

“Correct Yourself before You Correct Others”  
(Luke 6:41-42)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

Let's back up again just a bit,  
To understand Jesus' argument,  
As well as to remind ourselves  
What we've seen:

Jesus said,  
As we seek the kingdom –  
As we become more like Him –  
We will be hated.

When we're hated,  
He wants us to show love in return –  
He's already given us the power to do this  
By His Holy Spirit –  
That we might be His witnesses.

When we love those who hate us,  
It shows us something about ourselves:  
That we are blessed/justified:  
Since we're not judging, it shows we won't be judged;  
Since we're not condemning, we won't be condemned;  
Since we're forgiving, it shows we're forgiven;  
Since we're giving, we will receive.

Jesus then told us something

That was meant to help us to grow in love:

That we should *avoid bad/evil influences*.

He told us last week,

If we follow the blind –

Those who don't love the Lord

Or follow His ways;

And they are everywhere around us –

In Hollywood,

On and in the news,

In our government,

Even in our churches –

They will lead us into the pit –

That's where they're headed:

If we follow them,

That's where we'll end up.

Jesus told us

That only the blind follow the blind –

But at the same time,

He was warning us,

Because even those who see,

Can be blinded for a time.

That's why we need to take a good look

At the ones we're following –

Every disciple becomes like his/her master –

If we want to be like Jesus,  
He must be our Master.

## B. Preview.

This morning, Jesus tells us further  
Not to follow their example –  
Particularly that of the scribes and Pharisees –  
In how we deal with the sins of others –  
  
They strain out gnats, while swallowing camels:  
We are to stop swallowing camels, before we strain out gnats –  
We need to deal with our sins,  
Before we deal with those of others.

## II. Sermon.

### A. First, Jesus tells us we need *to see* our camels:

We need to be aware of our own sins.  
  
“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (v. 41).

He told us earlier  
We’re not to judge and condemn others –  
That we’re not to be quick or harsh in our criticism –  
But that doesn’t mean  
We’re not to look at what others do,  
Form an opinion on whether it’s right or wrong,  
And then respond accordingly.

Jesus tells us here that we need to do this,

But we need to do it in the right way:

First, we need to take note

Of our own faults/sins:

That's what Jesus refers to

By the log and the speck:

They represent our sins

And the sins of others.

A *speck* is a small splinter of straw or wood:

Here, it represents a slight fault –

A comparatively small sin –

Not every sin is equally serious –

It's sin to hate someone –

To murder them *in your heart* –

But it's worse to murder them *in reality* –

To do so demands a *greater* punishment.

But even if a sin is less serious,

It still needs to be dealt with –

Every sin deserves hell –

That's what we would have received for it,

If it hadn't been for God's grace –

We can't take any sin lightly.

A log is a wooden beam –

The better part of a tree trunk –

Jesus uses it to represent a greater sin –

To murder, rather than to be angry;

To steal, rather than to covet;

To commit adultery/fornication, rather than to lust.

Jesus is telling us,

Before we try to help others with their specks,

We first need to see our logs:

It's always easier to see sin in others,

Rather than in ourselves;

They always seem to look worse

When others wear them,

Than they ever look on us.

But that's only because of pride:

We tend to think better of ourselves

Than we do of others.

Jesus tells us

That it needs to be the other way around:

We need to think better of others than of ourselves –

To see ourselves as worse than others –

That's what humility is all about.

Edwards applied this principle

To his own life in his 8<sup>th</sup> Resolution:

“Resolved, To act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God.”

The Puritans are often characterized

As killjoys for statements like this –

In reality, they were the ones

Seeking the greatest pleasure:

They just understood that they could only gain it

By living as pleasing to God as they could:

And that requires humility –

Seeing ourselves as we really are.

Again, Jesus likely has in view here

The scribes and Pharisees:

They were the ones guilty of greater sins –

Pride, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, covetousness –

But were quick to censure others for their lesser offenses.

But they’re not the only ones who do this –

We can do a pretty good job as well –

Which is why Jesus tells us

We need to take a good look at ourselves –

For a reality check –

Before we reach out to help others.

B. Second, we also need to deal with our sins.

“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You

hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye" (v. 42).

1. This log/sin can get in the way

Of being able to see well enough

To help others.

Blind doctors don't make very good surgeons –

If we attempt spiritual surgery

When we're blinded by our sins,

We're going to do more harm than good –

Especially if we're guilty of worse –

We show that we lack the maturity,

And that measure of the Spirit we need

To do this well.

But if we successfully deal with our sins –

Not just those in the same area,

But in every area –

We'll gain the experience we need,

With the Spirit's help,

To help others overcome theirs.

How?

2. First, we'll gain a better understanding

Of how difficult it is to overcome sin,

Which will change the way we approach them.

Paul writes, “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are *spiritual*, restore such a one in a spirit of *gentleness*; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1-2).

Where does this spirituality and gentleness come from?

It comes from fighting against our own sins.

Arrogance produces a harshness:

Why are you struggling in this area? –

I’m not –

Why aren’t you over this by now?

But humility produces sympathy.

Listen to what William Perkins says

About how we should approach others:

“Do not despise your neighbor, but consider yourself as bad a sinner, and that the like defects may fall on you. If you cannot excuse his doing, excuse his intent which may be good; or if the deed be evil, think it was done of ignorance; if you can no way excuse him, think some great temptation befell him, and that you would be worse if the like temptation fell on you; and give God thanks that the like as yet has not fallen on you. Despise not a man being a sinner, for though he is evil today, he may turn tomorrow.”

### 3. Second, we’ll know better

How to make use of the resources

The Lord has placed at our disposal

Through experience, and not just theoretically:

How to use His Word as our guide;

And to draw on the Spirit’s help in prayer;

As well as how to find help

Through the prayers and counsel of others.



4. Finally, we need to think about

How others will see and receive us,  
If we don't deal with our sins –  
Especially if our faults happen to be  
More glaring than theirs.

Consider how Jesus looked at

The scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:23-24,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”

If we try to help someone with their specks/gnats

While we have a log in our own eye –

While we swallow camels –

We'll only prove to be hypocrites,

And more likely tempt them

To sin further against the Lord.

Let's be encouraged,

By what Jesus says this morning,

To look at ourselves

In the mirror of His Law –

And to deal with our own sins

Before we try to help others with theirs.

Particularly as we prepare to come to His Table.