

### **Jesus on Judging/Asking/Entering**

**Matthew 7:1-14; Luke 6:31, 37-38, 41-42, 11:9-13, 13:23-24**

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 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? 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? 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. Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (English Standard Version – ESV)

#### **Background:**

- The idea of a measuring scale (taken from the ancient marketplace) was used elsewhere for the Day of Judgment or divine retribution (“with the measure you use it will be measured to you”); it occurs several times in later Jewish sources and may have been a maxim. Compare also the Old Testament principles that false witnesses were to receive the penalty they sought for the accused (Deuteronomy 19:18-21), and that God opposed unjust judges (Exodus 23:6-8; Deut. 16:18-20).

- Although ancient eye surgery often involved lancing the eye, here Jesus clearly uses hyperbole. The imagery is vivid, shocking, ludicrous and probably humorous to Jesus’ hearers, but it clearly communicates the point. The prophets had appealed to graphic images, often employing plays on words to communicate their message (e.g. the Hebrew of Micah 1; Jeremiah 1:11-12). The Old Testament (e.g. Proverbs 15:32) and subsequent Jewish tradition stressed that people should always be humble enough to accept correction.

- Pigs and dogs, which were considered unclean animals (Proverbs 26:11; 2 Peter 2:22), had no appreciation for valuable things (Proverbs 11:22). Pigs typically ate the vilest foods and dogs were scavengers, consuming even human blood. Stray dogs were known to growl at those who tossed them food as well as those who ignored them. The image would thus be forceful and beyond dispute for ancient hearers. In the context of Matthew 7:1-5, verse 6 could refer to those who would not listen (Proverbs 23:9), or it could mean giving only to those who want what is offered, as God does (Matthew 7:7-11).

- Jesus adapts a standard Jewish argument here called *qal vahomer*; i.e. arguing from the lesser to the greater (if the lesser is true, how much more the greater). Fish and bread were basic staples, integral to the diet of most of Jesus' hearers; they do not represent the fineries of the wealthy.

- That one should not do to others what one did not wish done to self was a common teaching.

- Jesus' hearers would have been familiar with the common image of "two ways" - one leading to life and the other to death. The emphasis by Jesus that only a few are on the right way occurs in 4 Ezra, but is not as common as the image of the two ways. Most Jews believed that Israel as a whole would be saved, and that the few who were lost would be exceptions to the general rule.

### **Questions:**

- + Jesus says, "Judge not..." yet no court can function without judges. What does He mean? How have others judged you? How do you respond when judged? How should you respond? How have you judged others? How have others responded to the judgments you have made? What "log" in your eye does God want you to remove right now? How will you remove it?
- + What do you ask God for most, and why? Do you get what you ask for? Why or why not? What do you seek for most, and why? Do you get what you seek for? Why or why not? What are the "good things" God wants to give you? Compare Matt. 7:11 with Luke 12:13.
- + How does the "Golden Rule," stated by Jesus in v. 12, fit the context of prayer in vv. 7-11? What is "the narrow gate," and why is it hard? What is "the wide gate," and why is it easy? What is "the way... that leads to life?" How can you know whether or not you are on it? Why do only a few find the way? How can you know if you found it? How can you stay on it?