

June 25/23 - Matthew 7:1-12 "Kingdom Living Requires Community"

Read Matthew 7:1-12

Kingdom living requires community. A community where we come alongside one another in love to encourage those things which are consistent with the kingdom and step away from those that are not. Last week we looked at the tendency in all of us toward a judgemental, critical spirit which is absolutely destructive to kingdom community. As the heart is transformed by the gospel we can find our hearts freed from judgement that we might support others in removing the specks in their eye (vs. 5) This week we turn to the second part of this work – that of hearing truth in love.

(vs. 6) There is some debate as to what this verse means. In the early church it was used as justification to keep the communion table to the baptized. Currently the most accepted interpretation links the pearls here with the pearl of great price in Jesus' parable from Matthew 13:45-46 (may be helpful to read) – making this verse mean – be very discerning with whom you share the good news of Jesus with because you might not get a good response.

1. What do you make of those interpretations? Do they seem consistent with what Jesus is teaching in the sermon?
2. (vs. 6) One of the other threads of interpretation sees this as a continuation of Jesus' teaching of speaking truth in love. Not everyone will be appreciative of drawing attention to the realities in our lives that keep us from living in step with the kingdom – making this verse a proverb communicating the same truth as Proverbs 9:8 (read). Has this borne out in your experience of speaking truth in love?
3. (vs. 6) Why do pigs respond in the way that they do? What is the comparable when you relate it to human interaction?
4. (vs 6) We could turn the verse around and ask – do I create a conducive environment for another to share truth in love or am I piggy in my response? How does the gospel shape our hearts to hear truth in love?
5. (vs. 7) How is this verse both a fitting conclusion to the teaching on speaking truth in love, and the sermon as a whole?
6. (vs. 9-11) The sermon is the glorious promise of the life that God is shaping in us by the power of the Spirit. What aspects of the character of God are meant to shape our prayers that such a life will take shape within us?

Ask one another what aspect of the teaching of the sermon they would like shaped in them by the Spirit and then pray for one another as a group.