

Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 7:1-12 | The Golden Rule

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

Tonight we near the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as we begin Matthew Chapter 7. Remember that Jesus is talking to a crowd on the side of a mountain, teaching them what it means to be Kingdom people, which is a different Kingdom from what the Jewish people expected. Jesus taught that sin (missing the mark of perfection) isn't just the bad actions that we commit, but begins with our heart posture. He showed us how anger is the root of murder, and lust is the root of adultery. Though we may avoid certain actions, we are still subject to judgment when our hearts are in the wrong place. It's even possible to do righteous actions, like giving, praying, or fasting, for the wrong reasons and therefore miss the heart of the Kingdom of Heaven. Kingdom people are meant to show the world that there's another way to live - a life marked by love, mercy, humility, and all things good.

Last week, Jesus taught us that Kingdom people store up treasures in heaven and not on earth. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). He also taught that we don't need to worry about tomorrow, for in the same ways God cares for the birds & the flowers, He cares even more for you!

Jesus continues his radical teaching with something we have heard since we were young - treat others the way you want to be treated. Though many of us agree this is a good way to live, Matthew 7 will help us see the ways in which we don't live up to that standard. We tend to be harsh in our judgment towards others, while being merciful to ourselves. We hold others to a different standard than our own. The reality is that our judgment often says more about us, than it does the person we are judging.

Thankfully God doesn't judge us with the same harshness we judge each other. "We were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:3-5). The more we look to Jesus, the more we become like him. So let's look to him tonight as we study Matthew 7, to wrestle with how we can treat each other not with judgment, but with more love and mercy.

Read: Matthew 7:1-12 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. What topic does Jesus bring up (v. 1-2)? What warning does Jesus give about judgment?
2. What example does Jesus use to reveal people's hypocrisy around their judgments (v. 3-4)?
3. What is the first step in helping our brother with their speck (*their sin*) (v. 5)?
4. What animals does Jesus name in his metaphor - what contrast is Jesus making (v. 6)?
5. What 3 commands does Jesus give his people (v. 7)? What results when doing these (v. 8)?
6. What 2 hypothetical examples does Jesus give (v. 9-10)? What point is he making (v. 11)?
7. What summarizes the Law & the Prophets (v. 12)?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. How would you define judgment? What would be the opposite of judgment? Why does Jesus warn against the way & measure in which we judge (v. 1-2)? Is Jesus saying we are not to judge others? How does the example in verses 3-6 help us understand the point Jesus is making?
2. What do you think Jesus is referring to by his command to ask, seek, and knock (v. 7-11)? Why would he command this when Matthew 6:8 tells us that God already knows what we need before we ask him? How do the examples in verses 7-11 reveal who God is and help us see His relationship with His people? Why can we be confident in asking God?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. What are the specific ways we judge others? Why do we judge others? What reasons do we give for doing this? How do these reasons reveal a small view of our own sin (*the plank in our eye*)? Since God is the ultimate Judge, how should that affect how we interact with others?
2. Write down a specific person in your life that you are often judgmental toward. How would a bigger view of your own sin (*the plank in your eye*) affect that relationship?
3. How does not praying - asking, seeking, knocking - reveal what you really believe about God? Verse 11 tells us that God is a good Father, wanting to give good gifts to His children. Do you believe this? Sometimes a good Father also says no - are you okay with that? Why or why not?
4. What is the Golden Rule (v. 12)? *Traffic laws: there's a difference between doing & NOT doing.* In what ways does Jesus want his followers to live? What could this look like for the Harbor? For you? How do you want to implement this proactive living into your week, even today?