

SOTM - Stop, Start, Start (Matthew 7:1-12)

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. WELCOME TO THE BRIDGE - I'm Jared and here's why we're here.
2. We are 2 SUNDAYS AWAY from moving to 3 services!
 - a. Open seats means open opportunities for discipleship.

1. If you had to guess the most quoted verse twenty-five years ago, what would it be?
2. Most of us would say **John 3:16**—and we'd be right.
3. It reminds us we need a Savior, and that our Savior loves us enough to rescue us.
4. But over time people forget they need saving.
5. Today, the most quoted verse in America is Matthew 7:1: **"Judge not."**
6. Behind that verse is often this belief: *No one has the right to tell me I'm wrong.*
7. But is that really what Jesus meant?
8. Let's hear Him for ourselves.

"Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 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. 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.

Before we begin, let's notice what Jesus is not saying.

1. Jesus is not saying, "Never tell anyone they're wrong."
 - a. Truth still matters.
 - b. Love is not the same as affirming everything.
2. If that's what He meant, the rest of the Sermon on the Mount would collapse.
3. Just a few verses later Jesus tells us to beware of false prophets.
4. Discernment is not optional for Christians.
5. There is a difference between **discernment** and **judgmentalism**.
 - a. Discernment evaluates actions according to God's truth.
6. Judgmentalism condemns people as though we're God.
 - a. Discernment says, "*What you're doing is destructive.*"
7. Judgmentalism says, "*You're beyond grace.*"
8. Jesus isn't forbidding moral evaluation.
9. He's forbidding arrogant condemnation.
10. We are called to properly judge **without becoming judgmental**.
11. A judgmental spirit takes what someone **did** and makes it who they **are**.
12. "They lied"... becomes... "They're a liar."

13. "They failed"... becomes... "They're a failure."
14. The gospel never defines people by their worst moment.
15. It defines them by what Christ can make them.

Jesus IS saying: **Stop Playing God**

1. Jesus says, "Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but ignore the log in your own?"
 2. This may be one of the funniest pictures Jesus ever painted.
 3. Imagine someone walking around with a telephone pole sticking out of their face.
 - a. Not a splinter.
 - b. Not a toothpick.
 - c. A beam.
 4. They're bumping into walls, knocking over furniture... and then they notice a speck of sawdust in someone else's eye.
 5. "Hold still... let me help you."
 6. That's the absurdity Jesus wants us to see.
 7. Self-righteousness blinds us to the biggest problem in the room - ourselves.
 8. The reason Jesus warns us so strongly is because **judgmental people slowly forget they need grace.**
 9. You see, The moment I climb into God's chair...is the moment I stop kneeling at the cross.
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1. This is fascinating because Jesus is speaking against the religious leaders of the day because they looked down on everyone around them... It's called SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS...
 2. Self righteousness is really easy to define...
 3. A self-righteous person always minimizes their own sin while magnifying everybody else's.
 4. We carry a microscope for everyone else's failures...and a defense attorney for our own.
 5. "My anger is understandable."
 - a. "Theirs proves they're immature."
 6. "My gossip is venting."
 - a. "Theirs is toxic."
 7. But the gospel destroys that illusion.
 8. The ground at the foot of the cross is perfectly level.
 9. No one arrives there better than anyone else.
 10. The only people at the cross are sinners desperate for grace.
 - 11.
 12. But here's the deal - back to my original point: **Jesus isn't telling us to ignore sin.**
 13. He doesn't say,
 14. "Ignore the speck."
 15. He says, "First remove the log... then you'll see clearly to help your brother."
 16. He's telling us to examine ourselves before correcting someone else.
 17. Before I ask, "What's wrong with them?"
 18. I first ask, "Lord... what's wrong with me?"
 - 19.

20. Humility doesn't eliminate truth.

21. It makes us trustworthy enough to speak it.
22. Correction given in humility is received far differently than correction delivered from superiority.
23. The goal is never to win an argument. The goal is restoration.
24. The church should be the safest place on earth to tell the truth because it should be filled with people who know how much grace they've received.

1. So if Jesus has exposed our pride, the obvious question becomes:

2. "How do I become this kind of person?"

3. That's exactly where Jesus takes us next.

4. Matthew 7:7–11.

⁷ "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If 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!

So we, **Start Asking God**

1. I think if we're honest - to actually remove the log out of our own eye is far more difficult than we think.
2. How difficult is it to remove my own pride.
3. How are we supposed to manufacture humility.
4. How in the world am I supposed to consistently love difficult people.
5. *I can't change my own heart.*
6. And that's exactly where Jesus wants us.
7. Because immediately after exposing our inability, He teaches us our dependency.
8. Jesus isn't changing subjects.
9. I don't believe this section on prayer is a stand alone sermon - Jesus is doing something brilliant
10. He's answering the obvious question:
- 11. "How do I become the kind of person who lives like this?"**
12. His answer is simple. You don't try harder. You depend deeper.
13. The strongest Christians aren't the most gifted.
14. They aren't the most talented.
15. They aren't even the most disciplined.
16. They're the ones who have learned they cannot live the Christian life apart from the power of the Father.
17. That's why Jesus says, **"Ask... Seek... Knock."**
18. These verbs are all present tense.
19. Jesus isn't describing one emotional prayer. He's describing a way of life.
20. You could translate it: Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking.
21. In other words, Don't stop coming to him and don't stop depending on him.
- 22. Guys, The Christian life isn't sustained by one prayer. It's sustained by a lifetime of prayers.**

23. Every single morning we wake up saying,
 - a. *"Father, I need You again."*
 24. Every difficult conversation...
 - a. *"Father, give me wisdom."*
 25. Every temptation...
 - a. *"Father, give me strength."*
 26. Every opportunity to forgive...
 - a. *"Father, I can't do this without You."*
 27. Maturity is not needing God less.
 28. It's realizing you need Him more than you ever imagined.
 29. Notice the progression Jesus gives.
 - 30. Ask.**
 31. That's bringing your need before the Father.
 32. Pride doesn't ask for help.
 33. Grace does.
 34. Then...
 - 35. Seek.**
 36. Seeking means you don't simply want God's gifts.
 37. *You want God Himself.*
 38. His wisdom. His heart. His will.
 39. Then...
 - 40. Knock.**
 41. Knocking pictures persistence.
 42. It pictures someone who keeps coming because they're convinced a loving Father is on the other side of the door.
 43. So why can we keep asking?
 44. *Because Jesus doesn't point us to a principle. He points us to a **Father**.*
 45. "What father gives his hungry son a stone instead of bread?
 46. Or a snake instead of a fish?"
 47. Even broken parents delight in caring for their children.
 - 48. How much more** does your perfect heavenly Father delight in caring for His?
 49. Those may be the most hope-filled words in this passage.
 - 50. How much more.**
 51. If imperfect fathers know how to give good gifts...
 52. How much more does your heavenly Father?
 53. He is not reluctant.
 54. He is not annoyed.
 55. He never grows weary of His children coming to Him.
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1. And when you've stopped playing God...
 2. And you've learned to depend on God...
 3. Something begins to happen.

4. You begin to **look like your Father.**

5. That's exactly where Jesus takes us in verse 12.

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

So we, **Start Reflecting God**

1. Notice the very first word.

2. **"So..."**

3. Or in some translations,

4. **"Therefore..."**

5. That little word is a **bridge.**

6. Jesus is saying,

7. *"Because of everything I just taught you... this is what your life should look like."*

8. First...

9. You stopped playing God.

10. You took your hands off the Judge's bench.

11. You stopped pretending you knew every motive.

12. You removed the log.

13. Then...

14. You started asking God.

15. You stopped trying harder.

16. You started depending deeper.

17. You learned to ask. To seek. To knock.

18. Now...

19. *You begin reflecting God.*

20. The Christian life was never meant to stop with receiving grace.

21. Grace always flows through us to someone else.

22. Children naturally begin to resemble their father.

a. Sometimes it's their laugh. (AFV?)

b. Sometimes it's their mannerisms.

c. Sometimes it's the phrases they use.

23. In the same way, Jesus says,

24. "You've spent so much time with your heavenly Father that people begin to recognize **His heart** in you."

25. Now notice what Jesus doesn't say.

26. He doesn't say, *"Treat people the way they treat you."*

27. *That's retaliation.*

28. He doesn't say, *"Treat people the way they deserve."*

29. *If God treated us the way we deserved, none of us would have any hope.*

30. Instead He says, *"Treat people the way you wish they would treat you."*

31. That requires initiative. That requires grace.

32. That requires someone willing to make the first move.

33. It's easy to love lovable people.

- a. Jesus calls us to love difficult people.
 - 34. It's easy to forgive after someone apologizes.
 - a. Sometimes Jesus calls us to forgive before they ever do.
 - 35. Why?
 - 36. Because that's exactly how the Father has loved us.
 - 37. Romans says, *"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
 - 38. Jesus didn't wait for us to deserve grace.
 - 39. He moved toward us first.
 - 40. Now He says, *"Go do the same."*
 - 41. Then Jesus closes by saying, *"For this is the Law and the Prophets."*
 - 42. In other words, This has always been God's heart.
 - a. Not merely rule keeping.
 - b. Not external obedience.
 - 43. But a transformed heart that loves God so deeply... that it naturally loves people differently.
 - 44. Now, imagine with me a church that actually lived Matthew 7.
 - 45. *Imagine a church where people were more concerned with bringing their own logs to Jesus than pointing out everyone else's specks.***
 - 46. *Imagine a church where prayer wasn't the last resort... but the first response.***
 - 47. *Imagine a church so overwhelmed by the Father's grace... that giving grace became its natural language.***
 - 48. That's the kind of people Jesus is creating here!
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- 1. So here's the invitation.
 - a. Don't play God.
 - b. Ask God.
 - c. Reflect God.
 - 2. That's the Christian life.
 - a. Grace humbles us before God.
 - b. Grace keeps us dependent on God.
 - c. Grace sends us into the world looking more like our Father.
 - 3. And isn't that exactly what Jesus has done for us?
 - 4. Jesus is the only One who had every right to judge us.
 - 5. Yet instead of condemning us... He came for us.
 - 6. Instead of giving us what we deserved... He gave us what we could never earn.
 - 7. He gave us Grace.
 - 8. He gave us Mercy.
 - 9. He gave us Forgiveness.
 - 10. That's the gospel.
 - 11. If you've never trusted Christ...
 - 12. Today can be the day you stop carrying your sin... and start receiving His grace.
 - 13. Here's what we believe:

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

1. Our prayer team will be around the room today.
2. They would love to pray with you.

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, ^[b] "This is my body, which is ^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you ^[b]
and give you peace."