

DO NOT CAST YOUR PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

We are not to sinfully “judge” others, but there is a place for proper judging/discernment. That is true in reference to fellow believers and also true in reference to unbelievers, as Jesus now goes on to show.

Matthew 7:6 (NKJV)

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.

In bringing correction to a fellow believer, as noted earlier (see Matt. 7:1-5), we must do so with the right spirit, but what about unbelievers? What is required here is wisdom.

Colossians 4:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Our approach to correcting unbelievers is to be one of wisdom, graciousness, and humility. However, Jesus here in Matthew 7:6 brings out that there is a time when you don’t share at all with hardened unbelievers.

There is a time to hold your pearls of truth and not cast them at all! We don’t always have to try and bring about correction. Sometimes it is not wise! This again requires discernment. This involves a proper “judging” of the situation and the people involved.

Consistently in the Bible, pearls are shown to be gems of great value (cf. Job 28:18; Mt. 13:45-46; 1 Tim. 2:9; Rev. 17:4; 18:12, 16; 21:21).

“In v. 6, the ‘holy’ and the ‘pearls’ refer to God’s truth and kingdom standards. Those who are disciples of Jesus are not to take the precious truth of God and cast it before ‘dogs’ and ‘swine.’”

– Ed Glasscock

In the Bible, both dogs and pigs were unclean animals for the Jews (cf. Lev. 11:1-8; Deut. 23:18). In Bible times, dogs were rarely domestic pets like they are today. “They were largely half-wild mongrels that acted as scavengers. They were dirty, greedy, snarling, and often vicious and diseased. They were dangerous and despised.” (John MacArthur)

Swine in the OT were considered by Jews to be the epitome of uncleanness. When Antiochus Epiphanes offered up a pig on the altar at the Jewish Temple, it was the height of outrageous blasphemy.

Thus, both “dogs” and “pigs” were derogatory terms used by the Jews to designate unbelieving Gentiles. Consistently in the New Testament, these terms are used metaphorically to depict the wicked and the vile who refuse to repent (cf. 1 Sam. 17:43; 24:14; 1 Kings 14:11; 21:19; 2 Kings 8:13; Job 30:1; Prov. 26:11; Eccl. 9:4; Isa. 66:3; Matt. 15:27; Phil. 3:2; Rev. 22:15).

2 Peter 2:21–22 (NKJV)

21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “**A dog** returns to his own vomit,” and, “**a sow**, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Peter proverbially refers to those who have known the gospel and then turn from it as being like a dog that returns to its vomit or a sow to her wallowing. Both have an unclean nature, and being unchanged go right back to what is according to their nature.

Philippians 3:2 (NKJV)

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

Paul here referred to legalistic false teachers (known as Judaizers) as “dogs” (cf. Isa. 56:10-11). They were spiritually dangerous and unclean (cf. Ex. 22:31, 1 Kgs. 14:11, 16:4, 21:19, 23-24, 22:38).

Revelation 22:15 (NKJV)

15 But **outside are dogs** and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

Outside the holy city of New Jerusalem are spiritual dogs – in other words, people never cleansed from their unclean sinfulness. These are people who never repented of the disgusting vices that God hates.

Note how the characterization here. Those who refuse to repent of their vileness are “dogs,” and therefore it is inappropriate to serve them what is holy. The “swine” have no appreciation for pearls. They don’t see the value

in them at all, and if you cast them before them, they only become irritated, “trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces”.

They are not open to the value of kingdom truth, so don’t push it. They will only seek to abuse you for it. In such a case, don’t even go there – don’t force it. Don’t seek to apply the correction of TRUTH in such a case.

“When we meet vicious people who treat divine truths with utter contempt and respond to our preaching the claims of Christ with abuse and violence, we are not obligated to continue to share the gospel with them.” – **William MacDonald**

Footnote: Many contemporary Christians seem to think the mission of the Church is to somehow push for social changes in society. They think it is the job of the Church to reform society so that it aligns with kingdom standards. That never works because the coarse culture of society is filled with “dogs” and “swine”. To force it only brings abuse and blasphemy!

Proverbs 9:7–8 (NKJV)

7 “He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, And he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself.

8 Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.

Proverbs 23:9 (NKJV)

9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, For he will despise the wisdom of your words.

“This certainly does not mean that believers should not speak out against evil, but it is a warning against attempting to make a fallen world conform to standards that cannot be understood or appreciated. The intent of evangelism is not to make the world a better place, though that would be a blessed consequence, but to save people out of this present evil world.” – **Ed Glasscock**

When it comes to judging other people, we must ever remember we are NOT God. Yes, there is a place for correcting others in a helping sense, but it is to be done in humility and with integrity. There is no place for egotistical, hypocritical judging.

And when it comes to unbelievers, we have to be WISE in the matter of correcting or confronting. We are to seek to share the gospel with all

people, but when it comes to those hardened in hostile rejection, we are not to cast our pearls before them. It is counterproductive!