



First Baptist Church Selmer

SERMON ON THE MOUNT • THE GOLDEN RULE • MATTHEW 7:1-12 • 11/16/2025

MAIN POINT

As Christ followers, we're commanded to first consider our own sins before rebuking others about theirs, being very careful both in the manner and the method in which we judge.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When have you worn something that identified you as part of a group of people or team? What did the item reveal about your team?

How do you tend to identify yourself to someone new? What do you typically share about yourself in an initial conversation?

If you had to introduce the person seated to your right to someone new, what would you share about him or her?

In these verses, Jesus clarified what the kingdom of God was like and how His people should conduct themselves in their relationships. Jesus' teachings in these verses stand in contrast to our human instincts to hypocritically judge others, remain self-sufficient, and look out for our own best interests.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 7:1-5.

1 "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." (ESV)

In what circumstances are you most tempted to judge someone?

What kind of judgment is Jesus condemning? What kind of judgment are believers called to use?

How do we follow Jesus' teaching in these verses?

Why do you think Jesus shifted the focus from judging others' sin to examining our own?

In these verses, Jesus teaches that we're not to hypocritically judge ("*krino*") others. The root word means to *distinguish* or to *decide*. The point here is that we're not to be critical and mean-spirited. In other Scripture passages (1 Cor. 2:15 and Luke 7:43), believers are called to discern between righteous and unrighteous behavior. It is proper and even Biblical to discern between the things of God and the evil things of this world.

Akin, in the *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary*, states, "Jesus distinguishes between acts of judgment and an attitude of judgmentalism. God's people are certainly called by God to discern good from evil, right from wrong, and good fruit from bad fruit (7:17). What we are not called to do is judge people's motives or look down on people with a self-righteous, judgmental spirit."

Therefore, Jesus brings the attention to our own sin, commanding us to deal with our own sin first so that our hearts will be prepared to help others with theirs.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 7:6.

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." (ESV)

In your own words, how would you explain this teaching to someone?

What are some modern-day situations to which this teaching would apply?

Verse 6 is another exhortation to exercise wise discernment. The idea in this passage is that it is a complete waste of time to entrust sacred things to unholy people. Dogs and pigs were despised during Jesus' day. The dogs represented evil people who despised the Gospel message. Jesus warned believers against wasting precious time attempting to convert evil people who were unreceptive to the Gospel. But if dogs would attack the message, equally as evil were pigs who would trample it. It would be much wiser for believers to focus their time and energy on those who are willing and receptive to the Gospel than on those who will mock and devalue it. If a person is only set on mocking the gospel, Christ followers are to move on to those who will receive it.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 7:7-12.

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!

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

What's your initial reaction to verses 7-8?

When have you experienced this level of seeking God in your life?

What do these verses teach us about God's nature?

We can rest assured—God provides all we need to follow Him. Christ followers are to continually seek Him for what we lack. Charles Spurgeon states, "Our heavenly Father will correct our prayer, and give us, not what we ignorantly seek, but what we really need... Our heavenly Father himself knows how to give far better than we know how to ask."

Additionally, in the parallel text found in Luke 11:13, Jesus said that God the Father gives us the Holy Spirit. We're not left to our own resources when it comes to living a distinct life that points to Jesus. And, we're not left without God's provision. He always supplies what we need.

Does verse 12 connect to the previous 11 verses? How so?

Verse 12 seems almost out of place, but is one, if not one of the most quoted passages in all of the Scriptures. The "Golden Rule" is a principle that has crossed the world a thousand times over and has been taught to most kids both in and out of the Christian faith. This principle summarizes the essential teaching of all the Law and Prophets. But this principle is not something that can be truly performed without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As commentator Louis Barbieri states, "Only a righteous person is able to practice this rule and thereby demonstrate the spiritual change that has come about in his life."

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

According to this passage, Christ followers should be discerning without being critical. Furthermore, Christians are called to always seek Christ. This kind of kingdom living is hardly easy; in fact, it goes against our human nature. Thankfully, God provides the Holy Spirit to help us know and follow His ways.

In what area of life do you find it difficult to live out these verses?

What steps can you take this week to make yielding to God's plans for your relationships a bit easier?

What do you expect to see or experience as a result of following Jesus' teachings in this passage?

PRAYER

Ask God to show you opportunities this week to use discernment and seek Him before you turn anywhere else. Thank Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers Christ followers to live in a way that is distinctly Christlike for the sake of the gospel.

COMMENTARY

| MATTHEW 7:1-12

7:1. Jesus did not intend to prohibit all acts of judgment. Elsewhere, He commanded believers to discern the actions of others (v. 15; 18:15-20). What Jesus condemned is hypocritical judgment that focuses on the faults of others while excusing one's own sins.

7:2. Jesus warned that those who use a harsh standard of judgment when evaluating others can expect God to use the same harsh standard when they face His judgment.

7:3-5. The speck, perhaps a piece of sawdust, represents a small fault. The log, a piece of large timber, represents a major moral fault. He who corrects the minor faults of others without attending to his own more serious faults is a hypocrite. Believers do have a responsibility to help one another repent of sins, but only after first dealing with their own sins.

7:6. What is holy probably refers to sacrificial meat. Dogs would devour it insensibly without appreciating its sacredness. In Jesus' allegory, this sacrificial meat symbolizes His own sacred teachings. The dogs symbolize the wicked who disregard the value of His teachings. First-century teachers referred to pearls symbolically to speak of insightful and valuable teaching. Consequently, the pearls here symbolize Jesus' teachings given by the disciples. Pigs were ritually unclean animals. They symbolize the wicked and unclean. Pigs eat spoiled food but have no appreciation for pearls, just as the wicked consume wicked pleasures but disregard the gospel. This contempt for the gospel is pictured by the pig trampling the pearls underfoot. That pigs may turn against the one offering the pearls shows that contempt for the gospel message can become contempt for the gospel messenger, as has often happened in history.

7:7-8. While some people interpret these verses as a promise that God will give disciples whatever they pray for, linguistic connections between these verses and other portions of the Sermon on the Mount suggest that Jesus promised that those who ask, search, and knock will be invited to enter His kingdom. The command to keep asking is tied to the promise of "good things" to those who ask in verse 11. In the Lukan parallel, these good things are interpreted as the Holy Spirit who transforms the disciple and makes him fit for the kingdom. Keep searching uses the same Greek verb as 6:33, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* Since the word door is not in the Greek text of verse 7, and because ancient people knocked on gates as well as doors to request entrance (Ac 12:13), keep knocking likely refers to knocking on the gate of the kingdom.

7:9-10. Round loaves of bread resemble smooth, brown stones. Certain fish in the Sea of Galilee resemble snakes.

7:11. Jesus' description of humans as *"you... who are evil"* disproves the modern concept that people are basically good. Although Jesus acknowledged that humans may perform gracious acts like providing for their children, He insisted that they do so contrary to their

sinful nature. God's gracious acts, on the other hand, express our heavenly Father's perfect nature.

7:12. The word therefore suggests that the "Golden Rule" of this verse draws an application from the preceding section. Since the preceding verse describes God's gracious and loving provision for others, the conjunction probably implies that following the Golden Rule shows the disciple's resemblance to the heavenly Father.