

INTRODUCTION

Anytime that we find ourselves in a situation that is too complex or too costly to make a mistake, we find ourselves looking for an expert to help us. It might be that your car needs a repair, or your plumbing broke (like the time we had a broken pipe in the foundation of our house.) It might be that you are buying a property and need a real estate agent to help or even a lawyer too.

You might wake up with a toothache, and short of handling it yourself, like what Tom Hanks did in the “Castaway” movie, you decide to call your local dentist. Maybe you have a more serious medical issue and so you look for references for a doctor. We also see it on TV; the local TV stations are constantly trying to convince you that “they” are the only news channel that you can trust to keep you safe in the hurricane.

So, we frequently find ourselves in these situations: when the situation is beyond our knowledge, or the cost of a mistake is just too high; we want to consult an expert.

When it comes to how to live our lives, and most especially the eternal destiny of our soul, we are certainly in that situation again. Both are beyond our knowledge and the cost of being wrong is beyond imagination.

Fortunately, we have an expert that we can trust and that is Jesus Christ. We have been studying his teaching in the sermon on the mount for the past two Sundays. We will conclude the sermon on the mount today. As we go through this passage, we will be able to see that Jesus is doing a few things; He is teaching us how to live, but he is also showing that he is the only authority that we can trust and that we must trust and obey him.

Our passage today is Matthew chapter 7. Let’s drive in and see what Jesus is teaching us.

(Slide number 1)

MATTHEW 7:1–6 (ESV)

¹“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye. ⁶“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

I used to think that John 3:16 was the most known verse in the Bible. But I might be wrong. It seems that even non-believers know this verse and delight in pulling it out when needed: ¹“Judge not, that you be not judged.

The common misconception is that Christians can’t say anything about what is right or what is wrong; the idea is that the Bible forbids it. But we know that is not what it is saying. The Bible frequently calls on us to distinguish between the two as we will see a bit later in this passage.

The word judge is the Greek word “Krino.” Don’t krino me. It has a sort of ring to it... Like many words, there are various ways to use it. So, let’s look at another instance of this word in the New Testament. In John chapter 8, there is the story of a time when the Pharisees were trying to get Jesus to do something that was against the writings of the Old Testament and Moses. They knew Jesus well enough to know that he was compassionate, and they would try to use that against him. In this situation, they must have hired someone to commit adultery with a woman, and then they captured her in the act and dragged her before Jesus; the man conveniently escaped. They told Jesus that the law of God said that adulterers were to be stoned to death. What do you say, Jesus?

Jesus commanded their attention by writing in the dirt, and then he rose and calmly said, “he who is without sin, throw the first stone.” All of them exited the scene, like slinking away from a crime scene when the cops show up.

He spoke to the woman and said, “where are your accusers, does no one condemn you?” **Neither do I krino you...** “Neither do I condemn you.” So, the word krino also means to “condemn.” It means to sit in the judgment seat over someone as the judge and condemn them.

And this is what we are not capable of doing. Jesus states this clearly, ³*Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?* ⁴*Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?* ⁵*You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

We are morally incapable of judging another person. We cannot see their heart, their motives, their life situation. The only person capable of judging is Jesus and he will do that in the end. In the meantime, we are not to have an attitude of condemnation toward another person. We are always to treat them in the best way that we can; it does not mean that we trust them and allow them to abuse us, but that we do not take the seat of judgment and condemnation over them. **Do you see the difference?**

Do we want our measure of compassion to be applied to us? ²*For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.*

The issue is one of authority. Are you the authority that can sit in judgment or is Jesus? In essence, and it is timely this week, “Who died

and made you King?” **And so, Jesus is showing our incapacity of being in his position of judgment.**

Notice also that this passage speaks about relationships between believers. Jesus speaks about the “speck in your brother’s eye”; he means fellow believers. The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 5 that we are to “judge” within the church, but God judges those outside the church.

1 Corinthians 5:12–13a (ESV)

¹²For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³God judges those outside.

We are to distinguish good from evil, but not with a judgmental heart. To not be able to judge right and wrong means that we would have to stop thinking; to stop discerning. Discernment is definitely something the Bible wants us to have. In this very passage, Jesus says,

Jesus says in verse 5, You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

Jesus also says that we are to discern when to stop speaking to those who are hostile to the gospel.

⁶“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

He is saying if people are not receptive to the gospel from you, if they are continuing to trample God and you, don’t waste your time on them.

The people of the world want you to believe that you are being a hypocrite for saying what is right or wrong. They want to silence you, because they want to silence God. They don’t believe in “right or wrong” because they have thrown God out of the minds. Don’t let people say that you can’t say what is right or wrong. The only reason they have no right or wrong is

because they are living as if there is no God. Discern, but don't condemn, and let Jesus be the authority.

Let's continue in verse 7.

MATTHEW 7:7-12 (ESV)

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?

¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

¹²“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus is giving some short, pithy teachings. The point is that now that we have God as our Father, we need to know him as a good father. We don't have to cajole him or manipulate him, but he is a good Father, way better than any father we have known.

But God wants us to ask. Our needs are what drive us to him. God sovereignly ordains our troubles and our needs but gives us the means to deal with them by going to him. He wants us to ask. He still cares even if we don't ask, but he wants to reveal himself to us and have a relationship with him in the midst of troubles so that we find him there. So, he wants us to ask. Read Psalm 107. It shows people in need, asking and receiving.

James, the leader of the Jerusalem church and the half-brother of Jesus, says, “You do not have, because you do not ask.” (James 4:2b)

Jesus says, “ask and you will receive.” So, if I ask for a Ferrari, I will get it? You know the answer. Do I have a Ferrari?

Jesus says, “seek and you will find.” When we don’t get what we are asking for, maybe we need to “seek” some more of God’s will. We need to search the scriptures for God’s will.

So, if I ask for what God’s wants, then he will give it to me, right? I like the first option better, but Ok, “ask and seek for God’s will,” then I will receive. Yes, but maybe not right now. Ok. Now it is starting to feel like shopping on Amazon; sometimes the items that come are much smaller than they appeared online.

The point is this is not a formula. It is a relationship, and Jesus is saying that God is good and better than you can imagine. We need to ask, seek and knock. We knock when we enter God’s presence so as not to be rude. You would not just walk into someone’s house and say, “what’s for dinner?” You knock first, and when you press the door open, and you call in, “Hello, is anyone there?” You keep knocking.

Jesus tells an unusual story,

Luke 11:7–10 (ESV)

⁷and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything?’ ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Jesus encourages us to not give up and try to wear God down sometimes.

Jesus is encouraging the disciples to pray because God the Father is good and hears and answers prayers. We can't always see how he is answering or when. We just know that he does, and the problem is usually with our faith. I'm not saying our faith is not strong enough as if the strength of our faith is the issue. I am saying that based on the fact that we don't pray enough, it shows that our faith is not strong enough. We don't ask enough; our faith is too weak because all sorts of ideas about God that are wrong, and Jesus is showing a side of God that they did not know. He is the authority in knowing God.

⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Then Jesus says something that seems out of place.

¹²“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

We that have been Christians for a while recognize that as “the golden rule.” The teaching had been made earlier by Rabbi Hillel, but in negative terms. He stated, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah...”

Jesus says this in positive terms, “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

¹²“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

When we do that for others, we are being like God, because he gives good gifts to those that are evil; like us. RC. Sproul says, “we should be thinking about doing *for* them rather than *to* them.

Jesus says be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect, that is a moral command, to be like God. “That’s impossible!”, you say, of course it is without God helping us; we need to ask, seek, knock and it will be given to us.

Now Jesus will begin to wind down the sermon. He begins to bring some summary statements to bring things to a point. He speaks of two paths, two kinds of trees and two houses. Let’s continue in verse 13.

MATTHEW 7:13–23 (ESV)

¹³“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

²¹“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

²²On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’

²³And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Everyone wants to go to heaven, if they believe in such a place, but Jesus is saying that the way there is not the easy way, or the way that most people think is right.

I think of a scene in the old Poseidon Adventure movie. A cruise ship is capsized by a giant wave and is upside down. A couple of bands of survivors confront each other. One group is heading one way and the other the other way. They argue and you know that one group is heading toward their doom.

The way to heaven is not going to be the popular way, like, “I try to be a good person. If my good outweighs my bad, then I’ll get in.” “I go to church every Sunday and I love God. God will let me in.” Jesus warns about religious teachers. What they say sounds good, but judge them by their fruits. If they are talking about how to get rich don’t listen. If they are not talking about sin, but smoothing things over, don’t listen. But Jesus gets to the real point and we need to listen really closely to this.

²¹*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

²²*“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’*

²³*“And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*

There are few things that really stick out. First of all, it should have been astounding to people that Jesus is saying that he is the “Lord.” Not everyone that says to me, “lord, lord” will enter the Kingdom of heaven. When a Jew spoke the name of God, they substituted the real word YHWH (what we say as “Yahweh”) the name that God gave to Moses in the burning bush, “I am that I am” – they substitute that name with the “Lord.”

Jesus is saying clearly that he is that Lord and that he will be the one that will decide who is “in” and who is “out.”

He says, you must be one of the ones that “does the will of my father in heaven” to get in.

In the book of John in chapter six, Jesus is arguing with the Jewish teachers about who he is, they ask perhaps rhetorically, or sarcastically,

John 6:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

Doing the will of the Father begins with believing in Jesus, in putting our faith in him as the one who died for us. We need to put our faith in him as our forgiver. But real faith in Jesus is also borne out in how we chose to live in relationship to God.

Some people will come boasting of the great things that they did for the kingdom of God. And Jesus will reply, *“I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”*

That shows us that relationship is important to God. Do we have an ongoing relationship with Jesus or was it just a one-time prayer for salvation? **A real Christian will wake up in the morning and their heart will be awakened by God, and they will want to spend time with God and live the day for God.**

“I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.” Shows us something else. He calls them “workers of lawlessness.” The only law they have is their own law. Whatever they think is right is what they do. They are not following Jesus. If you don’t love God’s law, he does not

know you. I am not saying that we are saved by the law, we know that it is impossible, I am condemned by God's law, that is why I put my faith in Jesus' work on the cross for me. But the Bible says that God's law is written on our hearts.

2 Corinthians 3:3 (ESV)

³And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

A Christian, when he is born-again or regenerated by Christ has God's law written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is in modern terms, "flash written" like on a magnetic surface.

We do the Father's will by believing in Jesus and we prove that we believe by following Jesus. (2x)

I'll end the sermon where Jesus does, verse 24,

Matthew 7:24–29 (ESV)

²⁴"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

²⁸And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

It was clear to people that he was claiming to be the only authority that they need to be concerned about regarding their personal salvation.

We need to listen to Jesus carefully, and as his servant, I am saying to you, listen carefully, “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Jesus is saying that we need to listen to his words and do them. Which words? Well, all of them, but immediately the words that he taught them in the sermon on the mount. If we don't follow his words, we are building our house on the sand, and it will collapse on you.

If you ignore his words and just live your life without following Jesus and listening to and doing his words, the house you build with all your stuff is going to collapse on you and crush you!

I remember being in Mexico City, it was after a major earthquake in about 1985. I was talking to a coworker that lived there and he said that he was taking a shower on the 28th floor of the apartment building when the earthquake struck. He had a small window from which he could see the edge of a building next to him. When he looked out, the building was not there. Fortunately, it was because the buildings were swaying and it passed out of sight briefly and then came back into view. But there were many that were killed in the crush of their house collapsing.

(Show slide #2)

As fearful as an earthquake might be, there is a much more fearful event coming and Jesus will be there as the one that we must answer to. The Bible gives assurance to those that have put their faith in Christ,

1 John 5:11–13 (ESV)

¹¹And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

We are saved not by works, but by faith in Christ and if we have done that, the scriptures and God the Spirit give us reassurance that we are saved. I cannot give that to you. You need to get it from God and the Bible.

Jesus says we need to hear his words and do them. We come to Jesus in faith for forgiveness of sins and are saved. And a person that is saved will follow Jesus and seek to know and love his law, the law that is written on his heart and obey it.

We know Jesus as both our savior and our Lord; the Lord that we actually do follow. When we sin, we don't dismiss it or claim ignorance, we confess and seek to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. He is working in us to bring about his good pleasure; we welcome that work.

²⁸And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus is the only authority that we need. And we do follow and obey him and know him.

Amen.

Please pray with me.