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**Teaching: Carlon Tschetter**  
**Series: The Sermon On The Mount**  
**Message: The Most Misunderstood Verses in the Bible**

**Transcribed Message**  
**July 8, 2018**  
**Matthew 6:14-24**

If you had asked me, or any number of people years ago, what you think the best known verse in the Bible was I think probably many of us might've said John 3:16. It's a verse that a lot of people might know, whether they believe it and understand it, but they've heard of it. Some of you are old enough to remember the guy that was at an incredible number of sporting events. He had a big rainbow hairdo and he would hold a sign that said John 3:16. I always wondered what the frame of reference was for a lot of people who saw that sign, wondering what that was. They may have asked and found out it was a Bible verse. If you asked me that same question today, I think I would say it's probably Matthew chapter 7 verse 1. While a lot of people wouldn't know what that verse is by just saying Matthew 7:1, and they certainly wouldn't know the context in which Jesus said that or maybe they wouldn't know a whole lot of other things that Jesus said. Almost everybody knows today the verse that says don't judge, because if you judge you are going to be judged.

A case in point. Sir Charles Barkley, our NBA former All-Star now TV commentator says this: "Every time I hear the word 'conservative', it makes me sick to my stomach because they're really just fake Christians as I call them. That's all they are." When asked to explain, Barkley used a single Scripture to quote and to back up his claim Matthew 7:1. Barkley said, "Christians are never to judge another person's actions, whether good or bad. I think they want to be the judge and jury," Barkley said. "and I think these Christians first of all they're not supposed to judge other people but they're the most hypocritical judge of people we have in this country. They act like they're Christians. They're not forgiving at all. They should read the part of the Bible where it says they're not supposed to judge other people. They forget that one when it doesn't fit what they want to say." We won't respond any further to Sir Charles right now but we will be looking at this passage together this morning. I'm sure you've heard that

argument and probably you had somebody use that argument against you as well. Yet if there is any truth that is a part of our life on a daily basis, it is that every one of us make judgments every day about people and about circumstances and about situations.

We say to somebody I would like to find an honest mechanic. We're making a judgment. We're making a statement that there must be some that aren't honest. I want to find a good doctor, somebody who is really thorough, who knows, and who can help me with this situation. When we say that, we're distinguishing, we're making a judgment about maybe others that don't have that expertise or that capability. We make these kinds of judgments all the time. We want a dependable babysitter to take care of and watch over our children. So whether it's in business, whether it's in our frame of reference of work, whether it's in relationships or social places, we are constantly making judgments about situations and people. In fact, I'm making a judgment about you, that you do these things. I hope you won't be too harsh on me for making that judgment because then you would be judging me and that wouldn't be good either. So how do these kinds of things stack up in light of what Sir Charles said and a lot of other people say with him?

If you would, let's turn this morning to Matthew 7. In Matthew 7, this is the epicenter of that statement. These comments that Jesus made come to us in this seventh chapter in the Sermon on the Mount. We're almost at the end of the sermon. We're in the last chapter so we're getting close to the end. This is probably the most quoted, least understood section in the sermon and there are others that we have looked at that are challenging. Here's what I think Jesus is saying. I think in these verses He is saying judging and discernment are both necessary. You have to both judge and you have to be discerning. Jesus calls us to make these kinds of judgments. He calls us to be discerning, but we're just supposed to do it in the right way.

Let's read Matthew 7:1-6. "Judge not 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 a 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.” Let’s look at the first five verses in this seventh chapter. We want to ask this question or deal with this matter of whether we are to judge or not to judge. We start off by saying what Jesus is calling us to is that we must be discerning. We must be discerning.

The popular misunderstanding of Matthew 7:1 in my understanding is based on two things that people misunderstand. They misunderstand Matthew 7:1 and they do so in part because of two other misunderstandings. The first one is this. My life is to be lived totally and personally and privately to myself. When we bring that into the Christian world, we’re basically saying my Christian life is a private experience and you have no right or reason to speak anything into my life. I have said 100 times that your walk with God is personal but it is not private. When you enter into God's family, you are entering into a relationship with a group of people that you are committing yourself to, to rub shoulders with, and as the writer of Proverbs says as iron sharpens iron one sharpens another. So the misunderstanding of Matthew 7:1 is in part based on the fact that my life is private and nobody has any right to speak anything into my life.

The second part of that misunderstanding is that morality is relative. Morality is relative. What is right for you may not be right for me. What is right for me may be not right for you. We have two misunderstandings that drive the third misunderstanding which is to look at this passage and say you have no right to make any judgments in my life because Jesus said don't judge, because if you do you're going to be judged.

Now how did Jesus intend for us to take and understand this? Is that what Jesus meant when he said do not judge because if you do you'll be judged. Let's see if we can answer that question. We don't have to look any further to answer that then to look at the immediate context. So we start where we always do when we want to accurately handle the Word of God. We always begin by saying especially so if it's a difficult passage, if there's something going on that is oftentimes hard to understand, the first rule of handling the Word of God is what is the context in which these things have been said. When we look at that, let’s just notice together a number of things. First, just start with the broader context of the Sermon on the Mount. If you want to take chapter 7 and put it within the context, we have said the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus’s teaching with

regard to how it is that we're to live life the way He did. That's been our whole theme through all of these weeks and months of working through the Sermon on the Mount. This is the life of Christ. This is the way you're supposed to live like. It's supposed to be different. It's supposed to be distinctive. He's called us to be salt and light. He has told us that our righteousness is to exceed that of the righteousness of the Pharisees, the most religious people of His time, the ones that everybody thought had it going right. He said we're not to be hypocrites.

Just think of all of those things that we've looked at. What do all of those require? They all require that we make judgments. They all require that we be discerning. How do we know if we're salt and light? How do we know if our life is distinctive? How do we know if we're living a pattern that follows the life of Christ? We have to make judgments. We have to look at ourselves. We don't have to go any farther than verse 6. We're going to get in there in a minute, but when Jesus talks about dogs and pigs, He's using some of the harshest language in the sermon, maybe some of the harshest language in the New Testament. What we see in 7:6 is if you make judgments, if you're discerning, how are you going to know what that verse even means if you don't make a judgment? In 7:15 he says beware of false prophets. How are you going to distinguish and judge that which is true over against that which is false? So the very context immediately puts up guardrails to our veering off and just throwing out to anybody anytime we want don't make any judgments because if you do you're going to be judged.

Let's go farther than that. Let's expand on the Sermon on the Mount this idea of context to the whole of the New Testament. Does the rest of the New Testament support the idea that we should never make a judgment because if you make a judgment you're opening your life to that very same thing? Look at Matthew 18. In Matthew 18, Jesus again before we even get out of the Gospel of Matthew gives us an extended section that has to do with how we walk through the process of church discipline. You talk about a passage that undermines the idea that your Christian life is private, that nobody has any right to step into your world. Matthew 18 simply does away with that immediately. We have every right, we have every obligation to step into each other's lives. Jesus tells us how we're to do that. He goes through the steps that constantly call us to make judgments and to be discerning about what we see in

somebody else's life. In Galatians chapter 6 verse 1, Paul says those of you that are spiritual, and you see a brother or sister caught in a trespass. What do you do? You go to them in a spirit of gentleness and you seek to restore them. You have to make a judgment to get there. Jesus certainly had that in mind. Romans 16:17 says keep your eye on those who cause trouble. How are you going to do that if you don't make a judgment? You've got to define what it is that even is causing trouble, don't you?

In 1 Corinthians 5:3, Paul is dealing with all kinds of problems all kinds of issues in this church. Chapter 5 is probably the lowest point in terms of the things that he was dealing with. Dealing with things that he said aren't even happening in the unsaved world around you are happening in the church. Do you know what he says in verse 3? I have already judged him before I come to you. He is talking about the man caught up in an incestuous relationship. Paul said I don't need to get there. From what you have told me and what he has openly admitted, all I need to do is read the Word of God to know that there is something here that needs to be taken on. I've already made that determination. I have made that judgment. So you look at the Sermon on the Mount. You look at the rest of Scripture and it says to us our Christian life is not private and morality is not relative. God has given us the standard by which we're to conduct our lives and He has given us commands as to how it is that we're to relate to each other. So we begin by underscoring the fact that we have to be discerning.

I want you to see something though by way of a third point. The logical implications of how it is that this plays out. If you say, as many do today, don't say that's wrong. Don't make a judgment about something that's going on in somebody else's life. Who are you to make that kind of determination? Their life is personal, is private. You've got no right to do that and besides their morality is their issue and it's not yours. If you go down that road very long, where do you end up? You end up under the ministry of Isaiah the prophet. In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah the prophet, verse 13 sets the stage. "Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge." They've set aside the objective standard of the Word of God. They've adopted the mindset of their culture that said morality is for us to decide and determine for ourselves. Then he says this: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." He just goes on to describe not the world

only that he was living in, but he's describing 2018 in America. We have no answer to the question what is right and what is wrong if we adopt and accept the idea and the mindset that my life is private unto myself and the moral choices that I make are relative based on what I believe is truth and what is error. We believe we have an objective standard. We believe that God has given us his word and that word is to guide us in all of these things.

I want to just touch for a moment with this point on what happens in the application of this whole matter even within the life of the church. Our culture is what it is, my friends. We fully expect that they are going to live and act the way they do. They don't know Christ. They don't know the gospel. So we aren't and we can't be surprised by what we see in the world in this regard. But here's what happens when this mindset and this mentality comes into the church. This is what happens when increasingly we see people who are within the evangelical body of believers begin to evolve in certain positions, especially with regard to certain social things happening within our culture and time. They begin to evolve away from the objective truth of the Word. They begin to evolve in their position away from Orthodox theology and doctrine. They begin to adopt the thinking of the world.

Let me make it real practical. Let me just draw an illustration right out of the pages of where we're living. Within the last year or so, Jen Hatmaker, who has had a wonderful ministry especially to women and she and her husband pastor in Texas, came out and said that she has evolved in her understanding of marriage. How is it that for 2000 years, the church has believed and proclaimed the truth that marriage is between a man and a woman, and today within the body of Christ, we have people evolving away from the objective truth of the Word of God in which God declares in Genesis 2 that marriage is between a man and a woman? We just decide that because of the pressures of our culture and because of the compassion of our heart that is no longer a position that we think is viable. Here's what happened. She puts her position out there and thankfully and rightfully many people responded. The ones that I read responded graciously. I know there was a lot of hate that was out there too, but the things that I read, the blogs that I read were thoughtful Biblical responses to this. Do you know then what happened? Those people who responded to her evolution away from

truth became known as the persecutors and they became bad people. They became the ones who had no right to judge her heart. Listen. If we stray from the truth of the Word of God, that our walk with God is private unto ourselves and nobody dare breach the walls that we build, and the choices that I make are relative to my truth. This is happening in the church – that we're misunderstanding and misapplying the very words that Jesus gives us in Matthew 7:1. So we have to be discerning. We have to make judgments. We do it every day. What do we need to do?

Secondly, we have to make sure that in those judgments we're not destructive. We're not destructive. What Jesus is prohibiting in this statement when He says judge not that you be not judged, He is saying to us as you make these judgments, guard your heart with all diligence for out of it flow the issues of life. Do not make judgments based on self-righteousness. And what feeds self-righteousness? A spirit of pride. And what feeds pride and self-righteousness is a destructive and critical and censorious spirit. That is what Jesus is warning against. There's no real concern for the person. You just delight in finding some fault in somebody and tearing them down. It's a teeter totter principle. They go down and in our mind foolishly we think somehow we go up. We tear people down and we think we go up. That's not what's happening at all. That's what Jesus is warning us about. We're not going up at all. When we're censorious, when we're critical, when we're mean-spirited, when we're destructive in valuating and making these judgments without any real concern, we're doing great harm.

Listen to what John Stott said. He just nailed it. "The censorious critic is a fault-finder who is negative and destructive towards other people and enjoys actively seeking out their failings. He puts the worst possible construction on their motives. He pours cold water on their schemes and he is ungenerous towards their mistakes." Just listen to that. They're fault-finding. They're negative and destructive. They enjoy actively seeking other people's failings. They regularly are evaluating somebody else's motives that they have no idea what those motives are except they think they do. My friends, that's what Jesus is talking about here. He says that has no place in the heart of a child of God. Yet sadly, and I put myself in this category, this is too often where we find ourselves. I was convicted more than once just this week in preparing this lesson with the reality you just made a judgment about somebody you had no right to make. You

just reached a conclusion about something that you probably are wrong about. Jesus tells us why we shouldn't do this. Why shouldn't we be destructive? Well the reason in verse 2 is this: "For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Here's what we don't know. When you read verse 2, there's two possible ways to understand verse 2. Frankly, I think we aren't going to be able to determine which one it is and so why don't we just say it's both. It could mean that Jesus is saying that when you make those kinds of judgments, other people are going to be making the same kind of judgments about you. That's the reality. If my heart is pulled towards this kind of spirit, then I can imagine based on what Jesus says right here then somebody else is judging me in the same vein of thinking. He could be saying that's the way other people are going to judge you.

The other possibility, and it has merit as well, is that this is the judgment of God towards us. It doesn't specify who the subject of verse 2 is but this could very well be the judgment of God towards us. Remember back in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter when we first started out and we came to verse 7 and we read blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. As we unpacked that verse, we realized that Jesus is saying if you are a person lacking in mercy, guess what? You're asking God not to be merciful to you. It could very well be that that is what is in view here, that Jesus is saying this is how others are going to treat you and how others are going to see you. Or this may very well be God's judgment towards us when we think in terms of our standing before Christ at the Bema seat, when we're going to give an account for every word spoken and every act that we have done. This will all be put before us.

Either way, it's the principle of reciprocation. That's what is unfolded to us in verse 2. The principle of reciprocation. The standard that we set for others is the standard we better be prepared to keep for ourselves. That's what Jesus says. Do you really want God's justice to fall on you in the way that you apply it to others? Do you really want other people to apply justice and judgment to you to the way you apply it to others? Remember when we went through in the Lord's prayer that statement about forgiveness? Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. We talked there about the principle that Jesus was underscoring. Father, we're asking that you'll forgive us in the

same way that we forgive others. If you're not forgiving others, you're actually inviting God to not forgive you. I think it is the same thing here that the principle of reciprocation. You want to say to God: I want You to judge me the way I judge others.

Look at the illustration then thirdly in verses 3 through 5. He says: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye but 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." There's a couple things in these verses in this illustration. First, there's something of a word play. There's a distinction that we want to make in these words because Jesus uses two different words that we think of as looking or seeing or putting our eyes on. In verse 3, first of all He says you see the speck. You see. The word "see" there is to look without paying a lot of attention. It's like a glance. You can really understand and interpret that as you glanced at somebody and you see the speck of sawdust in their eye. It's just a glance but you're very sure that you see a speck of sawdust in their eye. But then he says, but you do not notice, and the word is not a passing glance. The word "notice" is to pay attention to. The word "notice" is somehow you are fastening your attention on something but remarkably even while you're fastening your attention, you don't see this beam sticking out of your own eye. So the picture that Jesus gives to us here is a wonderful picture that we can just visualize. We have an actual log and beam protruding from our eye, and for the life of us we can't figure out that it's there. But at the same time with just a passing glance at somebody else we can spot something in their life that they need to deal with that.

What Jesus underscores in this illustration is this. Our capacity for self-deception is vast. We have a vast capacity for self-deception. Now, my friends, if you think of just that statement by itself, regardless of anything else that we have already said about being hasty to make judgments about other people, wouldn't the truth that what Jesus says here that we have a vast capacity to deceive ourselves, wouldn't that be enough by itself to hold in check a spirit that is destructive and censorious and faultfinding? John Owen said: "The seed of every sin is in every heart." The seed of every sin is in every heart.

Listen to this little interchange in a Peanut cartoon strip. Linus asked Lucy, "Why are you so anxious to criticize me?" Lucy says, "I just think I have a gift for seeing other people faults." Linus snaps and says, "What about your own faults?" Lucy says, "I have a knack for overlooking them." That's it, isn't it? She's captured the meaning of the Greek here in these two words. She can look and see in a moment a speck of dust in somebody else but she can't by fastening her eye see anything wrong in her own life. The point, my friends, is this. We can be very sensitive to the sins in other people's lives, and at the same time be very insensitive to the sins in our own lives. That's what's going on in this passage. This passage isn't a verse to be thrown out there to tell somebody to never make judgments, to never be discerning, to never make a decision between what's right and wrong, what's good and what's bad, what's light and what's dark, what's truth and what's false. Of course not. This is the understanding that I need to be very aware of my own fallenness before I move to instruct someone else in there's. I think it's a word that we all would do well to take to heart.

It's been a long, long, long time ago when my best friend in seminary his dad was a pastor. He was telling us various points as this story unfolded some of the tribulations and trials that his dad and mom were going through in the church that they were at. While I don't remember all of the things, the things I do remember were terrible. They were being treated just terribly badly in this circumstance and I don't know any of the detail of course but just the things that were happening to them and as they were seeking to serve the church would've made anybody decide that they would like to do something other than going into the pastorate. But here's what sticks in my mind 40+ years later that my friend said about his mom and dad. He said I don't know if there's a connection, but I always have noticed over the years that my mom and dad are incredibly critical about their church. There is a connection.

There is a connection. We become so sensitive to the sins of somebody else that we fail to see our own condition and our own brokenness and our own fallenness and our own need. We become like Lucy. Very adept at overlooking our own issues all the while doing an incredibly great job of pointing out everybody else's. It saddens me to say but I think every church has their fault-finders. We're all there in some measure, but there are some that just are more gifted in this than others. Let's be frank right. There

are just some people who it seems that they think their gifts and calling are to point out all of the deficiencies of what may be happening in the life of the church or in the lives of other people in the church. Jesus says by all means be discerning, but by all means don't be destructive.

Look at why we must be generous thirdly. Why we must be generous. There's a parallel passage over in the Gospel of Luke and in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter. Jesus again says: "Be merciful even as your Father is merciful." Then listen to this. "Judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. It will be put into your lap for with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." This is one of my favorite passages in the gospels. When Jesus gives us the illustration, this imagery, it's this beautiful picture of generosity towards others. It is this beautiful picture of grace towards others. It is this picture of mercy. What does He say? It's going to be like a box of cereal. You open it up and it's all shaken down to the bottom. Jesus says in this case it's going to be overflowing. There's going to be a generosity that is going to come back to you. So by all means, be generous to each other.

Why should we take this to heart? Let me just very quickly give you three reasons why we should be slow to judge in applying what Jesus has said to us. First of all, we never know all the facts. We never know all the facts. We often think we do, but very often we find out we don't. So just slow down. We don't know all that is going on. We certainly don't know the motivations of a person's heart. Man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart.

Secondly it's impossible to be completely impartial. We just don't have that capability. We bring a bias. We bring a certain set of things that don't allow us to be impartial. We operate out of a bias. We have a particular perspective maybe towards someone or some circumstance and that puts us in a place that probably is going to take us somewhere we shouldn't go.

Then finally ultimately God is going to be the one who speaks the final word. God is going to be the one who speaks the final word. You and I put ourselves literally in the place that God has reserved for Himself when we make judgments about each other. If

you think about it in that way, do you know what this? Do you know what the sin of judgment is? It's a monstrous evil. That's the prayer for my heart. God, would You show me the monstrosity of this sin in my life when it rears itself up and I decide with the limited knowledge I have, with my own biases, with my own vast move toward self-deception. God, check my heart from this monstrous evil taking over my thoughts.

Verse six. "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." We have one problem in verses 1 to 5. We have another problem in verse 6. To judge or not to judge verses 1 to 5. Verse 6 to share or not to share. Here is one of the strongest, harshest if you will, statements in the sermon. What do we do? We want to understand this. What do you think we should do? Let's close our Bibles and go home? No. We look at the context, don't we? We look at the context. What is the context? The context is the opposite danger. I think the fact, at least the English Standard Version as they laid this passage out, they put these verses together. I think they should be together, because what you have in verses 1 through 5 is when you judge be generous. Be gracious to do so with an eye on yourself. Don't be harsh. Don't be destructive. Don't be censorious. If you follow that then you are going to be in a good place.

But he says in verse 6 there is a danger of not judging at all. There is a danger of becoming indiscriminating. There's a danger of being wishy-washy. There's a danger of overlooking legitimate concerns. It's easy to see how you can get here. We've already talked about the Beatitudes and this incredible life that Jesus has called us to live that is so different and so distinctive. He has called us to a higher plane. He has called us to live life the way He did. We are tempted to move in that way and to become lacking in discrimination. We have love for our neighbor. Yes, we can do that sometimes but loving our enemy is what we're also supposed to do. We're to turn the other cheek. We're to be a peacemaker. So before you know it, we're overlooking obvious things in our attempt to fulfill what Jesus has called us to do.

It is at this point we have to remember secondly the principle of proportion. The principle of proportion. How many verses does Jesus use to raise up the issue and to warn us and admonish us about judging? How many verses? Five. How many verses does He give us about lacking in discernment, about not making judgments the way we

should? He gives us one. I think the problem is evident. The problem of our heart. He already dealt five verses with our tendency to judge and so the law of proportion says the greater danger lies in verses 1 through 5. But the meaning as I understand verse 6 is wrapped around four words. We're going to break those words into two sets.

Two parts. We have something that is holy and we have something that is described as pearls. What is holy? It is something that is set apart. It's something that is sanctified. What are pearls? Somethings that are precious. They are of extreme value. They are things that are to be held on to and preserved. In this figure that Jesus uses, that which is holy and that which is pearls, in general if we can apply this in a general sense He's talking about spiritual things. He already said in chapter 6 verse 33 seek first the kingdom of God and all of these other things will take care of themselves. We're to not lay up treasures on earth. We're to lay up treasures in heaven. If we understand that this idea of what's holy and what's pearl in the general picture is just spiritual things.

But I don't think we leave it there. I think we bring it in and we press it into a more specific application. and in the more specific application in this passage it is going to be the pearls and what is holy represents the Word of God. It represents the truth of God. It represents the gospel. The gospel is the pearl of great price. It is the gospel that we value. It is the Word that we value. It is God's grace and His truth and His mercy that has come to us. That is holy and like pearls.

The second group. Dogs and pigs. Dogs and pigs. Now get out of your mind all of us that are dog owners Fido. This isn't Fido. This isn't your best friend in your life. This is not a man's best friend. It would've been very common in the 1<sup>st</sup> century to see packs of wild dogs roaming around. There are other illustrations of Scripture that speak to the same thing. Jesus is talking about dogs that are vicious and wild and mean when He uses this terminology. The same thing goes for pigs. This isn't an attack on Miss Piggy. This is a reference here to something more akin to a wild boar which we know are dangerous animals. Jesus in this figure with these two illustrations is talking about a certain kind of person. This person is described with very graphic language. They're described as being something to be afraid of if you will. They're mean. They're vicious. They're wild. They're harmful. They're dangerous. Jesus says don't give what is valuable to people like that.

What does that mean? Jesus is calling us to be discerning, to make judgments, to make evaluations about how it is that we handle and share spiritual things, the truth of the Word, the gospel of God's grace. Listen carefully. This instruction from Jesus Himself says if you encounter people who are mockers, who are scoffers, if in bringing spiritual truth to them they mount savage personal attacks against you, they're harmful in their heart and spirit towards anything spiritual. Jesus says stop throwing pearls to the swine. They have no value to them. They don't want them. They're going to take every opportunity to mock you in the face of that. Obviously this teaching has a specific application. It's going to be one that requires wisdom on your part. It's going to be one that requires discernment. We're going to see in just a moment that there are many other places in Scripture where this teaching is mirrored what Jesus says here.

I've listed a whole bunch of verses there on your outline. I'm not going to read all of them but I just want to give you a flavor so that you don't think this is some kind of weird view. Proverbs 9. Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse. He who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you. Reprove a wise man and he will love you. Matthew 10. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Listen to what Jesus did in his encounter with King Herod. Herod was a mocker. Herod was a scoffer. "When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad for he had long desired to see Him because he had heard about Him and he was hoping to see some sign done by Him. So he questioned Him at some length but He made no answer." That's the application of what Jesus has just taught us in Matthew 7. What Jesus calls for us in this verse requires wisdom, requires prayer, requires discernment, requires conversation. It's not something that is applied haphazardly or carelessly. I would understand it to be a circumstance and a situation where you have ongoing contact with someone in many instances and each time the conversation turns to spiritual things. That person scoffs and mocks and turns against you if you will. Jesus says at some point you need to understand what is holy and what is precious should not be given to those who have no appreciation for it. Judging and discernment are both necessary. Jesus calls us to make judgments and to be discerning. Just do it in the right way.

Two closing applications. It seems to me that there are two different things that work here. The first thing is this. God, fill my heart with mercy towards others the same mercy that I have received from You. Why don't we make that the prayer of our heart? God, by Your spirit cause me to be merciful to people in my sphere, in my home, in my family, my marriage partner, my children, people I'm worshiping with, people I encounter. Give me a merciful heart and keep me from being judgmental. Then the second part, which is verse 6, God, I confess for the most part my problem is not undiscerning zeal in evangelism. It is that I'm not evangelizing at all. Give me a heart for the lost and least.

Let me pray for us. Father God, we appreciate and love Your Word. It speaks with such clarity into our lives. Lord, it touches us right where we live, right where we are. Father, I confess that these things are hard to hear because it is so often where we find ourselves living that we find ourselves being critical and harsh towards others, when you demonstrate to us time and again that your heart is that we be generous and merciful and kind and long-suffering. Father, we repent. We repent of the sin of being judgmental towards each other within the body and within the circles of our influence. We pray that You would give us a bold and strong heart for people who do not know the gospel of Your grace. Lord, most people that we encounter are not going to be scoffers. They might very well be people who You are working in their heart that they would seek and know Jesus as their Savior. So give us an enlarged heart for the lost and the least around us. We pray in Jesus's name, Amen.