

Seeing Ourselves Clearly with Jesus

Thomas Robinson, *Seeing Life Through Jesus' Eyes 4*, January. 29, 2012

Matthew 7:1-12

¹ “**Judge** not, that you be not **judged**.

² For with the **judgment** you **judge** you will be **judged**,
and with the **measure** you **measure** it will be **measured** to you.

³ 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?

⁴ 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?

⁵ 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.

⁶ Do not give what is **holy** to **dogs**,
and do not throw your **pearls** before **pigs**,
lest they trample them underfoot
and turn to attack you.

⁷ **Ask**, and it will be **given** to you;
seek, and you will **find**;
knock, and it will be **opened** to you.

⁸ For everyone who **asks receives**,
and the one who **seeks finds**,
and to the one who **knocks** it will be **opened**.

⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for **bread**, will give him a **stone**?

¹⁰ Or if he asks for a **fish**, will give him a **serpent**?

¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give **good gifts** to your children,
how much more will your Father in heaven give **good things to those who ask him!**

¹² “**So whatever you wish that others would do to you,**
do also to them,
for this is the **Law** and the **Prophets**.

Matthew 5:7

⁷ “Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive **mercy**.”

Matthew 6:11-15, 31-33

¹¹ **Give** us this day our daily bread,

¹² and **forgive** us our debts, as we also have **forgiven** our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows** that you need them all. ³³ But **seek first the kingdom of God** and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

A New Way of Thinking

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus leads his disciples and the crowd on a journey to a new way of seeing life, action, others, ourselves, God. We are not yet at the point of history when all that Jesus is and will do (crucifixion, resurrection) can be brought to them. But Jesus is preparing for that. He is not giving a new law, new regulations for life. Rather trying to set a new default position, the basic vision from which to think and act.

From God to Us to Others. Jesus speaks to us to help us see ourselves without our built-in distortion. For that we need to see God at the center, everywhere, in all his beauty, simplicity, generosity, holiness. We need to learn from God and let that shape our actions toward others. We get in the way. We reverse the flow. Life gets distorted.

Judge Not, that you Be Not Judged

A favorite saying, today. Philosophical devaluing of values. But Jesus is not saying that there are no judgments to be made, but that we have a near infinite ability of self-deception, and are usually dangerous judges. He embodies the new default position in a memorable proverb and crazy/vivid story. (Not a new law!) We piously want to act in God's position, but we get in the way. Think how we long for God's mercy and then give that generosity to others. Start by assuming that I have problems I'm blind to.

This saying amplifies others in the sermon. When God is at the center of life, his mercy, love, forgiveness shape our lives. But Jesus warns that when we start from our own harshness, lack of love, grudges, we block God's grace and write our own judgment.

Pearls and Pigs

Jesus tells two more little parables about dogs and pigs. If you have found something beautiful, valuable, holy, don't trust/surrender its evaluation to forces, structures, or people that have no sense of that beauty or holiness. Pigs won't understand pearls.

Jesus is likely saying don't talk about the "kingdom of God" to Roman soldiers or Herod's spies. They'll make you pay. But the parables can apply to more. We can easily find ourselves in business structures that disdain honesty and live by greed, among peer groups that undermine faithfulness in marriage or sexual purity before marriage, etc. Be confident in what God shows you is really valuable. Don't reverse the flow.

Ask, Seek, Knock!

Jesus says that when we begin to see God everywhere, it creates a longing for more, a desire for a deeper, higher, more beautiful, richer experience of life. A holy dissatisfaction. Jesus says, Go for it! Ask! Seek! Knock! More is there. God is there.

Your life is intended to have dimensions beyond this world. When you know that everything is a gift, ask for everything. Jesus doesn't say be cautious. Let God be cautious. Live life as a joyful quest for all that is good, beautiful, holy, lasting – deep love, great joy.

The Active Golden Rule

Cause no harm is a good rule. But Jesus wants us to take our experience of all that is best in life and actively give it away. How we have been treated by God. How we would want to be treated and valued by others – the new default position. Act toward others from that.