

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 26

Dogs and Pigs

Matthew 7:6

Opening Prayer:

God our Father,
Your Son Jesus called his disciples and said,
“You did not choose Me, but I chose You.”
I thank You that You consider me
worthy to be a disciple of Jesus.
Transform me, Father, into the image of Jesus

Just like Jesus,
Make my heart long for You in **poverty of spirit**.
Make my heart **mourn** at the misfortune of others.
Make me **meek and humble of heart**.
Make me **hunger and thirst** for what is right.
Make me **merciful** and overflowing with compassion.
Make me **clean of heart** and share in Your holiness.
Make my life an instrument of **peace** and **reconciliation**.
Make me **bold** to face the consequences of discipleship.

Grant me the grace, Father, so that
I may **think** like Jesus, **act** like Jesus, and **talk** like Jesus,
for in this is **Radical Discipleship**

I make this prayer in the name of Jesus,
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Reflection

In an apparent contradiction to His teaching thus far, Jesus, in the next verse, makes a startling, brash statement:

Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces. Matthew 7:6

Taken at face value, this passage seems to say: “Don’t bother preaching the Gospel message to unbelievers – they will either never get it or will abuse it for their own advantage.” Yet, if we view this passage in light of Jesus’ actions, that interpretation is completely contrary to what Jesus is trying to teach us.

Jesus recognized that we are all on our own spiritual journey, at different places on the path and moving at our own pace of growth. He understood that timing and patience were needed to foster and cultivate spiritual growth and He was a master in meeting people where they were. He counsels us, as His disciples, to do the same.

In sharing the Gospel truth, we must strive to see people as they are and be sensitive to where they are on their journey so that we can provide what is helpful and appropriate for each person in their particular situation. How do we do this? We do this through active listening and authentic dialogue. Active listening, more than simply hearing, creates an openness of heart which then makes a genuine spiritual encounter possible. Authentic dialogue includes asking questions to increase *our* awareness and an exchange of perspectives which enables us to:

“understand the thinking of the other...to realize deep down that the brother or sister we wish to reach and redeem, with the power and the closeness of love, counts more than their positions, distant as they may be from what we hold as true and certain... only the enduring allure of goodness and love remains truly convincing.”

~Pope Francis in a talk to US Bishops during his 2015 visit.

There’s really no point in giving wisdom or truth to people who aren’t spiritually ready for it. If we offer too much too soon, we run the risk of people writing off the entire message because the heart or soul isn’t ready for it yet. We must keep in mind that Jesus doesn’t ask us to water down the truth, only that the presentation of His truth vary to accommodate the person we are trying to reach.

Reflection Question: My Spiritual Journey appears at times to be messy and sometimes a bit lost; how does that enable me to walk more closely with others on their journey?

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.