

The Sermon on the Mount: A Reformed Exposition

Chapter 30: A Warning against Unlawful Liberality

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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 (Mt. 7:6).

After speaking at length about unlawful judgment, our Lord turns His attention to the necessity of a careful, holy discrimination on the part of Christians toward unbelievers. Although it is common to see this verse as an unrelated statement, it should be viewed as a balancing verse to the preceding teaching. The saints are not to judge hypocritically or unfairly and they are not to be naïve or indiscriminating towards the heathen. Believers should not be unnecessarily harsh or judgmental and they must not abuse love and grace by casting pearls before dogs and pigs. Jesus wants to make sure that His teaching about being unfair in judgment is not turned into a reason for a lax, antinomian, wishy-washy attitude towards people who are wicked, foolish and obstinate. There are people who Christ says are in such a state that it is actually wrong to preach the gospel to them or attempt to spiritually admonish them. By way of introduction, there are some things to note about this passage.

First, our Lord was not afraid to use strong language to describe people when appropriate. After a section on carefulness and fairness in judgment, He turns right around and refers to some people as “dogs” and “swine.” Later in His ministry, He referred to the respected religious leaders in His day, the scribes and Pharisees, as “whitewashed tombs” (Mt. 23:27) and a “brood of vipers” (Mt. 23:33). He told them that they were hypocrites whose covenantal father was not God, but the devil (Jn. 8:44). He also referred to Herod Antipas as “that fox” (Lk. 13:32). The Jews regarded the fox as “the sliest of beasts” and, thus, Christ is openly identifying Herod’s wicked craftiness.

The Savior always called a spade a spade and, unlike many of today’s religious leaders, did not pretend that wicked political and religious leaders were wonderful human beings for the purpose of publicity or material gain. In our day, it is deemed inappropriate to use strong language because modern Reformed and evangelical churches are often effeminate, pluralistic and non-confrontational in their thinking. A common view is that we should only be positive in our teaching and not call dangerous error, heresy or false teachers, heretics. Jesus emphatically rejected such a view, as did the Protestant Reformers who referred to the Pope as anti-Christ and his bishops as Satan’s lieutenants.

Second, unlike the other sections in the Sermon on the Mount, this instruction is brief and is not accompanied by detailed explanations, illustrations or applications. This makes interpreting this passage more difficult. It can really only be properly interpreted in the light of the broader context of Scripture. Our Lord uses figurative language (“dogs, swine, pearls”) which can only be properly understood in the light of the cultural and religious background of the original Jewish audience.

The structure of this saying is interesting. The verse naturally divides into halves with each part having parallel clauses. The first two clauses are parallel and essentially say the same

thing with different terminology. Many scholars believe that this verse follows the a-b-b-a pattern, where the trampling refers to the swine and the rending refers back to the dogs. While this may be the case, the pigs described are not tame farm animals; but, rather, are wild boars which are ferocious animals and quite capable of tearing into an unwise giver.

Third, the teaching of this verse is neglected in our day due to Arminian, antinomian and pagan concepts of love and fairness that have penetrated many churches. Because Jehovah's holiness is no longer emphasized in preaching and God's moral law is no longer taught in many churches, the idea of refusing to preach the gospel to certain persons or witness to them is seen as incompatible with Scripture. It is viewed as undemocratic, anti-egalitarian and unloving. False views of love adopted from our pagan culture have caused many to refuse to obey this command of Christ. Believers, in their ignorance of the teaching of this passage, are sometimes guilty of casting the holy pearls of the gospel before the blaspheming swine and dogs of this world.

Defining Terms

The first thing that we need to do to understand this teaching is define the words that are used metaphorically. What does Jesus mean by "dogs" and "pigs"? Also, what does He mean by "holy things" and "pearls"?

The words "dogs" and "pigs" were among the most derogatory in the Jewish vocabulary of the first century. This was not because the Jews simply had a personal or subjective dislike of these animals, but because of their treatment by Scripture. The law of God regarded dogs and pigs as unclean and unholy animals. Because the Jews regarded dogs as utterly unclean, they were not kept as tame pets like in ancient Egypt or modern America. As a result, the dogs in and around Jewish cities were wild, vicious, and dangerous scavengers. They killed any small animals they could and roamed garbage heaps eating refuse and dead bodies; they often carried diseases. In 2 Kings 9 when Jezebel was thrown over the wall the dogs were waiting to eat her flesh and consumed her whole body (vs. 35-36). Earlier dogs had licked up Ahab's blood that was washed from his chariot (1 Kgs. 22:38) "while the harlots bathed." Because Ahab and Jezebel were exceedingly wicked apostates who savagely persecuted the holy remnant of God, it was fitting that both were left to the dogs. This was God's ultimate judgmental insult toward them. The filthy scavenger nature of dogs is set forth in Proverbs 26:11, which speaks of "a dog that returns to its vomit." Peter applies this verse to unregenerate professing Christians who apostatize from the faith (2 Pet. 2:22).

In Deuteronomy the word "dog" is used to designate a male (i.e. homosexual) prostitute: "You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God" (23:18). In both Philistine and Israelite culture the term "dog" was used as a strong insult to persons who were deeply hated (1 Sam. 17:43; 24:14; 2 Sam. 9:8; 16:9; 2 Kgs. 8:13). In Matthew 15:26 Jesus uses the term "dogs" to represent the Gentiles, although the expression there refers to a house dog or pet. In Psalm 22 the word "dogs" is used prophetically to describe our Lord's cruel taunting enemies (vs. 16, 20). This included both Jewish and Gentile tormentors and persecutors. The Jews in Jesus' day referred to all Gentiles as "dogs." It was a term of hatred and derision. In the last chapter of the Bible, people who are excluded from the new Jerusalem—the paradise of God—are identified as "dogs." "But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie" (Rev. 22:15).

The picture that Scripture gives of pigs is as bad as dogs. In the Old Testament, they are listed as one of the unclean animals (Lev. 11:7; Dt. 14:8). God says that anyone who has eaten swine's flesh or offered swine's blood in sacrifice has committed an abomination (Isa. 65:4; 66:3, 17). When Peter describes apostates who go back into the world, he describes pigs as having the same nature as dogs. "A dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, having wasted, to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:22). Interestingly, when Jesus cast the demons out of two men, he sent them into a herd of swine at their own request (Mt. 8:28-32). When our Lord wanted to illustrate the depths of declension and sin in the life of the prodigal son, He described him as a feeder of swine who wanted to eat the swine's food (Lk. 15:15-16). In other words, ethically and spiritually, he had reached the bottom of the barrel.

Given the scriptural use of these terms what specifically does our Lord mean? It is important that we recognize that Jesus is *not* simply referring to Gentiles, unbelievers or notorious sinners. This point becomes evident when we look at the broad context of Scripture. The Bible explicitly teaches that the gospel is to go into every nation (Mt. 28:19-20). It is to be preached "to every creature" (Mk. 16:15), first beginning at "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Ac. 1:8). Moreover, it cannot refer to especially wicked unbelievers for Jesus and the apostles preached to prostitutes, tax collectors, homosexuals, sorcerers and all the dregs of society. Therefore, it must refer to people who have already heard the gospel and rejected it or to pagans and apostates who are blaspheming and mocking the gospel. This point will become clearer as we look at specific examples in a moment.

The expression "what is holy" refers to something that is set apart by God. It is consecrated unto God and, thus, is special. It is *not* something that is common or profane. The Jews were required to make a distinction between that which is "holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean" (Lev. 10:10). The term "holy" is set in parallel with the word "pearls" and both are used to describe the same thing, but with a slightly different emphasis. Pearls in the first century were exceptionally valuable and were only purchased by people of great wealth. "In order to obtain a pearl of great value a merchant might have to sell all his possessions (Matt. 13:46; cf. 1 Tim. 2:9; Rev. 17:4; 18:12, 16; 21:21)."¹

Taking all this together, Jesus is saying that there is something exceptionally valuable and profoundly holy that believers have that must not be placed before men who are in such a wicked state as to abuse it and turn upon the Christian. Although this very valuable and holy thing is not identified in the immediate context, an examination of the broader context of Scripture reveals that Christ was speaking about the Word of God; in particular, the gospel of the kingdom.

Biblical Examples of This Principle

The best way to understand what our Lord is teaching here is to examine the many examples of the application of this principle in Scripture. There is the example of Christ Himself. The Savior was very patient and careful in how He dealt with the disciples, even though they were slow to learn and of little faith. He sometimes rebuked them, but the admonitions were loving and were designed to help them. But when He confronted His hardened enemies, the scribes and Pharisees, He condemned them outright and did not seek out any middle ground. The scribes and Pharisees, who heard the truth of the gospel but rejected it and sought to kill the Messiah, were not sheep, but were "dogs" and "swine." They were vicious, ravenous apostates

¹ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 359.

who were only interested in trampling the gospel underfoot. But when our Lord encountered Nicodemus, “ruler of the Jews,” who had not rejected the truth, He spent a good deal of time explaining the gospel to him.

We see this principle at work at Jesus’ trial. Christ was willing to speak to Pilate and tell him some amazing things about Himself even though Pilate was a wicked Roman ruler. But when He came before Herod Antipas, who had privately been instructed in the truth by John the baptizer yet rejected it and killed him, Jesus kept silent. Herod had rejected the gospel and his only interest in the Nazarene was a perverse curiosity relating to the Savior’s miracles and popularity. Our Lord was unwilling to cast the pearls of the gospel before this hedonistic, egotistical swine (cf. Lk. 23:3, 9).

Also, when Jesus sent forth the apostles, He gave them specific instructions on what to do when people, or even whole cities, reject the gospel and do not welcome His representatives. “And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet” (Mt. 10:14; cf. Lk. 9:5; Mk. 6:11). Among the Jews a shaking of the dust from the feet was done when leaving Gentile territory to remove the uncleanness from their feet. Here, the act is a sign that the gospel rejecters have been hardened in their separation from God and that impending judgment awaits them if they do not repent. It is a holy “good riddance” from God. Our Lord wants everyone to understand that rejecting the gospel is a very serious matter. It is a direct insult to Christ and God. With people who have rejected the truth, we are not “to beat a dead horse,” but rather are to figuratively shake off the dust. That is, we are to regard them as vile and have nothing whatsoever to do with them. If they show signs of repentance and are sincerely seeking spiritual guidance, then matters can change. Obviously, such people, while still alive, are not beyond the reach of grace. We can still pray for them, but we are to move on to other fishing grounds.

That the apostles followed our Lord’s example and teaching regarding this issue is seen in the book of Acts. In Acts 13 we read about certain Jews who heard the gospel, yet rejected it and opposed Paul and Barnabas. These first missionaries responded exactly as Jesus had commanded. “On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles’” (vs. 45-46). After these Jews stirred up the leaders of the city to persecute them and drive them out of their region we read, “But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium” (v. 51). There was a disapprobation, complete rejection and renunciation of the Jews who made themselves enemies of the gospel. Later, in his ministry at Corinth, we find Paul doing the same thing: “But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, ‘Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles’” (Ac. 18:6). From this we see that, while there is a responsibility to preach the gospel to all men without exception, there is also a duty to not cast precious pearls of truth before those set in array against the gospel. Those who oppose the gospel with a systematic and concerted opposition and blaspheme it are filthy, vicious “dogs” and “pigs” that need to be left alone.

Another teaching of Scripture that relates to our topic, at least in a tangential manner, is the matter of the excommunicated brother. Paul writes, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person” (1

Cor. 5:11). Here the apostle is instructing believers to avoid contact and fellowship of any kind with hypocritical and excommunicated professing Christians. Unlike the earlier examples, here we are not necessarily dealing with people who have rejected the gospel with their mouths, but with people who repudiate it by their lives. Such people know the truth and have repeatedly been admonished to repent of scandalous sins, but have obstinately rejected the truth by their behavior. Since these people were already part of the Christian community, believers cannot shake the dust off their feet and leave them. Instead they are to be cast out of the local church of Christ.

These people, like the enemies of the church noted earlier, have been given the truth but have rejected it. Indeed, apostates have heard the gospel and the teachings of Scripture many times, but have chosen to trample it underfoot as worthless. Thus, they too are to be regarded as “dogs” and “pigs.” To speak to them is a waste of time because they have already been given the truth and have rejected it. In fact, if Matthew 18 has been carefully followed, they have been given at least three separate occasions to repent, but have not. For those who disagree with this interpretation we point to the radical nature of the apostle’s statement: “With such a person do not even eat!” In the Eastern culture of that time to not make such an offer of hospitality would be considered a great insult. Socially, it was virtually unthinkable. Thus we can only conclude that Paul was following Jesus’ teaching regarding excommunication. That excommunication must result in a complete separation between the unrepentant scandalous sinner and the Christian community. “Such a sinner must be excluded from Christian fellowship. Then he may learn to see the error of his way, repent, and return to the faith.”²

When we look at Scriptural examples that flesh out our Lord’s command, we see certain things in common. Those deemed “dogs” and “pigs” have three characteristics. First, they already have received the truth and rejected it emphatically. This point is important because certain Christians called hyper-Calvinists have come up with the idea that the gospel is only to be spoken to people who are seeking it or who already show some interest in the truth. This teaching is refuted by the Great Commission and the many examples in the gospels and Acts where Jesus or the apostles preach to people who are simply going about their business. The woman at the well (Jn. 4:7-26), the man born blind (Jn. 9:35-39), the multitudes in Samaria (Ac. 8:5-8) and the philosophers at the Areopagus (Ac. 17:22-23) are obvious examples. If gospel preaching is limited to those who show some interest, then how are we to know who is interested without first speaking the truth to them?

Second, the people who have rejected the truth have also become hostile toward the gospel. Christ said that those who are “dogs” and “pigs” will respond to the truth by committing grievous sins. Instead of contemplating the truth or embracing it, they trample the gospel underfoot as worthless and attack the gospel messenger. This was first true of the Jews who persecuted the church, then the Greeks and Romans and can still be observed in many heretics, modernists, secular humanists and Muslims today. Preaching or witnessing to such people is not only a waste of precious time, but is also dangerous. It only manages to stir up a hornet’s nest of abuse and persecution.

Third, the people who have rejected the gospel and made themselves active enemies of the truth are not worthy any longer to hear it. Hearing the gospel is a great privilege. For thousands of years God’s special revelation and ordinances were limited to a tiny fraction of the world’s population. But with the death and resurrection of Jesus, Satan has been chained and now the Savior has a comprehensive authority over heaven and earth. The gospel is to go to

² Simon J. Kistemaker, *1 Corinthians*, 170-171.

every person in the whole world. Those who turn on the gospel are to be cut off from these precious words of life. This should be seen as a form of judgment. Those who hear the gospel need to take full advantage of this revealed light. It may be their last chance to ever hear it again.

Applications

Now that we have an understanding of our Lord's metaphorical language, we need to consider how this teaching applies to our own situation. There are a number of implications and applications that we should take from this text.

First, we need to see that Jesus is telling us that we possess a priceless treasure in the gospel. Christ does not speak of throwing stubble, hay or even bread before "dogs" and "pigs," but rather pearls, one of the rarest, most valuable commodities in the ancient world. Therefore, by implication, we need to see the importance of possessing the gospel and spreading it. It is a tragic thing when professing Christians act as though they take the gospel for granted. They are not serious about studying it, praying over it and meditating on it. They often view it as just another piece of information or part of their life. We need every day to think about and act upon the preciousness of Christ and His redemption. "It is wonderful beyond words. All physical wealth palls to insignificance beside it. Because this is God's world, nothing is more important to me than to have my sins forgiven and to be accepted by him; and nothing is more wonderful than the way God has accomplished this by sending his own son to die in my behalf. God has graciously given to men, both in human language (the Bible) and in a human person (Jesus), true and sure revelation of himself; and nothing absolutely nothing is richer or more important or of more consequence than that."³ Young people raised in Christian homes who have heard these words of life since birth must always keep in mind the value of the gospel. The whole world is nothing but a speck of dust in God's sight compared to the work of His dear Son.

Also, with an understanding of the preciousness of the gospel, should we not be more willing to tell our neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances and relatives about it? If we found a great chest of gold and became rich beyond belief, would we not be excited and tell others about it? Oh, that we could be more like the Samaritan woman who was so excited about Christ that she brought many people in her own city to a saving knowledge of the Savior (Jn. 4:29, 39-41).

Second, this passage tells us something very sobering about what man has become because of Adam's fall into sin. When the Word of God looks at fallen mankind and considers how men apart from grace treat God and His Word, it says that they are "dogs" and "swine." The effect of sin upon man has been spiritually devastating. That which is holy, good and spiritual is hated by men, while they love to wallow in the mire of sin and all sorts of disgusting perversions. Paul says, "To be carnally minded is death" and "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:6, 7). Because of the pollution of sin, we are born as ethical and spiritual "dogs and pigs." We are born rebels against God's throne, with an inner hostility and hatred of God's truth. Do you not see how terrible sin is? It has taken the crown of God's glorious creation that was meant to live in fellowship with God and serve Him with joy and has turned him into a wild, ravenous, savage boar. It is for this reason that, without a work of the Holy Spirit, people are hostile to the gospel. People become angry when they hear the truth of God's Word because it shows them what they really are and what they truly need. "That is what sin does to man; that is what it does to his nature; that is how it affects his attitude towards the truth. It is something that gets into the

³ D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 105-106.

very depths and vitals of man's being, and turns him into something that is not only hateful, but utterly opposed to God, and purity, to cleanness, and holiness, and truth."⁴

Third, Jesus is commanding us to use wisdom and discrimination when speaking to others about Christ. This is the central teaching of this passage. Unfortunately, many Christians have been ignorant of this principle and have allowed the gospel and themselves to be punching bags for the heathen. For example, prominent ministers have appeared on pagan television programs with good intentions, but have been used by hardened, Christ-hating, secular humanists to try and make God's Word look foolish. A Christian preacher or intellectual should never appear on a format where a notorious anti-Christian has control over the debate or the editing of the final product. In the United States the pattern of secular humanists in the media is to place three secular humanists who hate Christ up against one incapable Christian minister, simply to trample the truths of Scripture underfoot. We must not cast our pearls before swine.

Our Lord's teaching needs to be applied to personal witnessing. There are people who will respectfully listen to what one has to say and then there are hostile mockers and blasphemers of the gospel who are out to make trouble. It is sad to see fervent Christians in a campus ministry stand and take repeated abuse by people who have already rejected the gospel because the Christians have not learned discrimination. In such situations we should be like Paul and Barnabas and tell such people that they are not worthy to hear the gospel and move on. There are plenty of unbelievers to witness to in our day and age. If you are witnessing to someone and they understand what you have to say but hate it and begin attacking you, then it is time to shake the dust off and walk away. People who are out to mock and ridicule the gospel should be rebuked and asked to leave. We accomplish nothing good when we waste much time and energy on people who already know the truth and hate it. We can and should pray for such people, but we must refuse to talk further with them until the Holy Spirit changes their hearts and makes them seekers instead of haters.

All of this does not mean that we should mistreat, abuse, or act hatefully toward those who mock and ridicule the message of the kingdom. Christians who go to funerals for AIDS activists and carry signs that say "God hates fags" or "faggots burn in hell" are accomplishing nothing productive. They are simply stirring up more anger and hatred toward believers. We are to shake the dust off of our feet, not throw it in their face. Many who are Christians now did mock and reject the gospel the first time they heard it. Therefore, it is wise to avoid being nasty and vindictive toward them; simply refuse to argue with them. We must avoid the temptation to become abrasive and verbally fight with those who mock the gospel. It is easy to become angry when people make fun of our most cherished beliefs. It is at such times that we must remember not to cast pearls before "dogs" and "swine." That is why Jesus told his disciples regarding the Pharisees, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind" (Mt. 15:14). Solomon says that we should "go from the presence of a foolish man" (Pr. 14:7). There is nothing more foolish than rejecting and mocking the truth.

The flip side of this teaching is that when we are *not* dealing with savage "dogs" and debauched "swine" (who are destitute of the fear of God and have a hardened contempt for the gospel), we need to be patient and persevere with the unbeliever. A person may not believe immediately, but may have many questions. The person who is willing to listen and does not emphatically reject the truth ought to have all of his questions patiently answered. As Peter says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). We all

⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 2:190.

need to be ready to give the inquirer biblical reasons why we believe in Christ. This involves not only knowing what the Bible says, but also being able to explain it logically. We are to do so without showing off or acting arrogantly. We need to know when to walk away and we need to know when to stay and earnestly contend for the faith. It is probable that more Christians are guilty of walking away before they should, than are guilty of staying too long.

As we use biblical discrimination to identify “dogs” and “swine,” it is important that we learn to be objective with former friends and even relatives who hate the gospel and attack it. Our Lord’s principle is really not that hard to implement with strangers and people with whom we have no emotional attachment. But when it comes to people with whom we have emotional attachments (e.g., childhood friends, close relatives and even *grown* children), the tendency is to think that the principle does not apply to such situations. Thus, we see Christian parents that tolerate, fellowship with, and even support grown apostate children who trample the cross of Christ underfoot as worthless. This is a grave mistake. While we need to be there for such people if they decide to repent, we actually do them more harm when we continue to cast “pearls” before them. These “dogs” and “pigs” will not only blaspheme and curse the gospel even more, but they will turn and rend the misguided Christian. Many a believing parent has been taken advantage of and has even fallen into serious sin by not heeding our Lord’s command with their *adult* apostate, anti-Christian children.

Fourth, although the teaching of God’s Word is in mind in our Lord’s command, it also certainly applies to the Lord’s supper where the gospel is set forth symbolically in the bread and the wine. This is how the post-apostolic church applied this passage. In the early second-century document, the *Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve)*, we read, “Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, but they who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, ‘Give not that which is holy to the dogs.’”⁵ The Lord’s supper must not be distributed to unbelievers, unrepentant apostates, believers guilty of scandalous sins and people who refuse to join a Bible-believing church. The common practice today in evangelical churches of handing out communion to every person who walks in the door of the church is totally unscriptural. The church elders have a responsibility to fence the table and make sure that that which is holy, or set apart for the saints, is not given to the dogs and swine of this world.

Fifth, in a tangential way, our passage can be applied in a sense to professing Christians who themselves mock and scoff at the truth. If someone who claims to be a believer completely rejects any correction from God’s Word and viciously attacks you for attempting to correct him, then you are wasting your time and placing yourself in harm’s way. It is best to stay away from such people. “He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer lest he hate you” (Pr. 9:7-8). “Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words” (Pr. 23:9). To correct such a person is like catching the tail of a snake who then turns and bites you. It is like trying to cut a piece of wood with an ax and having it rebound and strike you in the face. “Wisdom’s messengers must discriminate in the proclamation of their message.... The gospel is a thing too holy to be exposed to scoffing fools. Why should we *correct*, where more harm than good may be occasioned?”⁶ If the person is a member of the local church and is guilty of some scandalous sin, then Matthew 18:15ff would come into play. However, most Christians are not connected to a solid church that has real discipline.

⁵ *Didache* (Chapter 12) as quoted in John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counter Culture*, 181, footnote 4.

⁶ Charles Bridges, *The Book of Proverbs*, 107.

God has given us His Word which is holy and exceedingly precious. We need to use this Word with great wisdom and discretion. The gospel which is the Pearl of pearls must be revered and treated with respect. It must never be thrown to the filthy, savage dogs and pigs of this world, as if it were common or unclean. As representatives of Christ, our witnessing must not be indiscriminate. We need to be on guard for those situations when we must shake off the dust and leave those who have a hardened contempt for the gospel to wallow in their own blindness and filth. Their blood will be on their own head.

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