

You Are Judged: The Lord's Holy Pearl

We bow our hearts in prayer: O Lord, may our judgments be Your judgments, and Your love and mercy our love and mercy, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

There is little doubt that the first part of our text today is one of the most mis-quoted, mis-applied, & misunderstood texts in the Bible.

And sadly, it is not just the heathen that misquote and misunderstand it, but we Christians too. It's often used as a trump card against Christians who would seek to curb the immorality of their neighbors .

I've even, sadly, heard Christians use it against Christians in this way.

But you know, the last part of our text is also often misquoted, misapplied, & misunderstood, by Christians more so than by anyone else.

And I have heard it used among us as if it were a trump card to be used against the heathen when our many encouragements and warnings are not heeded, or are even vehemently rejected.

Perhaps you're curious by now about what our text is.

Well, let's hear what God has to say to us today.

Our text for meditation today is...

We read as follows in Jesus' name:

[Jesus said,] "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 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 the 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.

"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."^(ESV)

These are Your Words, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. ^(John 17:17)

So first off, let's go about clarifying what Jesus actually said in the first part here.

The superficial reading of this text (and what most people take away from it), usually gets summarized as "Don't judge me." Or "Who are you to judge me?"

Again, often used when a Christian would try to correct the immoral behavior of another.

But is Jesus really saying that His people are not to make any judgments whatsoever?

In a word, "NO"! We are to make judgments, but only those that are in our vocation/calling.

For example, a father or mother must make judgments about the behavior of a child.

In spiritual matters too, we are to make judgments.

How often does Jesus warn us to beware of false teachers?

This involves making a judgment, doesn't it?

Judging whether what a pastor says is truly what God has said in His Word?

Judging whether a preacher's life conforms to the morality of the Lord's Word?
This is within your vocation as a member of the Church, to judge the doctrine/life of a pastor,
not according to your own thoughts and opinions, but according to God's Word.

The Church, with her pastors, also will make judgments, as Christ commanded in Matthew 18:18:
**And if he refuses to listen even to the Church,
let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.**

St. Paul gave us an example of such a judgment in his first letter to the Corinthians.
A certain man had taken his father's wife as his own.

St. Paul wrote: **"I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.
When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus...**

you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. 1Corinthians5:3-5

Here St. Paul speaks of what we call excommunication.

What he means by **"delivering him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh"** is that
here in this life, the man should be removed from the Christian community,
and live without the comfort of forgiveness for his impenitent sin,
so that he may be troubled by his sin, thus destroying the desire for evil,
and, Lord willing, lead him to repent of his sin.

So Christians are to make judgments, within their vocations and according to God's Word.

But just because we have this responsibility and authority,
does not give you license to judge everyone and everything.

God isn't setting you up as THE judge, jury, and executioner.

Instead He cautions you to realize that you are a guilty party as well.

And so Jesus adds the middle part about the speck in your brother's eye & the log in yours.

But being guilty doesn't take away your responsibility to speak to your brother.

Notice, Jesus didn't end the parable with "you have a log in your own eye."

But He concludes it with "first take out your log," that is, repent of your sins,
"then take out your brother's speck," that is, speak to him about his sin.

By recognizing and repenting of your own sins, in humility and meekness,
you will approach your brother, not as judge, but as fellow sinner forgiven in Christ,
not in self-righteousness, but in true Christian love.

But this is not how we always act is it?

And sometimes, even with the best of intentions and proper attitude, others will not listen.
Their conscience strikes them, so they toughen their resolve against correction.

They tell you not to judge. They call you a hypocrite. They malign you. They ignore you.
And so you satisfy yourself with the last part of our text:

**"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."**

And so you justify your resolve not to speak to them any longer about their sin.

The interpretation is that the "holy thing" and the "pearl" are God's Word and forgiveness.

And to speak it to the heathen is to "give it to dogs" and "throw it before pigs,"

who, not desiring to hear it, trample it and turn to attack you.

Dear Christians, this is not what this proverb means.

God tells us to speak His Word to the heathen.

He sows it indiscriminately on the path, the rocky soil, the weedy soil, as well as the good.

He sent his prophets and apostles, and His own Son, Jesus, to the stiff-necked unbelievers.

So God is not saying, "Don't speak to them. Don't tell them of their forgiveness in Christ."

Instead, this little proverb is for us Christians, to beware of judging our own brethren falsely.

That's right! It's not about them. It's about you!

"**What is holy**" are the saints. "The **pearl**" likewise, Christians... believers.

We can see it clearly from the context.

Jesus is warning you to be very careful in your judgments.

Not only in making them, being sure that they are according to His Word, not your whims, but also in how and why you make them.

This goes back to the speck and the log parable.

If you judge a fellow Christian with an air of superiority or with a self-righteous attitude, and would judge that person out of the Church, when, in fact, the person is repentant, and you refuse to forgive, beware.

If you correct a fellow believer without love, so that the person leaves the Church, beware.

Beware first of all for that person's salvation.

Though you would seem to try to help them by bringing a sin to light, you drive them further away, by your sinful attitude and lovelessness.

Beware secondly, for the world's reaction.

They will happily receive and listen to a disgruntled former-Christian, and deepen their hatred of Christ and you, based upon the reports, totally true or not and so trample the soul of the disgruntled and turn to attack you, not to mention drive them further away from hearing the Gospel and so be saved.

Beware thirdly, for your own salvation.

Jesus also said in our text, **For the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**

If you judge without love or mercy, are you to expect the Father to show you mercy?

If you judge, according to your own understanding, even if it is a misunderstanding of Scripture, God will still be faithful to His Word. And isn't He to hold you accountable to it?

If you judge without Jesus in view, then your judgment is not true.

The reason God gives His Church the authority to judge is ultimately for salvation, not condemnation.

We do not just show a person their sin to wallow in it, but to show them Christ's redemption of it and His salvation from it.

We show them how Jesus has judged them to be a pearl of great value.

He is "**.. like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.**" Matthew 13:46

How Jesus sold all He had, gave up His earthly life in death to redeem you, to buy you back,

to remove your sins of self-righteousness and loveless motivations and false judgments, in order to give you His own righteousness, purity and true judgements.

... In other words, to make you holy and pronounce you innocent.

This is the judgment you always want to pronounce on others and to be judged with yourself.

This is the measure you desire to use and be measured with, Luke6:38

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, as our Gospel text said.

We see this to be the case, also in St. Paul's judgment in 1 Corinthians, spoken of earlier.

For in 2 Corinthians, after they had excommunicated the unrepentant sinner,

the man repented and St. Paul writes: ... **forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.**

And so now the Lord affirms His love for you by coming to you and bringing you to Himself,

coming to you with His forgiveness, **good measure, pressed down, shaken together,**

and running over, running over to your neighbor and causing your love for him, so that you humbly and meekly would seek his eternal good and show Him Christ for his salvation.

Soli Deo Gloria