

Intro:

Hi I'm Matt Emmons. Louie and Joni are out on vacation for the next three weeks and so we are having a group of speakers helping out. We have Mike Mercer from compassion first coming next week on his way up to Washington, we have Shawn McConnel the next week, and then we have our missionaries from Poland joining us the week after. Lots of good talks coming up so stay tuned.

Today I'm going to be speaking from Matthew 7 from a section known as sermon on the mount. Before we dive in let us pray: God I pray as we dive into your word, that you will give me the words to speak and that today's talk bring you glory and honor and praise. Teach us something new today Father as we dive into familiar scriptures and I pray that our hearts will be softened to hear your truth. In Jesus name Amen.

What is sermon on the mount?

The sermon on the mount is really the first teaching recorded by Jesus in the book of Matthew. Right before this, Jesus is tempted in the desert by Satan and resists all temptations stating that he will follow God's will over all else. He then calls his first disciples by saying follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

Jesus sees the crowds approaching him and he goes to a side of a hill and teaches them. Jesus teaches them what it takes to be his followers. He gives them what the characteristics of God are like and how we in turn are to act and behave as his followers. There is a lot in this sermon and I highly encourage you to read the whole sermon together.

Today I am going to read from the around the end of the sermon starting in Matthew 7.

Slides

So how many of you have heard this section before on do not judge? I have heard it said so many times and miss quoted so many times. Let's start at the beginning.

Judge not. What does it mean to judge? I don't know about you but when here judge today I tend to think of people complaining about being criticized. Right? I hear people talk about don't judge me you don't know me. Don't judge me you haven't lived my life. How dare you say that about me. Judge has so many meanings today but lets look at the Greek and lets look at the context of what we see here in the passage. The word judge used here speaks to condemnation, the idea of passing judgement. Judgement as in if you in court and the judge is going to decide your fate. That is the type of judgement being referenced here. So with that in mind lets now read the full sentence.

Judge not, that you not be judged. For with the judgement you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured for you.

I take that first part as do not write people off. Do not condemn them. Do not declare someone as unworthy. Do not declare some as worthless or un-savable. Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. **Jesus did not write anyone off.** Jesus died on the cross for all of us. He has given all of us, no matter how badly you have messed up, no matter how badly you have sinned, a chance at redemption. Do not write people off as we do not know what God is doing in their lives or how God will move to

change people in their lives. **Look at Paul, who used to be Saul** the persecutor of all Christians. If he can be changed and used for God, anyone can.

Does that mean that we can't comment on people's lives? Does that mean we can't speak correction? Of course not! I believe the rest of this passage clarifies how we are to act and work with one another.

For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 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? 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? 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.

I love the metaphor being used here. Just try to picture someone with a foot-long log sticking out of your eye as you try to remove a spec of saw dust out of a friend's eye. There is no way the person with the foot-long log is going to be able to remove the saw dust from the friend's eye. At least, he won't be able to until he deals with his own log. **Jesus is showing us a few things in this section. First off, he is telling us to deal with our own sin issues.** We cannot speak of the redemptive work Jesus does if we do not have Jesus working inside of us. If we haven't dealt with our own issues, it is hard to give advice and hard to guide others to seeing God's truth. I know what it is like to tell "little white lies" or conceal the truth, or without the truth. I know what it is like to serve man and to try and do everything possible to please others and to look good in man's eyes. I know what it is like to have struggled with lust and pornography. As God and the Holy Spirit work on your heart, habits, and life style you can overcome all of those things and more. I'm not claiming to be perfect, but I can speak of how awesome God is and how there is nothing that can't be done in Jesus name.

Alright the second thing is **that it is too easy to point out problems and sins in other people and act like you have it all together.** That's what the hypocrite means in this, an Actor. One who puts on a mask and puts on a show for those around him. **Following Jesus isn't a holiness competition.** It doesn't matter where you have been or what you have done, all are welcome to follow after Jesus. If we see that someone is going through something, we can support them and help them get through their issues. We aren't perfect people, I would be so bold as to say **stop pretending to be perfect people!**

Once again, I don't think this passage means we are to be silent when we see wrong doings being done. I don't think this means we can't give correction or speak the truth in love in people's lives. I think what is being said is to make correction in a very caring manner and delicate manner. Think about it, if you are trying to assist someone in removing a small sliver of wood out of their eye. You are going to need to be right up in their face, have a steady hand, and hopefully some good vision to see the sliver and pull it out with some tweezers. If I am messing up, I want to know. I want those who are close to me and know me and my character to speak the truth where I am missing the mark. I want that correction that is going to guide me to repentance and guide me to becoming a better representation of who Jesus is which in turn, makes me a better person. But we shouldn't be giving correction in the wrong spirit either. We want to be giving correction in a loving and caring manner. We want to be giving correction in a way that is truly going to build the person up and guide them onto the next challenge of life. We speak correction because we truly want the best for the person on the receiving end. Are we tracking on that whole section? Awesome okay onto the next verse.

"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.

This verse on do not give dogs what is holy and do not throw your pearls before pigs can feel out of place from all the passage around it but I think Jesus is giving us a great metaphor specifically on correction and support. Have you ever tried to give advice to someone and they completely just blow you off or even just go and do the opposite of what you just said? Have you ever tried to help an injured animal or maybe an animal who is in panic and in trying to free them they ended up attacking you? I think the same thing applies here. We can try to give loving correction to someone in need and they may not be ready to repent and take it in. We can try to help those in need and they may not want anything to do with you and instead act defensively and attack back. Who do you think you are? Don't tell me how to live my life. Even though the advice or correction you are giving maybe great for their soul or good in the long run, if people aren't ready to receive it and make a change, it is going to fall on deaf ears or potentially cause a violent defensive reaction.

With that in mind, how do we work on fixing ourselves? If someone who you trust and care dearly about talks to you about an issue, what do you do. Let's look at the next section:

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

God and the holy spirit is the one who does the correction. We need to be praying and asking for wisdom, asking for forgiveness, asking for strength to make it through the day. Prayer is a powerful thing! We get to communicate with the creator of the universe who can do all things, and we know that he will give good gifts. God always has times for us and is always listening. God also uses people to communicate truth and love. Let the people of this earth guide us to correction, where we then check in with our heavenly father who works on our hearts to be more correctly aligned with him. This is the action part! We have to ask, we have to seek, we have to knock. God will be faithful, and he won't let you down.

Everything we have talked about today can be summed up I believe in this one verse.

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

Look at how this whole section now comes together. We are to not write people off, we need to work on our own sin issues before handing out correction, we are to be loving and kind in giving correction as we truly want what's best for the person on the other side of the correction being given. Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them. When working on our stuff, seek God in prayer and let the Holy spirit guide you.

That's tough to do. Following Jesus is hard. We are being called to live a life that is so different from the world around us that people will know that we have been with Jesus just by how we act and treat others. This last section of scripture I believe is the challenge.

"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. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

We really need to be careful of the wide gate. Its so easy that sometimes we don't even realize that we are on the path. Doing what is culturally acceptable and pleasing man is easy. Doing those things may get you advancement on this earth, but it doesn't lead to life. Writing people off and never talking to

them again is easy, but how can Jesus use you in that relationship to reach that person? How can that relationship be restored? Putting people down and pointing out faults is easy, but how can we come along side and guide a person to repentance and restoration?

Let that be your challenge this week. Am I going to just go with the flow of this world? Or am I going to choose the narrow gate? Who do you need to ask forgiveness of? What relationships need to be repaired? What sin issues do we need to be asking God to heal us of and work on?

Let's pray. God help us to remember we are all the same page here. We have all sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. We all need forgiveness for our sins. You sent your son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so we didn't have to and we now can live eternally with the father. We didn't earn it or deserve it, its because of your love. Let us walk out in love and care for those around us as our goal is for people to know the love that Jesus has shared with us, so they too can be transformed and made new. In Jesus Name, Amen.