

Sermon 57: Living by the Golden Rule: Matthew 7:12

Text: Matthew 7:1-12 "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets..."

Summary: Because we are created in God's image, we have a basic natural awareness of God's law written in our hearts, and we are responsible to live consistently with that principle.

Introduction:

- What is the golden rule?
- Why is it applicable?
- How should we apply this teaching?

Part 1: Five Important observations:

- **Observation 1: The "golden rule" is not disconnected from His teaching on righteousness:** "Therefore..."
 - **Godly people recognize they lack it: Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..."
 - **They long for it: Matthew 5:6** "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled..."
 - **Even the religious teachers fell short of the standard: Matthew 5:20** "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven..."
 - **The prevailing culture fell short: Matthew 5:21-22** "You have heard it said...but I say unto you..."

- **God is the standard: Matthew 5:48** "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect..."
- **Observation 2: It continues His teaching on edifying confrontations:** "Therefore..."
 - **Personal honesty: Matthew 7:5** "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye..."
 - **Godly wisdom:** "Ask...seek...knock..."
 - **Considering others: Matthew 7:12** "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them..."
- **Observation 3: It reminds us that people have an internal sense of morality:** "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you..."
 - **Everyone has expectations:**
 - **There is something universal about people's expectations:**
 - **Romans 1:18-20** "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse..."
 - **Romans 2:14-15** "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another..."
- **Observation 4: It reminds us that God's laws are personal and practical not arbitrary and theoretical:** "Do ye even so to them..."
 - **Two thoughts:**
 - **Action:** "Do..."
 - **Directed:** "To them..."
 - **This principle applied:**
 - **Romans 2:11-13** "There is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified..."
 - **James 1:22** "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves..."

- **Observation 5: God's law can be summarized very simply:** "This is the law and the prophets..."
 - **Scripture consistently simplifies God's expectation for people:**
 - **Love the LORD: Deuteronomy 6:4-5** "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might..."
 - **Love your neighbor as yourself: Leviticus 19:18** "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD..."
 - **Love the Lord and your neighbor as yourself: Matthew 22:37-40** "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets..."
 - **Follow Christ's example as a perfect man who kept the law of loving God and your neighbor as yourself: 1 John 2:5-7** "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning..."
 - **The law proclaimed the standard:**
 - **The prophets warned the people that they fell short of that standard.**
 - **The prophets pointed people to Christ as their only hope.**

Part 2: The main truths found in the passage:

- **Truth 1: Our righteousness can never meet God's perfect standard.**
- **Truth 2: His standard is simple: We must love Him supremely and others as ourselves.**
- **Truth 3: While people may not realize what they are saying, their conscience continually proclaims that they are created in His image and guilty before Him.**
- **Truth 4: We must develop the discipline of putting ourselves in the place of others before we act.**
- **Truth 5: We need to live simple, practical lives.**

Part 3: Four areas of practical application:

- **Apologetics:**
 - **Presupposition 1:** Everyone knows that we live in a world with moral standards.
 - **Presupposition 2:** An inability to see is really an unwillingness to see.
 - **Presupposition 3:** This sense of right and wrong has a Source which functions as the Standard.
 - **Presupposition 4:** Our job is not to argue people into faith, but rather to ask them questions that prick their conscience, poke holes in their flawed worldview, and open the door to Biblical answers as the Holy Spirit works in their hearts.
- **Evangelism:**
 - **Conscience:** Assume that everyone has a conscience, even if it has become twisted or desensitized.
 - **Law:** Call people to examine God's standard and how far short they fall from that standard.
 - **Gospel:** Point repentant sinners to the good news that Christ has done it all.
- **Disputes:**
 - Look within.
 - Address your issues first.
 - Turn to God for wisdom.
 - Choose your battles wisely.
 - Give the grace you would want others to give you.
 - Work toward productive God honoring solutions and resolutions.
- **Preaching and teaching:**
 - Hold fast to the right standard.
 - Understand human nature.
 - Have a high view of scripture.
 - Humbly trust in the Spirit's power.
 - Be simple.
 - Be practical.
 - Be gracious.