

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: The Golden Rule

Text: Matthew 7:7-12

Introduction: I want us to see where our Lord is bringing us to about personal relationships where Jesus started in Matthew 5:21. Jesus began teaching His disciples about these personal relationships. Hating your brother is akin to murder. Lusting after a woman is akin to adultery. Divorcing your wife for any reason is an adulterous act in remarriage. Matters of what you say should be trustworthy, let your yes be yes and your no be no. Don't be vengeful, love your neighbor as yourself, pray for those who persecute you.

In chapter six the Lord deals with how to pray, not as the hypocrites, how to give, not as the hypocrites. How to fast, how to not be over anxious or worry about things here, but trust in the good Father for His provisions. We are told to seek first his kingdom.

Transition: How do all these teachings lead us to these verses in 7:1-12? It's vital to take vs. 1-6 and flow into the command of vs. 7. The context of vs. 1-6 is not having our own standard to make judgments, but recognizing our own failures, weaknesses and sin, repenting and then being able to help a brother. The question of how to do this is answered in our text in vs. 7-12.

POINT 1 - ASK, SEEK, FIND

What are we to ask for? What are we to seek? What are we to knock on to open us? We are to seek and ask and knock for wisdom from God to be able to clearly see. If we are going to help our brother, then we must seek wisdom from God. This is help us not be hypocritical. James 1:5 “**But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**” We need God's wisdom to know how to remove specks in our brother's eye. God's wisdom is among our greatest need. We cannot be discerning without God's council. A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,
— Proverbs 1:5

We need God's wisdom in leadership in the church. We need God's wisdom in our marriages, families, jobs and what to do in this life. If we want wisdom to help a brother in sin, or recognize false teachings, and false doctrine, we must ask God for that. Being able to see false doctrine is vital to the health of the church and your spiritual life. We don't have specifics for every single possible situation, but we have His word, and by being in His word, we rely on the Spirit of God to discern and direct us. Without being in God's word we aren't able to discern correctly or even make accurate assessments. This is the thrust of this command to “**seek, knock and ask.**”

POINT 2 - THIS ISN'T A BLANK CHECK TO GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT (VS. 7-8)

There have been some interpretations that this is for us to get what we want. God is at our beck and call. He isn't a cosmic bellhop. First, this promise is to believers not unbelievers. There were scribes and Pharisees that were in the teachings of Jesus, but He referred to them as hypocrites. Everyone here refers to believers only. Those who aren't God's children cannot come to Him as their Father. James 4:1-3 “**What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do**

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not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask (amiss) with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.” God provides your needs and even blesses you with “toys” but to say He is your cosmic bellhop to give you all the pleasures you desire is not a Biblical view of God.

We are promised that if we ask, seek and knock that God will give us spiritual wisdom. The usage of the words “*ask, seek and knock*” is a present imperative tense. The idea is that of continuing and constancy. We should “*keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking.*” If you need a better job, finances, or some need in your life, keep on doing these things. If you need help in confronting a brother about his sin, keep on doing these things to get wisdom and direction. I think 1 John 3:22 gives us help with this, “*and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.*” Notice the asking is based upon the keeping. We don’t ask for selfish things amiss. Furthermore, John says in 5:14 “*This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*” As a true follower of Christ, we want to ask things according to His will.

To the wavering man who wants only things for himself, for his own satisfaction, to judge according to his own standards, God says he’s double minded, James 1:7-8 “*For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*”

POINT 3 - THE GOODNESS OF GOD (VS. 9-11)

Jesus stresses that no parent would deceive a child asking for bread or fish by giving him a similar looking but inedible stone or a poisonous snake. Men are evil, but they aren’t as evil as they could be seeing they can give good gifts, even though they are evil. Thus He contrasts the goodness of God. Jesus presupposes the sinfulness of human nature but implicitly acknowledges that does not mean all human beings are as bad as they could be. How much more, then, will the heavenly Father, who is pure goodness, give good gifts to those who ask! Psalms 34:8 “*O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!*”

POINT 4 - THE GOLDEN RULE (VS. 12)

It has been said by scholars the “therefore” is likely referring to the body of the sermon beginning in chapter 5:21, as we noted in the introduction. Jesus has taught in these passages the true direction where the law points, love your neighbor as yourself. So this fulfillment of these personal teaching is the law and the prophets. Jesus didn’t come to destroy the law but to fulfill it.

At the end of the day, Christians are to fulfill the law, to love and treat people the way you wish to be treated. Paul emphasizes this in Galatians 6:10 “*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*” Romans 13:8 “*Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.*”

How we treat others is not determined by how we expect them to treat us or they should treat us. You expect someone to give you a thank you wave when you let them into traffic. But that shouldn’t mean you won’t ever let anyone else into traffic. The heart of this message is you treat others as you want to be treated. Even secular, non-Christians think in some terms like this. Greek philosophers had saying referring to “*not to be*

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bateful or angry as you don't want others to do the same." The problem is man is preoccupied with himself. We are devoted to ourselves rather than others and God. And only children of God can understand and put aside their pride to treat others as you have them treat you.

How do we do this? How do we put aside ourselves, our own selfishness and do this? By asking, seeking and knocking for God's wisdom in our own lives. Whatever situation you are facing today, ask, seek and knock for God's wisdom to help you exhibit the grace of God. We all need to do this.