

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

28 September 2025

Watch the Planks

Text: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." *Luke 6: 41-42.*

Jesus' words in *Luke 6* are to the "spiritual." He must have turned his primary attention to the Twelve as he spoke them.

In today's Scripture passage, Jesus touches on one of the primary dangers to those of us who become serious about discipleship.

It is the danger of living by a double standard, or overlooking some of the planks in our own lives.

We need to watch for the planks!

There must have been a smile on Jesus' face as he spoke this parable.

We cannot help but see the humor in a blind man attempting to lead another blind man or in a man trying to get a small speck out of the eye of his friend while a large plank protruded from his own eye.

Let us see what we can learn from this parable about living a life that will withstand the storms of life.

We have difficulty seeing the planks.

Clear perception of life is important in the Christian life.

Anything that will hinder our spiritual vision is a problem.

Jesus describes these impairments to vision as being "specks" or "planks".

The primary difference in the two is their size.

Both of them would cause a great deal of pain to the eye, and both would obviously impair vision.

What is the plank?

Did our Lord have some particular sin in mind?

Campbell Morgan thinks so.

He identifies the plank as being a critical, censorious spirit.

He believes that this is a greater hindrance to spiritual perception than many of the things that would be labeled as being sinful.

This kind of spirit in people makes one want to withdraw from their presence to avoid them.

Why is it difficult to see?

The difficulty is caused by human pride.

While it would seem that anything so obvious would be quickly seen, human pride blinds us to the reality about ourselves.

This is especially true of spiritual pride, or pride of grace.

It is the most offensive of the different forms of pride and the most common among the disciples.

Such pride will blind us to the truth about ourselves.

It will cause us to become so preoccupied with the specks of others that we never realize the sizable problem that has developed in our lives.

Removal of the planks is a painful process.

The sensitivity of the spirit.

Just as a speck or plank might get into the eye, so spiritual specks or planks can get into a person's spirit.

Surely Jesus uses the eye for his illustration because of its special sensitivity.

Even a little speck of dust in the eye can become a painful and blinding problem.
The very nature of the human spirit will make it a painful process to extract a plank from the life.
You do not understand your spiritual make up if you take this process lightly.
The strength of the plank.
Jesus surely chose the plank to call attention to its size and seriousness.
A plank is a much greater threat to the well-being of the eye than a small speck.
Furthermore, its removal will be much more painful.
While the speck would probably lie on the surface and would come away rather easily with proper care, the plank would probably be imbedded in the eye, causing great pain.
Personal holiness does not come cheap.
It comes only to those who are willing to undergo the pain of removing the planks.
There will be the pain of subjecting oneself to the counsel of others, the struggle of removing from one's life the offensive matter.
If one expects to develop godly character in three easy steps, he or she is in for some surprises.
Lives that reflect godly character have been willing to undergo the painful process of removing the planks.
The removal of the planks prepares us to help others.
We do have friends who have specks in their eyes, and they need our ministry.
They need someone to help them extract these bothersome things from their lives.
They will probably never be able to get them out without some help.
Jesus says, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye".
The qualities needed to help others are developed as we go through the painful process of developing personal holiness in our own lives.
Humility is developed.
Dealing with the plank in your life humbles you.
It develops in you a proper perspective on yourself and others.
Interestingly, this is the quality Paul called for when performing such a ministry.
That "spirit of meekness" is the humility that comes as you rid your life of the planks.

Understanding is developed.
If you remove planks from your life, you will know the pain a brother is feeling as you help him get the speck out of his life.
Such understanding gives you the capacity to weep with those who weep.
Faith is developed.
As God enables you to remove the offensive plank from your life, your confidence in his ability to help your brother with his problem will be greatly increased.
You will be able to approach him with a whole new outlook.
You will be able to give greater encouragement as you bear witness to God's "plank-removing" power.
God has a special school for spiritual ophthalmologists.
He teaches them how to remove specks by letting them practice on themselves.
They learn how to deal with the problems of others by dealing first with their own problems.
You will not be qualified to minister to others until you have dealt with your own problems successfully.
The life that will stand the storms is marked by clear spiritual perception.
The inner vision of the soul is unimpaired.
Such perception of vision is gained by the careful, painful removal of planks from your own life.
Where should you begin?
Why not ask God to let you see all the planks that may be a part of your life?
And allow him to assist you in their removal one by one and by that prepare you to assist others in their removal process.
This is all spiritual work

And we will need the assistance of the Holy Spirit to be able to do this in our life and the lives of others.

It is God's work done through us, his people who are continuing the work of Jesus.