

Leave Them Alone

Matthew 7:6
Halifax: 5 September 2004

Introduction

Two weeks ago, I began chapter 7 in our sermon series from Matthew's Gospel.

- In this chapter, we find Jesus continuing His great sermon that we know as the Sermon on the Mount.
- In this portion of the sermon,
 - He preaches to us about how we ought to live before God as Judge.

The first 6 verses of chapter 7 form a unit that has to do with our judging others.

- I covered the first five verses last time;
 - Today we are going to focus on verse 6.
 - Let me read it to you again. Jesus says:
 - Matthew 5:6: "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

What is Jesus talking about in this verse?

- What are the holy things and the pearls?
- Who are the dogs and the swine?
- Why are we not allowed to give holy things to the dogs and pearls to the swine?

Today, I propose to answer these questions.

- Let's take them one at a time...
 - First of all...

I. What are the holy things and the pearls?

A. The holy things and the pearls are Christian reproofs.

1. They are the words of counsel and correction that you bring to help your brother.
 - a. As believers, we are all desirous to conform our lives to God's word...
 - But there are times when we all need to be corrected...
 - We need someone to come to us with God's word and show us where we have gone wrong and what we need to do instead.

- b. Christian reproof is one of the most wonderful aspects of Christian fellowship!
 - Because we have the word of God among us, we are able to bring real help to each other!
 - We are able to speak the very word of God into each other's lives!
 - This is what I mean by Christian reproofs.
2. We are called to use Christian reproofs all the time...
- a. Fathers are called to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!
 - That means that they are to be ministers of God's word to their children!
 - They are to take His precious word and apply it to the children!
 - b. Ministers are called to bring Christian reproofs to God's people through preaching...
 - And the elders and the pastor together are to bring personal reproofs to those who are in need.
 - Jesus says that if a brother wanders away from God,
 - the shepherd ought to leave the other 99 sheep in the fold and go after that one to restore him!
 - Christian reproof is to take priority over everything else!
 - c. Any time you see your brother go astray, you are called to go to help him!
 - In Gal 6:1, Paul says:
 - Gal 6:1: Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
 - When Paul says, "you who are spiritual," he doesn't mean super spiritual, he simply means that you have the Holy Spirit and do not have a beam in your own eye.

TRANS> But perhaps you are wondering,

- How do you know that Jesus is talking about Christian reproofs when talks about holy things and pearls?

B. It is clear from the context.

- 1. Jesus has just been talking about judging one another.
 - a. And as I showed you last time, His main point is that **you** are not to judge...
 - Jesus is forbidding you to set **yourself** up as judge...

- I showed you three ways that this is done:
 - 1) First, you set yourself up as judge when you judge other people based on your own standard!
 - You are not say, “Oh that’s an awful thing to do,” unless **God** says it’s an awful thing to do...
 - Nor are you to say, “Well that’s okay,” if God says it’s not okay!
 - It doesn’t matter whether your neighbour’s actions please you—
 - the only thing that matters is what God thinks... He is the judge.
 - 2) Secondly, you set yourself up as judge when you try to determine how someone ought to be penalised for their actions—how they ought to be punished!
 - It is not for you to decide that you will never speak to someone because he cheated you—
 - God has told you to go and reconcile with that person...
 - And yes, God requires that person to make restitution, but he has not authorised you to shun him—you are to go and reconcile.
 - 3) And thirdly, you set yourself up as judge when you exceed the boundaries that God has given you in rendering judgement...
 - For example, you are not to judge someone else’s heart—only God can do that...
 - nor are you to assume someone has done wrong when you don’t know enough facts to make such a judgement...

TRANS> Jesus is forbidding you to set yourself up as judge in any of these ways...

- b. But Jesus does not at all suggest that you are not to bring God’s word to your brother when He has erred.
 - 1) Jesus great concern is that you come to correct your brother correctly...
 - That you come to Him with correction based on God’s word instead of your own opinion.
 - That you come with sincere desire that **God’s** will be done...
 - 2) Jesus warns you that if you come to apply God’s word to your brother in a little thing but have not applied to yourself in a big thing, it is hypocrisy!

- It is obvious in that case that you don't really care if God's will is done.
 - If that was your concern, you would certainly apply God's word to your own sin first!
- 3) But you see in verse 5 that Jesus does not tell you to forget about bringing His word to your brother!
- He does not excuse you from helping your brother because you have your own sins!
 - He rather commands you:
 - "First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."
 - What a terrible thing it is if your life is so full of sin that you can't help your brother when he is caught in sin!
 - What a terrible thing it is for a parent to be so full of sin that he can't bring God's reproof to his children!
 - What a terrible thing it is for elders to be so full of sin that they can't bring God's reproof to the members of the church!

TRANS> And so Jesus is showing you in these first five verses how to correct correctly—how to administer Christian reproofs.

2. He has not changed the subject when you get to verse 6...

- He is talking about bringing the word of God into your brother's life when he needs to be corrected.
- These Christian reproofs are the holy things and the pearls.

C. It is no wonder that He calls these reproofs pearls and holy things!

1. Christian reproofs are holy because they are from God.

a. A holy thing is a thing that is especially associated with God!

- God's word is sacred or holy because it comes from Him...
- When you properly bring reproof to your brother, God is speaking to Him!

b. Having God's word is the thing that sets God's people apart from the whole world!

- When Paul wants to talk about what makes God's people different He summarises it like this:
 - "To them were committed the oracles of God!"

- When people are saved,
 - The Bible sometimes simply says, “they received the word of God,” or “the word of God came to them.”
 - When the church was growing in grace,
 - Luke says that the word of God increased and flourished.
 - c. Brothers and sisters...
 - Understand what you have when you take God’s word to someone in need!
 - It is the very word of God...
 - The reproof you bring is holy!
 - You bring God’s perspective into the situation for your brother!
2. How valuable such reproofs are! That is why Jesus refers to them as pearls!
- a. The Psalmist says that God’s word is more to be desired than gold—yea than much find gold!
 - Solomon refers to the word that parents give to their children as precious jewels that adorn them and make them beautiful!
 - That is what God’s word does when it is received and applied!
 - b. What could be more valuable than to have God speak into our lives!
 - We have the privilege of giving and receiving God’s holy precious word to one another as we go on in life.
 - By His word, we grow together in the unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.
 - God shapes us and renews us into His very own image!

TRANS> So you see that in answer to the first question,

- Christian reproofs are the holy things and the pearls that Jesus tells us not to give to the dogs and the pigs...
- And now the second question...

II. Who are the dogs and the swine?

A. To answer this, let me begin by looking at the Old Testament.

1. Under Old Testament ceremonial law,
 - dogs and swine were regarded as unclean animals.

- a. In the ceremonial worship that God gave to Israel, there were three classifications:
 - clean, unclean, and holy.
 - b. God taught the people that something unclean (like a dog or pig) must never come into contact with what was holy.
 - If a person was unclean or had become unclean,
 - he had to first be cleansed...
 - And even a clean person had to be consecrated before he could come into God's presence.
 - All sorts of washings and ceremonies of purification were required before a person could come before God.
 - c. With all these rituals,
 - 1) God was teaching His people that the only reason they could come before Him and have communion with Him was because He had cleansed them and consecrated them by the blood of the covenant!
 - He was teaching them what a privilege it was to come before Him!
 - Those who were not cleansed (the Gentiles) were not allowed to come before Him.
 - 2) This was not intended to make Israel proud because they were clean and others were not...
 - It was rather to make them humble in realising that the only reason they could come before God was because He had cleansed them!
 - That without the shedding of blood, there was no remission of their sins.
 - All these ceremonies pointed them to look to the cleansing that Christ would bring!
2. After Jesus came and shed His own blood to consecrates us to God...
- a. The ceremonial rituals pertaining to the temple were dropped.
 - No longer were there clean and unclean foods or clean and unclean animals.
 - The temple is now in heaven, and Christ has offered a sacrifice in heaven that cleanses His people...
 - It is entirely unfitting to have cleansing ceremonies now that He has come—
 - Rather, we look back to the work of Jesus on the cross that has accomplished cleansing forever.

TRANS> But what about the distinction between holy and unclean people?

- How has that been affected by the coming of Jesus?

- b. The distinction between holy and unclean people is actually emphasised even more now that Jesus has come and offered his cleansing, consecrating sacrifice!
 - 1) Those who have trusted in Him are everywhere called saints, or holy ones!
 - They are said to have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ from all their sins.
 - They are invited to draw near to God with a greater confidence than ever now that Jesus has shed His blood for them!
 - They are declared to be fully accepted in the beloved Son of God!
 - Those who are not in Christ are under the wrath of God, but those who believe are given eternal life!

TRANS> There is a radical difference because of Christ's cleansing!

- 2) Paul instructs the Corinthians that they are not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers because they are holy—a holy temple to the Lord!
 - There is not to be a blurring of the distinction between what is holy and what is unclean!
 - Listen to how he ties in the Old Testament language and applies it to believers as holy and unbelievers as unclean:
 - 2 Cor 6:14-18: Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate," says the Lord. "Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters," Says the LORD Almighty.

- 3) Even the children of a believer are set apart by the blood of the covenant...
 - In 1 Cor 7, Paul declares that even those children who have only one believing parent are holy...
 - and that in distinction from the children of unbelievers who are said to be unclean.

TRANS> The distinction between unclean people and holy people is not abolished at all in Jesus.

- It is emphasised all the more!
- c. The terminology of dog and pig is also carried over into the New Testament...
 - 1) Because dogs and pigs were unclean in the Old Testament,
 - the New Testament sometimes refers to those who are outside of Christ as dogs and pigs.
 - They are unclean.
 - 2) Jesus Himself refers to Gentiles as dogs in Matthew 15:
 - Here we have the account of a Canaanite woman who comes to Jesus looking for mercy because her daughter is demon possessed.
 - Jesus says to her:
 - "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
 - He has come to minister to the covenant people, not to those who were outside the covenant...
 - She cries out to him all the more, but He insists...
 - "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."
 - You see how she refers to her and her people as dogs because they were not part of the holy people—they were unclean.
 - He does not want to give what is holy to the dogs...
 - The woman, instead of being insulted by this, accepts it and says:
 - "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."
 - 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.
 - She proved that she was a child of God by her faith and so she received a holy thing that belongs to the children of God.

TRANS> The point for us, however, is that Jesus considered people outside God's covenant to be dogs until they had proven otherwise!

- 3) Peter uses this same language to refer to those who had apostatised from the church in 2 Peter 2:20-22...

- Here are people who had once been members of the church, but who had gone astray and been cut off from them.
 - Peter shows that such persons have rejected the truth because they are by nature unclean like dogs and pigs:
 - They were never truly cleansed by Jesus Christ...
 - He says of them:
 - 2 Peter 2:20-22: For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."
- 4) In the same way, the book of Revelation describes those who are outside of the city of God as dogs...
- Re 22:15: But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

TRANS> I think it is clear that when Jesus speaks of dogs and swine in Matthew 7:6, He is talking about those who are outside the city of God—unbelievers.

B. But why are such harsh, unkind terms used of unbelievers?

1. These terms are used because this is what people really are before God until they are cleansed by Christ!
 - a. Every unbeliever needs to realise his condition before a holy God.
 - It is no trifling matter!
 - We are by nature repulsive to a holy God who cannot look upon iniquity...
 - He is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity!"
 - Every human being, because of sin, is unclean in God's eyes until he has been consecrated by the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - We are dogs and pigs that are utterly repulsive to the Holy God.
 - We are cut off from all fellowship with Him and are under His wrath and curse.
 - b. Every believer also needs to realise the condition of the unbeliever in God's eyes.
 - Not so you can become proud,

- but so you can become thankful that God has delivered us and made us holy!
 - What an inestimable privilege it is for the unclean to be declared holy!
 - God calls us to assemble together every Lord's day to remember the sacrifice of Jesus that makes us holy that we might give thanks to His name!
 - Realise how great your salvation is!
 - You were unclean, but you have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb!
 - Our hope is in God and the blood of the covenant by which He consecrates us!
2. Does it seem too harsh to refer to unbelievers as dogs and pigs?
- a. There are many, especially among modern commentators, who are offended with this verse!
 - They want to soften it and reinterpret it!
 - The Jesus they worship would never call anyone a dog or a pig!
 - But that is because they are worshipping a different Jesus than the One we find in the Bible...
 - A Jesus that is different than the Jesus who came to bear the wrath and curse of God for sinners on the cross!
 - The God they worship is not holy!
 - b. If it seems too harsh to call unbelievers dogs and pigs...
 - 1) Consider the judgement that is awaiting the unclean if they are not converted!
 - God declares very clearly that they will suffer the same penalty as the Devil and his angels who will be tormented night and day forever and ever in the Lake of Fire.
 - If God (the only Judge) regards us as worthy of such punishment apart from Christ,
 - does it seem inconsistent for him to call us dogs and pigs?
 - I think not!

TRANS> But if you still think calling unbelievers dogs and pigs seems too harsh...

- 2) Consider further how harsh the cross was!

- Why do you think Jesus had to suffer so if we are not unclean dogs and pigs until He consecrates us!
- Was Jesus' suffering unnecessary?
 - Did His Father refuse to answer His prayer when He said: "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me?"
 - Could salvation have come if God had not cursed His holy pure, spotless Son?
 - Could we have been cleansed if He had not cut Him off and cast Him away as an unclean thing?
 - No! It was not possible!
 - The cross was severe because our sin is severe!

TRANS> Jesus classifies all unbelievers as dogs and swine because our sin has made us to be such in God's eyes.

- Remember:
 - **You** are not the judge.
 - **God** is the judge.
 - And God has sentenced us to eternal death unless we are redeemed by the price of Christ's blood.
 - Those who are outside of Christ are dogs and pigs...
- Now if we put together what we have seen so far, we can restate what Jesus says without the figurative language very simply as follows:
 - "Do not judge unbelievers!"
 - "Do not apply Christian reproof to those who are outside Christ."

C. But how are you to make the distinction between those who are outside of Christ and those who are in Christ?

1. There is a problem because you are not able to read people's hearts...
 - a. There are many people who are in the church that are not truly believers...
 - They profess to be, but they are not.
 - Then again,
 - There are some people who are outside the church who are believers but for various reasons are not members of any church.
 - b. But God only requires that we deal with people based on whether they belong to the covenant people or not...

- In other words, we deal with them based on the church membership status.
 - If they are members, we treat them as believers.
 - Interestingly, the Bible calls those who are members of the church saints.
 - They are the holy people:
 - “The saints at Ephesus” or
 - “The saints at Corinth”—
 - If they are not members, we treat them as unbelievers, at least as a general rule.
 - In other words, we don’t expect them to live as a believer, nor do we go to correct them when they go astray.
 - Reproofs are for those who are in the church, those who are outside have not asked us to reprove them.
 - Of course this is a general principle and there will be some variation...
 - There are some people who are not members of the church for various reasons, and we do not declare them all to be unbelievers,
 - but we should encourage them to unite with the church of Jesus Christ as soon as they are able.
- c. And one of the main reasons for encouraging them to unite with a church is because they are not under the care and protection of the church that Jesus has established in the world...
- They are outside of the official care and discipline that Jesus set up.
 - There are no elders that are responsible to “watch out for their souls” as there are for the members.
2. Paul makes the same distinction between member and non-members in 1 Cor 5.
- a. This is the chapter where he is reproofing the Corinthians for not applying Christian reproofs to the incestuous man in their congregation.
- He has been making a very strong appeal that they must judge this man because he is a part of their congregation and is living in rebellion against God...
 - At the end of his appeal, he makes a distinction between judging those inside the church and those outside....
- b. Listen to what He says in verses 9-13:
- 1Cor 6:9-13: I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you

would need to go out of the world. 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. For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

- Paul is essentially saying,
 - If this person is not a member of the church,
 - It is not your place to judge Him... God will do that.
 - If he is in the church, it **is** your responsibility to judge him...
 - You are to bring God's word to bear on that person.

TRANS> The principle here is that reproofs are to be applied only to people who are in the church.

- You are not to give what is holy to dogs or cast your pearls before swine.
- And this brings us to our third question...
 - Why not?

III. Why are we not to give what is holy to dogs or to cast our pearls before swine?

- Jesus tells you why:
 - "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.
- Before we explore the reasons, there is a preliminary point I need to make about the way this verse is structured...
 - It is what is called a chiasmic structure, a structure that is very common in the Bible.
 - You see that there are two kinds of animals mentioned here: dogs and swine...
 - Also, there are two responses: "trampling them under feet" and "turning to tear you in pieces."
 - A chiasmic structure is one in which the first thing in the first list (the dog)
 - goes with the second thing in the second list (the response of turning and tearing you to pieces)
 - And the second thing in the first list (the swine)
 - goes with the first thing in the second list (the response of trampling the pearls underfoot).

- It is called “chiastic” because if you put the two lists side by side and draw lines to the thing in the first list that goes with second,
 - you get an X or a “chi” which is the Greek letter that looks like an X.
 - All that to say that the dog is obviously the one that turns to tear you to pieces and the pig is the obviously the one that tramples pearls underfoot.
 - With that in mind, let us now consider the reasons Jesus gives for us not to give what is holy to dogs or to cast our pearls before swine.
 - we will start with the dogs...
- A. He says you are not to give what is holy to dogs lest the turn and tear you to pieces.
1. Just think about it...
 - The dog refers to the nature of the unbeliever as one who is hostile toward the true God.
 - a. Romans 8:7 teaches that:
 - “The carnal mind (unconverted mind) is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”
 - An unbeliever is not born again—
 - He has not been given a new heart that is subject to God’s law and that wants to please God...
 - He is therefore in rebellion against God—even if he is nice...
 - b. Because an unbeliever is not reconciled to God, he has never repented of his sin.
 - He may have confessed a sin or two here and there,
 - but he has never turned from his own self government to submit to God’s government in his whole person.
 - That’s what it means that he is not subject to the law of God—
 - He has never placed Himself under the authority and rule of God and so he is not submitting to God now...
 2. So what happens...
 - You—Joe Christian—come along and you find that this guy is not submitting to God’s law concerning sexuality...
 - Say he is a fornicator—sleeping around with people he’s not married to...
 - What is he going to think of you if you bring God’s word and apply it to him?

- He will like get angry with you!
 - Why are you coming and telling me how **God** wants me to live?
 - I am not trying to serve God!
 - I don't want to please God!
 - He will resent it and may even turn against you!
3. What possible use it is to get him to stop fornicating if he is still at enmity with God?
- Until you can get that dog to give up his rebellion, you have done nothing.
 - You are trying to restrain him, but God is not his master.
 - He is a wild dog.

B. Then there is the pig...

1. The pig refers to the unconverted person's inability to understand the value of Christian reproof...
 - A pig has certain things he wants, certain things he is going after,
 - but pearls are not one of them!
 - He has no idea what pearls are all about...
 - God's precious counsel is just foolishness to him...
 - 1Co 2:14: But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.
 - He won't know what to do with Christian reproof because it is designed for people that have been born again!
 - He will abuse the counsel and make a mess of it.
2. Take anything as an example...
 - a. Suppose you go to reprove him about a drinking problem.
 - What are you going to tell him?
 - If you bring to him what God says about drunkenness
 - (and of course you are not supposed to have any other standard of judgement than God's)
 - you will have to tell him that instead of being drunk with wine, he needs to be filled with the Spirit—

- That means his life needs to be dominated by serving God in worship, in family relations, and in his daily work.

TRANS> He won't understand what you are talking about!

b. Sadly, what Christians sometimes wrongly do is modify the counsel...

- They encourage him to take up responsibilities in religion, family and work in place of his drinking...
 - but they don't call him to follow God's way in religion, family, and work—to honour God in these things!
 - And the fellow may take your advice and do that and he may solve his drinking problem!

c. But there is something terribly wrong with what you just did!

1) You totally distorted God's counsel about the matter!

- The whole purpose of God's counsel is that drunkenness keeps you from pleasing God in your worship, ministry to your wife and children, and your work...
- But you have removed the most important thing from that counsel...
 - You have made getting on with his own life in his own way the goal,
 - You have shown him how drinking was in the way of what he wants to do, not in the way of pleasing God!
 - You helped him to go on living independently of God—
 - pursuing his own goals and desires apart in some way other than to glorify of God!

2) There are two things desperately wrong with what you did!

a) First of all, by modifying what God says, you set yourself up as the judge!

- the very thing Jesus condemns when He says "Judge not!"

b) Secondly, you made that poor chap twice as bad as he was before!

- At least before he felt bad about himself and knew he needed to change!
- Now he thinks he is okay—
 - perhaps he even thinks he is pleasing God!
 - He trampled those pearls of wisdom you gave him underfoot because he is a pig, not a child of God!

- You need to tell him that there is no REAL help for him until he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ!
- C. Our whole desire to apply God’s holy counsel to unbelievers really shows that we have an inadequate understanding of what God’s counsel is really all about!
1. Here is this unbeliever and he has this terrible problem—a great big plank in his eye!
 - a. The plank is that he is at enmity with God and is under God’s wrath and judgement.
 - And you come to him and say,
 - “Here, let me remove that spec from your eye!”
 - You start talking to him about his marriage or his drinking or his gambling or whatever it is and trying to help him with that!
 - And all the while he is not reconciled with the living God!
 - There is this huge problem—this camel sitting on top of his soup bowl—
 - and you are there helping him strain at gnats!
 - b. Everything is wrong with his life until he reconciles with God and he needs to see that!
 - He can’t have a marriage that pleases God (the only one whose judgement matters) until he is saved...
 - He can’t even plough his field in a way that pleases God until He is reconciled with God!
 - Why are you trying get a dog to stop doing what dogs do?
 - Why are you trying to wash a pig, you can’t wash his pigness off!
 - God must do that!
 - The unbeliever needs to repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved!
 - c. God’s holy word is not given to us to produce morality!
 - We don’t need a bunch of Dudly-do-rights running around doing good things who have no interest in the glory of God!
 - The counsel of God that we are to bring to one another as believers is counsel that brings us to God!
 - It is about loving Him, not just being moral!

2. Now it is true that God does indeed bring his judgement into the world to restrain wickedness—
 - He raises up judges in our courts who represent Him (whether they know it or not) and they do restrain wickedness so that we don't destroy ourselves.
 - It is all part of His promise to preserve the world that He made in covenant he made with Noah.
 - In that sense, then, we may appeal to the morals of man and speak of right and wrong...
 - But you must understand that this is not really bringing the word of God to people...
 - The word of God is always interested in people living for the glory God before the face of God...
 - not just being good citizens in the world!

3. So what we do bring to the unbeliever is what Jesus told us to bring...
 - a. He told us to preach the gospel to every creature!
 - b. We bring the good news that we can be reconciled to God, born again, that Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit!
 - Yes, you are a dog and pig,
 - but God is able to change dogs and pigs into His very own children!
 - Yes, you are unclean and cut off from God, an object of His wrath...
 - but all your sins will be forgiven if you would look to Jesus Christ who bore the penalty of sin on the cross.
 - c. That is the glorious message we are to graciously bring to unbelievers from God!
 - Don't go telling them how God expects *us* to live who are already saved...
 - unless you are showing them what is required so that they will see their need of Christ.
 - If full reconciliation is not in view,
 - you are giving what is holy to dogs and casting your pearls before swine!

Please stand and let us call on His name in prayer....

Holy Father,

- How we praise you for your precious word by which you speak into our lives so that we might have true communion with you.
 - Teach us how precious your word is so that we will not use it for unholy purposes.
 - Forgive us for the way we have looked at your word in such a light and frivolous way.

Oh Father, your word tells us that we have access to you through Jesus Christ...

- Your word tells us that we are unclean until His blood cleanses us and consecrates us to make us holy.
- We praise you that you have brought us into fellowship through so great a price.
 - Help us to cherish that fellowship and to proclaim to others your word so that they might have fellowship with us.

We pray that you would bless the ministry of the word today as it is preached all around the world.

- We pray that Christ would be exalted, that sinners would be converted, and that saints would be edified.
- We pray that you help the officers of your church to faithfully apply your word to the members of Christ's body...
- And we pray that every man would apply your word to the members of his own household.
 - We are weary of human judgement and want to see your word prevail instead of our own!

We pray that you bless our witness in this city and cause us to make your word known here.

- We pray that you would bring more people out to worship with us and to call upon your name and that we would grow into a holy fellowship that loves one another.

Thank you for the ways you have provided for us in this world...

- We give you thanks for our families and friends...
- We give you thanks for our houses and their furnishings...
- We give you thanks for our food and clothes...
- We give you thanks for our health and for the health care we enjoy...
- We give you thanks for the peace and security that we have to this day...
- Bless all those who serve us in political offices, law enforcement, military service, health care, and all the other services we benefit from.

- We know that all these are ultimately from your hand and we give you thanks and plead with you to continue to show mercy to us.

And now Lord, we pray that you would keep us from temptation and deliver us from our sins...

- For we know that if you do not keep us, we will be led into a million errors and a million perversions.
- Keep us in your way; and keep us in it with delight so that we will not be drawn away and enticed by the world, the flesh and the devil.
 - For we ask all these things in Jesus' name,
 - Amen.