

“That’s My King: The Authority of the Messiah”

Matthew 7:1-28

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Key Teachings Matthew 7

- Criticism (7:1-6)
- Expect Good Things from God (7:7–11)
- Fulfilling the Law and the Prophets (7:12)
- Responding to Jesus words: Four Warnings (7:13–27)
- The Authority of the Teacher Recognized (7:28–29)

““Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “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, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Matthew 7:1-6 NIV

The infallible standard for the interpretation of the Bible is the Bible itself. And so any question about the true and complete sense of a passage in the Bible (which is a unified hall) can be answered by referring to other passages which speak more plainly.

– Westminster Confession of Faith 1:9

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Matthew 6:14-15 NIV

““If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Matthew 18:15-17 NIV

““Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Matthew 7:6 NIV

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““Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 7:7-9, 11-12 NIV

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Matthew 7:1-12

For the past couple of weeks, we have been looking at the sermon on the Mount from Matthew's gospel. Rob presented Chapter 5 two weeks ago, and last week, Dave let us through chapter 6. Dave highlighted 3 key themes of chapter 6:

- Piety (1-18) the key here was to avoid ostentation or pretentiousness. Our worship is to be of God and not intended to impress or attract attention to ourselves. We are to practice our righteousness before God, not other people. We are to give in secret. We are to pray in secret. This is where Jesus teaches us to pray the Lord's prayer. We're not to draw attention to ourselves when we fast.
- Treasure in Heaven (19-24) this gives us a right attitude toward possessions, and challenges us in who we serve, God or money. That's a particularly piercing challenge in our Western materialistic society.
- Trusting the Father (25-34) here, our Lord tells us to not be anxious about our life. Our father in heaven knows what we need and if ***we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, we have the assurance that our father will take care of us.*** While God's care and provision are assured, it certainly does not mean that the life of discipleship is one long picnic. Each day will certainly have its own troubles. This section provides us assurance that by the grace of God these troubled days can be survived and the saints will persevere.

Today, in chapter 7, Christ teaches several seemingly stand-alone lessons. Some of these tie back to themes that he taught previously in the Sermon on the Mount and each of which are so rich and applicable to our daily lives, we could spend several weeks talking through. Here are some of the key themes SLIDE

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SLIDE Matthew 7:1-6

What do you see here? This section addresses a very down to earth issue of having an unfairly critical attitude to others. This passage also addresses something else that is critical and fascinating... And naïve lack of self-criticism or even self-awareness.

Jesus gives a simple negative instruction in verse 1 “Judge not, that you be not judged.” Followed by an explanatory comment in verse 2, “for in the same way you judge others, you will be judged...”) And then a parable that uses broad humor to show how ludicrous and inappropriate such behavior is, “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:

There is an underlying principle of reciprocity here. Who is the judge here? Is it society? Is it God? If we use the hermeneutical principle of allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, then we can get a better grasp on who the judge is. Let me show you what the WCF says about this **SLIDE**.

Our passage today picks up on and reemphasizes what we learned immediately after the Lord’s prayer in 6:14-15 **SLIDE**. Matthew, in verses 1 & 2, does not specifically tell us who the judge is; however, probably should read these as divine passages; just as God will forgive only the forgiving, so he will judge his people as they judge others.

Now, this passage is frequently quoted, but it is often taken out of context and misapplied. How so? Have you ever encountered someone using this passage against you? Is this passage saying that we should never judge? No, judge not for bids pronouncing another person guilty before God. If we hold to an undue harshness and a judge mental attitude toward others, we can expect to be treated much in the same way by God. How do we know that this passage is not saying that we shall never judge?

Let’s use the same hermeneutical principle of allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. Let’s stay in the book of Matthew, and look at 18:15-17 **SLIDE**

Does this passage tell us that were not to judge? No. Judgment is obviously used here. Jesus does not forbid all evaluation or judgment of others, for ultimately within the family of believers, it takes one who is broken and grieved and

humbled over his own sin before he can help remove the “speck” from his brother’s eye. What Jesus does rule out is pride that views oneself as better than others. So what is the difference here in Matthew 18 versus Matthew 7? We should have a proper desire to correct a brother who sins. In Matthew 18 we see a picture of loving responsible criticism that is done with an unselfish concern for others.

In Matthew 7, we see the danger of criticizing others, ***especially when we lack any degree of self-awareness.*** The hyperbole of a plank in your eye is a total lack of self-awareness. The real danger here is that everyone around you can see the plank in your eye. How do we see that in our own culture today? (Self-awareness versus self-centeredness)

If we are hypercritical of others, yet blind to our own faults and failings, were trying to create a world where we can exempt ourselves from the standards which others are expected to conform to. Here is the piercing question... ***Can a disciple of Jesus Christ live like that?*** This judging is a recipe for the breakdown of relationships. To whom was Jesus speaking? The disciples. The person being criticized is the critics “brother”. The term here is probably used for a fellow disciple. This is another example of the Spirit using Matthew to show his sustained concern for good relationships within the disciple community. We saw that previously in 5:22-26. “You shall not murder... But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment... Go and be reconciled to them.... Settle matters quickly with your adversary. Why do you may the Spirit of God used Matthew to write about the importance of good relationships within the disciple community? How do you think Matthew was treated by the other disciples when he became a follower of Christ?

So, do you see the cultural implications and the cultural applications from the truth of this small and familiar teaching?

Immediately following the clear and simple instructions for the disciples in verses 1-5, Jesus tells the disciples ***SLIDE*** “do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

This imagery of sacred things being given to dogs and precious pearls to pigs is about the inappropriate use of what is special. In fact, Jesus is telling the disciples that there will be times in which they will have to use judgment. In the ancient world, dogs were scavengers. Jews considered them unclean and actually used the term to describe those who were apart from our enemies of Israel's covenant community. Pigs were rejected because they were scavenging animals and were unclean according to Old Testament law. The pearls symbolize the great value of the message of the kingdom of heaven.

As we've just learned in verses 1-5, believers are to be merciful, forgiving, and slow to judge, yet we should always wisely discern the true character of people and not indefinitely continue proclaiming the gospel to those who adamantly reject it when others are waiting to hear the Good News. The disciples were going to experience hostile responses to their mission. So, in summary, while we should not prejudge who may receive the gospel message, neither should one try to force it on those who show no inclination to accept it.

Expect Good Things from God (7:7-11) Slide

While these verses do not link clearly with the sense of 1-6, they do pick up directly from the sense of 6:25-34, (this is the "do not worry passage). The language about our Father in heaven who gives to his children echoing 6:32-33, ... And your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But first seek his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you."

This teaching highlights one of the overriding themes of the whole discourse; the invitation to seek. We see it here just like we did in 6:33 "seek first."

How might these verses be taken out of context or misapplied? Have you ever heard them misapplied?

Let's look at them a little more closely. The antidote to worry and 6:25-34, is an absolute confidence in God's willingness to give his people all day need. In the 6:25-34 passage the focus was explicitly on need rather than desire. Here, too, notice that the son's requests are for what... Basic food, not luxuries.

So, wouldn't it be wise to read this unqualified offer in verses 7-8 against that background of God giving us what we need? The "good things" which God will surely give do not necessarily include everything that his children might like to have. Again, if we look at other places in Scripture, this "carte blanche" approach to petitionary prayer is not supported as a whole. It is God as our Father in heaven who knows what is "good" for his children. We know, as parents ourselves, that what our children want may not be what is best or "good" for them.

But also notice, even with this necessary caution in interpreting verses 7 and 8, there is an openness and willingness from God for us to explore the extent of his generosity while remaining secure in the knowledge that only what is "good" will be given.

There is nothing mechanical or inevitable about God's answers to his peoples request. Even in this gospel there are instances where the door will not be opened to someone who knocks, just as there are prayers which will not be answered such as Jesus own request in Gethsemane. However, we do have a childlike confidence that is the prerogative only of disciples who, as verses 9 to 11 illustrate, have a true relationship with their Father in heaven.

Also, the fact that asking is a prerequisite to receiving may well be part of what is saying was originally intended to convey; it's not only a promise of response, but an encouragement to ask as James 4:2 says, "you do not have because you do not ask."

Fulfilling the Law and the Prophets (7:12) Slide

²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

This far-reaching and memorable "Golden rule" is a summary of the ethics of discipleship and emphasizes what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.