

The Golden Rule & The Narrow Way

Lakewood Family Church | Pastor Jonathan Vorce | July 26, 2026

Matthew 7:12–27

Introduction

Final Message in the Series: The Teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount

- We have walked with Jesus through the entire Sermon on the Mount.
- He has shown us the character of kingdom citizens (**5:3–16**) and the radical righteousness the kingdom requires (**5:17–7:11**).
- Now, in these final verses, Jesus gives us two things:
 1. The single greatest summary of how kingdom people treat others.
 2. Clear, urgent exhortations about how we actually enter and continue on the path that leads to life.
- This is not theory. This is the doorway into the kingdom.

I. The Golden Rule: How Kingdom People Should Treat Each Other (**Matthew 7:12**)

Jesus says:

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

This is not a suggestion. It is the summary of everything the Law and the Prophets taught about human relationships.

A. Many religions teach a negative version of the Golden Rule:

- **Hinduism:** Do not do to others what would cause you pain.
- **Buddhism:** Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.
- **Judaism** (Talmud): What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man.

- *Islam*: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.
 - *Baha'i*: Wish not for others what you do not wish for yourself.
1. These are good as far as they go. They tell us what not to do.
 2. **Jesus goes further. He turns the command positive:** **Actively do for others what you wish they would do for you.**
 3. **The Golden Rule** says, **"Bless people. Serve people. Treat them the way you long to be treated."**

B. Why This Matters

1. This single verse gathers up everything Jesus has already taught about anger, lust, divorce, retaliation, loving enemies, giving, praying, and judging.
2. If we live the Golden Rule, we will fulfill the heart of the Law toward our fellow man.

II. Two Gates, Two Roads (**Matthew 7:13–14**)

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

A. Jesus immediately moves from how we treat people to the most important decision we will ever make:

1. The Wide Gate

- Easy entrance
- No self-denial required
- Room for pride, unforgiveness, greed, and self-righteousness
- Popular—most people choose it

B. The Narrow Gate

- Requires repentance and surrender

- Demands the higher righteousness Jesus has just described
 - Few find it because few are willing to leave the crowd
1. There is no third option. Every person is on one road or the other.

III. Watch Out for False Guides (**Matthew 7:15–20**)

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.”

A. Once we enter the narrow gate, Jesus warns us that the road itself is dangerous.

1. How do we recognize them? Not by their personality, their charisma, or even their miracles. By their fruit:
 - What does their life produce?
 - Does their teaching line up with the whole counsel of Scripture?

B. We are not called to judge motives, but we are commanded to inspect fruit.

1. A tree is known by what it consistently produces.

IV. Closing: Jesus closes the sermon with the most sobering words of all. (**Matthew 7:21–27**)

A. Doers, Not Just Hearers or Talkers

1. Saying the Right Things Is Not Enough (**vv. 21–23**)
 - Many will say, “Lord, Lord,” and even point to impressive spiritual activity.
 - Jesus’ reply: *“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”*

B. Entrance into the kingdom requires doing the will of the Father—not just believing the right doctrines or performing impressive works.

1. Building on the Rock or on Sand (vv. 24–27)

- Everyone who hears these words of Jesus and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
- Everyone who hears and does not do them is like a foolish man who built on sand.

C. Storms come to both houses. Only one stands.

Conclusion

Jesus has now finished the Sermon on the Mount. The people were astonished because He taught with authority (7:28–29).

- That same authority still stands today.

He has shown us:

- The kind of people who belong in the kingdom
 - The kind of righteousness the kingdom requires
 - The Golden Rule that summarizes how we treat others
 - The narrow gate we must enter
 - The danger of false teachers
 - The absolute necessity of obeying what we have heard
- The question is no longer, “Do I understand the Sermon on the Mount?”
 - The question is, “Am I entering the narrow gate and building my life on these words?”
 - There is forgiveness through the blood of Jesus when we fail.
 - There is power through the Holy Spirit to live what He has commanded.
 - But we must choose.
 - The wide gate is still open.
 - The narrow gate is still open.
 - Which one will you walk through?