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Pastor Dan Esh

Calvary Chapel Central Phoenix

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MATTHEW

Restoration Over Superiority

Matthew 07:1-6

- I. The Kingdom of Heaven
 - a. Our purpose in a fallen world is to reflect the Father's glory so that others see our good works and glorify Him.
 - i. "Salt and Light" and "City on a Hill"
 - ii. Kingdom living is not found in the "theatrical" displays of righteousness - public prayers, demonstrative generosity, or obvious fasting (Matthew 6)
 1. Our public witness is a calm, peaceful presence in a chaotic world.
 2. Loving enemies and constant forgiveness
 3. Anonymous giving and quiet faithfulness.
 - iii. This "other way" of living points to another Kingdom and another King.
 - b. Jesus continues this theme into chapter 7

Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 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.

- II. Condemnation vs. Compassion: A Heart Issue
 - a. Jesus isn't just correcting behavior; He is addressing the heart.
 - i. "Judge not" refers to a spirit of condemnation
 1. Setting oneself up as morally superior and becoming hyper-sensitive to the faults of others.
 - b. Jesus specifically had the scribes and Pharisees in mind
 - i. They created a moral climate where everyone was examining everyone else
 1. There was a moral hierarchy where the religious elite placed themselves at the top
 - ii. They would celebrate their morality by taking their obedience to the law to comical extremes
 1. ***Matt 23:5 "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments."***
 2. come from passages like Exodus 13:9 and Deuteronomy 6:8, "bind them as a sign on your hand... between your eyes."
 3. Numbers 15:38-40 as a reminder "to remember all the commandments of the Lord."
 - a. Both practices were meant to be private reminders of obedience, not public announcements of righteousness.

- b. The Pharisees began making the boxes bigger and the tassels longer—comically, unnecessarily large versions of what God originally commanded.
 - iii. Their theatrical righteousness was not out of care or concern - not with a desire to help
 - 1. ***Matt 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.***
 - 2. This moral superiority flexed through public displays of righteousness and a hypersensitivity to the faults of others is not the way of the Kingdom of Heaven
 - 3. That is ***Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.***

III. Hypocrite!

- a. Defining the Hypocrite: The word hypocrites means "actor" or "one who wears a mask." It is the act of hiding private sin behind performative righteousness.
 - i. ***Matt 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"***
- b. The Carpenter's Analogy
 - i. The Beam (Log): A massive structural rafter that completely obstructs the view.
 - ii. The Speck (Sawdust): A minor annoyance in another's eye. (similar to our saying – take it with a grain of salt)
 - 1. In my pastoral experience, the most hypercritical individuals are often those who cannot bear to have the light pointed at themselves. They use the faults of others as a shield to deflect attention away from themselves
 - 2. There is always someone who is more moral than you – I don't watch rated R movies, well I don't watch movies, well I don't have a TV in my house, well I sold my house and gave the money to the poor – we can all play that game
 - 3. We can all fixate on the morality of others – use that fine tooth comb to examine their behaviors
 - a. What about the Great Commandment – love God, and the one that is like it, love our neighbors – the two commandments which all the other commandments rest
 - b. What about dealing with anger and lust in our hearts
 - c. What about seeking justice, showing mercy, and learning to trust Jesus
 - d. What about seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness
 - e. What about the example that Mary provided that her sister Martha did not understand – Jesus had to rebuke her - ***But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.***
 - i. We often major in the minors with others and minor in the majors with ourselves
 - iii. Jesus says, remove that which obstructs your judgement.

- iv. Removing the beam is no easy task. Not a simple, one-time act. It is a complete change in heart.
 - 1. Remember the entire sermon on the mount is a complete shift away from worldly thinking and living and into Kingdom thinking and living
 - 2. It is not just “be a nice person” - but supernatural love, and forgiveness, and generosity, and prayer, and peace, and a supernatural approach to restoration
 - 3. Our motive must be the restoration of the brother, not the assertion of our moral superiority.
- c. The Need for Discernment
 - i. Jesus is not calling for "moral blindness."
 - 1. He is not saying it is wrong to use discernment and wisdom, and to ignore what we plainly see with our eyes
 - 2. In verse 6 we see a call for discernment – identify those who trample and tear apart that which is sacred
 - 3. Later in *Matt 7:15* ***“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits...20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.***
 - 4. *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. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.***
 - a. *Jam 5:19* ***Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.***
 - ii. 2 Samuel 12
 - 1. After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrated the murder of her husband, Uriah, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him.
 - 2. Nathan approached the King and told a story about a wealthy man with many flocks who stole a poor man’s only beloved pet lamb to feed a guest.
 - 3. Outraged by the injustice, David declared that the wealthy man deserved to die, at which point Nathan revealed the trap by stating, "You are the man!"
- d. It is all about restoration and not moral superiority – it comes with an understanding that we could be in the same place
 - i. Discernment is a tool for healing
 - 1. Those with a unique gift of discernment must be extremely careful that the enemy does not twist this into moral superiority or bitterness and resentment – no one can live up to our standards
 - 2. Retain this heart - I am not calling you out because I am better than you, I am here because I love you

IV. Pearls to Swine

- a. ***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.***
 - i. Verse 6 seems unrelated but it provides balance

1. Some believe this is a reference to communion and unbelievers – I think that ignores the context
- b. **Sacred Truth:** The "Pearls" represent the Gospel and sacred Kingdom truths.
 - i. Pigs – trample under feet
 - ii. Dogs (Wild dogs, wolves) – tear to pieces
 1. Those who take the sacred Word of God and consistently and habitually ignore it – trample it – cheapen it
 2. Those who violently mock it and oppose it
 3. About ones heart posture towards the Word of God
 - iii. Inside the church - *Mat 18:15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*
 1. Scripture tells us to identify those who cause division and avoid them (Romans 16:17)
 2. Address the "cover-up culture" (specifically Bethel). We must be wary of environments where "protecting the brand" or the "image" becomes more important than the truth of the Gospel.
 - iv. Outside the church – *1 Cor 5: 9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 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. 11 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. 12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”*

V. Closing – Spiritual Discernment

a. Knowing When to Be Silent

- i. *The Disciples:* Jesus told them to shake the dust off their feet if a town rejected the message
- ii. *Jesus’ Example:* Note His silence before Herod and Pilate. He knew when words would only be trampled
 1. Wonderful example of all of this – *John 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on*

the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

2. In a culture of moral superiority, the broken are used as pawns – their sins exploited for personal gain
 - a. They are not seen as people in need of healing; but props used to reinforce someone else's righteousness. Their sins are steppingstone for our own superiority
 - b. We ask questions like "who sinned that this man was born blind" – while we are blind to his need
- iii. That is the worst part of the beam in our eye – we stop seeing people – that is when churches look a lot more like the Pharisees and nothing like the Kingdom of God.
- b. Salt, Light, and the Savior
 - i. What it Means to be Salt and Light: It means we are more concerned with restoration than where we fall in some manufactured moral hierarchy
 - ii. Love Covers: We live in the reality that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8) and that every person is a work in progress.
 - iii. This doesn't mean we ignore wolves or stop identifying sin, but it means we always look in the mirror first.
 1. We are all sinners who have, by the grace of God, found the Savior. Our job is to lead others to that same healing, not to stand over them in judgment.