

## DOGS AND HOGS

Matthew 7:6

### I. INTRODUCTION

- If you think dogs can't count, try putting three dog biscuits in your pocket and then giving Fido only two of them. ~Phil Pastoret
- My dog is worried about the economy because Alpo is up to 99 cents a can. That's almost \$7.00 in dog money. ~Joe Weinstein
- If your dog is fat, you're not getting enough exercise. ~Anonymous
- The dog wags his tail, not for you, but for your bread. ~Portuguese Proverb
- I am fond of pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals. ~W. Churchill
- Never wrestle with pigs. You both get dirty and the pig likes it. ~ G.B. Shaw
- You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. ~ Anonymous
- **Pr 11:22**—Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

### II. THE TEXT

**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.*

**NASB**—*Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*

**NIV**—*Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*

**ESV**—*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.*

**The Message**—*Don't be flip with the sacred. Banter and silliness give no honor to God. Don't reduce holy mysteries to slogans. In trying to be relevant, you're only being cute and inviting sacrilege.*

### III. BACKGROUND

#### 1. PIGS

- a. Unclean in Jewish culture
  1. Jews were allowed to eat what had split hoof **and** chewed the cud—**Lev 11:3**
  2. Pigs unclean to eat—because they did not fit into *both* categories

**Lev 11:7**—*and the pig. For though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you.*

3. Not just unclean to eat—but also to touch when dead

**Dt 14:8**—*The pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, it is unclean for you. You shall not eat any of their flesh nor touch their carcasses.*

b. Unclean in other cultures

1. Ancient Egypt

- a. Egyptians said certain animals were devoted for a definite purpose.
- b. They were taboo for other purposes, specifically as unclean for eating.
- c. Among them were pigs—pork was not to be eaten.
- d. Mythological basis
  - o **Seth**—god of evil (and deserts/storms) took the form of a black pig
  - o Seth struck eye of **Horus**—god of war (and sky/falcons)— giving him black eye
  - o **Ra**—sun god—pronounced pigs an abomination to the gods on behalf of Horus

2. But not in Gentile territories

- a. Decapolis—Ten Greek cities—swineherding a major industry—**Mk 5**
- b. Philistines—sea-farers came from Aegean—archeology show—diet heavy with pork

3. Muslim culture

- a. Eating of swine specifically forbidden in Quran—**5:3**
- b. The only animal specifically designated as ‘unclean’ in Quran
- c. Other animals unclean—based on type of death and other circumstances

4. Seventh-Day Adventists

- a. Recommend vegetarianism
- b. Expect adherence to kosher rules of Leviticus 11—thus prohibit eating pork

c. Sayings

“You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.”

“Even a blind hog can find an acorn sometimes.”

## 2. **DOGS**

### a. Negative biblical connotation

1. Most of the 41 references to dogs in Scripture are negative

2. Only a few are good

o Watchfulness—**Is 56**—but even here in a negative context

o Dogs helping shepherds—**Job 30**

o Dogs used for hunting—**Ps 22**

3. Dogs were scavengers—therefore ‘unclean’

a. Identified as such by the Bible—contrasted with holiness

**Ex 22:31**—*And you shall be holy men unto me: neither shall you eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs.*

b. One of the worst ways to end life—one’s corpse to be eaten by dogs

1. Judgment pronounce on bad Kings of Israel

**I Kgs 14:11**—*He who dies of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and he who dies in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD has spoken.*

2. Similar prophecies about descendants of Baasha and Ahab; of Jezebel herself (3 times)

c. Used to pronounce judgment on Judah and Jerusalem

**Jer 15:3**—*I will appoint over them four kinds of doom, declares the Lord: “the sword to slay, the dogs to drag off, and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.*

4. Wild dogs were dangerous

a. David used them to depict danger—in his messianic prophecy

**Ps 22:16-18**—*For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

b. **Example—packs of wild dogs—Russia 1995**

## **IV. EXPLANATION OF TEXT**

## A. IDENTITY OF DOGS AND PIGS

### 1. **DOGS**

a. Hebrew Old Testament = keleb = dog

1. Term of contempt/abasement
2. Sometimes refers to pagan sacrifice
3. Once—referring to male prostitute—**Dt 23**

b. Greek New Testament

1. Here **κυων** = wild dogs

a. In Jesus' day—generally a pejorative term for Gentiles—Romans—unbelievers

b. In NT passages

1. Dogs—as false teachers

**Ph 3:2**—*Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision*

2. Dogs—as godless people

**Rev 22:14-15**—*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

2. Another term—elsewhere = **κυναριον**

a. Jesus uses this term—with Syrophoenician woman—**Mk 7:27-8; Mt 15:26-7**

b. Little domesticated dogs—like saying 'puppies'

c. Woman identified them as under the table—eating scraps of the children

### 2. **PIGS**—SWINE

a. NT term = **χοῖρος** = swine

b. Always used in negative context in New Testament—3 places

1. Here—in the Sermon on the Mount

2. 'Legion' story—evil spirits entered 2000 pigs—and drowned—**Mt 8; Mk 5; Lk 8**

3. Prodigal son—reduced to feeding swine in ‘far country’—[Lk 15](#)

#### D. CENTRAL MEANING OF TEXT

1. Meaning seems to turn on the meaning of ‘**holy things**’ and ‘**pearls**’
2. Some argue this relates to the Eucharist
  - a. Argument for—supporters say Jesus means don’t give holy food to dogs
  - b. Arguments against
    1. Jesus has not yet implemented the Lord’s Supper
    2. Seems too narrow/specific in context of general ‘kingdom’ principles
2. Better explanation
  - a. The message about the kingdom of God—the **gospel** and **salvation**
  - b. Arguments for
    1. Pearl—is equated with kingdom treasure  
[Mt 13:45-46](#)—*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*
    2. Context of [6:19-21](#)—storing up *kingdom* treasure—is not about liturgical rites

#### E. CONTEXT

1. Kingdom principles of stewardship—what to do ‘holy things’ of God
  - a. How and what to save/store
    - Store heavenly treasure—[6:19-21](#)
  - b. How to use your treasure
    - Serve God and not mammon—[6:24](#)
  - c. How to spend/share it
    - Use discernment—[7:6](#)
2. Extension of discussion about judging—[7:1-5](#)
  - a. Don’t be judgmental/critical in spirit
  - b. But still use discernment/discretion—don’t be naive

3. Anticipating next passage—**7:7-11**
  - a. Anyone who asks/seeks/knocks—should receive holy things
  - b. Except for ‘dogs’ and ‘pigs’—who will not appreciate them

## F. STRUCTURE

1. Chiastic—ABBA--structure
  - **A Dogs—B Pigs—B Trample under feet—A Tear to pieces**
2. Explanation
  - a. Dogs—typically tear things
  - b. Pigs—typically trample things
3. Another way to read the passage

*Do not give dogs what is sacred—they may turn and tear you to pieces; do not throw your pearls to pigs—the may trample them under their feet.*

## G. NATURE OF MESSAGE

1. Three possible explanations
  - **Temporary** restriction—based on ‘secret messiahship’
  - **Temporary** restriction—based on Jewish phase of ministry
  - **Permanent** guidance—timeless truth
2. **Temporary** restriction—based on ‘secret messiahship’
  - a. Jesus warned disciples and others not to reveal Him as messiah yet
  - b. Problems
    1. Warning was always general—don’t share with anyone—not just certain types of people
    2. Nothing else in Sermon on Mount seems to be restricted this way
3. **Temporary** restriction—based on Jewish phase of ministry
  - a. Jesus told disciples in **Matthew 10** to go only to the Jews
  - b. So ‘dogs’ might refer to Gentiles
    - o Support for this view = Jesus refusing to help Syrophenician woman—**Mt 15:21ff**

- c. Support for this view
  - a. Jesus has just warned them not to be like the ‘pagans/Gentiles’
  - b. In prayer—don’t keep on babbling like them—[6:7](#)
  - c. Don’t worry—like the ‘pagans/Gentiles’—[6:32](#)
- d. Problems
  - 1. Gentiles were not usually referred to as ‘pigs’
  - 2. Restriction on disciples in [Mt 10](#) was a short-lived restriction
    - In [Luke 10](#)—He did not restrict the 70 this way
    - And [Luke 10](#) preceded Luke’s account of Sermon on Mount ‘ask/seek/knock’ passage—[Lk 11:9-13](#)—which is part of context for ‘dogs/pigs’ passage
  - 3. Sermon on Mount has universal tone—reaching beyond Jews
    - a. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you—[5:44](#)
    - b. The Father causes sun to shine, rain to fall, on evil and good alike—[5:45](#)
    - c. Everyone who hears these words and puts them into practice—[7:21](#)
- 4. **Permanent** guidance
  - a. Timeless ethical/moral instructions for the Kingdom of God
  - b. THE PRINCIPLE—USE DISCRETION/DISCERNMENT IN SHARING THE GOSPEL
    - 1. There is a dignity to the gospel
      - a. It demands respect and due attention
      - b. Never degrade it by begging people—or forcing them—to listen
    - 2. Economy of time—go where the fields are white—not re-plowing barren ground
    - 3. Satan tries to side-track us
      - a. Be careful always to follow Holy Spirit’s direction
      - b. But —sometimes pride causes us to prove we can overcome all opposition
- 5. **Warning**—there *are* ‘dogs’ and ‘pigs’ out there
  - 1. Those who are **insatiable**—mindlessly wanting to fill themselves with wrong food

- a. Jesus warned those who followed Him after feeding the 5000

*Jn 6:26-27—Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.*

- b. They are like insatiable—dogs and pigs

*Is 56:11—And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied*

- 1. Dogs who turn and bite—**example Egan’s aggressiveness for ‘treats’**
- 2. **Herschel Hobbs example—of ‘pigs’**

*A small boy sat at the dinner table shoving in food with both hands. His father said, “Son, don’t make a pig out of yourself!” When this didn’t slow the boy down, the father asked, “Son, do you know what a pig is?” Still shoving in the food, the boy replied, “Yes, sir. It’s an old hog’s little boy.”*

- 2. Those who are **godless**—intentionally **set against the gospel**

- a. **Do not dignify blasphemy**—always responding to every demanding question

- b. Jesus set the example

- ❖ Silent before high priest—**Mk 14**
- ❖ Silent before Pilate—**Mk 15**
- ❖ Silent before Herod—**Lk 23:9**

- c. Give the Holy Spirit time/opportunity—to work on their hearts first

- 3. False teachers—‘dogs’ and ‘pigs’

- a. Who mislead others

- b. Who eventually turn their back on the gospel

*I Pe 2:17-22— 17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. 18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, 19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the*



*true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”*

4. There comes a time—to shake the dust off our feet
  - a. Jesus’ directions to His disciples

**Mk 6:11**—*If any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave as a testimony against them.* [Mt:10:14]
  - b. Paul’s example—leaving the Jews behind and going to the Gentiles
    - ❖ **Pisidian Antioch**—first missionary journey—**Act 13:46**
    - ❖ **Corinth**—second missionary journey—**Acts 18:6**
    - ❖ **Ephesus**—third missionary journey—**Acts 19:9**
5. Wait on Holy Spirit—to guide us
  - a. He will tell us when and what to say
    - ❖ As His witnesses—Jesus said don’t prepare—depend on Him—**Mk 13**
  - b. He will tell us where to go
    - ❖ Paul directed *not* to go to Asia or Bithynia—but to Macedonia—**Acts 16**