



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

Kingdom Principles – Part 7

Matthew 7:12-23

Message #22 of 80 – S1052

Sermon given on July 2, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Kingdom Principles – Part 7

Matthew 7:12-23

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 7**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- We are in the section of the gospel of Matthew referred to as the Sermon on the Mount.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us ears to hear. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **Kingdom Principles – Part 7**
- This morning we start with a verse that describes a concept that is commonly referred to as the Golden Rule.
- **Kingdom Principle #15 – The Golden Rule**
- **Matthew 7:12**
- This is also found in the gospel of Luke.
- If you want people to show you favor, you need to show them favor first.
- If you want them to be generous with you, you need to be generous with them.
- While it is right to think things like this, I want someone to be nice to me so I will be nice, it is a very shallow interpretation of this verse.
- These kingdom principles in the Sermon on the Mount are how we as Christians should live while we wait for Jesus to come back.
- Because He is good, because God is good, these principles are good.
- And because these principles are good, living them out will produce good in the world.
- We shouldn't be living the Golden Rule because of how it will benefit us.
- It is much better to desire that others would live like Jesus so that they would treat me like Jesus would, so, I will live like Jesus and treat them the way Jesus would treat them.
- The next principle makes it clear that living like that is not easy.

- **Kingdom Principle #16 – The right way is not the easy way.**
- **Matthew 7:13-14**
- On the broad way, life is easy.
- There are few limitations or restrictions.
- Feelings can be used to navigate your way and no one's opinion has more merit than your own.
- The broad way makes no demands on thoughts or behaviors and encourages freedom to explore one's own interpretation of reality.
- Unfortunately, there are few warning signs of where that path is leading, and many go blindly to their own destruction.
- And the warnings that do come to them are ignored like many traffic signs in our own culture.
- 'Enter...' is in the imperative – it is a command.
- We have a choice – obey or disobey.
- To disobey is to desire destruction **Deuteronomy 30:19-20a**
I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days...
- Everything Jesus said in this sermon is the 'narrow gate.'
- To live according to these principles is not as easy as it is to live the easy way of the world.
- The narrow way demands faith, discipline, and integrity.
- The broad way does not. It makes few demands.
- Once you enter the narrow gate, the road does not wide or easier.
- In fact, the way remains difficult.
- Nowhere in the Bible is a Christ-follower promised an easy life.
- Well, then why do it.
- First, the alternative is the way to destruction – forever!
- Second, this life is not all there is.
- We have the hope of eternal life.
- The Christian life is never easy, but it is not always hard.
- There are times of refreshing and peace.
- We should relish those times and praise God for them.

- Another way of interpreting ‘difficult is the way’ is ‘the way is narrowed.’
 - As I embrace the truth of God and grow in my knowledge of His Word, my path becomes narrower.
 - At the end of chapter six Jesus said, ‘Do not worry.’
 - Because Jesus said it, it is truth.
 - That truth has narrowed the path I walk on – there is no place for worry on the path we are to walk.
 - We can see that with each truth we learn and accept, our path narrows.
 - It is difficult because there is still a part of me that wants to worry.
 - It is also difficult because the narrow way runs right down the center of the broad way, but in the opposite direction.
 - We can see people walking on the easy road.
 - And while we know it is the way to destruction, there is a part of us that is tempted to jump the fence and walk that way for a while.
 - At the end of the broad road is destruction – at the end of the narrow way is glory forevermore.
 - Jesus then tells us that not only is the narrow path harder, but there are also some who are trying to lead us away from that path.
 - **Kingdom Principle #17 – Watch out for false prophets.**
 - **Matthew 7:15**
 - A false prophet is someone who claims or acts like they are speaking on behalf of God or about the things of God but God didn’t send them.
 - They might come claiming to have a message from God.
 - ‘sheep’s clothing’ – The false prophet looks no different than anyone else in the church.
 - They act like a true believer, they talk like one, and from the outside they are one.
 - False prophets have existed since the very beginning.
 - The Old Testament has numerous examples and Jesus will say near the end of this gospel that as we approach of the time of His return that more will rise up. **Matthew 24:11-12**
- Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**
- The false prophet seeks to lure you away from the narrow way.

- They can't profit off you if you are on the narrow path.
- Only those who are tempted by the worldly things of the broad way benefit the false prophet.
- 'ravenous wolves' – A wolf was a great threat to the flock.
- Shepherds always had to be on guard against wolves.
- They tended to go after the young, the weak, and the vulnerable.
- A wolf doesn't care who it hurts as it seeks to satisfy its carnal desires.
- The false prophet acts like they want people to be happy.
- A true prophet wants people to be holy – happiness is a fruit of holiness.
- Because false prophets/pastors/preachers look like believers, they can be hard to spot prowling around the flock.
- Jesus tells us how to detect them.
- **Matthew 7:16-20**
- 'You will know...' tells us that it is possible to see past their sheep's clothing and recognize the ravenous wolf they really are.
- The test of a false prophet is the fruit that their life and ministry is producing.
- Good fruit glorifies God, blesses others, and grows faith.
- A true prophet seeks nothing but those three things.
- A true prophet trusts God to provide for their needs.
- We are living in a time when false prophets abound and there is a reason for that. **2 Timothy 4:2-4**

Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**

- We are living in a time when people want things to be easy, convenient, and prosperous.
- That's not new but seems to be growing.
- R. Kent Hughes suggested four tests to discern a false prophet/pastor/preacher.

1 - The false prophet avoids preaching on such things as the holiness, righteousness, justice, and wrath of God.

2 - He avoids preaching on the doctrine of the final judgment.

3 - False prophets fail to emphasize the fallenness and depravity of mankind.

4 - False prophets de-emphasize the substitutionary death and atonement of Christ.

- False prophets are often very successful at growing large churches.
- Sadly, many of those churches are filled with people who know some things about God but who do not have a saving relationship with Him through faith in Christ Jesus.
- The false prophet gives the false hope of heaven to people who have not repented of their sins and been washed clean by Christ's blood.
- The fate of those false prophets is terrible.
- Jesus then tells us to make sure we are on the narrow path.
- **Kingdom Principle #18 – All roads do not lead to heaven.**
- **Matthew 7:21-23**
- Entrance into heaven is not based on what we say, but on what we believe about God and what we do because of those beliefs.
- This is a warning about being a false believer.
- False prophets may lead people astray but, ultimately, it is every person's responsibility to know, believe, and live out the truth of God and His Word.
- These false believers know things about God and Jesus.
- They might be orthodox in all their beliefs.
- They are missing just one thing – faith in the atoning work of Christ.
- It is not enough to say you are a Christian – you must put your trust in Christ, or you are not a Christian.
- True Christianity involves words and deeds. **Myron Augsberger**
"The disciple is one who interfaces deed and word, for the deed demonstrates the word and the word interprets the deed."
- 'depart from Me' - is speaking of the final judgment.
- These principles challenge us to examine ourselves.
- That is a good thing. None of us is perfect but we should strive to be better.
- **Kingdom Principle #15 – The Golden Rule**
- Are you treating people the way you want them to treat you?
- Are you treating them the way Jesus would treat them?
- **Kingdom Principle #16 – The right way is not the easy way.**

- When life is hard because you are following Christ, rejoice, you are on the narrow path that leads to the glory of heaven.
- **Kingdom Principle #17 – Watch out for false prophets.**
- Don't blindly believe everything you read or hear – test them.
- **Kingdom Principle #18 – All roads do not lead to heaven.**
- Confirm in your heart that trust Jesus and Him alone and what He did for you to get into heaven.
- Following Christ might be the narrow path, but it is the only good path.
- It leads to good because it leads to God.
- Next time, Jesus will tell us what happens as you apply these principles in your life. Let's pray!