

Pigs & Pearls

Jimmy Harris January 28, 2018

We live in a culture of condemnation

- People have turned cultural condemnation and judgment into the normal way we approach our daily lives!
 - Facebook comments — vitriol — bitterness — hatred
 - News channel bias — flip the channels. The hate from one side to the other is palpable...especially in regard to moral or political views...

Condemnation is often met with Self-Righteous Counter Condemnation

- **In Matthew 4,5,6 Jesus has been healing people, everywhere he went. Crowds began to gather with every kind of illness and sickness.** Jesus went on a mountain near the Lake of Gennesaret and Capernaum, the fishing town on the northern shore of the Lake of Gennesaret. Crowds gathered all around him. Jesus began the sermon that would reshape the world and everything we know today as what is good, what life really is, and how the kingdom is now available to everyone. We are going to jump into the middle of the sermon in Matthew chapter 7, where Jesus speaks to this culture of condemnation.
- **Matthew 7:1-6**

“Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.
- ⁶ “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.
 - “Don’t judge me!” or “Christians are so judgmental.”
 - Jesus is not asking us to stop making judgments about things. When someone says, “*don’t judge*” they actually mean — “*don’t think.*” That’s craziness.
 - *Sometimes people are so OPEN MINDED their brains just fall right out of their heads!*

FACT — Jesus is not telling us to avoid evaluating situations — the world is full of compelling wisdom — that is **TOTALLY** false.

- We must be wise.
- We must discern.
- At times, in fact, we must confront.
- **But, what Jesus is talking about here** is the tendency of all of us to judge too quickly, falsely, and without knowledge or understanding. We all do it.

Condemnation starts with our own sin — Shame and Blame

- man has been prone to unjust judgement *from the very beginning*
- in **Genesis 3** we see this type of condemnation. Adam, after eating from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, is confronted with his sin. What does he do?
 - He hides (**shame**)
 - He **blames** his wife (“this woman you gave me”)
- How does condemnation start? It always starts with *our own sin*. Shame and Blame.
- We sin, we hide, we blame, and this is key — *that is why our **condemnation** always feels justified.*
- Whose fault is it that Adam ate the forbidden fruit? What does he think? He thinks it’s her fault. But that is not what he thought at first.

What came before the blame? *Shame*.

- “I was naked, so I hid.” The feeling of shame turned quickly into BLAME and condemnation.
- **Condemnation always feels justified** *because we are covering up our shame.*

You will be judged with the same judgment you use

- **Matthew 7:1-2 — Jesus said...**
“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”
 - You will be judged with the same judgment you use. Wow!
 - Do you have 1 or 2 standards? One we apply to ourselves — and one that we apply to everyone else?
 - What’s important is that we see clearly what the real problem is.
 - It’s not always easy to see *how our own sin has distorted our view of the situation.*

Essays in the *London Times* posed the question, “What’s Wrong with the World?”
Theologian G. K. Chesterton had a two word response.

Dear Sirs:

I am.

Sincerely Yours,

G. K. Chesterton¹

I am the biggest problem in the world.

Plank Speck

- **Matthew 7:3**
And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

¹ Steve Sherwood, *Embraced: Prodigals at the Cross* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, Feb 1, 2010), 37

- Jesus knew we would get this wrong.
- It takes about one minute for us to forget “our part” in the problem. It is just hard to believe that we are the problem. But we are.
- *But that doesn't mean we shouldn't help anyone else. It just means we need to deal with our own sin first.*

QUICK EYE TEST — FARSIGHTED... NEARSIGHTED?

- FARSIGHTED — We are farsighted when we don't see things up close, but can see things far away
 - SPIRITUAL SENSE — there are many who just can't see their own sin very clearly — but they have CRYSTAL clarity about everyone else's problems
 - can blog, post, gossip, bait, debate, and argue about those problems
 - Even if I can see *your* problems in perfect 4K/HD detail, if I am farsighted I will trip over my own feet.
- NEARSIGHTED — We are nearsighted when we see things up near, and don't see things far away
 - SPIRITUAL SENSE — we see our own faults with crystal clarity, but we have very little discernment about anything that is beyond our own shadow
 - When we are nearsighted we may be tempted to put our heads in the sand under the guise of ... of “grace, grace, grace.”

Both of these are BIG problems.

- *We need to see up close to see our own problems.*
- *We need to see far out to see the real problems that are all around us.*

Jesus isn't teaching you about the plank in your eye so that you can turn around and put your head in the sand and pretend that nothing is really going on here!

***To see clearly both up close (your own sin)
and with clarity about the problems around you (the sins of others)
it will require you to put on the corrective lenses of Jesus Christ.***

- **Let me be clear. Only Jesus can remove a plank...**
- ***But Jesus expects us to help our brothers remove their specks.***

But how? Jesus gives some great practical advice on how to do this.

Pigs & Pearls

- **Matthew 7:6**
“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”
- This is not as many people suppose, that Jesus labels some people “unworthy” to learn about the good things of the kingdom. This would be the opposite of so many things Jesus said and did. No.
- This is a practical problem. Pigs can't eat pearls. No matter how valuable your pearls are — the pigs will take your ill-timed advice and turn to eat you!

- *Have you ever tried to give some good advice to someone who was not ready for it?*
- *Or received advice you were not ready to hear? How did that work?*

What do we do?

- We force good things on people who are not ready, cannot value what we give, and can't digest or use it.
- We take our ill-conceived, poorly-timed advice, and force it down their throats.

WHAT CONDITIONS DO YOU NEED TO HAVE TO FEED A PIG?

- A hungry pig (*ready to receive a good thing*)
- Food they can eat (*is this a useful thing, can they receive it?*)
- Quick hands (*sometimes right things, right time... can still risk getting bitten*)
 - * *Just because someone condemns or hates you does not mean you did it wrong. Jesus said that people would hate us. That he didn't come to bring peace, but the sword.*

Personal story from Pastor Jimmy... he spent two years meeting with a group of young men, early in the morning. He prepared and taught, but they were not growing, and he got frustrated. He complained to his wife, and she asked, "Do you love them?" He admitted that he didn't. When he threw away his notes, just started drinking coffee with them and loving them, letting God work, their lives began to change.

How do I know when I am pushing pearls on someone?

- **When I have a NEED to help.** (*you are not in charge of hope*)
 - I have to replace "helping" with a desire to give hope.
- **When I have a NEED to explain/understand.**
 - I have to stop solving and fixing someone, and replace that with a passion to love them.
- **When I have a NEED to be right** (*don't hear anyone that doesn't agree with you*)
 - **I must** replace it with the goal to exalt the name of Jesus Christ.
- **When I have a deep NEED to be accepted** (*I need you to like me*)
 - **I must** replace it with a passion to trust God.

Review

- We must stop the cycle of condemnation
- Jesus wants to help us to see our own sin up close — *and* see clearly the problems around us
- We need to stop living postured to condemn or counter condemn
- We must admit that we are truly the biggest problem in the universe

Application — Here are 2 things you can do right away to apply what we learned today.

1. Shut your mouth. *Silence is an act of humility. It is admitting loudly that you do not know everything, and that you trust God with this.*

- **James 1:26**

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

2. Let the goal of every conversation be: Love. *The only way to stop the cycle of condemnation is to take a hit, and love someone that doesn't deserve it.*

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-4**

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we usually feel righteous when we condemn a person or a situation?
2. How do you think you will be “measured” on judgment day, when God examines how you judged others?
3. How can we stop the cycle of condemnation in our lives, and the lives of others?
4. Would you characterize yourself as primarily Farsighted or Nearsighted? Why?
5. Have you had experience in “casting pearls before swine”? What happened? How would you handle it differently now?
6. Read James 1:26. What is so hard about keeping our mouths shut?