

Prayer and the Golden Rule

Matthew 7:7-12

Authenticity

(Sermon on the Mount, Part 3)

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, being 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! ¹²Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

V.12 THE GOLDEN RULE –

A)The Golden rule is the book end of the passage that we looked at last week.

B)The unbeliever and the Carnal Christians – **Favorite bible verse** – DO NOT JUDGE!

1)Don't Judge me – Man

C)Pastor Jamie – correctly noted that doesn't mean

1)We are not to call sin sin! - call the Kettle black!

D)Because then the implication would be that we would be treating **GOOD AND EVIL – THE SAME! – TOLERATION** – no absolutes

E)The Bible warns about that!

Isaiah 5:20 Living in the Last days: **“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness.”**

WE ARE Living in a world where everything is becoming Various SHADES OF GRAY!

A)Not RIGHT and wrong – no Absolutes – ALL PREFERENCE!

B)SIGN OF THE LAST DAYS - People would be turning from the truth – to embrace a lie

C)One of the **biggest LIES TODAY IS** – You can have it your way!

1)Your preference about Sexual orientation – Morality - Etc. is entirely up to you!

D)Isaiah said: Woe to those who talk that way!

1)Woe to the nation – that embraces that kind of ideology.

SO When Jesus said - Do not Judge – He wasn't talking about Not calling sin sin – taking a stand.

A)He was addressing the tendency that all of us have to JUDGE TO CONDEMN – KRINOS

B)Size someone up and write them off!

1)Label people – See a fault in them – and make a Judgment – that person is so

C)Happens all the time in the body of Christ – especially by people who IGNORE their own faults

D)Which was precisely the Point of Jesus' Hilarious illustration in v.3 **And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?**

All had something in our eyes right – Irritant – Help

A)Open eye let me see – Here comes - Plank man

B)Cartoon – Veggie Tales – **PLANK MAN!** – **CARNAGE** - Get rid of the Plank -

C)V.12 Is the book end to that – Instead of Judging treat others the way that you want to be treated!

1)Don't Judge – Don't size up..... write off – Be patient and GRACIOUS

Many religions have a similar command but all of them approach it from **the negative** point of view:

- ❖ Rabbi Hillel said – **What is hateful to yourself, do to no other.”**
- ❖ Confucius said - **“don't do to men what you don't want done to you”**
- ❖ Aristotle said **“what you don't want done, don't do...”**
- ❖ Socrates said , **“Whatever is displeasing to you, don't do it to others”**

Makes sense: Don't want to be hit.... Don't hit
Don't want people to be mean – Not going to be mean

A) Jesus takes a different position. He is not trying to prevent certain actions from taking place.

B)He is instead commanding positive action toward others: "treat people the same way you want them to treat you."

C)IN the NIV v.12 is stronger - In Everything – KJV – In all things "treat people the same way you want them to treat you."

D)IN EVERYTHING - Wow! – not just the big stuff –

E) So Don't Judge others to Condemn them - "treat people the same way you want them to treat you."

So Jesus is admonishing us to be careful **HOW** we approach others and also **WHO** we approach – A)Because if you are trying to lovingly correct someone who is NOT teachable

B)V.6 It will be like putting that which is holy before **dogs or casting pearls before Hogs** – (as Pastor Jamie so aptly put it last week-logs, dogs, and hogs)

C)**THE POINT** – We need discernment in these matters – SO How do we get discernment?

1)Prayer – V.7-8 **Lord I need Help! – Whole sermon**

V.7 "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."

A)Context is – Help in relationships – Not – NAME IT CLAIM IT!

B)Context is Lord I want to know how to treat others rightly! –

C)Lord I need your help in becoming an Authentic Christian.

1)Sometimes – I feel like such a Failure – Times where all I see are MY PLANKS –

D)Lord – I am not like You AT ALL!

Don't give up – Jesus hasn't given up on You!

A)GREAT encouragement to Pray.

B)A Great Invitation – He says Ask, Seek, Knock

B)The repetition is meant to say, "I mean this." I want you to do this

1)I want you to feel free to come to me!

C)Sometimes – we can feel like our needs are so small in comparison to God's big Job of taking care of the universe

D)But - Jesus invites us to Come to Him

The requests are also made in the present imperative sense: **Idea is keep praying, keep seeking, keep knocking.**

A)Jesus is saying – You can come more than once!

B)He is not bothered by our REPETITION !–

C)Jesus told two stories to Illustrate God's heart toward persistent prayer.

1)Widow who wore out the King

2)Man who wore down his Neighbor.

D)In both – He illustrated the effectiveness of Persistence –

1)King gave in not because He cared ... bothered

D)Neighbor – wanted to go back to bed – Nothing to do with Friendship

Contrasted that to God – who loves people and wants to help them – NEVER A BOTHER!

A)The reason God wants us to be persistent is not because – He is playing hard to get.

B)The Reason is He is seeking relationship.

God is smart – He knows that if He answered our prayers the first time we prayed.....

A)He knows that for many of us – ONLY TIME HE WOULD SEE US!

B)Before you say: I am not that way: Not being fair pastor Rob –

1)Think about all the people in your life now that you only reach out to when you have a problem.

C)God's heart is always moving toward relationship

D)**So technology Driven** – Phones – iPads – Mobile devices – can't live without it – stay connected

1)My wife – sometimes says – Put away your phone and talk to me!

E)**God is the Same way**: Keep coming – this is nice!

God values persistence and passion in prayer because it show that we share His heart.

A)It shows that we care about the things He cares about – **Interested in Him – HIS KINGDOM.**

B)Persistent prayer does not overcome God's reluctance; {He is not RELUCTANT -

1)In fact I think it is interesting that He uses the term **Knocking.....**

2)Knocking suggests a door – that can be opened

C)We are not **KNOCKING ON a STONE WALL** that needs to be blown up – but a door

1>Welcome Mat out Front !

James 1:5,6 **“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (NO fault finding – no scrutiny – no strings – no deals – if you do this – I will)⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”** –

D)Prayer gives glory to Him, expresses dependence upon Him, and aligns our heart more with His.

E)Prayer expresses – Faith in the Bigness of God – He is big enough to handle – every need!

So 1st this is a great invitation – 3X – Keep Praying, ... Seeking ... Knocking

2nd Encouragemnt: He makes Promises to us if we pray!

A)Even better and more amazing than the three invitations are the promises given to us if We will just come to Him! 7 Promises

B)**Ask**, and [#1] **it will be given to you**; **seek**, and [#2] **you will find**;

1)**knock**, and [#3] **it will be opened to you.**

C)Note the certainty – It will be given – You will Find – It will be opened.

C)**For everyone who asks** [#4] **receives**,

1)**and the one who seeks** [#5] **finds**, and to the one who knocks [#6] **it will be opened.”**

D)Then at the end of verse 11b (#7): **“How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”**

D)Seven promises. It will be given you. You will find. It will be opened to you.

The asker receives. The seeker finds. The knocker gets an open door.

E)Here is the Point: **Our God is a God who hears – He responds – He is not distant – not on vacation.**

Remember Elijah – 450 Prophets of Baal - 1 Kings 18

A)Challenge - cutting themselves – Crazy things – trying to get their god's attention- HRS, HRS – ALL DAY

B)ELIJAH is kicking back – STARTS TAUNTING THEM

1)Maybe Your god is busy – VACATION – USING THE TOILET

C)Then when they are warn out – Your turn – Elijah has a quick prayer – **ok God show your stuff – show your power**

D)God is a God who hears – He responds – He is for us – always ANSWERS PRAYER!

➤ YES - AWESOME –

➤ NO – Bummer – but OK –

➤ **WAIT** – how long? – I will tell you – just keep coming

So 1st this is a great invitation – 3X – Keep Praying, ... Seeking ... Knocking

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#3 We are coming to our Father

A)Father was not a throw away label for Jesus – NOT USED CASUALLY

B)The Jewish people never referred to God as their father – Jesus keeps bringing us back to that!

1)EMPHASIS – RELATIONSHIP

C)Noted a few weeks ago – God is NOT the father of every human being – CREATOR – YES

D)FATHER – Only to those who are believers in Jesus – followers of Jesus

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:- John 1:12

God is a Father.

A)Jesus paints this incredible contrast – think about your own fatherhood

B) V.9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Chew on this¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? {Snake or scorpion

C) “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!”

D)You are evil in comparison to God! –

E)But you get this one right - You know how to give good gifts to your kids!

1)Even the worst Dad gets this right sometimes

Jesus is wanting us to understand that – God our Father will never, never give us what is bad for us. NOT HIS NATURE!

A)GOD IS LOVE – GOD IS GOOD!

B)Knowing the nature of our Father is Key to our prayer life!

C)If a young man wants to ask is father for something,

1)He will pattern his request on the nature and the temperament of his father.

D)If the father is ill-tempered and stingy, the young man will ask for little.

1)He will anticipate his reluctance and be very careful about what he asks for and how he asks

E)His asking will often be in the form of building a case for why he deserves what he is asking for

1) Or how this will benefit his father in the long run.

If the father is good-natured & generous, the child will present his need openly & with great confidence.

A)It is the same spiritually. When a man prays, he will pray in harmony with his view of the God to whom he is praying.

B)To The Greeks the gods were unpredictable – given to great mood swings (What kind of mood today)

C)The Greek gods were vengeful - so man was always fearful.

D)But if HIS God is gracious, as Jesus Christ declared the true God to be,

1)Then the one who believes in Him can come boldly.

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” – Hebrews 4:14-16

A)Throne of Grace – not Judgment – Mercy

B)God wants to help us – supply us – is for us !

LUKE ADDS SOMETHING TO HIS ACCOUNT

11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**”

C)The Best gift? – The Holy Spirit

D)DON'T WE GET THE HOLY SPIRIT – WHEN WE ARE SAVED ?

1)Yes He DWELLS in us –

E)But if that is a Given – why do we need to ask for it! – RIGHT ?

Jesus taught in John 14 – Acts 1 - Three relationships to the Holy Spirit.

A)With you – Knocking heart/ Shall be IN you – Conversion - John 20

B)Acts 1 Go wait – Come upon – Empowered –

1)Filled to overflowing –

C)We need the Spirit's power –

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.

– Eph 5:18

- **Filled is also in the present imperative sense = be continually being filled.**

D)Don't miss - CONNECTION TO LUKE

- **Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking – because you need a daily continual filling of the Holy Spirit!**

Lord I am beginning to Realize – If I am going to be an authentic Believer – I need HELP – POWER.

In everything: Treat others the way I want to be treated – I need help!

POOR IN SPIRIT – realizing our utter need!

B)Not a Fan of Yield signs – OFFENSIVE

DRIVER – my wife is a Defensive driver and just – really courteous.

1)Pedestrians on the curb – cross – (no crossing)
She stops – me? No way – go to the corner – cross walk

C)AUSTRALIA – Pedestrians always have the right of way

1)New Zealand – The driver does

Jesus is saying: Take a Posture of Yielding in everything – Take a posture of preferring others above yourself in Everything!

A)That sounds nice – but it completely - GOES AGAINST OUR NATURE

B)**Jesus wants us to UNDERSTAND** – given a new nature – YOU CAN BE DIFFERENT!

1)You can live – SUPERNATURALLY

C)Learn to yield to the Spirit – respond to the Spirit!

Start your day that way!

A)Doesn't matter that you prayed for that yesterday – keep asking – keep seeking to grow – keep knocking

B)Learn to live life – yielded to the HOLY SPIRIT – responding in the spirit instead of reacting in the flesh!

C)Isn't that an awesome feeling – when that begins to happen. **{I didn't react like I normally do**

I remember how I felt the first time I reacted to a situation that would normally – make me really mad – Reacted in a calm way – WOW – growing