs or swine. But Jesus, and the disciples shared the Gospel with those who were patently unworthy all the time. Jesus shared with the woman at the well, he shared with Nicodemus, He shared with Zacheus, he shared with outcasts and lepers, the crippled, the blind, the hungry and the sick. He shared the Gospel with tax collectors and sinners.

The concept of dog mainly as a domesticated house pet is a modern concept. Dogs were dangerous packs of dogs that would wander the countryside, and sometimes the cities, preying on whatever they could, including livestock and sometimes unattended children. And for the Jews it was even worse: the dog was an unclean animal, not fit for consumption, non-Kosher, and dirty so the word Dog had the connotations of impurity, shamelessness, greed, and ferocity, and uncleanness, since dogs often fed on carrion and garbage. In fact Proverbs 26:11 says **Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly**. And because dogs were especially associated with uncleanness in what they ate, the Pharisees in particular sometimes referred to “gentile dogs”—meaning that just like dogs, the gentiles were not particular about what they ate, and ate unclean things. But there’s something more. Isaiah 56:11 **The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. But they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all**. This describes people who are a slave to their appetites just like animals are, disregarding holy things, and thinking nothing of them, only wanting more and more and more. In fact, in Philippians 3:2, **Paul tells us to Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh**. And so, Paul is putting the dogs in the same group with those who practice evil, and those who are following the law without following God, false-Jews, having a circumcision, but not obeying God in their hearts. In Psalm 22:16 God describes those who were standing around mocking Jesus as He hung on the cross saying **For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—** So, we get a picture here of people who are slaves to their appetites, care nothing for holy things, and mock the things of God. Just like we don’t share the holiness of communion with them, we don’t share the deeper things of God with them, because they don’t understand. There is a progression. In Hebrews 5:12-14 we read that baby Christians cannot tolerate the deeper things saying **12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary**

**principles of the actual words of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil.** In other words, as we comprehend more of the Word of God and apply it to our lives more and more, our senses are trained to discern, to distinguish good from evil. Baby Christians and certainly unbelievers can't do this, and are liable to be blown around by every wind of a new and false doctrine, and are also liable to reject the truth of God, not discerning that there are difficult truths in God's Word. Let's look how Jesus did it. He was friendly to unbelievers. He helped them and healed them. We are to witness to them and lead them to Jesus, sharing the Gospel with them, just like He did. Share with them the Romans Road to salvation, give them the Gospel. But do not get into deep spiritual debates with them. Those deeper things that have been set apart as holy should not be given to dogs who will not appreciate them, preferring their garbage, and are also liable to misunderstand and misinterpret them, and hurt themselves and others. Demonstrate through your life and conversation that they should want to get to know God because of the difference He has made in your life. As Col 4:5-6 says **5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**

Now to understand what Jesus means by not casting our pearls before swine, it helps to remember that Jesus' audience here is Jewish, and that they understood the Torah, and it's dietary laws very well—it was one of the pillars of their society, and something that they grew up with their whole lives. In **Leviticus 11:7 and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you.** The pig is specifically called out for being unclean? It's the epitome of unclean animals. Why? A pig is a faker. A pig may look kosher on the outside, but it is the inside that makes it unclean. It gives the appearance of being kosher, but it's not. Matthew 23:27 **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.** They looked righteous on the outside, following their interpretation of the ceremonial laws, but inside were full of unrighteousness and uncleanness. When someone chooses their own ways instead of following God, and then covers it up with a veneer of righteousness, it can make them hard to distinguish from true believers. The irony of the saying is that they represent the very thing they avoid. They are not what they appear to be, and they are to be avoided as unclean (even though they claim to be clean). Because they want to live in fantasy-land that they are “alright with God” on their own terms, and they don't want anyone to disturb their fantasy. They refuse to, as Paul said in 2 Cor 13:5 **5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?** The proof of salvation is the Holy Spirit living in us, but if we won't come to God on His terms, then we can't be saved, and thus don't have the Holy Spirit, and fail the test. What happens when you give a pearl to a Pig? He is going to try to eat it. And when he chomps down on it, he is going to find that it's not to His liking, and may hurt his teeth. Then he's going to get mad at you for hurting him, and attack you. Pearls come from oysters, which as shellfish, is an unclean animal. So, they are unclean on the outside, but inside, the pearl is very valuable. But it's not the kind of value that's apparent from where it comes from. It's the exact opposite of a Pig, it looks unclean, but inside it's valuable. And, so the pure Gospel, free to all, even the gentiles, was abhorrent to the Jews—and that's what Jesus came to offer. Not through the religious system of the self-righteous Pharisees. And they turned on Him and killed him. They tried to kill Paul just for saying that salvation had come to the gentiles—and in a way they succeeded there too, since it started a chain of events that at least contributed to his death many years later. And there are people like that today. They're not looking for the truth of the Gospel. They will not meet God on His terms of Truth and Purity, and resent you for asking them to try. 2 Peter 2:22 said of false teachers that **2 Peter 2:22, “Of [false teachers] the**

proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit,’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.’” We are not to expose the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have no other purpose than to trample it and return to their own evil ways, and especially those who attack us and blaspheme Jesus when we do. Repeatedly sharing the gospel with someone who continually scoffs and ridicules Christ is like casting pearls before swine. We are responsible to share the good news; we are not responsible for people’s response to the good news. Pigs don’t appreciate pearls, and some people don’t appreciate what Christ has done for them. Our job is not to force conversions or cram the gospel down people’s throats; there’s no sense in preaching the value of pearls to swine. So, what are we to do? We are supposed to pray for them. Pray in Jesus’ name that the work of the enemy in blinding them to the truth is stopped by God. Pray for something to come into their lives that will help them to see the truth. We can identify such people through discernment, 1 Cor 2:15 tells us **14 But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.** It doesn’t matter what degrees that people have, it doesn’t matter how much of the Bible they can quote—if they are not filled with the Holy Spirit then they are false teachers, and dangerous. And they will be very likely to attack you for giving True Doctrine. But we must allow the Holy Spirit to give us discernment, so that we are not deceived by their show. **15 But the one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned by no one. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.** So, let the Holy Spirit guide you as you share the Gospel, so that you are more effective for the Kingdom of God.