

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 7 (PART 2)

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HOW APPROPRIATE THAT WE SPEND 6 VERSES ON A MATTER THAT REALLY REQUIRES WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING OTHERS (JUDGING, DISCERNMENT, ETC) AND JESUS WILL NOW TEACH US ABOUT ASKING, SEEKING, AND KNOCKING - GOING TO OUR LOVING FATHER FOR THE THINGS WE NEED.

MATTHEW 7:7-11 - ASK, SEEK, KNOCK - BECAUSE YOU HAVE A GOOD FATHER

THE VERB TENSE OF THESE THREE WORDS IS THAT OF CONTINUAL, ONGOING ACTION.

JESUS USES THE RELATIONSHIP OF A CHILD AND PARENT TO ILLUSTRATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A DISCIPLE AND GOD. CHILDREN ARE FAMOUS FOR THEIR INSISTENCE AND SEARCHING FOR THEIR PARENTS WHEN THEY HAVE A NEED.

ASK → SEEK → KNOCK

Q - WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

GOOD FATHERS WANT TO GIVE GOOD THINGS TO THEIR CHILDREN. JESUS CHALLENGES THE FATHERS IN THE CROWD BY ASKING "WHICH MAN AMONG YOU..." AND GIVING SOME EXAMPLES OF A FATHER'S DESIRE TO CARE FOR HIS CHILD AND RESPOND TO THEIR REQUESTS. AND YET HE CALLS THE GOOD FATHERS IN THE CROWD "EVIL" BECAUSE OF THEIR SINS AND FLAWS AND IMPERFECTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN CONTRAST TO THEIR "FATHER IN HEAVEN" (V. 11) WHO NOT ONLY DESIRES TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO HIS CHILDREN, BUT HAS THE RESOURCES TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO HIS CHILDREN.

MATTHEW 6:8 - "SO DO NOT BE LIKE THEM; FOR YOUR FATHER KNOWS WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU ASK HIM.

MATTHEW 6:32-33 - "FOR THE GENTILES EAGERLY SEEK ALL THESE THINGS; FOR YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS THAT YOU NEED ALL THESE THINGS. 33 "BUT SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE ADDED TO YOU.

Q - WHAT ARE "GOOD GIFTS" THAT GOD GIVES?

Q - WHAT DOES THIS *NOT* MEAN?

MATTHEW 7:12 - TREAT PEOPLE THE SAME WAY YOU WANT THEM TO TREAT YOU

THIS IS PERHAPS ONE OF JESUS' MOST FAMOUS SAYINGS. IT HAS BEEN UNOFFICIALLY CODIFIED IN CULTURE AS THE "GOLDEN RULE", MANY TIMES WITHOUT EVEN REFERENCING JESUS AS THE SOURCE FOR THIS RULE. THIS IS A TRANSFORMATIVE COMMAND AND UNLIKE ANYTHING SEEN IN THE WORLD BEFORE. MORE ON THIS IN A MINUTE.

THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS - IF YOU REMEMBER, SO MUCH OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT DEALT WITH JESUS' INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND RAISING THE STANDARD FOR HIS DISCIPLES BY DEALING WITH MATTERS OF THE HEART. THERE WAS A COMPARABLE RABBINICAL TEACHING FROM HILLEL AT THAT TIME.

RABBI HILLEL - "WHAT IS HATEFUL TO YOU, DO NOT DO TO YOUR NEIGHBOR" (B. SABB. 31A).

JESUS IS SAYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT. HE'S NOT JUST SAYING "DON'T DO BAD TO OTHERS". HE IS CALLING US TO BE INTENTIONAL.

JUST NOT DOING EVIL TO YOUR NEIGHBOR IS "NOT NEARLY AS DEMANDING AND CHALLENGING AS THE POSITIVE FORM THAT JESUS GIVES HIS DISCIPLES AS THE KEYNOTE FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS... THAT GENEROUS ATTITUDE OF GOING OUT OF YOUR WAY TO ENCOURAGE THE DEPRESSED, TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED YOU, AND TO HELP THE DISADVANTAGED REQUIRES POSITIVE ACTION, OFTEN SELF-SACRIFICIAL ACTION... IT IS ONE THING TO SAY "I MUST NOT HARM MY FELLOW MAN" IT IS QUITE ANOTHER THING TO SAY "I MUST GO OUT OF MY WAY TO HELP THEM." THE FIRST COULD BE FULFILLED BY INACTION; THE SECOND ONLY BY SELF-SACRIFICIAL LOVE..." MICHAEL GREEN, "THE MESSAGE OF MATTHEW" PAGE 107)

Q - THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS → WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

LEVITICUS 19:9-18

JESUS IS SAYING THAT IF WE FOLLOW THIS COMMAND TO "TREAT OTHERS THE WAY WE WANT TO BE TREATED", WE WILL BE OBEYING ALL OF THE LAW AND PROPHETS. THOUGH THIS IS A COMMONLY KNOWN TEACHING, IT IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE. TOO OFTEN WE TREAT PEOPLE THE WAY THEY HAVE TREATED US. TOO OFTEN WE DETERMINE HOW WE WILL TREAT SOMEONE BASED ON HOW WE FEEL. WE NEED TO CONSIDER HOW WE WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED AND ALLOW THAT TO INFLUENCE HOW WE TREAT OTHERS.

HOW WOULD THIS SHAPE AND CHANGE OUR RELATIONSHIPS?

HOW WOULD THIS AFFECT OUR CHURCHES?

HOW WOULD THIS ALTER OUR NEIGHBORHOODS?

HOW WOULD THIS IMPACT OUR WORLD?