

Matthew 7:12-23 – Kingdom Principles – Part 7

Scriptures:

¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to

you, do also to them, for this is the Law and

the Prophets.

Notes:

Kingdom Principle #15 – The Golden Rule

As this is near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, we understand that it is in context with the rest of the sermon.

Because God is good, everything He does is good. Jesus has been laying out the principles for living in His kingdom. If we live according to these principles, we will be better people – more like Jesus.

‘...whatever you want men to do to you...’ – If we are living according to the kingdom principles, our desire is that others would also live according to the principles of Christ’s kingdom. We know the world gets better as more people are living like Jesus.

While it is right to think, I want someone to be nice to me so I will be nice, it is a very shallow interpretation of this verse. It is much better to desire they would live like Jesus so that they would treat you like Jesus would, so, I will live like Jesus.

This verse does not promise that living this way will guarantee they will treat you like Jesus, but it does imply they might if you do.

What does it mean that ‘this is the Law and the Prophets?’

Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 30:1-20a - 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...

13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide **is** the

G1525 -

G4728 -

G4439 -

gate and broad **is** the way that leads to

G520 – lead away, take away, lead off to punishment.

destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

G684 - ruin

G1525 - enter

Notes:

Kingdom Principle #16 – The right way is not the easy way.

On the broad way, life is easy. There are 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. The choice we have is to obey and enter by the narrow gate or choose to go by the broad way. It is a choice with the direst of consequences if we make the wrong one ([Deut. 30:19](#)).

Scriptures:
John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult is

G2346 –
narrowed,
crowded.

Notes:
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.

the way which leads to life, and there are few

G3641 -

No one likes to be called narrow-minded. We might be accused of that if we agree with Scripture that there is only one way to heaven, through faith in Christ Jesus (John 14:6).

These principles in the Sermon on the Mount are the narrow path. It would be narrow-minded to say there is only one way to apply these principles to all people. Prayer is a good example of that. We know we must pray, but what is the right way to do it.

who find it.

G2147 – discover,
learn.

Once you enter the narrow gate, the road does not widen and become easy. 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 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.

Scriptures:

Matthew 24:11 - Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 -For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you

G4337 – VPAM - be alert for, be on guard for.

G5578 - (pseudoprophētēs)

in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are

G2081 -

ravenous wolves.

G727 -

The false prophet wants people to be happy. A true prophet wants people to be holy – true happiness is a fruit of holiness.

Paul warned us to watch out for false prophets also (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

It was not uncommon in the Old Testament that the true prophets were outnumbered by the false prophets. It shouldn’t surprise us that there are so many today.

Notes:

Kingdom Principle #17 – Watch out for false prophets.

This is warning about something Jesus says will happen. Later, Jesus says it will be a lot of false prophets (Matt. 24:11). False prophets have been in and around the church since it was first founded. A false prophet is someone who claims to speak on behalf of God but wasn’t sent by God. Their words may sound like the things God says, but they are not His words. Wisdom and discernment and humility are required to know when a false prophet is speaking.

The false prophet will encourage you away from the narrow way. They can’t profit off of 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.

‘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.

Without discernment, the sheep (God’s people) will invite them and welcome them.

‘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. There is an element of greed and pride motivating the false prophet.

This suggests that they are not innocent. It is their uncontrolled appetites that are driving them to be false prophets.

In the context of the previous verse, there probably is not a narrow gate in their message. It is likely that there would be nothing in his teachings that are wrong. The problem will be what they leave out of their messages, like the need to repent and God’s displeasure with sin. They also might not be inclined to talk about judgment and the need for righteousness. His message may be very encouraging, but it won’t be convicting. His message comforts and soothes but never warns of judgment. Sinners will not be offended by his message. The message of Christ is offensive to sinners because it confronts them with the danger their soul is in because they have sinned against a holy God and they must give an accounting of their lives before Him.

Scriptures:

16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men

G1921 -

Notes:

'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.

A false prophet usually is seeking personal gain. This could be money, influence, fame, respect, reputation, or some other thing.

gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from

thistles?

Scriptures:

17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit,

G18 -

G4160 -

Notes:

Teachers can be tested by looking at their message and at their lives.

but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

Scriptures:

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor **can** a

Notes:

bad tree bear good fruit.

Scriptures:

James 3:1 - My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

1 Peter 4:11 - If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 18:6 - Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Scriptures:

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit

is cut down and thrown into the fire.

G1581 – do away with.

20 Therefore by their fruits you will know

them.

Notes:

The fate of any false prophet who does not repent will be more severe than ordinary sinners will experience (James 3:1). If you are called to speak on behalf of God, then do it boldly (1 Pet. 4:11). But if you are not called and you speak, you cause one of God's children to stumble into sin (Matt. 18:6).

Notes:

R. Kent Hughes suggest four tests of a teacher/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.

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’

G2962 –
supernatural
master over all,
ruler, master, one
who exercises
authority over.

Notes:

Kingdom Principle #18 – All roads do not lead to heaven.

Obedience is crucial in the life of a believer. Someone who calls themselves a Christian but doesn't know what God's will is, or who chooses to follow their own will, may not actually be a Christian.

shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but

G1525 – begin to
experience.

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 their responsibility to know, believe, and live out the truth of God and His Word.

he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

G4160 -

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.

“The disciple is one who interfaces deed and word, for the deed demonstrates the word and the word interprets the deed.”
(Augsburger, 1982) pages 95-96

True adherence to these principles is impossible apart from the work of the Holy Spirit empowering God's Word to transform us and be the motivation behind our deeds and words.

“Faith without practice is a contradiction in terms, and love without obedience is an impossibility.” Barclay (Augsburger, 1982) page 96

Scriptures:
John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord,

Notes:
There is a tragic sound to this verse. It seems that these people believe that their good works, including miraculous works, were enough to get them into heaven.

have we not prophesied in Your name, cast

We should always view miraculous events with eyes of faith but with a touch of skepticism. Not all supernatural events are from God.

out demons in Your name, and done many

Works, no matter how good they are will not qualify someone for heaven. Even miraculous works are not enough for entrance to heaven. Entrance to heaven is possible one way – through faith in Jesus ([John 14:6](#)).

wonders in Your name?'

G1411 – miracle, supernatural power.

Scriptures:
Matthew 25:41 - Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...

23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never

Notes:
'I never knew you' – These people knew about Jesus and did things in His name, including miraculous things. The problem is that they didn't have a relationship with Jesus. This means they were not saved.

knew you; depart from Me, you who practice

G1097 -

G672 -

G2038 – (present tense) – engage in

'depart from Me' - this seems to be speaking of the final judgment. Jesus never knew them. Jesus describes their fate later in Matthew's gospel (Matt. 25:41).

Lawlessness - the state of being or behaving in open defiance to the law. The choice is do God's will or do your own will (lawlessness).

Everyone should take a serious look deep inside themselves. Can you see these principles in your life? Are they growing? Are you growing to be more like Jesus or more like the world?

lawlessness!

G458 -
lawlessness n. —
the state of being
or behaving in
open defiance to
the law.

[Top of section](#) [Top of chapter](#)