###  Warm Springs Church Logo June 25

# More Than A Feeling

**Matthew 7:6 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 then turn and tear you to pieces.**

Is Your Opinion Valued?

Fresh out of high school, one of my great passions was rock music. My favorite bands were ones with sonic guitar playing and great vocalists. I went to the famous Day on the Green concerts and saw the all-time greats perform. The debauchery of these rock stars did not deter my enthusiasm for their music or showmanship. It was the golden era of rock music and talented new bands were springing up left and right. To keep up with the growing market, large music stores like Tower Records and The Wherehouse became meccas for record explorations. I used to go to The Wherehouse and spend an hour or two just looking around for one album. On one of those trips I asked a staff person if he recommended any new groups. His face lit up, he wasn’t any older than me but seemed a lot cooler, and he glowingly described a band that hardly anyone had heard of yet but he said would soon be one of the most popular groups in the world. When he told me their name, I wasn’t very impressed. I was after all a west coast kid and my favorite groups were from the Bay Area. I followed the clerk to where the albums of this new band were stashed and I must say I wasn’t real impressed with the album cover graphic. I thought it was kind of “dorky” but out of respect for the enthusiasm of the guy helping me, I perused the song titles and debated the pros and cons of buying a copy. I wasn’t sure I trusted the opinion of the clerk working with me but, he seemed pretty cool and he already knew what groups I liked so he had a good idea of my tastes. I just stared at the album for several minutes trying to decide if I would follow the clerk’s advice and buy it, long past when the store employee left me to help another customer. Finally though I did it, I gave in to his impassioned recommendation. I am not sure why I followed that guy’s advice. I didn’t know him at all yet I did buy the album he suggested. None of my friends had ever heard of the band when I told them about the album. But within the next three months they certainly had. The album generated one monster hit after another. And what was the name of the group whose album I bought that day so ago? Boston.

Probably like me though, your advice hasn’t always been followed. You have tried to help someone but that person just wouldn’t listen to you. Of course you knew what you were talking about; you were kind of an expert on the issue but you were ignored. There are those, and I encounter this too, who don’t care for you that much, they don’t pay attention to you; don’t have any interest in hanging out with you. Some people might not like you and no matter how hard you try to please them, they steer clear of you. There are those who won’t go out with you on a date, who won’t pick you for their teams, who don’t want to follow in your footsteps. You might know someone who talks badly about you, who finds you boring or makes fun of you. One of the most difficult revelations is the realization that some people just aren’t interested in you, you cannot please them and they don’t accept your opinions.

Are we shocked to discover that Jesus Himself was not popular with everyone? His own family thought he had lost his mind during his work and believed He needed to be pulled out of the public eye. **Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."**Mark 3:20-21 NIV One of the classic examples of being unable to win people over no matter how hard you try is the account in John 5 of the miracle of the healed cripple. Unable to walk for thirty-eight years, the man was healed by Jesus and never bothered to thank him, showed no interest in finding out more about Him or hearing what power He possessed to be able to do such a wonderful thing. He didn’t even try to find out who it was who had made him well. It was Jesus who went after him. **Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.** John 5:14-15 NIV The Jewish leaders who found out about this miracle were not impressed with Jesus’ miracle either. In fact, they argued with Him over the legality of performing miracles on the Sabbath Day.

One of the great moments in the history of mankind was following the mighty works the Lord did in Egypt He then parted the Red Sea. **Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen — the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.** Exodus 14:21-28 NIV

After this mighty miracle, piled onto the other ten miracles in Egypt, we would, if we didn’t already know how the story turned, expect the people God saved from sure slaughter, the Israelites, to have been lifelong devotees of the Lord. Not many days later, the Lord had the Israelites set up camp next to Mt. Sinai. After three days of preparation, God revealed once more His supernatural power. Moses, under the Lord’s direction assembled all the million plus people of Israel at the foot of Mt. Sinai and a spectacle ensued. **Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up…** (Exodus 19:18-21 NIV) And yet, within forty days of all this, the Israelites created an idol to worship rather than God Himself and then engaged in widespread debauchery. If God Himself with all these lovely signs and miracles cannot win the loyalty of most people, why would we expect to be able to do so?

In Luke is the famous account of the ten lepers who begged Jesus desperately to be healed. Never promising to make them well, He sent the ten off to the priest for the legal assessment of their condition. On the way to the priest, all ten were miraculously healed. Nine of the ten kept going and only one returned to thank Jesus for what He had done. **One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.** (Luke 17: 15 NIV) Of course this account is disturbing at several levels, not least of which is our own propensity to be ungrateful and not register our thanks for all the good done us. But at another level it reminds us just how universal the independence of mankind is. Most people have no interest in putting themselves in a camp…they want to go it on their own. They pay little attention to what others are doing other than for its entertainment value. Few really notice God; fewer still take interest in Him. The cry of the masses is “me”. Are we shocked that one of ten come back to God after what He has done for them? Is it stunning that one out of ten are truly grateful for the Lord’s mercy?

Let’s consider this is the natural ratio of the people God has made. One out of ten pay attention to Him. One of ten care about His dealings with mankind. Why should we be shocked when someone doesn’t pay attention to us, if someone doesn’t take our advice, if someone disregards the help we give? Why should we get bent when we aren’t “liked” much, when we don’t have a following noticing us? Imagine a child or even an adult trying to get a kite to fly. The wind is irregular and not helping him at all. You come along and ask him about an app you just got or a quarterback you picked for your fantasy team. He is too busy trying to get his kite up in the air to be much bothered with you. Most people have kites they are trying their best to get to fly and that is what they care about most. One out of ten though will put down their kites to look at you…to really hear you…to be with you. Let us turn to the most profound question before us. Where do we fit into this ratio of one to ten? Are we among the one or the nine? Jesus put it another way. Who is a pig or a dog? Who of us does not value the pearl, care for the sacred? It is a most disturbing image! Are nine out of ten us dogs, pigs…careless about the sacred…not all that interested in the pearl, our Lord Himself?

It is time to flip this entire equation around and acknowledge a secondary principle here. One of ten will love the sacred. One of ten is thankful for the pearl. One of ten will gladly receive the holy. Nine may not but the one will and that is where we must give our full attention. Stop giving your heart to the nine and trying to force them to be the one; rather put your heart and soul into the one. Love the one. Help the one. Support the one. Bless the one. Let the nine go because nine will leave regardless of what you do and you must respect their freedom to reject the holy and not care about the pearl but there is one who will fall in love with Jesus. One will give himself fully to God. There is one who will gladly receive the Gospel and that one will help you change the world…that one will gladly follow Christ to the ends of earth. Pray for miracles among the ten. Share the Gospel with the ten. Give your full power to the reaching of the ten. Only one will come back to you though…that is a great possibility. But then give all you have to that one who returns to you. Support that one’s faith. Encourage that one with your full will. Pour all you have into that one. The next time that one leaves you, it will be to make God’s kingdom come wherever she goes.