

Be Discerning

Matthew 7:6

After speaking at length about unlawful judgment in Matthew 7:1-5, our Lord turns His attention to the necessity of a careful, spiritual discernment on the part of Christians toward unbelievers. Here are two significant truths we can learn:

1. Christians must _____ discernment

Christians must learn to distinguish between those who are determined in their rejection of the Gospel, and those who are open to the Gospel. What does Jesus mean here?

- “Dogs” - refer to those filthy large savage, half wild, dangerous dogs in the streets of Jerusalem (2 Kings 9:35-36, 1 Kings. 22:38; Prov. 26:11). The term is used to refer to apostate (fake/professing) Christians (2 Peter 2:22), an abominable person (Deut. 23:18), an enemy of God (Psa. 22:16,20) who will not inherit God’s kingdom (Rev. 22:15).
- “Swine” – are considered an unclean animal (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8; cf. Isa. 65:4; 66:3,17; Matt. 8:28-32). These dogs and swine refer to people who have heard the gospel and rejected it or to pagans and apostates who are mocking or blaspheming the gospel.
- “What is holy” - something that is set apart by/consecrated to God (Lev. 10:10).
- “Pearls”- are precious gems of costly value.

Christians are to exercise discernment in sharing the Gospel to those who are determined to oppose and reject it (Prov. 9:7-8; illustration: Luke 23:9).

2. Christians must _____ the gospel

Christians must take care to guard the preciousness of the gospel in their witness and in their lives; that we do not put the gospel in the position of being rejected by a hard hearted sinner (Matt. 10:14-15; cf. Luke 9:5; Mark 6:11; Acts 13:46-51; 18:6).

We must not cheapen the gospel because the gospel is not cheap! The gospel of salvation may be free but it’s not cheap. The gospel cost the precious life of Jesus, the Son of God.

We protect the sanctity of the gospel by:

- Being careful of not giving ourselves in relationships to those who are antagonistic and obstinately refuse the gospel (2 Cor. 6:14)
 - Not changing the content of or “sugar coating” the gospel to make it appealing to unbelievers (2 Tim 4:3).
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The greatest thing in the whole world is the knowledge of the gospel (John 17:3). By it, we were regenerated, saved and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. When we became Christians, we have received that sacred thing. With it comes the recognition that our purpose is to guard and share this gospel. But we need to use His Word and we must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and have a spirit of discernment.