

Judge Not

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[0 : 00] I'm going to read from God's word for us now. We are in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7, verses 1 to 6.

Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that's in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there's 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 attack you.

Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Good evening. If you have a Bible with you, please do keep it open at Matthew 7, verses 1 to 6, which Chris just read for us.

[1 : 27] Cultures, even generations, culture after culture within the same place, have very different values on judging other people.

Way back, a long, long time ago, when I was a teenager, back in the 1990s, UK culture, and it was the same in US culture as well, was all about not judging other people.

Don't be judgmental was the message of that age. And that had all of its own values behind it. The idea was nobody has the moral high ground over anyone else.

We're all trying to live life on our own terms, so you just don't have the right to judge someone else. But really, the thing that made that so normal was the world's most popular TV show at the time, which was called Friends.

Some of you are just old enough to remember it, so I commiserate with you. Some of you are too old or too young, and you should count yourself blessed. But when I was a teenager, this is what everyone watched.

[2 : 29] It was about six young adults living in New York, living life without any bigger moral framework, all trying to make their own way in life. And the big idea in that show with what it meant to be a friend was that you were never judgmental of your friends.

You were always affirming, always supportive. A friend would never say to one of their friends that there's a connection between their actions and the consequences of those actions.

That's not what friends were supposed to do. So the worst thing that you could be was judgmental. Nowadays, though, that has all flipped around. And now we live in a culture in the West at large, here in Edinburgh, that is pro-judgmental, that's highly judgmental.

There's something wrong with you nowadays if you don't judge people, if you see evil in the world, if you see evil in someone else's life, when you don't call it out, what do we say to that? We say, silence is violence, right?

Who's the icon of our age? It's not Joey and Chandler not pointing out the consequences of their actions. It's Greta Thunberg who's become a global celebrity by going around saying, how dare you?

[3 : 40] Shame on you to everyone, making us all feel really bad about ourselves. And ours is the age that has given rise to what gets called cancel culture, which is a really deep rejection of the kind of culture that I grew up in in the 1990s, which was only a firm culture.

So the question is, if we think about these two cultures, 1990s culture, 2025 culture, which one gets judgment right?

Because they can't both be true. Let me say something that's going to end in a prediction. I don't claim to be a prophet and we don't really do that in a reformed church like this, but a humble prediction.

The reason that the culture we have now, at this moment, which is so into being judgmental, the reason for that is that what came before that age of, don't judge me, don't make me face consequences for my actions, that way of living just doesn't really work in real life because actions do have consequences.

And even back in the 1990s, nobody really believed that we should never judge another human being for anything ever. Imagine you walk into your home and you find someone burgling it and you say, stop, burglar, that's wrong.

[5 : 02] And the guy turns around and says to you, don't judge me. Did anyone ever say, well, it is 1995, so I suppose you're right. People just didn't do that.

But what that culture back then tried to hold on to, we could put it in Christian terms, was something like this. show me grace, but don't you dare tell me I'm a sinner.

So, it was something like grace without righteousness and that doesn't work. So, what our culture has done is just to swap all of that around. It inverted it.

And now we have the opposite. I will condemn you for being a sinner, but there's no grace for you. There's no redemption. There's only shame. And there's your cancellation.

And that doesn't work in real life either. That is a crushing way to live because nobody is perfect.

And if the judgment turns on us, there isn't a prospect of redemption.

[6 : 08] So, then life becomes a game. And the way that you play the game is you keep the arrow of judgment pointed away from yourself as much as you can. Always point it at someone else because the moment it turns on you, the game is up.

And you don't want anyone to go looking for the skeletons in your closet and that motivates you to look for them in everyone else's. Okay? It's all a big game of distraction away from ourselves.

And that's not satisfying either. It's a really ugly way to live. So, here's the prediction. What will come next? Well, eventually, the culture we have now will give up on this way of being judgmental. And what will come next? Well, I think what we see now is that it's changing already. Our culture is really tribal in lots of ways. Identity, political groups, all that kind of stuff.

And what people increasingly expect is righteousness without grace for whoever the opposite tribe to mine is and grace without righteousness for me and my tribe.

[7 : 12] Okay? We want acceptance for ourselves and condemnation for the other. But those things are really separate. But that doesn't work either. Eventually, people will move on from that because it's just another way to shuffle around the same set of options that don't work.

Now, what I want us to see tonight when we're looking at these verses in Matthew 7 is that Christianity offers us a way to think about judgment that you will not find in the same holistic form, the same true-to-life form, the same true-to-God form.

You won't find that in the culture around us. However, the culture tries to shift itself unless our culture were to be really deeply, profoundly impacted by the gospel.

So we're looking at verses 1 to 6. And these are a really puzzling few verses, a really puzzling unit in the Sermon on the Mount. So the Sermon on the Mount is this big, long sermon that Jesus preaches.

And this is a very strange part within it. At least it seems like that when we read it first. Because it begins with Jesus saying, don't judge other people, verse 1.

[8 : 20] But then in verse 6, Jesus himself calls some people pigs and dogs. And which sounds like he's judging them. And in the middle of that, there's this really puzzling story, this parable, about someone who has a whole log of wood stuck in his eye and who can't see that log of wood there.

And he's trying to take a tiny splinter out of someone else's eye. So there's a lot going on in these six verses. And the big challenge in reading them is trying to work out what verses 1 to 5, don't judge people, don't be a hypocrite, you know, with a plank of wood in your eye, what that has to do with verse 6.

Don't cast your, don't give what's holy to the dogs, don't cast your pearls to pigs. And it's such a strange combination that some scholars on the Bible, even some really good ones, have thought that they just, that they can't be connected.

This can't really be one whole idea that Jesus has. So even, so John Calvin, really great commentator on the Bible, thought that when Matthew was writing down Jesus' sermon, these were simply two different things that Jesus was talking about.

And they follow one another in what he writes down, but they're not intended to be read as one whole unit. But one scholar who saw that they are connected, I think he was right, was John Stott, a great preacher, Bible commentator in London.

[9 : 49] And John Stott said that, I think he was right on this, that these verses, one to six, and actually even what comes next as well, are all one movement, one idea, because there's a thread that runs through all of them, and that is relationships.

So verses one to five, if you are a Christian, are about your relationships to other Christians. Verse six, then, if you are a Christian, is about your relationships to some non-Christians.

And what comes next from verse seven is your relationship to God. Okay, so Stott saw that these are all different ways that Jesus is addressing how the gospel shapes the relationships we have to all these different, these different people, and then to God.

And when you read the verses like that, it makes a lot of sense, not just of these verses, but actually of what we see throughout the gospels at large, and throughout the New Testament at large.

Because when Jesus says, don't judge, he's not saying, never use your critical faculties, you know, never form an opinion, never reach a verdict where you have to discern something.

[10 : 57] Imagine you take your car to the garage, you know, you're driving it, something doesn't seem right, and you think it needs looked at, so you take it to the garage, and you ask a mechanic, have a look at it, tell me, is this car safe to drive or not?

And then the mechanic, you know, does what he does with the car, but then he tells you, I'm really sorry, but I'm actually a Christian, so I'm not allowed to make that kind of judgment call.

That's not what Jesus is saying. The word for judge here comes up a lot in the gospels, comes up a lot in Matthew's gospel, and it's something that Jesus says, God the Father does, something Jesus says that he does, and the word means specifically someone who sits in judgment over someone else to discern the difference between good and evil, okay?

And now this is a really important point. There are other places in the gospels where Jesus tells his followers that they should judge. In John 7, he says, do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

In Luke 12, he asks a crowd of people, why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? So what we have here in Matthew 7 is Jesus teaching on judgment done badly, okay?

[12 : 20] If it's possible, if Jesus says judge with right judgment, it's also possible to judge with wrong judgment, and that's what he's addressing here. Judgment done badly between Christians, people judging with wrong judgment, and then after that, Christians lacking good judgment in how they relate to some non-Christians.

So there was a, I already quoted John Stock, pastor in London, there was another pastor in London called Charles Spurgeon, and he had a really excellent insight also on how these verses hold together.

And he said that if you really take the Christian gospel to heart, it will shape you in two ways. It will make you a particular kind of person in two ways. On the one hand, it will stop you from being censorious.

I'll explain what that means in a minute. And on the other hand, he said it will stop you from being a simpleton, okay? And we could update the language. It will stop you from being naive, okay? So it'll stop you from being censorious, and the gospel will stop you from being naive.

So I'm just plagiarizing Spurgeon entirely because those are the two points of the sermon, okay?

The two ways that the gospel shapes you in your relationships, as we think about judgment, stops you from being censorious, point one, and it stops you from being naive, point two.

[13 : 37] So don't be censorious. In our culture nowadays, a lot of people confuse the word censorious with censorship. So if you look up, if you Google censorious and look at the news, you'll find a lot of journalists saying, we live in a censorious culture when they're talking about, you know, books that get banned by libraries or something like that.

But that's not what the word censorious means, okay? But in the way that I'm using it. So someone who is censorious is someone who is severely, harshly critical of other people.

Okay? John stopped, defined it like this. Censoriousness is a compound sin. It's a sin made up of different parts. It's a compound sin composed of several unpleasant ingredients.

It does not mean to assess people critically, but to judge them harshly. The censorious critic is a fault finder who is negative and destructive towards other people and enjoys actively seeking out

their failings.

He puts the worst possible spin on their motives, pours cold water on their schemes, and is ungenerous toward their mistakes. So the thing is, if you're a censorious person, it means that you appoint yourself the judge, the jury, and the executioner for other people.

[15:05] And deep down, you actually enjoy it. You like being the judge, and you take it upon yourself never to be the one who's judged. You think that you belong on the bench, but not in the dock.

And here's where this is exactly, why this is a very pervasive thing in the culture that we live in, why this is an idol that's offered to us every day.

Our culture in Edinburgh today believes in something like righteousness and judgment, but our culture doesn't really believe very strongly in forgiveness or grace.

You know, we talk about karma a lot nowadays, but much less about grace. And that means that in our culture, to be judged by other people is terrifying, it's devastating, because our culture can offer, it can condemn us, but it doesn't really have ways to offer us a path back.

It can't offer us redemption. And that means that we have an incentive to judge other people. And the more we do that, the more we think that we're protecting ourselves from the judgment ever turning on us.

[16:17] And so we tell ourselves that we are righteous, that whatever the big issue is, I am on the right side of history, and other people are the immoral ones, and I rage against them. But really, we just become censorious, which is a way of trying to hide underneath all of that, trying to hide from the judgment ever pointing around to us.

So in real life, if this is you, maybe you are that person in the staff room who always likes to draw attention to other people's failings.

You know, if you talk about a colleague, it begins with, you know, the problem with her is, the issue with him is, and maybe you enjoy the way that you think it makes you look better than them.

In real life, maybe this means that you're the person who lurks on social media waiting for one of the people in the other tribe to say something that you can condemn them for, and those are the comments that you lead with.

And you express your righteous anger, and you enjoy the, all the wee dopamine hits that come with everyone else in your tribe liking it. Or maybe you're the bully in your playground, and you love to point out how rubbish all the other kids are.

[17:33] In the Sermon on the Mount, if that's you, Jesus' counsel to you is, you need to live a different way. Don't be censorious. And he says that in a way that speaks very directly into our culture.

The reason that Jesus gives for why you should not be a censorious person is that you can only pretend to be the judge for so long. You can't do it forever. Eventually, you must be the one who also gets judged.

You can't put it off forever, and when that happens, you will be held to the same merciless standard, the same harshly critical standard, that you've been dishing out to everyone else. It's exactly the same logic as when Jesus said, if you live by the sword, you will die by the sword.

If you live by censoriousness, you will die by censoriousness. If you choose, in a censorious culture, to be a censorious person, eventually, well, that's the only game in town.

You will have to be on the receiving end of it. Eventually, some other judgmental person will shine a light into the dark corners of your life and show you no mercy. Okay? True story that many of you will have read in the newspapers a week or so ago here in Scotland.

[18:50] There was a politician who was doing moral grandstanding against second homeowners. Because we have a housing crisis, there are a lot of people who really struggle to find a place to live. This politician was railing against second homeowners and how immoral this is.

And shame on you if you have a second home. Only for someone else to do some digging on her and it turned out she has a second home in Scotland, she has a third home in Spain where the housing crisis is much worse. If you live by censoriousness, you will die by censoriousness.

But the gospel offers you a different way to live. It offers you the chance to be a different kind of person. If you've really taken it to heart, then the gospel tells you that before God you were morally bankrupt.

You were spiritually empty. And you were guilty before God as a rebel. And you were his enemy but he showed you completely undeserved mercy and he made you, he put you in the category a friend.

And he adopted you, not just a friend, he made you his child. And he welcomed you into that and it was all completely gratuitous. And it was lavish and you didn't deserve any of it.

[20 : 05] Not the tiniest speck. And there's something that just doesn't work if you say, I have received all of that from God, all that lavish forgiveness, all that mercy, and now when I turn around to my fellow human being, none of that flows through.

And I will show other people no mercy. And I'm only hard-hearted. And I don't believe in forgiveness for them. And I actually really like dragging them down. I like seeing them not being redeemed.

There's something that just doesn't, that doesn't work with that. Okay? And we see this, if you read through all of Matthew's gospel, when you get to chapter 18, Jesus tells a parable about this.

About a king who had a servant who owed him a massive debt. You know, up in the millions of pounds. And he asked the king for mercy. And the king said, I free you of the debt.

I'll show you mercy. I forgive you. And the servant was delighted. He goes off. And then there's someone else who owes that servant a tiny sum of money. You know, ten pounds, something like that.

[21 : 12] And he can't repay it. And he says to the servant, I can't repay this. I'm bankrupt. I ask you for mercy. And the servant grabs him by the neck and throttles him and says, no mercy for you.

And he throws him in prison. He's happy to receive forgiveness, but he does not pass on forgiveness. He loves to get mercy, but he does not love to give mercy. And when the king in Jesus' parable hears about this, the king is furious with the servant because although he received forgiveness, he didn't show forgiveness.

And the king then has him thrown in prison and has the other man released. See, that is why censoriousness and the gospel don't fit together.

They're like oil and water. If anything, believing the gospel should make you less censorious and certainly not more. Now, if you're listening to this, maybe you're not a Christian, maybe you're skeptical.

And in our kind of culture, then maybe you're listening to this and thinking, you know, in a silence is violence culture, where we do really believe in righteousness and there's a lot of evil in the world that needs to be called out and challenged.

[22 : 25] Maybe you're listening to this so far and thinking, okay, so the Christian message means that people who believe it become naive to the evil in the world and that's why, you know, they don't call it out like I want to.

Or maybe does Christianity just dull your conscience and make you passive and you just learn to tolerate all the evil in the world? In which case, Christianity seems like a problem.

But that's not what Jesus teaches here. Not at all. In fact, look at what comes next after he says don't be censorious. Look at verses 3 to 5 and the story that Jesus tells.

He asks you to imagine someone who sees a problem in someone else's life. So there's something to be corrected. There's an evil in someone's life, let's say.

And there's a person then who's trying to correct that in someone else. And Jesus compares that problem to a tiny speck. It's a splinter in an eye.

[23 : 25] Okay? And if you have a splinter in your eye, you probably do want it removed. I mean, that's not a good thing. It's not there to be left in the eye. But here's the issue. The person who's trying to take the splinter out happens to have an entire log, a beam of wood.

So not just a little bit of wood, but the word he uses is the word for, you know, a rafter that you would have from the roof of your house. This person who's trying to deal with the problem has that sticking out of his eye.

I mean, it's meant to make you laugh. It's a ridiculous image, but this guy has that sticking out of his eye, and even more ridiculously, he doesn't even see it. He's completely blind to this fact.

And the ridiculous picture is, you know, if you want to take a splinter out of someone's eye, you have to get quite close, and you need to be able to see it clearly. If you, I don't know, I've never had a beam stuck in my eye.

I can't imagine it would be easy to get near someone else's head doing that, but that's what he's doing. He's trying to fix something in someone else's life, all the while assuming that his life also

doesn't need to be fixed in very fundamental ways.

[24 : 31] And Jesus calls it out. There is no silence is violence here, but there's something much better. There is speech that is redemptive. Because Jesus here says that the guy with the beam in his eye is a hypocrite.

He's looking at someone else's life, having forgotten first to look at his own. You know, there's an Old Testament story that teaches the same thing.

And it's the story of King David where he abuses his power as a king to steal another man's wife. And then he abuses his power as king to have that man sent to the front line of a battle where he will certainly die.

And he does. And he does all of this. He has multiple beams in his eye. And then the prophet Nathan comes to David and says, let me tell you a story.

Once there was a rich man and there was a poor man. And the rich man had many sheep and the poor man only had one. And the rich man had to feed a guest. But he didn't take any of his own sheep.

[25 : 38] Even though he had so many, he took the poor man's only sheep and he slaughtered it and he fed it to the guest. And when David's hearing the story at this point, he becomes furious and says, that man deserves to die.

And Nathan says to him, David, you are the man. Right? The beam in his eye that he could not see. You're, this story is about a, is about a speck.

It's about a splinter. It's about a sheep. You are the one who stole another man's wife and who had that man murdered, who murdered that man by arrangement.

And here you are feeling rage about someone who stole a sheep because he was a bit of a cheapskate. So there, David is like the guy who doesn't see that he has a plank in his eye when he's looking at someone with a speck in his eye.

And Jesus' judgment there is, you hypocrite. But here's the thing where Jesus doesn't fit into our way of doing this in our culture. Jesus' judgment is redemptive.

[26 : 42] It's not, you hypocrite, cancelled. Jesus says, first, take the plank out of your own eye. Then you can actually help get the speck out of your brother's eye.

It's not that Christianity doesn't, it's not that Christianity makes you naive to the problems in the world or in other people's lives. And it's not that Christianity means you just tolerate it and that you do nothing.

Instead, it changes how you respond to these problems. It means that now you respond to them with humility. A kind of humility that only the gospel can form in you.

It means you respond with gentleness that only the gospel can form in you. It's not randomly that Jesus chooses for his story an eye, something that is so sensitive and that would feel even a tiny splinter and be irritated by it.

You can only take it out with tremendous care and gentleness. And the gospel shapes you like that. It gives you a new way of judging others that is grounded in humility because the gospel says you sit under the same judgment.

[27 : 54] And that's the real difference between the gospel and censoriousness. If you're censorious, you judge others as though you don't need redemption yourself and as though there is no redemption for the people you judge.

But if you believe the gospel, it's different. If you judge someone else, you also recognize that you stand under the same judgment and that you both need the same redemption.

You know, it's like the difference between, if you imagine someone who just lambasts someone who struggles with alcohol addiction and writes that person off, the difference between that kind of person and someone who comes alongside that person and says, I have the same struggle, let's get you help.

Right? Those are two completely different things. So, that's the first thing. The gospel shapes you and says, don't be censorious. And the second is that the gospel shapes you and says, don't be naive.

See, the other effect of the gospel is that it changes the kind of judgment or discernment you have about people who don't yet believe the gospel. So, here, in verse 6, Jesus pivots from talking about people who do share the faith with you, don't judge your brother, to people who don't.

[29 : 09] So, now, just like with don't judge, we have to read Jesus here in the whole context of the gospels. So, what you see in the gospels more broadly is that Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven as a pearl, as a pearl of great price.

So, there's another parable also in Matthew where he talks about a merchant who travels the whole world looking for valuable pearls. And he finds what he knows instantly is the greatest pearl that there ever could be.

The pearl of great price. And he knew how valuable it was and he knew it was actually more valuable than everything else in his life. So much so that it would be worth giving up everything to get this pearl. So, he sells everything to get the pearl of great price.

So, elsewhere in the gospels, Jesus speaks about how there are some people in this world who are looking for goodness and truth and beauty and they encounter the gospel and then somehow it strikes them down to the ground.

It strikes them so powerfully that they will reorder their entire lives. They'll give up anything to get this, to get this Jesus. It's what they've always been looking for. But here in Matthew 7 when he says don't give what is holy to the dogs, don't cast your pearls to pigs, he's talking about people who encounter the gospel, who are not looking for truth.

[30 : 31] They're more like a stray dog that scavenges in the rubbish. So, Jesus says don't throw what is holy and there he's drawing on the idea of holy bread in the temple. Don't throw that holy food to dogs who will just treat it as though it's any old rubbish in the scrap pile and don't throw your pearls to pigs who get all the waste food that the farmer doesn't want because that pig will know that the pearl isn't that waste food and the pig will just trample the pearl.

Now, that maybe sounds like a really strange thing for Jesus to say after everything that he said in verses 3 to 5 about planks and specks. But here's why I think Jesus says this in verse 6.

In verses 1 to 5, he tells us that we have to go into a censorious world as non-censorious people and we have to do that with a way of living in this world that will be deeply counterintuitive to the people around us.

Some people, when they hear our gospel, when they see what it looks like and how we live, will think they'll be like the merchant who finds the pearl of great price and they'll see our way of life and the reason for that in the message of the gospel and be attracted to it and they will join us.

But not everyone will be like that. Some people will hear our message and they'll hate it. It's not what they're looking for. So, some people will respond like that.

[32 : 10] Now, to be sure what Jesus does not mean here is that we only share the gospel with people who will respond well, like the merchant looking for the pearl of great price. We can't do that in any sense because until you share the gospel with someone, you don't know how they'll respond.

So, that's why Matthew's gospel ends with the great commission. Bring the gospel to everyone. And you just don't know when you do that whether someone will say, finally, this is the pearl of great price or, why have you given me this round, hard, white ball?

I wanted a rotten turnip and I would have just been happy with that. I don't want what you offer. You see, you just don't know in advance and that's why Jesus, at the very end of this gospel tells his followers that you must share the gospel with everyone.

But if you want to understand what Jesus means here in Matthew 7 about not casting your pearls before swine, you actually need to think of what happens in a few chapters time in Matthew 10 because that's the chapter where Jesus takes his disciples and he tells them you are now my apostles and he sends them out to preach to everyone that they come across in the towns and villages around them and he sends them out to give people a deep, remarkable, life-changing window into the kingdom of heaven.

So he tells them as he sends them out, you are now my apostles and he sends them out to give people this deep exposure to the transformation the gospel will bring to the world.

[33 : 50] So he sends them out to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse lepers, to cast out their demons and he sends them out saying, and you won't make a penny from this, you will not ask anyone for anything, you will not exploit anyone financially, you will not make money, in fact you will give lavishly and you will make their lives better and even when you've done all that some people will still reject you and everything you've done for them and the message at its heart they will just say is garbage and when that happens, Jesus tells them in Matthew 10, after you've done all that for them then you shake the dust off your feet and then you bring the message of the kingdom of heaven to other people and that's actually the context where when Jesus is sending them out he

tells them I am sending you out as sheep among wolves so be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves so you see taking us back to Matthew 7 if the gospel has made you or is making you a non-censorious person in hyper-censorious

Edinburgh 2025 that means that the gospel is making you the kind of person who is discerning enough to see the speck in someone's eye but it also makes you someone who is gentle enough trustworthy enough non-pompous enough humble enough honest enough about the plank in your own eye that maybe they'll trust you to get close enough to their eye to help them take the speck out but if you're doing that you're doing it as sheep among wolves because the gospel in a censorious culture will divide people some people will hear it and think finally this is my liberation from censoriousness from this world's harsh judgmentalism but other people will hear the gospel and see it lived out and think I'm going to be you know what I'm going to be more censorious than ever shame on you for bringing this message to me and that's why if you want to live like this you need to be as wise as a serpent and you need to be as innocent as a dove and that is why Jesus follows judge not do not judge with do not cast your pearls before swine amen let me pray our father in heaven we thank you for your son Jesus Christ we thank you for the fathomless wisdom in his teaching we thank you for his perfect judgment of the human heart of the goodness and the evil in this world the goodness that you have made the evil that must be redeemed and we thank you that Jesus has come into our world the true judge who made himself the one who was judged we thank you that when his gospel when his perfect person when his lavish love confronts us that it shows us ourselves in a new light and that it helps us see the the beam in our own eye but also that Jesus is the one who comes to open our eyes to help us see the truth about himself about yourself about ourselves we thank you for his great redeeming love for the way that he is patient with us that he came to us in all humility and gentleness we pray that in small ways day by day you would help us to grow more and more into being like Jesus in all of those ways we pray for your forgiveness for all the ways that we are shaped by the world around us and all the ways that it does not resemble your gospel and we pray that you would help us in this world then to be people who are reworked refashioned by your gospel and because of that who are sent out as sheep among wolves help us to be both wise and innocent in following our saviour's teaching we pray for this in his name amen