Logs Dogs & Pigs

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[0:00] Thank you, Glazeby. Good morning, my name's Tim, I'm part of the team here at Harvest Church. And we're going to be continuing our series in the Gospel of Matthew.

And we found our way to what I reckon is probably one of the most quoted verses in the Bible, especially by people that don't follow Jesus.
And I'm probably one of the more misunderstood. So I'm going to jump straight into it. We're going to be at the start of Matthew chapter 7, so we're still in what is called the Sermon on the Mount, with Jesus' kind of lengthy bit of teaching that Jesus does.
I'm going to read the first six verses. Judge not that 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?
[1:03] 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.
This is the word of the Lord. So today, you're like, what? Today's title is Logs, Dogs, and Pigs. Oh my. We're just going to sort of try and explore, what are these images that Jesus is giving?
What are they about? And whether or not we've encountered those specific words, we will have definitely heard people say, judge not. That's the thing Jesus says, right?
That's the thing that everybody knows that Jesus says, and they like to respond to Christians, no, no, no, no. Judge not. I mean, that's what he starts with. Judge not that you be not judged.
[2:07] It's what's called a wisdom saying, which means it's not actually that easy to get underneath it. It requires a little bit of reflection. And the reason we know that is because the next thing he says makes the assumption that the people he's talking to will be doing some judging.

So he says, judge not. Judge not. And then immediately says, for with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
He's clearly expecting that they will judge. And at the end of the passage I read, that section about dogs and pigs, it's about making the right judgment. So I've pictured the image.
He says, don't throw your pearls before pigs. You think, why would I? But it's supposed to make you laugh. As though you had pigs in a pig pen, you've got a big old basket of pig pods.
And in your big old basket of pig pods, to put in your pig pen, it sounds like a tongue twister, doesn't it? You've put some pearls. And so you've got pearls in your pig pods, and you're just throwing them out freely before the pigs.
[3:12] So clearly that's silly. No one would do that. That's his point. No one would do that. No one is going to mix up their important things with the food that you'd give to the pigs.

But that means you need to know what, or indeed who, because it is who, who the dogs and pigs are, which requires that you make judgments.
So when Jesus starts with judge not, he then moves on to clearly making the assumption that the people he's talking to will make some sort of judgments. His point is about how we make them.
I mean, in context, what his first hearers would have heard, when Jesus says dogs and pigs, they would have heard, oh, you mean Gentiles? You mean people who aren't Jewish?
And Jesus, I think he's making a wider point that we'll explore, but he's also making a subtle, funny dig at those who think that the Roman Empire will be the salvation of the Jewish people. He is, he is, I think we've often tempted us and many people through many ages to think, oh, we'll be safe if

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only the right people are in power.
[4:29] That the church will be protected if only the right people are in power. Now, of course, there are better and worse people to have in power in nations. There clearly are, and there's some judgments.

And so what Jesus says is, make them wisely. Because that's his point. He says, judge not that you'll be judged, but then immediately he goes on, verse two, with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged.
With the measure you use, it will be measured to you. So the measure is what matters. You will be judged with the measure you judge. The way that you judge other people will be, as it were, the way that God will act towards you.
It's terrifying, actually, if you think about it. So Jesus' point is, well, judge with grace. Judge mercifully. Judge how you want God, or indeed others, to judge you.
I mean, Jesus judges us perfectly, and he found you wanting. He found me wanting. We've sung about it over and over. We're sinners before the throne of God with no excuse.
[5:42] And yet he came to get you anyway. He came to die in your place anyway. He has risen for your salvation anyway. He's merciful.

So let's be merciful. Let's get practical. What does this mean that we should judge with the measure that we want to be judged with?
Think about it like this. Many of you in the room are married. Do you judge your husband or your wife with the measure you would like them to judge you with? Oh, yes, yes, yes.
Do you? Do you? I mean, let me give you a really trivial example. Helen and I were laughing about this this week when I asked her. We were trying to think up what a good example from our marriage is.
It really grinds my gears. I'm aware my wife isn't here, so I'm going to also respond to what she then said about me. It really grinds my gears when she leaves her banana skin around that she's had for breakfast in the morning.
[6:46] It does. I'm deliberately picking a really trivial example, but it does. It really annoys me. And I find myself picking it up and throwing it away, putting it in the compost remarkably often.

Right? I'm thinking inside. Do I judge with the measure with which I'm judged? Do I ever. The... I asked Helen, well, what do I leave around the house that really annoys you?
There was a long list. Let me give you one. Well, she said, every wife in the room will be annoyed about the fact you don't pick up stuff on the bottom of the stairs and take it upstairs. It's like, okay. But she gave me the example of the way that I leave an empty shower gel bottle in the shower.
I said, it's just, you don't see it. I'm like, no, I really don't see it. In exactly the same way she doesn't see the banana skin. Right? So again, to take the trivial example, am I judging with the measure with which I want to be judged?
Well, I would like Helen to look at the shower gel bottle and think, oh, he's forgotten that. I'll just do it for him. Which means that I need to look at the banana skin and think, oh, she's forgotten that.
[7:53] Let me just do it for her. I think nothing more of it. Right? I don't. But Jesus is saying you should. Because that's, you want to be judged with the measure with which you would like others to judge you.

And all of us would love ourselves to be judged by very understanding people who would like to get all of our motivations and understand exactly why we've made all those decisions and we tend not to do that for others.
Do we do the same thing with our children, perhaps? Or with our boss? Or with our colleagues? Or with the prime minister? Whatever we might think of his policies.
Or any other politician you might see on the television. Or others in the church or the church leadership. Do we judge with the measure we would like to be judged with? I suspect, if we're honest, sometimes, at best.
And if your heart, when I said that, went, oh yes, definitely. I've got really bad news for you. You're kind of deceived. But our hearts aren't deceptive.
[9:04] It can work like that. We don't tend to see our own faults and we find it really easy to see other people's. So we need to judge others with which, the measure, we would like to be judged.

You can't live life without making some form of judgment about things. You just, you can't. But to make them in the manner you would like others to judge you. Not believe the best.

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It's not quite that. Because that's sort of, oh, we just let everything go. It's not that. But it's judge how you'd want to be judged. Assume there's a story. That's what you'd like people to do.
If you do or say something someone else doesn't like, you'd like them to assume that there's a story behind it. That there's a reason that you've done or said or thought or whatever it is, forgotten. Whatever it is you might have done. You want to assume the other person is a person with as many complex motives as you have.
[10:09] And again, none of us have ever met an unmixed motive in our life, I don't think. I think Jesus is probably the only person who's ever had unmixed motives. Most things we do, we do for a good reason and some other reasons too that we'd probably rather people didn't notice hidden under the surface if we're honest with ourselves.

But then we need to make that assumption about other people. We think, oh, they've done it for that reason. They've probably done it for a whole host of reasons. Assume that you don't have all the information. Right?
You wouldn't generally want people to make judgments about you based on a snapshot. You'd quite like them to get the whole picture if they have to. I mean, assume you don't know what kind of day the person that's just cut you up on the roundabout has had.
Right? It's a really easy one, isn't it? You don't know them, but you get very cross about it in the car. Should they have done that? No. Sure. Maybe you are in the right. Okay. But you get quite het up about the thing, don't we, internally.
You grumble about it behind the steering wheel. Who knows what kind of day they've had? Your driving's pretty rubbish on your worst day, too. Depending on what, you think of what fan call they just had, what news they just had, what they're dealing with.
[11:27] We don't know. And so we strive to disciple, as it were, our impulse. You'll be like, oh. And we're like, no, no, I don't know what day they've had. And then on we go.

Again, sometimes you need to ask. Sometimes, particularly if it's someone you know well or in some kind of relationship with. It's the prime minister, it's probably not the case, but you might need to ask. I don't have all the information, so okay, I can't make any judgment.
I might need to go and ask. I might need to go and have a conversation. I might even need to go and say, you know, when you said that or did that, it really hurt me.
Not, why did you say and do that to hurt me? Do you see the difference? But when you said or did or whatever it was that it hurt me for this reason, what were you trying to do?
You know, ask the question, thinking they probably weren't trying to hurt me. That's possible, isn't it? But they probably weren't. They might need to know that they did, but find out what's going on.
[12:37] And then they'll give you, if they tell you what the story is, sometimes you'll go, ah, okay, I kind of get it, but the way it came across was this, and you can have a conversation about that. Or other times, you might be like, oh, oh yeah, okay, actually, I'm not hurt because of what you said, I'm hurt because of something inside me, because of something that's happened in my past, or this looks like another thing that's happened to me, or there's a pattern that I've fallen into thinking in, or whatever it might be.

But actually, a lot of the time you don't need to ask, because if we're honest, we don't actually need to know. We just like judging people over there for whatever it is that they might be doing. So pray. Now, we know a really good judge who's actually good at making clear and good judgments is the Lord. Why don't you ask him to judge them?
And that's not a call down fire from heaven kind of thing, that's just, I mean, again, there are occasionally moments for that sort of thing, but that's just, oh Lord, I'm feeling like this about it, I'm not 100% sure, why don't you judge them?
And he will, you know he will, he'll do good and perfect judgment. In fact, that's kind of what forgiveness looks like, the internal bit, is sort of saying, I choose not to judge this person, I'm going to take them out of my law court, put them in your law court, you make good and perfect judgments, revenge is mine, saith the Lord, have at it God.
[14:06] That's, that's essentially what you're doing in your heart when you forgive someone. You're saying, I'm just giving over my right to make a judgment about that. I think God will do it better than me. And, Jesus says, before you get into all of that, you're going to need to have a little look in your own eye too.

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So he gives this image which is genuinely, I think, meant to be hilarious, where he says, 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 brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there is a log in your own eye, you hypocrite. I mean, picture the image.
You have, your friend is there and you can see they've just got a little bit of something just here. And you're like, oh, I could deal with that, Feeney. And you reach over to wipe it out and as you do, you bash them in the head with this enormous log that is sat in your eye straight into their face.
It's like, that's probably not doing them much good. Again, we read it and we sort of think, oh yes, it's pious because it's the Bible. Jesus is telling a joke. We're supposed to read it and think that's kind of funny, right?
[15:28] The guy, he's trying to deal with the tiny thing but there's an enormous big old log that has swung into the person's face. What's his point? Deal with yourself first.

Deal with yourself first. Which, you know, sometimes you need to agonize with tears into the carpet about where you need to repent before you go to talk to someone about where they need to.
You notice what he says isn't, in fact, he's very explicit about it. He says, you hypocrite, first take out the log of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
His point is not, oh no, no, don't worry about the little thing. Deal with the big thing in your own face. His point is, deal with this first and then you'll be able to see in order to deal with whatever it is that your brother has in their face.
Like, we need each other to point out our sin and our foibles and our mistakes. We absolutely do. But Jesus' point is, deal with your own first as best you can and then go and do what you can about theirs.
[16:48] Which means we, we need to assume that we have one even if we can't see it. I think, I mean, I've had to learn this posture, I think probably the hard way over many years.

I'm hardly perfect at it, but I think I can say with honesty that before I'm about to have an interaction with someone that I think when I'm going to need to tell them something about their sin or I'm going to need to call something out or correct something, spend quite a long time doing the hard internal thing of where am I sinning in this?
Like, I kind of generally make the assumption I probably am. Like, we're riddled with the stuff and covered by the blood of Jesus and set wonderfully free, but where do I need to repent?
I mean, occasionally, the Lord says, no, you're okay. I wouldn't say that's the most common answer. There's usually something where I'm like, I need to deal with this in my heart first to give them, to give a fair crack of the whip at doing them any good in this conversation rather than just me bringing in all my own mess.
we need to do what, if you like, hard internal heart work before we go and say, you've got a little bit of something there.
[18:10] We need to sift our motives. They'll be complex. Of course they will. But what are they? We need to ask the Lord, where do I need to repent?

Well, I've got two questions. What's one of them? Where do I need to repent? Again, assume there's somewhere. I think we should, if we're Christians, that's something here you're kind of looking in, that's great, but if you're Christians we should make the assumption we probably need to repent of something most of the time.
Like, what is it? And that's not in a, oh, I need to repent. No, no, I'm covered by the blood of Jesus. I'm completely set free, confident in the Lord's love for me, but to do my heart good and to grow into all that Jesus would have for me, I, he's given me two tools and they are repentance and forgiveness and as broadly they're the tools for us.
As a pastor, if you like, that's what my toolbox has in here. I've got the gospel, I've got repentance, forgiveness, I haven't got anything else, but that's, they're remarkably effective and so you, you start with, okay, well, I probably need to repent of something.
If you've been hurt, it's like, well, maybe it's my pride, it won't always be, but it might be, like, what's the thing that, where am I sinning in this? Make that assumption, ask the Lord, search the scriptures, pray, just ask him.
[19:30] You're allowed to do that, by the way. You can just say, God, where am I, where am I sinning in this? I'd really like to know and you might sometimes hear it in your head, you might sometimes, someone will point it out for you, like, oh, but, that's helpful, helps us grow.

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Or, the other question is, is why does that hurt? Now, if you've been hurt by someone, you kind of want to go and tell them about it, great, okay, that's good, you should tell them, often.
But, firstly, like, why, why did that hurt? Like, what, is it that they said a really mean thing and they shouldn't have done, okay, well, you should probably just tell them that, that's okay. But, is it actually that whatever they said or did it presses on something for you?
Maybe a wound from the past or, like I said, a pattern where you're like, I've seen this go round and round and round, they're doing the same thing as everyone else. It's like, well, they might not be, but we learn to look through lenses in our life.
Why does it hurt? Again, we ask the Lord thinking that, actually, he can heal us and before we go and tell them about it, we might need some healing of that.
[20:47] We make the assumption that we need to do something first. So, none of this is supposed to be it. Don't tell other people what you think about them. That is absolutely not Jesus' point. I think it is often what we hear, just like, let everything go.

But his point is you should be most concerned with your own sin and you should give the measure of grace that you'd really like other people to give you to others when you go to talk to them too.
And all of that, if we're honest, is quite hard. It's quite hard. And even if I'm saying, so before you talk to them, you must do some hard internal work.
Some of you are slightly dying inside that are sort of, I don't have the energy for it. Do you not know what my week's been like? Do you not, like, how could I possibly manage to do that?
And I do genuinely think that it is important that as Christians we are attentive to our hearts and that we continue to grow throughout our Christian walk. and it's not a, well, I repented a long time ago and so I'm fine.
[22:00] It doesn't really work like that. And we just keep rooting out sin in our absolutely. But the thing that we do is we need to approach that through the gospel. Because if you just heard what I said about you must do some hard internal work, it sounds, it's cold, it sounds like law.

It is law. It kind of kills us. And if that's all you had, when you try and live like that with nothing else, you will be flat as a pancake on the floor within a month, I guarantee it.
You will exhaust yourself. Do you need to do it? Yeah. But you can only do what I call hard internal work on your heart if you approach it knowing that the Lord is for me.
If you approach it knowing Jesus loves me. If you approach it knowing I'm going to let you in a little secret here, I'm God's favourite. I mean, the secret is that in the gospel so are you.
Because the Father looks at us as though we're in Christ and the Son is the favourite of the Father, which means you get treated as though you were God's favourite if you trust Jesus. But it means, but I'm like, if I know that the Lord of hosts, the God of armies, who made the world with a word and who is terrifying in splendour and holiness, if I know that he thinks I'm brilliant, not because I'm brilliant but because he looks at me as though I'm a Jesus, it makes it a lot easier for me to approach hard internal work thinking, you know what, I am actually a lot worse than I think I am and I'm a lot more loved than I could possibly realise.
[23:42] And it changes your posture towards the thing because then it's not like, ooh, it's more, okay Jesus, what's next? And he is the kindest master you could follow.

I'm convinced of this, he tells us one thing about ourselves at a time. It's really kind. If we knew all the things at once, we would, how would you live?
Like if you saw the depths of your sin today, right now, oh gosh, I don't know how you'd get out of the room. But the thing is, Jesus, he wants to tell you about one thing at a time, it's like, this one next. And then we deal with it as we walk with him with the spirit and he helps us and we, some of it is kind of we learn to do it and some of it is just the spirit comes and changes us and some of it is just we get the gospel into our thinking and then he's like, well done, here's the next one.
And it's like a, the church, the 16th century church planter John Calvin talked about the heart as a factory of idols. I think it's a little bit like a treadmill, like a sort of conveyor belt even and they sort of, they come through one at a time and Jesus is like, just smash the one at the front.
There's a lot of them but you don't need to worry about the ones behind yet. Just deal with the next thing I'm telling you to. He is kind. He said, the Bible tells us, Book of Romans chapter 2 that his kindness is what leads us to repentance.
[25:01] He wants us to repent but he does, he's kind with us. One of the ways he's kind is he just says that one next. So do we need to do work in our hearts?

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Yeah. But if that makes your heart sink, what you need to know is this law like that kills but then the gospel raises us to life. Are you loved because Jesus died on the cross for you?
Yes you are. Yes you are. Hmm. He's so good. He's so good.
Can I have a band? Jesus the judge comes to judge us. He does. He comes to judge us.
He will judge everyone. But here's the good news. For those who trust him he has mercy on us.
And then he says yeah come and live like that.
[26:12] Come and have mercy on others. Yeah. Come and come and judge others with the measure that you would quite like to be judged yourself. Yeah. Will that lead to a world that is like the kingdom?

Yeah. It will actually. If we all did that it would be much nicer. But he has mercy on us first. Not because we do that but because he has mercy on us.
Because he loved us. Because he chose to. Because he wants you. Because he even likes you.
Hard though that might be to believe. He's for you. And so we can have a go at living in the way that he calls us to.
What we're going to do right now is we're going to worship that Jesus who has mercy on us. And then we'll see what we do the rest of our meeting. Some people have prophetic things that help us. That might help.
I wonder if we might end up doing a little bit of repenting in a minute. But first we're going to worship Jesus. Let's stand together if you're able. Amen.

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