

Matthew

The Gospel of

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

LESSON EIGHT

MATTHEW 7

Day 1



Father, please open my ears, still my heart, quiet my mind to be able to hear your voice through your word today. May your truth fill me with peace and cause me to rest and trust you.

- Read chapter 7.
- In the first part of chapter 7 Jesus tells us how, as his followers, we should interact in a variety of different relationships. Take note of the different relationships Jesus addresses. Verse 13 begins the conclusion of the sermon. Underline recurring words and themes you see in the conclusion.
- What is one truth in today's passage that moves your heart to praise, thanksgiving, confession, action or love for God?

Day 2- Matthew 7:1-6

1. What warning does Jesus give about being judgmental in verses 1-2?

-How do you want others to judge you?

Picture and Ponder: "We need to be as critical of ourselves as we often are of others, and as generous to others as we always are to ourselves."¹



We know from what Jesus has taught so far in his sermon, that we *are* to discern, to assess, and to see distinctions in behavior because he tells us not to be like hypocrites and the godless. Jesus is the Truth and the Light so we know that he is not telling us to compromise truth or call what is sin, good. Exercising discernment is not the same as judging others. When we are judgmental we put ourselves above our fellow humans and on the level with God, as if we are not capable of committing the same acts we are judging. Once again, Jesus is calling us to be like him. He is full of mercy and grace. He is gentle and humble. He is loving and generous.

- ❖ 1 Corinthians 11:31 says, *But if we evaluated and judged ourselves honestly [recognizing our shortcomings and correcting our behavior], we would not be judged.(AMP)* This is not easy and we need the help of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to our own sins that we are blind to. But as uncomfortable and painful as this is, what is our comfort as believers?

- ❖ How does being judgmental obscure the gospel?

2. What does Jesus reveal about human nature in verse 3?

3. What two responsibilities does Jesus charge us with in verse 5?



Jesus is not saying that we should never point out a fellow believer's sin. In Matthew 18 he will instruct us to go directly to a brother or sister who has sinned against us. He is warning against our tendency to criticize and focus on others' faults. He is telling us not to be hypocrites, pointing out other's sins while never confronting our own.

- ❖ In light of Jesus' parable about our human nature in verses 3-4, what should we do if we see a splinter in someone else's eye?

- ❖ Many times the sins that are so glaring to us in others are the very same ones we are not noticing in ourselves. Why is it so easy for us to see someone else's fault but not notice our own?

- ❖ How would you go about removing the log from your eye?



Father forgive me for judging others more harshly than I judge myself, and for noticing others sins while turning a blind eye to my own. Help me Jesus, to see and love others with your gracious mercy and to see and put to death the sin in my life that you died to save me from.

Picture and Ponder: "To use another's failure to condemn and look down on them is a greater sin than theirs!"²

For Discussion: In verses 1-5 Jesus is warning his followers not to be overly harsh, condemning, and hypocritical with each other and now in verse 6 he warns against another extreme of having no discernment at all. Like the *pearl of great price* in Matthew 13, the holy pearl here in verse 6 is the gospel of the kingdom. Why is it unwise to keep offering the gospel to someone who has rejected it with vicious scorn and hardened contempt? How do we know when is the time to do this? What other alternatives do we have for those people?

Scholar's Note: "The "pigs" are not only unclean animals but wild and vicious, capable of savage action against a person. "Dogs" must not be thought of as household pets: in the Scriptures they are normally wild, associated with what is unclean, despised (e.g., 1Sam 17:43; 24:14; 1 Kings 14:11; 21:19; 2 Kings 8:13; Job 30:1; Prov 26:11;

Eccl 9:4; Isa 66:3; Matt 15:27; Philippians 3:2; Rev 22:15). The two animals serve together as a picture of what is vicious, unclean, and abominable (cf. 2 Peter 2:22).

Day 3- Matthew 7:7-12

4. In verse 7 Jesus turns to our relationship with our heavenly Father through prayer again. The promises he makes in verses 7-8 are attached to direct commands. What are the three things he tells us to do?

-What does he promise?

5. In Jesus' analogy in verses 9-11, when a child asks his father for something that is good for them, like bread or fish, what do even sinful fathers do?

-What do even sinful fathers not do?

-What if foolish children asked for a stone or snake to eat, what would even a sinful father do?

-How does this relate to God and his children and prayer?

Picture and Ponder: "It would impose an intolerable burden on frail human wisdom if by his prayer-promises God was pledged to give whatever we ask, when we ask it, and in exactly the terms we ask. How could we bear the burden?"³



Ask and it will be given to you. Yet all of us have probably asked God for things we haven't received—things that to us— were good things. We know God always keeps his promises so what does it mean when we don't get what we ask for? We can't come to the conclusion that our Father in heaven is unable or unwilling, so we have to conclude that what we are asking for must be off. If we are asking God for something that seems good to us and he isn't giving it to us at that moment then we must conclude that it would not be good for us at that time and we have to trust God's fatherly love, goodness and wisdom. His promises always align with his character.

- ❖ Is your first inclination to doubt God's promises or to doubt your own wisdom?

- ❖ We have to look at these prayer-promises in the context of what Jesus has been teaching about the kingdom of heaven and its' character, ethics and priorities that are impossible for us to carry out on our own. These prayer-promises are the means for carrying out what Jesus asks of us in his sermon. If we are seeking God's kingdom first, what will much of our asking, seeking and knocking look like? What in Jesus' sermon do you need to ask God to work into your heart?

- ❖ What are you asking for right now that God is not giving to you so far? What about God's character do you need to keep reminding yourself of?

- ❖ Do you believe that your heavenly Father wants to give you good things? Do you believe that he knows what is good for you?

Picture and Ponder:

"Jesus' disciples will pray ("ask")
with earnest sincerity ("seek")
and active, diligent pursuit of God's way ("knock").

Like a human father, the heavenly Father uses these means to teach his children
courtesy, persistence, and diligence. If the child prevails with a thoughtful father, it is
because the father has molded the child to his way."⁴



Father, conform me to your will and your ways, help me to ask for the good things that promote your Kingdom in my life and in the world.



J.C. Ryle writes about the Golden Rule: "It settles a hundred difficult points...It prevents the necessity of laying down endless little rules for our conduct in specific cases." Jesus simplifies how his followers are to relate to others so that in every situation we can know how to respond. It may be simple but it is not easy; we need the heart of God through the power of the Holy Spirit to live the life of Jesus.

If you carried out Jesus' command to treat others the way you want to be treated, what would change in your relationship with...

your spouse-

your children-

your parents-

your friends-

your enemies or those people who irritate or frustrate you?-

Day 4- Matthew 7:13-20

Jesus ends his sermon making it clear that his words require a response. He gives four warnings, each containing two opposite choices that lead to either life or death.

Two Ways

6. Jesus makes four comparisons in verses 13 and 14. What are they?

Entrance- _____ vs. _____

Way- _____ vs. _____

Destination- _____ vs. _____

Crowd- _____ vs. _____



Jesus clearly lays out our options for us. We can join the crowd and enter the wide gate, carrying with us whatever baggage and belongings we cling to, and travel the easy road, or we can come empty handed, squeezing through the narrow gate that isn't popular and journey the hard road. These are the only options. One way leads to destruction. One way leads to life. The life way is through Jesus.

In John 14, Jesus tells his disciples that he wants them to be with him where he is going and one of the disciples replies that they don't know the way. Jesus tells them,

*I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me (v.6).*

In John 10:9, Jesus says,

I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved (NIV).

On the road that leads to life we enter through faith in Jesus the Gate and we journey by faith with Jesus the Way and at the end of the hard journey we enter eternity with Jesus the Life.

- ❖ There are only two roads, one leading to life and one leading to death. Which road are you on? If you haven't put your faith in Jesus and surrendered your life to follow him, then you are on the road to destruction. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 says, *...I have set before you life and death...Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life...Make the choice now to leave the way of death, turning away from your sin and to Jesus and life.*

- ❖ How have you found the road that leads to life to be hard?

- ❖ The hard road leads to *eternal* life, but how does it also lead to life even now?

Two Trees

7. Jesus warns about false prophets/teachers who present themselves as believers (sheep's clothing), but are really ravenous wolves. How does Jesus say we are to recognize them in verse 16?

Digging Deeper: Throughout both the Old and New Testaments and continuing on right up to our time there have always been false prophets/teachers. Jesus tells us that we can recognize them by their fruit. From the following scriptures, what is one of the main fruits by which we can recognize false prophets/teachers?

Jeremiah 23:16,18, 22

¹⁶ This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says to his people:

*Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you,
filling you with futile hopes.*

They are making up everything they say.

They do not speak for the LORD!

*18 Have any of these prophets been in the LORD's presence
to hear what he is really saying?*

Has even one of them cared enough to listen?

*22 If they had stood before me and listened to me,
they would have spoken my words,
and they would have turned my people
from their evil ways and deeds. (NLT)*

Acts 20:28-30 [Paul says,]²⁸ "So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.²⁹ I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following.(NLT)

- From the following verse in Acts, what should be our standard for knowing what the truth is?

Acts 17:11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (NIV)

For Discussion: What are some things we might hear a false prophet/teacher teaching today that would be in keeping with the wide gate of verse 13?

8. What happens to the tree that does not bear good fruit according to Jesus in verse 19?

Digging Deeper: In verse 19, Jesus says, *every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.* It is vital to remember that bearing fruit is not the way we earn heaven and escape hell. Jesus talks to us more about fruit in John 15. What is bearing fruit a result of?

-What characterizes the branches that are thrown into the fire?

John 15:5-6 I am the vine; you are the branches; whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

Day 5- Matthew 7:21-29

Two Claims

9. Jesus goes from false prophets in verses 15-20 to false followers in verses 21-23. What is Jesus contrasting in verse 21?

Scholar's Note: "On that day" means the Day of the Lord, when all will stand before God in final judgment (Isa 10:20; Joel 1:15; 3:18; Amos 8:9; 9:11; Zeph 1:10, 14; Zech 14:4; Mal 3:17-18; Matt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-52; 24:30, 51; 25:12, 30, 46; 1 En. 45:3). So the picture is that of a defendant standing before the Judge and explaining his or her actions."⁵

10. What are some of the mighty works the false followers will do in Jesus' name according to verse 22?

-What is alarming about this?

-These things seem to be good deeds done in the name of Jesus, but what are they not apparently according to verse 21?

-What is the essence of the problem according to 23a?

Scholar's Note: "...lawlessness" refers to anyone who fails to do the will of the Father, i.e., fails to keep the higher "righteousness" demanded in 5:20."⁶

Digging Deeper: Jesus tells us in John 14 what it means to do God's will and to know Jesus. What is it?

John 14:21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

For Discussion: What would doing things in Jesus' name, but not truly knowing him or obeying him look like today?



Jesus help me to love you so much that my strongest desire is to obey you.

Two Foundations

11. In verses 21-23 Jesus contrasts *saying* and *doing*. What is the contrast Jesus makes in verses 24 and 26?

12. What is the *will of the Father* in verse 21 equal to in verse 24?

Picture and Ponder: "...when we listen to the Sermon on the Mount, we do not simply hear Jesus' words. We hear Jesus...Jesus' words perfectly express his mind, his character and his will."⁷

13. What makes someone wise according to verse 24?



Jesus, forgive me for sometimes hearing your words and letting them go in one ear and out the other. Help me Holy Spirit to really listen and let Jesus' words take hold of my heart and become part of me so that I will live them out for God's glory.

14. What happens to the person who hears Jesus' words but doesn't live them out according to verses 26-27?

-How does this apply to life now?

-How does this apply to the final judgment?



Both of Jesus' closing examples pose the vital question—are you going to obey Jesus' words? One group *hears* Jesus' words, but doesn't obey them. The other group *says* the right things, but doesn't *do* what Jesus says. Both groups of people are part of the believing community—they look good on the outside, taking part in all sorts of Christian talk and listening—but they don't truly follow Jesus.

- ❖ We can deceive ourselves by thinking that hearing Jesus' words, (listening to Bible teaching, reading Christian books, listening to Christian music) and agreeing with them means that we are saved, but that is not what Jesus is teaching us. And we can know all the right things to say, but unless we do them, James tells us our faith is dead (Ja 2:17) Why is only an intellectual enjoyment or agreement with Jesus' words not sufficient for saving faith?

- ❖ We all know people who *claim* Jesus as Lord, but don't *live* as if Jesus is their Lord. These people are in danger of Jesus pronouncing that he never knew them and refusing them entrance into his kingdom. If you claim Jesus as Lord, you need to ask yourself if your life bears proof of that claim. To follow Jesus and have him as Lord of your life does not mean you are perfect, or even that you obey more often than you don't. To call Jesus Lord means that you have experienced his grace and mercy and surrendered your whole self to his authority. Do you love Jesus? Do you desire to know him, follow him, and obey him? Do you struggle against your sin? Are you becoming like him?

15. Why were the crowds astonished at Jesus' teaching according to verse 29?

-Is this an adequate response to Jesus' teaching? Why or why not?



Jesus could speak with authority about the rewards of the kingdom, the counter-cultural priorities of the kingdom, the standards of the kingdom and who would enter the kingdom because he is the King and it is his kingdom. When the Old Testament prophets brought God's word to the people they opened or closed the message with, *thus says the LORD* or *this is what God says...* Jesus on the other hand, six times in his sermon says something along the lines of *truly I say to you* (5:18,6:2,5,16,25,29) and six more times says, *but I say to you* (5:22, 27, 32, 34, 39, 44). Jesus didn't just bring the message, he *was* the message. The demands Jesus makes of his followers in his sermon are impossible apart from him. He is the message because only through union with him can we live the life he lives.

- ❖ Spend some time thinking and praying about what areas in your life have more authority or influence over you than Jesus has. Is it personal opinions or feelings, influential people, politics, traditions, family etc.? Ask God to help you live under Jesus' authority and be influenced by him alone.

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here. How will this truth impact the way you think and act?

¹ Stott, John R. W. The Message of the Sermon on the Mount, The Bible Speaks Today, Inter-Varsity Press, USA, 1978 p.180

² Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Location 6959). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

³ Moyter, Alec, Studies in the Epistle of James, New Mildmay Press, 1968, p. 88

⁴ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

⁵ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 7236-7239). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Mattheusevangelium, Gnilka as quoted in Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 7268-7270). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁷ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 308). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

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