

Matthew 7:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Analysis

Holy things (things of God) shouldn't be given to 'dogs' (a Jewish term for Gentiles or impure persons), nor pearls cast before swine. This isn't ethnic prejudice but wisdom about presenting gospel truth to those who will only mock and attack it. Discernment is needed about when to speak and when to remain silent.

Historical Context

Dogs were unclean scavengers in Jewish culture, not pets. Swine were particularly unclean. The imagery warns against wasting sacred truth on those who will only profane it. Jesus Himself sometimes refused to answer hostile questioners (Matthew 27:14) and told disciples to shake dust off feet when rejected (Matthew 10:14).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you balance Jesus's command not to judge with His command to exercise discernment about sharing truth?
2. When have you seen gospel truth mocked or attacked by those hostile to it, and how did you respond?

Interlinear Text

Μὴ δώτε τοῖς ἁγίον τοῖς κυσίν, μηδὲ βάλητε
not Give that which is holy that which unto the dogs neither cast
G3361 G1325 G3588 G40 G3588 G2965 G3366 G906

τοῖς μαργαρίτας ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τοῖς χοίρων
that which pearls ye your before that which swine
G3588 G3135 G5216 G1715 G3588 G5519

μήποτε καταπατήσωσιν αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτῶν
lest they trample them under that which feet them
G3379 G2662 G846 G1722 G3588 G4228 G846

καὶ στραφέντες ῥήξωσιν ὑμᾶς
and turn again and rend you
G2532 G4762 G4486 G5209

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 23:9 (Parallel theme): Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

Proverbs 26:11 (Parallel theme): As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

Matthew 15:26 (Parallel theme): But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

Philippians 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Hebrews 10:29 (Holy): Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

2 Peter 2:22 (Parallel theme): But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Matthew 24:10 (Parallel theme): And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Proverbs 11:22 (Parallel theme): As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

Hebrews 6:6 (Parallel theme): If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.