

11-16-2025, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Sermon on the Mount, pt-14

Purpose: Provoke people to apply the Golden Rule to everyday life and after salvation, stay on the narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Truth for Today: If we apply the Golden Rule to everyday life and stay on the narrow path, we'll have a better life now and spend eternity in heaven.

Text: Matthew 7: 12-14

Topic: Golden Rule, Salvation, Lifestyle, Heaven, Hell

Series Title: 100% Jesus...pure, undiluted truth.

Series Purpose: Provoke people to embrace the spiritual reality that true, lasting happiness is found by following Jesus Christ and obeying His words.

The Sermon on the Mount, pt-14

I. Introduction

- A. Review Series: '100% Jesus, Pure and Undiluted Truth', Pt-14 of the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. ch. 5-7. Today we'll talk about 'The Golden Rule' and narrow and wide gates; one path leads us to heaven, and one leads us to hell. Today we're going to talk about (1) the Golden Rule, (3) The gateway to life and the highway to hell.
- B. Truth for Today: If we apply the Golden Rule to everyday life and stay on the narrow path, we'll have a better life now and spend eternity in heaven.

II. The Golden Rule

- A. [Matthew 7:12 (ESV)] "So **whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them**, for this is the **Law and the Prophets**." e.g. let in traffic on Richmond road.
 - 1. This is 1/3 summary statements of the entire OT. In Mt. 22 Jesus said the most important commandments are to love the Lord and love your neighbor. ⁴⁰ The entire **law** and all the demands of the **prophets** are based on these two commandments. We simplify the Christian life by living by these 3 commands.
 - 2. This verse is commonly referred to as "the Golden Rule." The principle is that what we want **others to do** for us should be what we do to them.¹ This is the basis of how we treat people. E.g., Jesus parable about the man forgiven millions and wouldn't forgive a man who owed him a few thousand.
 - 3. The ESV starts the sentence with so; the NKJV with therefore implying the Golden Rule summarizes the Sermon on the Mount, e.g., judging others, forgiving those who wrong us, giving to those in need, loving enemies who treat us wrong, keeping our word, not hating or verbally abusing others, attacking people in anger, being merciful, comforting those who are mourning, being a peacemaker.
 - 4. The golden rule is found in some form or other in many religions, mostly in the negative: "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you." E.g. car Richmond. The Jewish rabbi Hillel was asked to summarize the Law of Moses and He said, "What you hate, do not do to anyone" (Tob. 4:15)⁴. Jesus, however, made the negative into a positive command, "way you want others to treat you..." Christians shouldn't be selfish but love and care for others. If we live by the Golden Rule, we're following all the Bible teaches about treating people.

III. The gate we enter and the road we choose

- A. This is the 1st of 4 concluding warnings.² There are no new commandments but a challenge to obey what Jesus said or suffer the consequences of disobedience.³
- B. [Vs. 13–14] Commentator translation: The gate you go through on the way to hell is wide, and the road you take there is easy. There are many people who take that way. But the gate that leads to abundant life and heaven is narrow, and the way there is full of difficulties. Few people find that way. You should go through that gate to find life.²] Contrast *wide* and *narrow*, *few* and *many*, *easy* and *hard*.²
 - 1. Bottom line: There are only 2 categories of people in the world,³ (1) Those who hear God's Word, obey it, and are saved; (2) Those who hear God's Word, reject it, and choose to follow their own desires. Both will stand before God on Judgment Day. 1 will go to heaven and 1 to hell.
 - 2. *Gates*: (1) Jesus is the gateway to life: [John 10:9–10 (NLT)] I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be **saved**] Saved from the judgment of sin; a spiritual transformation resulting from believing in Jesus, turning from sin and following Him.) [Vs 10...My purpose is to give them a **rich and satisfying life**.] Jesus offers a better life on earth and eternity in heaven to those who believe and follow Him. (2) The wide gate is the world's way; we do what we want, ignore God's Word and suffer the consequences.
 - 3. *Roads/ Paths*, i.e. the way we live: (1) Living on the narrow path means following Jesus and trying to obey His words. It's hard changing who we are and what we do, especially when others persecute us. Few people choose it. (2) Living on the wide path is following the ways of the world and doing what I want to do. Jesus is ignored or rejected. It's easier to do what we want and follow the world and most people do. Sadly, they're unwilling to follow Jesus.
- C. Is following Jesus worth it? (1) Heaven, [Rev. 21:3–4 (NLT)]...God's home is now among his people...⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain..." 1 Cor. 2:9 (NLT) "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." (2) Hell, Jesus spoke of a rich man and Lazarus, [Luke 16:22–24 (NLT)] ... The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he...shouted... Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.'] Is entering the narrow gate and walking on the narrow path worth it?

IV. Conclusion/ Response: Where RU in your spiritual life? Are you on the path that leads to life, or the wide path that ends in destruction?

- A. Prayer, Christian: Are you trying to follow Jesus on the narrow path each day or do you often wander on the wide path? You're having a hard time right now?
- B. Not a Christian: Would you like to enter the gate for salvation now? You can. God's love and desire for relationship now and heaven later, Problem, Solution, Decision.

V. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 34). Victor Books.
2. Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). [A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew](#) (p. 200). United Bible Societies.
3. Blomberg, C. (1992). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 22, p. 129). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
4. Morris, L. (1992). [The Gospel according to Matthew](#) (p. 169). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

VI. Supplemental Material

- A. This verse is commonly referred to as “the Golden Rule.” The principle is that what people ordinarily want **others** to **do** for them should be what they do to others. This principle summarizes the essential teachings of **the Law and the Prophets**. But such a principle cannot be consistently practiced by a natural person. Only a righteous person is able to practice this rule and thereby demonstrate the spiritual change that has come about in his life. An individual who is able to live this kind of life obviously possesses the righteousness Jesus demanded¹
- B. The Jewish Rabbi Hillel gave the “Golden Rule” in its negative form: “Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you; that is the entire Law, and all else is interpretation.”²
- C. But from a Christian perspective even negative commands imply positive action. Thus, e.g., in the first antithesis (5:21–26) even if we succeed in not murdering and in not hating or verbally abusing others, we still have not completely obeyed until we earnestly seek others’ well-being.³
 1. The golden rule is found in some form or other in a variety of religions, mostly in the negative: “Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you.”⁴² Jesus, however, enunciates the rule in a positive form, and he appears to have

⁴² For example, “What you hate, do not do to any one” (Tob. 4:15). The great Hillel, when invited to teach a certain heathen the whole Torah while he stood on one leg, replied: “What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof” (*Shab.* 31a). Many examples may be cited from Judaism, and indeed some are to be found in most religions.

been the first to do so;⁴³ his followers are to be active in doing good to others.⁴⁴ It is a most important rule for disciples. *Therefore* probably refers to the whole of the preceding sermon, not simply to the immediately foregoing.⁴⁵ In the light of the whole way of life that Jesus is inculcating this is the rule that his people must obey⁴

- D. *You* is emphatic; others may not follow this rule, but there is no escaping it for disciples.⁴⁷ Jesus rounds this off by saying that to act like this *is the law and the prophets*. This is the customary expression for the whole Old Testament. To say that this rule is the law and the prophets means that the rule sums up Old Testament teaching as a whole. Elsewhere Jesus says that the law and the prophets “hang” on the two commandments to love God and one’s neighbor (22:40), which is another way of saying the same thing. Both ways of putting it totally exclude selfishness and stress a proper attitude of love and care for others. The person who consistently lives according to the golden rule is keeping all the regulations in Scripture directing one’s conduct toward other people⁴
- E. Matthew 18:21–35 (NLT) Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”²² “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!”²³ “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him.²⁴ In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.²⁵ He couldn’t pay, so his master

⁴³ Davies and Allison think that “There is much room for doubt about this.” But although they cite the rule in many forms, from a variety of sources, they do not cite any example of the positive form prior to Jesus.

⁴⁴ It is often urged that it matters little whether the golden rule be cited in its positive or negative forms, but this is not so. If we did nothing at all, we would satisfy the negative form! In the great judgment scene in chapter 25 those who are condemned might well claim that they had fulfilled the golden rule in its negative form. Their condemnation lay in the fact that they had failed to do good, not in any evil action that they had carried through. Cf. Bruce: “The negative confines us to the region of *justice*; the positive takes us into the region of *generosity* or *grace*, and so embraces both law *and* prophets.”

⁴⁵ Davies and Allison remark that verse 12 brings “to a climax the entire central core of the sermon on the mount, 5.17–7.11.”

⁴⁷ Ryle speaks of the value of this rule as a daily guide: “It settles a hundred difficult points, which in a world like this are continually arising between man and man; it prevents the necessity of laying down endless little rules for our conduct in specific cases, it sweeps the whole debateable ground with one mighty principle.” So also Barclay, “It will be a principle which will dominate his life at home, in the factory, in the bus, in the office, in the street, in the train, at his games, everywhere” (p. 277).

ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. ²⁶ “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’” ²⁷ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. ²⁸ “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. ²⁹ “His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. ³⁰ But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. ³¹ “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³² Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’” ³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. ³⁵ “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

- F. In verse 14 life certainly refers to eternal life, and by analogy *destruction* must be given the meaning “eternal destruction” or “eternal death,” which would be equivalent to “hell”²
- G. Our motivation should be God’s generosity to us, treating others in the manner we would like ourselves to be treated is the least we can do,³ e.g., forgive, 2nd chance
- H. “Wide” versus “narrow” may refer not only to the majority versus the minority but also to relative levels of difficulty or ease. “Narrow” in v. 14 comes from the verb *thlibō*, meaning *to experience trouble or difficulty*, while “broad” in v. 13 can have overtones of *prosperous*.³
- I. *Life* often refers to life in the physical sense, this earthly, natural life. But in this context it clearly refers to the fuller and more satisfying life, the life that Christ alone brings about, eternal life.⁴
- J. In light of the whole sermon, it was obvious Jesus was comparing the wide gate and the broad road to the outward righteousness of the Pharisees. If those listening to Jesus followed the Pharisees’ teachings, their path would lead **to destruction** (*apōleian*, “ruin”). **The narrow gate** and road referred to Jesus’ teaching, which emphasized not external requirements but internal transformation.¹
- K. AC/DC song Highway to Hell
 - 1. [Verse 1]
 - 2. Livin' easy, lovin' free
 - 3. Season ticket on a one-way ride
 - 4. Askin' nothin', leave me be
 - 5. Takin' everything in my stride
 - 6. Don't need reason, don't need rhyme
 - 7. Ain't nothin' I'd rather do
 - 8. Goin' down, party time
 - 9. My friends are gonna be there too, yeah

- 10.
11. [Chorus]
12. I'm on the highway to Hell
13. On the highway to Hell
14. Highway to Hell
15. I'm on the highway to Hell
- 16.
17. [Verse 2]
18. No stop signs, speed limit
19. Nobody's gonna slow me down
20. Like a wheel, gonna spin it
21. Nobody's gonna mess me around
22. Hey, Satan, payin' my dues
23. Playin' in a rockin' band
24. Hey, mama, look at me
25. I'm on the way to the promised land, wow