

Of Dogs, Pigs And Pearls

by Wayne Greeson

Jesus came into this world to reveal and speak the Truth. Often the truth He spoke was painful. One of the more painful truths spoken by Christ is found in the Sermon on the Mount. "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 rend you" (Matt. 7:6).

Jesus paints a vivid picture of a cornered person confronted by a hungry pack of snarling dogs and vicious boars. In fear and desperation the person throws into the mud in front of the beasts his most valuable possession, a bag full of pearls. The animals lunge forward anticipating food for their bellies only to discover the precious pearls are hard and tasteless. In their anger, the entire pack of animals turn on the person before them and drag him down into the mud where they tear him to pieces.

To the Jews dogs and swine were unholy and unclean animals fit neither for sacrifice nor food. However, Jesus is not warning about animals but people! There are numerous places throughout the Bible where unfit and worthless persons are called dogs or swine (See, 1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 16:9; 2 Ki. 8:13; 2 Pet. 2:18-22).

Jesus instructs His disciples not to waste the holy and precious instruction and rebuke of God's Word to those who are unfit and unworthy, for not only will they abuse and reject it, but they also abuse and reject you.

It is a sad but painful truth that there are those who lower themselves to the level of vicious snarling junkyard dogs and brutish boars in their rejection of God's wisdom. Get out of their way for if they have no respect for God or His Word they will certainly despise those who try to proclaim God's Truth. Jesus warns about such characters and teaches that we should be discriminating in our teaching and preaching lest we fall victim to them.

Solomon explained why one must be discriminating in whom he entrusts precious pearls of instruction and wisdom. He taught that "fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7) and a "scuffer does not love one who reproves him" (Prov. 15:12). Therefore, "Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words" (Prov. 23:9). Like Jesus, Solomon recommended a discriminating attitude toward those one tries to teach: "He who reproves a scuffer gets shame for himself, And he who rebukes a wicked man gets himself a blemish. Do not reprove a scuffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser. Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." (Proverbs 9:7-9).

Edifier

Evant church of Christ

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Attending church services regularly is like making a path through the forest: the more often you use it, the less obstruction you find in the way."

Sunday Worship:

9:30 am Bible Study

10:20 am Worship

12:30 pm Afternoon

Wednesday Night

7:pm

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Where's The Fruit?

by Wayne Greeson

Every few years a commercial comes along that is priceless. It strikes a chord with Americans everywhere. Soon, the jingle or slogan is heard not only from television but from the lips of senior citizens to babes -- the commercial becomes a bit of true Americana.

One such commercial was Wendy's Hamburgers, "Where's the Beef?" commercial. Who hasn't entered a fast food place, ordered a hamburger, sat down to eat and, in the words of Wendy's commercial, wondered: "Where's the Beef?"

Many will chuckle as they dig through their hamburger bun in an attempt to find "the beef" in their 98 cent hamburger. Yet, how many will go through their lives looking for the insignificant beef in their hamburger and fail to ever search for the more weightier spiritual fruit in their lives? Instead of asking "Where's the Beef?" a person needs to examine himself and ask:

Where's The Fruit?

Just as a good hamburger contains plenty of beef, a person acceptable to God bears much fruit. To be "fruitful" means to be productive. A fruitful garden produces much fruit; a fruitful worker is a worker productive in his work. To produce fruit for God means one is working and serving God in the works God would have him do. Paul wrote that we must "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work..." (Col. 1:10). The fruit that God expects of men "consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9).

Relationship with Christ

The New Testament uses the phrase "in Christ" to describe those who have a spiritual relationship with Christ. To get "into Christ" one must first be obedient to Christ by being "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13). Those outside of Christ cannot bear fruit for Christ. It does not matter how pious, humble or sincere one becomes there is no producing for the Lord outside of the Lord. Jesus said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me ... for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).

Relationship And Service

Christians must recognize that the Christian life does not mean "being" a Christian but rather doing what a Christian does. Jesus spoke of the vine and branches in John 15 to illustrate the Christian life as a relationship to Christ (abiding in Christ) and a service to Christ (bearing fruit). Jesus warned His followers, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away" (John 15:2). Those branches taken away are cast "into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6). Jesus explained the twofold purpose of His disciples bearing fruit, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8). This brings up once again a question every Christian must ask and examine their lives with, "Where's the Fruit?" The Christian life is to be one of labor not loafing, fruit not foliage. Is your life producing for the Lord or are you just putting off the Lord?

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Those to Serve

(B) Calvin Burks (FV) Judd Wall
(O) Doug Pruett (A) Kyle Stifflemire
1st prayer Jack Wall
2nd prayer Jeffrey Burks
Announcements: Keith Stifflemire
Singing: Mike Mallett

Prayer List:

Naomi Wall
Leta Sheldon
Mildred Lovell
Janese Lancaster
Ruby Jones
Lloyd Crownover
Pray for our Nation
Our Troops
Law Enforcement

Dates to Remember

December 4th
Mission Sunday
December 7th
Pearl Harbor Day
December 10th
Christmas Party at
Ruby's Jones Home

Happy Birthday

To

Lynette Vann December 14th
Virginia Lovell December 19th
Leta Sheldon December 25th
Will Vann December 26th

Please see Cindi Wall today after services about the Angels for the Angel Tree.

Where's The Fruit

(continued)

Christians who would walk out of a restaurant that cheats its customers of the meat in their hamburger, will short change the Lord's service. If you set out tomato plants in the Spring, you expect tomatoes come summer. If all you received was sucker vines, its doubtful you would leave those plants taking up space in your garden for the rest of the year. Jesus cursed a fruitless fig tree. "And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it 'No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you' and at once the fig tree withered" (Matt. 21:19). If Jesus would not tolerate a fruitless fig tree, will He tolerate a fruitless Christian?