Has anyone ever asked you for advice, only to completely ignore it? You carefully considered their situation, gave them what seemed like the best guidance, and yet they turned around and did the exact opposite. From your perspective, their decision made no sense—maybe it even made their situation worse! You tried to help, but they wouldn't listen.

It can be frustrating when this happens, but why do people ignore advice, even when it seems wise? Often, it's because there are aspects of their lives we don't see. We may know their situation, but we don't fully grasp their fears, their struggles, or the silent pressures they carry. Maybe they're trying to avoid conflict with a family member. Maybe they fear disappointing someone they love. Or maybe they are simply afraid of change. From our vantage point, their decision might seem foolish, but from their perspective, it might be the most reasonable choice they can make.

This is why Jesus warns us in today's Gospel about **judging others**. People are far more complex than what we see on the surface. Their struggles, wounds, and motivations are often hidden from us. We may think we understand, but our judgments are shaped by **our own experiences, our own values, our own fears**. In reality, what we often want is for them to do what is best for **us**, not necessarily what is best for **them**. And when they don't, we accuse them of being selfish—when in fact, it might be **our own selfishness** clouding our vision.

Nasruddin and the Royal Falcon

There's a story about **Nasruddin, the wise fool**, that illustrates this point. One day, while walking through the palace, Nasruddin saw a royal falcon sitting in its cage. But Nasruddin had never seen a falcon before. He thought it was just an ordinary pigeon that had been neglected by its keeper.

So, wanting to **"help"** the poor bird, Nasruddin took out his scissors and **trimmed the falcon's talons, clipped its wings, and even reshaped its beak**. After doing so, he proudly said, "Now you look like a decent bird! Your keeper must have been neglecting you."

What Nasruddin didn't realize was that **he wasn't helping the falcon—he was destroying its true nature.** The very things that made the bird special—its sharp talons, its strong wings, its curved beak—were what allowed it to soar. But

because **Nasruddin only knew pigeons**, he assumed that anything different must be **wrong** and needed to be changed.

How often do we do the same? We judge people by our **own standards** and **our own experiences**, rather than seeking to understand who they truly are. We try to "fix" people, thinking we are helping, when in reality, **we may be doing more harm than good**.

This is what Jesus warns against when He says, **"Remove the wooden beam from your own eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye."**

How Do We Remove the Log from Our Own Eye?

Jesus doesn't just tell us to remove the log—He shows us how. Here are three concrete ways we can begin this work of self-examination and transformation:

1. Prayer: Let God Be the Surgeon

If you've ever tried to remove something from your eye, you know how difficult it is. You need a mirror. You need light. And most of all, you need patience. The same is true for our spiritual blindness. We cannot remove the log by ourselves. **We need God's help.**

In prayer, we must ask the Lord to **reveal what is hidden in our hearts**. What fears control us? What wounds are influencing how we treat others? What selfish motives do we not even recognize? When we sit in silence before God, He brings these things into the light. **He is the Divine Physician, and He alone can heal us.**

A good practice is to **pay attention to what distracts us in prayer**. Are we constantly worried about money? Are we preoccupied with how others see us? Are we replaying past arguments in our heads? **Our distractions reveal our hidden fears.** When we notice them, we can bring them to the Lord and ask for His grace to overcome them.

2. Daily Examination of Conscience: Reviewing the Day with God

Another essential practice is the **daily examen**—a brief review of our day in God's presence. Before bed, we can take a few minutes to reflect:

- What choices did I make today?

- What were my motivations?
- Was I acting out of love, or was I seeking control, comfort, or approval?

This simple habit helps us recognize patterns in our behavior. It makes us more aware of **when we are acting out of love** and **when we are acting out of fear or selfishness**. Over time, it opens our eyes to the deeper movements of our hearts.

3. Confession: A Radical Encounter with Mercy

Finally, the most powerful way to remove the log from our eye is the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**.
Confession is not just about listing our sins—it's about letting Christ heal us. It is an encounter with infinite mercy, where we acknowledge our weakness and receive the grace to change.

The more we experience **God's mercy**, the more merciful we become toward others. When we recognize how patient God has been with our faults, we are far less likely to be harsh in judging others. Instead of condemning, we learn to **see others through the eyes of Christ**—with compassion, patience, and love.

Bearing Good Fruit

Jesus tells us, **"Every tree is known by its fruit."** If we want to bear good fruit, we must allow Him to **purify our hearts**. This means constantly bringing our hidden fears and selfish motives into the light, allowing Him to transform us from within.

We won't always get it right. We will still struggle with judgment and pride. But if we commit to prayer, self-examination, and confession, **we will begin to see more clearly**. We will become more compassionate, more forgiving, and more Christ-like in how we treat others.

This is what Jesus calls us to—a heart transformed by His mercy, a heart that sees others with love rather than judgment. And when we allow Him to do this work in us, we will not only see clearly, but we will also be able to **truly help others**, not by condemning, but by leading them with the same mercy that God has shown to us.