

Matthew 7:6 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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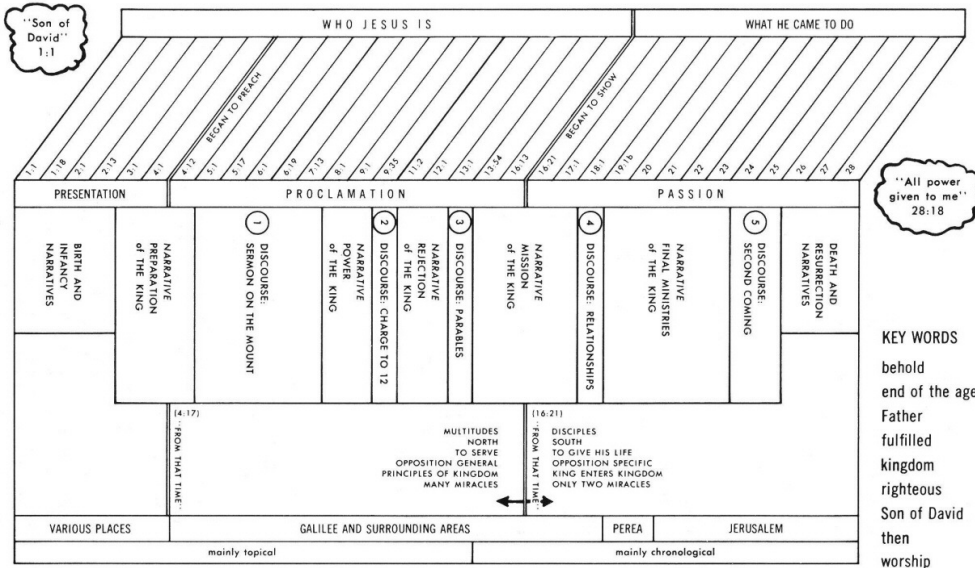
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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES

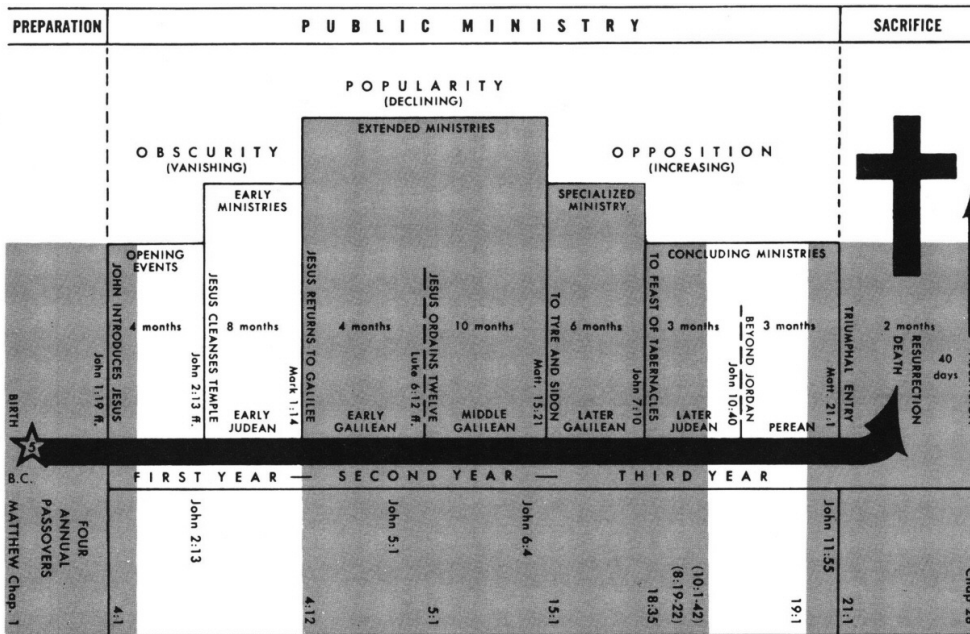
KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."



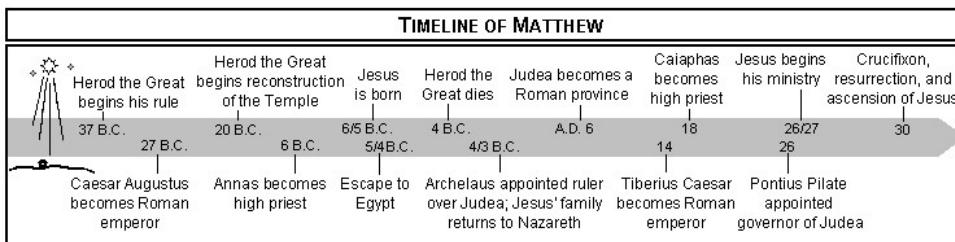
Click chart to enlarge
 Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
 Another [Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge

Jesus Birth and Early Years
 Leading up to the Sermon on the Mount
 Matthew 1-7



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 7:6 "Do not [give what is holy](#) to [dogs](#), and do not [throw](#) your [pearls before swine](#), or they will [trample](#) them [under their feet](#), and [turn](#) and [tear](#) you to [pieces](#). (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [Me dote \(2PAAS\) to agion tois kusin, mede balete \(2PAAS\) tous margaritas umon emprosthen ton choiron, mepote katapatesousin \(3PFAI\) autous en tois posin auton kai straphentes \(APPMPN\) rexosin \(3PAAS\) humas.](#)

Amplified: Do not give that which is holy (the sacred thing) to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before hogs, lest they trample upon them with their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

NLT: Don't give what is holy to unholy people. Don't give pearls to swine! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: "You must not give holy things to dogs, nor must you throw your pearls before pigs - or they may trample them underfoot and turn and attack you." ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

Wuest: Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the hogs lest perchance they trample them under their feet and having turned, lacerate you.

Young's: 'Ye may not give that which is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before the swine, that they may not trample them among their feet, and having turned -- may rend you.

Matthew 7:6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces: Me dote (2PAAS) to agion tois kusin, mede balete (2PAAS) tous margaritas umon emprosthen ton choiron, mepote katapatesousin (3PFAI) autous en tois posin auton kai straphentes (APPMPN) rexosin (3PAAS) humas

- Mt 7:10:14,15; 15:26; Proverbs 9:7,8; 23:9; 26:11; Acts 13:45, 46, 47; Philippians 3:2; Hebrews 6:6; 10:29; 2Peter 2:22
- Proverbs 11:22
- Mt 22:5,6; 24:10; 2 Cor 11:26; 2 Ti 4:14,15
- Matthew 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NO GOSPEL PEARLS FOR DOGS OR PIGS!

Do not give what is holy to dogs - If someone isn't open to listen to you, there's no reason to continue speaking. Now this needs to be qualified -- most people will initially resist the Gospel, but here Jesus is not speaking of resistance in general but of a vicious attack against you and the Lord and His Gospel (like a swine or dog would do! As described below "dogs" in Jesus' day were not viewed as sweet little puppies!).

Here is the major point of this passage -

While followers of Jesus must not be guilty of condemning anyone, we must learn to discriminate in our witness.

You might ask "Well what about 2 Timothy 2:25-note where Paul writes "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth?" One key to answering this question is to ask what does the Greek word **opposition** mean? **Zodhiates** has an excellent comment writing that *antidiatithemi* speaks "either those who directly oppose the Gospel or those who are ill-disposed toward or unaffected by it. **The latter meaning seems preferable** because the Apostle directs Timothy to treat the *antidiatitheménous*, those whose attitudes are contrary or ill-disposed to the gospel, in a very different manner from the *anhistaménous* (436), opposers, those actually opposing the gospel, from whom he was to turn away ("**Avoid** [\[apostrepho](#) in the present imperative = command to **keep on avoiding** them!] such men as these" - 2 Ti 3:5-note)" (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

So it is a question of "[discernment](#)" -- if you have shared the Gospel since you became a follower of Christ (and if you haven't shared it, you should!), over time you can generally get a good "feel" for whether there is simply general resistance to the Good

News (as was frankly true of me before I came to Christ and is true of all of us because Paul says all of us "were enemies [Greek word echthros means hostile and speaks of our intrinsic hatred of God and His Good News]." - Ro 5:10-note). General resistance is quite different than vicious attacks. It is the latter to whom we are to shake the dust off our sandals and move on!

- See also [explanation below](#) from Gotquestions, a website that is highly recommended.

Solomon - Do not reprove (Hebrew word yakach includes ideas of education, discipline, teaching and admonishing) a scoffer (speaks words showing no respect for the reprover), lest he hate you. Reprove a wise man, and he will love you. (**Proverbs 9:8**) (Reproof is wasted on a "scoffer" because the more shallow and foolish the person is, the less willing he is to listen to wise, godly counsel)

Jamieson, F, B -The opposite extreme to that of censoriousness is here condemned—want of discrimination of character.... Religion is brought into contempt, and its professors insulted, when it is forced upon those who cannot value it and will not have it. But while the indiscriminately zealous have need of this caution, let us be on our guard against too readily setting our neighbors down as dogs and swine, and excusing ourselves from endeavoring to do them good on this poor plea.

Spurgeon writes...

There are some holy enjoyments, some gracious experiences, some deep doctrines of the Word of God, which it would be out of place to speak of before certain profane and unclean persons. They would only make a jest of them; perhaps they might persecute you on account of them. No; holy things are for holy men; and as of old the crier in the Grecian temple was wont to say, before the mysteries were performed, "&Far hence, ye profane!&" so sometimes, before we enter into the innermost circle of Christian converse, it would be well for us to notice who is listening.

Zeal should always be tempered by prudence. There are times when it would be treason to truth to introduce it as a topic of conversation,-when men are in such a frame of mind that they will be sure rather to cavil at it than to believe it. Not only speak thou well, but speak thou at the right time, for silence is sometimes golden. See that thou hast thy measure of golden silence as well as of silver speech.

When men are evidently unable to perceive the purity of a great truth, do not set it before them. They are like mere dogs, and if you set holy things before them they will be provoked to "&turn again and rend you&": holy things are not for the profane. "&Without are dogs&": they must not be allowed to enter the holy place. When you are in the midst of the vicious, who are like "&swine,&" do not bring forth the precious mysteries of the faith, for they will despise them, and "&trample them under their feet&" in the mire. You are not needlessly to provoke attack upon yourself, or upon the higher truths of the gospel. You are not to judge, but you are not to act without judgment. Count not men to be dogs or swine; but when they avow themselves to be such, or by their conduct act as if they were such, do not put occasions in their way for displaying their evil character. Saints are not to be simpletons; they are not to be judges, but, also, they are not to be fools.

Great King, how much wisdom thy precepts require! I need thee, not only to open my mouth, but also at times to keep it shut.

Give (1325) (didomi) means to give based on decision of will of the giver. Although the tense is not imperative, the force is that of an imperative or command. We are to speak the truth in love, but we are not to allow love to color or distort our sense of discernment. Note in this warning Jesus is not trying to discourage us from sharing the gospel, but is calling for discernment which is ever looking for listeners with prepared and not antagonistic hearts.

In **Hebrews** we read that "solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses (Ability to discriminate & make moral decisions. Capacity for spiritual apprehension) **trained** (gumnazo = having experienced vigorous training and control and in a state of increased moral strength which allows one) to discern (decide between, make a judgment between) good and evil." (Hebrews 5:14)

This verse makes it clear that Jesus does not exclude every kind of judgment in **Matthew 7:1-2** for here He just as plainly commands a certain kind of right judgment or discernment in this verse, for such discrimination is necessary in order to determine who is a dog and a hog!

Holy (40) (hagios) (Click for an in depth discussion of hagios) refers to that which is set apart (sanctified) for a special purpose.

Holy and **pearls** (see discussion below) are somewhat indefinite and as discussed surely include the gospel message but also apply to other holy things besides the gospel, such as the Holy Word, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Name, etc. We refrain from giving out these holy, precious things out of respect for them more than out of contempt for the opposers. In fact, in this very sermon, Jesus would still call us to "*love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you*" (notes **Matthew 5:44**)

Dogs (2965) (**kuon**) in the ancient world does not refer to dogs as we currently think of them for they were seldom household pets but instead were largely half-wild, dirty, greedy, snarling, vicious, flea-bitten, diseased, mongrel scavenger, that often ran in packs. They are often on the point of starvation and were known to devour corpses, and attack humans, in the night. Clearly literal "dogs" in the ancient world were dangerous and despised. **Kuon** -5 times in the NAS and always translated "dog" or "dogs": (Matt 7:6; Luke 16:21; Phil 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22; Rev 22:15)

For example we read God's prophet Abijah's harsh message to the wife of the evil Jeroboam declaring..."Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the **dogs will eat**. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken it." (1 Kings 14:11) (Similar prophecies were decreed against Baasha's family, in 1Kings 16:4, and Ahab's family, 1Kings 21:24.) (For bodies to be devoured by dogs and wild birds of prey was considered one of the worst disgraces that could befall a Jew)

The epithet "**dogs**" is used figuratively to refer to certain classes of men, expressing their insolent rapacity, Psalms 22:16 and their beastly vices, Deuteronomy 23:18.

It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "**ADOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT**," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." (see notes on 2Peter 2:22)

Outside are the **dogs** and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. (Revelation 22:15-[note](#))

Paul used the term "**dogs**" in his letter to Philippi warning the converts to...

Beware of the **dogs**, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision (see notesPhilippians 3:2)

The Jews used "**dog**" as a derogatory term referring to Gentiles in general. In Philippi, Paul turned the tables so to speak and actually referred to Jews (probably Judaizers) who professed to believe in Christ but depended upon keeping the Law and the rituals of Judaism in order to "merit" salvation. Thus in this sense Paul uses "Dogs" to refer to false teachers.

Barclay has a helpful note on **dogs** - With us the **dog** is a well-loved animal, but it was not so in the East in the time of Jesus. The **dogs** were the pariah **dogs**, roaming the streets, sometimes in packs, hunting amidst the garbage dumps and snapping and snarling at all whom they met. J. B. Lightfoot speaks of "the **dogs** which prowl about eastern cities, without a home and without an owner, feeding on the refuse and filth of the streets, quarrelling among themselves, and attacking the passer-by." In the Bible the **dog** always stands for that than which nothing can be lower. When Saul is seeking to take his life, David's demand is: "&After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! after a flea!&" (&1Sa 24:14&, cf. &2Ki 8:13&; &Ps 22:16&, &20&). In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, part of the torture of Lazarus is that the street **dogs** annoy him by licking his sores (&Luke 16:21&). In Deuteronomy the Law brings together the price of a dog and the hire of a whore, and declares that neither must be offered to God (&Deut 23:18&). In Revelation the word dog stands for those who are so impure that they are debarred from the Holy City (&Rev 22:15-[note](#)&). That which is holy must never be given to dogs (&Mt 7:6&). It is the same in Greek thought; the **dog** stands for everything that is shamelessly unclean. It was by this name that the Jews called the Gentiles. There is a Rabbinic saying, "&The nations of the world are like **dogs**.&" So this is Paul's answer to the Jewish teachers. He says to them, "&In your proud self-righteousness, you call other men dogs; but it is you who are **dogs**, because you shamelessly pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ.&" He takes the very name the Jewish teachers would have applied to the impure and to the Gentiles and flings it back at themselves. A man must always have a care that he is not himself guilty of the sins of which he accuses others. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Dogs and **swine** (5519) describe profane people who treat spiritual matters with contempt. They are unbelievers who are enemies of the gospel and are people to avoid. This verse does not mean that the blessings of the gospel are not to be offered to the **Gentiles** (remembering that Jews in Jesus' day frequently referred to Gentiles as "dogs"), but rather that precious spiritual truths should not be pressed upon those who are either unready or unwilling to accept or appreciate their value. The verse continues logically in the train of thought developed in the sayings which immediately precede it. While judging others is not the prerogative of man, there are, nonetheless, those whose uncleanness and violence prevent the sharing of the most noble truths of the Christian faith.

Brothers (referred to in Mt 7:3-5) and "**dogs**" or "**swine**" must not be treated alike. Believers must discriminate carefully, clearly

indicating that Jesus' command to stop judging in Matthew 7:1 was not meant to exclude discerning judgment, but only condemnatory, critical judgment.

Swine are just as contemptible and filthy as dogs. The OT mentions **swine** among the unclean animals (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8) and the eating of swine flesh is an abomination in (Isa. 65:4; 66:3, 17) **Swine** are not only unclean animals but can be vicious and are capable of savage attacks against people. The wild boar of the wood was frequently met with in the woody parts of Palestine, especially in Mount Tabor. In Psalm 80:13 the powers that destroyed the Jewish nation are compared to wild boars and wild beasts of the field.

Wild Boars Can Tear you to Pieces!

The phrase "**what is holy**" or set apart from the common and profane and consecrated to God is used synonymously with "**pearls**".

Do not throw your pearls before swine - Do not give something valuable to a swine. Do not give something spiritually valuable to those who turn on you. **Pearls (margarites)** were usually regarded as precious stones in Jesus' day. Pearls are found in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean and were brought into the western culture through Alexander the Great's conquests. Pearls were priced way beyond the purchasing power of the average person and in order to obtain a pearl of great value a merchant might have to sell all his possessions (cf Mt 13:46) **Margaritēs** is used by Jesus as a figure of speech for what is of supreme worth. The Jews used "**margaritēs**" to refer to a valuable saying. Jesus is saying that whatever is very precious in the spiritual realm should be treated with reverence and not entrusted to those who, because of their utterly wicked, vicious, and despicable nature, are like dogs and hogs.

Pearls (3135)(margarites) refers to a literal pearl as in Rev. 17:4[±]; Rev. 18:12[±]; Rev. 18:16[±] which all refer to pearls as items the **lost** world highly valued (and **lost!**). In Rev 21:21[±] John described "the twelve gates were twelve pearls." Figuratively the pearl speaks of something of supreme worth. BDAG writes in Jesus' day the pearl was "more in demand than gold." **BDAG** adds "Among the Indians worth 3 times as much as pure gold: Arrian, Ind. 8, 13 and always in great demand....in imagery, in a proverb....throw pearls to swine i.e. entrust something precious" (Mt 7:6[±]). Thayer adds that Mt 7:6 "a proverb, i.e., to thrust the most sacred and precious teachings of the gospel upon the most wicked and abandoned men (incompetent as they are, through their hostility to the gospel, to receive them), and thus to profane them." **Margarites** - Mt. 7:6[±] ("do not throw your pearls before swine" =); Matt. 13:45; Matt. 13:46; 1 Ti 2:9; Rev. 17:4[±]; Rev. 18:12[±]; Rev. 18:16[±]; Rev. 21:21[±]. Not present in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#).

Trample (2662 (katapateo from **katá** = intensifies meaning + **patéo** = tread, trample, fig to treat contemptuously) means to step down forcibly upon often with the implication of seeking to destroy or ruin. The idea is to spurn, to reject with disdain, treat contemptuously, treat with rudeness and insult or thoroughly despise someone or something. Jesus pictures hogs trampling the pearls with their feet, thus treating them with utter disdain.

In Matthew Jesus returns to Nazareth, His home town, and we read that "they **took offense** (verb [skandalizo](#) - see in depth study of noun, skandalon) at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A *prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his own household.*" And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief." (Mt 13:57-58+) So here we see Jesus practicing the same principle He is laying down for His disciples to practice.

D A Carson comments that "The pigs trample the pearls under foot (perhaps out of animal disappointment that they are not morsels of food), and the dogs are so disgusted with "what is sacred" that they turn on the giver. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Spurgeon comments that...It is a pity to talk about some of the secrets of our holy faith in any and every company. It would be almost, profane to speak of them in the company of profane men. We know that they would not understand us; they would find occasion for jest and ridicule, and therefore our own reverence for holy things must cause us to lay a finger on our lips when we are in the presence of profane persons. Do not let us, however, carry out one precept to the exclusion of others. There are dogs that eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table. Drop them a crumb. And there are even swine that may yet be trained; to whom the sight of a pearl might give some inkling of a better condition of heart. Cast not the pearls before them, but you may show them to them sometimes when they are in as good a state of mind as they are likely to be in. It is ours to preach the gospel to every creature; that is a precept of Christ, and yet all creatures are not always in the condition to hear the gospel. We must choose our time. Yet even this I would not push too far. We are to preach the gospel in season and out of season. Oh! that we may be able to follow precepts as far as they are meant to go, and no further.

Turn (4762) (strephe from **trope** = a turn or revolution) means to twist, turn quite around or reverse.

Tear (4486) (**rhegnumi**) means to break in pieces, disrupt or lacerate as dogs would do.

Clearly to be an undiscerning simpleton (as might occur in one who took the meaning of "*do not judge*" to an extreme interpretation which Jesus did not intend) can place one in a dangerous position (cf "trample", "tear to pieces"!)

Paul gives us an example of a vicious opponent of the gospel warning Timothy to beware of...

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. (notes 2 Timothy 4:14-15)

VOLTAIRE AN ILLUSTRATION OF A "DOG/SWINE" - The French philosopher **Voltaire** would certainly fit the picture of a spiritual "dog and a hog", who violently opposed God, His Holy Word and His precious Son. How tragic that one of the most fertile and talented minds of his time (which parenthetically bears witness to the common grace and longsuffering of our great Father), was such a vicious opponent of truth, using his pen to retard and demolish Christianity as much as humanly possible. Once speaking about our Lord Jesus Christ, Voltaire uttered the unspeakable words "*Curse the wretch!*" Voltaire was so self deceived and arrogant that he once boasted that within "*twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear.*" God however is not mocked beloved (see Galatians) and so not surprisingly shortly after Voltaire's death the very house in which he printed his vicious anti-Christian literature became the home of the Geneva Bible Society! A nurse who attended Voltaire at the time of his horrible death vowed "For all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel die." Voltaire's physician, Trochim, also attended the infidel up to the time of his last breath, and is quoted as hearing Voltaire's last desperate (rightly so) cry "*I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!*" In short, **Voltaire**, as brilliant as he was intellectually, is the epitome of the type of individual citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven must refrain from repeatedly sharing the precious and holy truths of God's Gospel.

We are not to continue to present the **gospel** to those who repeatedly mock, scorn and deride it. To be sure, this determination sometimes is obvious as in the case of rank infidels but in other situations requires God's wisdom (see role of prayer in Matthew 7:7-8-note) and Spirit controlled guidance. There is a limit Jesus says and when that time arrives, it is high time for the ambassador of Christ to depart company.

And so we see Jesus instructing His disciples "And into whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it; and abide there until you go away. And as you enter the house, give it your greeting. And if the house is worthy, let your greeting of peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your greeting of peace return to you. **And whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet.** Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matthew 10:11-15)

In the same way **Jesus pronounced judgment on the Galilean towns** which for the most part rejected the light of His presence and His gospel "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. (Mt 11:21-23)

And we see **Paul's reaction to the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews** of Corinth "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:1-6, see also Acts 13:44-51, 28:17-28; Ro 16:17-18).

Writing to **Titus** on the Isle of **Crete** Paul instructed him "Reject a factious (divisive, one who causes division) man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

Herod Antipas was a **dog...swine**, who heard John gladly, Mark recording "for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him." (Mark 6:20) Herod proved his "canine character" because this same **Herod turned on John the Baptist** and had him beheaded him (see Mt 14:1-12; Mk 6:14-28; Lu 9:7-9). Later, **Jesus Christ refused to give what was holy to Herod** "Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing." (Luke 23:8-9-note)

And after Jesus rose from the dead He showed Himself to no one who was not a believer.

In the **parable of The Barren Fig Tree** Jesus explained that God was patience, but His patience was not endless "And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'" (Luke 13:6-9-note)

Solomon presents a similar principle regarding bestowal of "holy things" on dogs and hogs...

A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy. (Proverbs 29:1)

Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you (don't bother rebuking mockers; they will only hate you), Reprove a wise man, and he will love you. (Proverbs 9:8)

Jesus' teaching is in fact imminently logical for if we were to remain in the company of those who constantly ridicule the small gate and narrow way of the Gospel, we would by default, fail to enter other "fields" which Jesus described in other passages declaring...

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (Mt 9:37)

Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. (John 4:35)

Hendriksen - The suggestion may be correct that, since pearls resemble peas or acorns, these hogs, having greedily tasted a few and having discovered that they can do nothing with them, in anger trample the pearls underfoot and turn and tear to pieces those who had flung such non-edibles in front of them. ([Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew Grand Rapids: Baker Book House](#))

ILLUSTRATION - **J Vernon McGee** tells the following story - I remember a Tennessee legislator friend of mine who was a heavy drinker. He was wonderfully converted and is a choice servant of God today. The other members of the legislature knew how he drank. Then they heard he "got religion," as they called it. One day this fellow took his seat in the legislature, and his fellow-members looked him over. Finally, someone rose, addressed the chairman of the meeting and said, "I make a motion that we hear a sermon from Deacon So-and-So." Everyone laughed. But my friend was equal to the occasion. He got to his feet and said, "I'm sorry, I do not have anything to say. My Lord told me not to cast my pearls before swine." He sat down, and they never ridiculed him anymore. ([Thru the Bible Commentary: Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Alan Carr has a comment on Mark 6:5+ (**And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.**) that relates to Jesus' warning to not cast pearls before swine. Carr says "Let's get one thing straight now; their unbelief did not hinder His power. Jesus was and is absolutely sovereign. He could have done anything there that He wanted to do. He possessed the power, but He refused to demonstrate His power in the face of blatant unbelief. The hands of Jesus were not tied. A few people came to Him in faith and those people received His help. The rest rejected Him and were rejected by Him.

THOUGHT - There is a word here for the health and wealth crowd. There is a word here for those who promote the cult of [prosperity](#). People who have embraced the prosperity cult doctrine believe that God only responds to our faith. In other words, if you have enough faith, you will be healed. If you have enough faith you will have plenty of money. If you have the faith you can enjoy endless health, wealth and blessing. This way of thinking holds God captive to the will of man! I would remind you that we serve a sovereign God! He can do what He pleases, when He pleases and to whom He pleases. Our faith, or the lack thereof, does not pose a problem for Him. In this case, Jesus refused to "cast His pearls before the swine". (Mt 7:6+) They refused the message, thus they forfeited the miracles. God's best blessings are not the works of healing, multiplying your loaves and fishes, or meeting your needs. The greatest work of God is saving, sealing and securing lost souls! If you are saved, you have experienced the greatest of our Lord's works.) ([Carr](#))

Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about the prosperity gospel?](#)
- [Is the Word of Faith movement biblical?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about prosperity? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is "name it claim it" teaching biblical?](#)
- [Are all prosperity preachers charlatans and/or false teachers?](#)
- [What is miracle money, and is it biblical to seek it?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about prosperity?](#)
- [Is there power in positive confession?](#)

Answer: “Do not cast your pearls before swine” is a portion of the Sermon on the Mount, and, to understand its meaning, we have to understand its context and placement within the sermon. Christ had just finished instructing the crowd on judgment and reproof: “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” (Matthew 7:1–2), and “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” (Matthew 7:5). Then in verse 6, Christ tempers these admonitions and shows us the difference between “judgment” and “discernment.” We are not to be hypocritical judges, yet we must be able to discern the swine, lest we cast our pearls before them.

Before Jesus says, “Do not cast your pearls before swine,” He says, “Do not give dogs what is sacred.” An analogy mentioning dogs is also used in Proverbs: “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly” (Proverbs 26:11). A dual reference to swine and dogs is also found in 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.’” In His sermon, Jesus uses dogs and pigs as representative of those who would ridicule, reject, and blaspheme the gospel once it is presented to them. 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. Repeatedly sharing the gospel with someone who continually scoffs and ridicules Christ is like casting pearls before swine. We can identify such people through discernment, which is given in some measure to all Christians (1 Corinthians 2:15–16).

The command not to cast your pearls before swine does not mean we refrain from preaching the gospel. Jesus Himself ate with and taught sinners and tax collectors (Matthew 9:10). In essence, the instruction in Matthew 7:6 is the same that Jesus gave to His apostles when He said, “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town” (Matthew 10:14). We are to share the gospel, but, when it becomes apparent that the gospel is not welcome, we are to move on. 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. Jesus’ instruction to His apostles on how to handle rejection was to simply go elsewhere. There are other people who need to hear the gospel, and they are ready to hear it. (From Gotquestions.org - recommended resource)

CAUTION TO BE USED IN REPROVING

Matt. 7:6

Charles Simeon

IN the holy Scriptures there are not only such directions as are necessary for the saving of the soul, but such also as are of a prudential nature, calculated for the rectifying of our judgment, and the regulating of our conduct, in less important matters. A pious person would obtain salvation, though he should not be discreet in his mode of communicating instruction or reproof to others. But it is desirable that “the man of God should be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works:” and therefore he should attend as well to those admonitions which are of secondary importance, as to those which relate to the fundamental points of faith or practice. The words before us are connected with the prohibition respecting the judging of others. To judge others uncharitably will expose us to similar treatment from them, as well as to the displeasure of Almighty God. Before we presume to judge others at all, we ought to be diligent in searching out and amending our own faults; without which we are but ill qualified to reprove the faults of others. We ought also to consider the state of the person whom we undertake to reprove: for if he be hardened in his wickedness, and disposed to resent our well-meant endeavours, it will be more prudent to let him alone, and to wait for some season when we may speak to him with a better prospect of success. Such is the import of the caution in our text; from whence we may observe,

I. That religious instruction is often most unworthily received—

The value of religious instruction is but little known—

[Education in general is esteemed one of the greatest blessings we can enjoy; nor is any sacrifice, whether of time or money, deemed too great for the obtaining of the benefits arising from it. A richly-furnished mind, a cultivated taste, a polished manner, are distinctions which the richer part of the community particularly affect: and they are most envied who possess in the highest measure such accomplishments. But divine knowledge is considered as of little worth: though it would enrich the soul beyond all conception, and adorn it with all the most amiable graces, and is therefore most fully characterized by the name of “pearls,” yet has it no beauty, no excellency, in the eyes of carnal men: the generality are as insensible of its value as swine are of the value of pearls, which they would “trample under their feet” as mire and dirt. Of this however we may be assured, that instruction, even

though it be in a way of reproof, lays us under the deepest obligation to him who gives it&&.]

Many, instead of being pleased, are only irritated and offended at it—

[Nothing under heaven has ever given more offence than this. Men may utter lewdness and blasphemy, and create but little disgust: but let them bear their testimony against sin, or proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and instantly an indignation is excited in every bosom. In the house of God indeed a certain licence is allowed, provided the preacher be not too faithful: but in a private company the mention of such things is considered as a death-blow to social comfort, and is reprobated as an insufferable nuisance. Even in the public ministry those who “labour with fidelity in the word and doctrine” are not unfrequently treated with every species of indignity. No name is too odious for them to bear, no opposition too violent to be raised against them.

It is supposed indeed by some, that the offence excited by ministers arises from the erroneousness of their statements, or the injudiciousness of their manner. But what then shall we say to the treatment which Christ and his Apostles met with? Did our blessed Lord want any qualification that could recommend his doctrine? Did he not exhibit “the meekness of wisdom,” and “speak as never man spake?” And was not Paul guided and instructed by God himself in his ministrations? Yet were both he and his Divine Master represented as babblers and deceivers; and one cry was raised against them both, “Away with them; it is not fit that they should live.”

Nor is it more against the doctrines of Christianity that this prejudice exists, than it does against its practice. The doctrine of “Christ crucified is still to some a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness:” and the same anger that rankled in the bosoms of Herod and Herodias against John, who condemned their incestuous connexion, is called forth at this time against any one who shall condemn the customs of the world&&. Our Lord’s words may still be used by all his faithful followers, “The world hateth me, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil&&.” Doubtless the inveteracy of wicked men will shew itself in different ways and different degrees, according to the different circumstances under which it is called forth: but no times or circumstances have ever superseded the necessity of attending to the caution in the text: there ever have been multitudes who would take offence at the kindest efforts for their welfare&&, and, like ferocious “dogs, would turn again and rend you.” Reprove iniquity, and you will still be deemed “the troublers of Israel;” and those who are reprovèd will say of you, “I hate Micaiah, for he doth not speak good of me, but evil.”]

From this aversion which men feel to religious instruction, it appears,

II. That great caution is to be used in administering it—

The direction in our text was given to the whole multitude of those who heard our Lord’s discourse; and therefore may be considered as applicable,

1. To ministers—

[Though it is not to be confined to them, it does not exclude them. Doubtless where numbers of persons are assembled to hear the word of God, it is not possible to suit oneself to the disposition and taste of every individual. The rule which God himself has laid down must in such cases be followed: “He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully&&.” A minister must “warn men, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear:” he must “commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God,” “keeping back nothing that is profitable unto them,” but “declaring unto them the whole counsel of God.” Still, however, the caution in the text is necessary for him. He should consider the state of his hearers, and should adapt his discourses to their necessities. Our blessed Lord, knowing how full of prejudice the Jews were, “spake the word to them in parables, as they were able to hear it.” In like manner, though we must not seek the applause of man, (for “if we please men, we cannot be the servants of Jesus Christ;”) yet we should endeavour to “please all men for their good to edification:” we should argue with them on principles which they acknowledge; we should be content to give “milk to babes,” and to reserve the “strong meat” for such as are able to digest it. We should pay attention to every thing that may lessen prejudice and conciliate regard: and, though we must not affect “the wisdom of words, which would only make void the cross of Christ,” we should “search out acceptable words,” and be especially careful to “speak the truth in love.” Our great object should be not to “deliver our own souls,” (though doubtless we must be careful to do that,) but principally to “win the souls” of others.]

2. To Christians in general—

[As “men do not light a candle, to put it under a bed or under a bushel, but to give light to those who are in the house,” so God, when he illuminates any soul, expects that the light he has imparted should be diffused for the good of others. But in endeavouring to instruct others, we should consider the tune, the manner, the measure of instruction, that will be most likely to ensure success. In particular, we should not press matters when our exhortations are contemned as foolish, or resented as injurious. Not that our concern should be about ourselves, as though we feared either the contempt of men, or their resentment; but we should be afraid of hardening them, and thereby increasing their guilt and condemnation. As to ourselves, we should gladly

“suffer all things for the elect’s sake:” but for them we should “weep, as it were, in secret places&&,” and “gladly spend and be spent for them, though the more abundantly we love them the less we be loved.” If, indeed, after all our labour, we find that our efforts are only rejected by them with disdain, we may then with propriety leave them to themselves, and, like the Apostles, bestow our attention on more hopeful subjects&&. As the priests imparted of the holy food to every member of their families, but gave none of it to dogs, so may you give your holy things to others, and withhold it from those who have shewn themselves so unworthy of it.]

We will now apply the subject,

1. To those who are strangers to the truth—

[From the indifference which is usually shewn to divine things, it is evident that the value of religious knowledge is but little known. If we could inform persons how to restore their health, or how to recover an estate, or how to obtain any great temporal benefit, they would hear us gladly, and follow our advice with thankfulness; but when we speak of spiritual benefits, they have no ears to hear, no hearts to understand: they are ready to say to us, as the demoniac to Christ, “Art thou come to torment us before our time?” But let it not be so with you. Think in what light God represents such conduct&& — — — what regret you will hereafter feel&& — — — and what augmented punishment you will endure&& — — — And may God “open your hearts, that you may attend to the things” that belong unto your peace, before they be for ever hid from your eyes!]

2. To those who know it—

[Whilst we exhort you to be cautious in admonishing others, we would caution you also against being soon discouraged. Think not every one assimilated to dogs or swine because he resists the truth for a season; but give “line upon line, and precept upon precept,” and “instruct in meekness them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, by whom they have been led captive at his will.”

And whilst you take upon you to admonish others, be willing to receive admonition also yourselves. It is not every religious professor that is so open to conviction as he ought to be&&, and that will receive reproof like David, esteeming it as “an excellent oil, that shall not break his head&&. Watch over your own spirit, therefore, and exemplify in yourselves the conduct you require in others.]