

Speaking to the Soul



August 29 - Self awareness

“Why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own?” Matthew 7:3

This comical illustration is taken from the carpenter’s workshop. Jesus used it to press home his teaching about being judgemental. It’s so easy to spot the shortcomings of other people. Jesus wasn’t suggesting that their inadequacies aren’t real, but rather was encouraging us to look at ourselves and recognise that our failings may be much greater than the little failings of others. He wasn’t saying that we should stop identifying the specks in other

people's eyes but that we should start by becoming far more self-aware.

How well do you know yourself? It is very easy for all of us to develop annoying habits and attitudes that are so deeply embedded in us that we don't see them anymore. When someone points out that we are a little short of perfection, we shrug our shoulders and conclude that people just need to take us as they find us. Jesus suggested that this isn't good enough. We need to let his light shine into our lives so that our shortcomings are revealed, and he can set us free from them in the power of the Spirit.

A negatively critical attitude is always damaging. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't reflect honestly and carefully on one another's actions. But when it turns into a mindset that is continually looking for other people's failings then it will poison our relationships in terrible ways. Such an attitude often grows when we feel threatened or unsure of ourselves. We lash out at other people because of our longing to find someone else to blame and in the hope that it will make us feel better about ourselves. Jesus urges us not to do that because if we judge people harshly in that way, then that will be the way that he judges us. We need to be constantly aware of our failings in order to be gentle and gracious when we seek to help other people.

QUESTION

What might be the log in your own eye?

PRAYER

Lord God our Father I confess that I have sinned against you. Forgive me for those times when I have been so quick

to see the failings of others, and been totally unaware of my own shortcomings. Amen