

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5-7

“The King’s Inaugural Address”

Study Number Seven – Matthew 7:1-14

In the Sermon on the Mount, the word “righteousness” is a key word. There is a contrast between real righteousness that the Lord provides for us when we receive Christ as Savior, which is perfect in His sight, and self-righteousness, which is false, which is phony, which is on the surface.

That conflict is there but we often associate self-righteousness with someone who isn’t a Christian and real righteousness with someone who is a Christian. But that isn’t true. There is a better understanding of it. Sure, a lot of people that are not Christians are self-righteous, because they are on a performance kick and they’re really trying to impress people and God that they’re moral and upright and they’ve never come into relationship with Christ. And of course, those people are not going to be in heaven.

That’s sad to say, but the Lord is the one who tells us how we’re going to get there and it will not be on the basis of His righteousness but ours. But on the other side of the fence, there are Christians too who are very self-righteous.

In Galatians 5, Paul says, “The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.” (ref. Galatians 5:17) In Romans chapter 7 he says, “The good that I would not, that I do. And that which I would do, I never do.” (ref. Romans 7:19) He’s talking about the conflict between the two natures.

When we become a Christian, we have an old divine nature within us. The old nature within us that still is capable of performing those acts of sin, because that’s why Christians get into trouble. And that’s the only entrée the evil one has is to our old nature with temptation, and we yield to that, sin is the result. Right?

Alright, we have a new divine nature within us, a potential energized by the power of the Spirit to have victory in those areas of our life. What we’re saying is, self-righteousness comes from the believer when he’s energized by the old nature, trying to perform for God.

And the reason we come to that is because in every one of these studies, there is a potential for a Christian—for instance in the beatitudes—to want to DO those attitudes. In regard to the salt and the light, to want to do witnessing, instead of being salt and being light to the society.

When it comes to the Law and the prophets, to want to do the Law and the prophets and live by the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule and all that stuff, rather than to allow the righteousness of Christ to produce those qualities in our

life. So out of a love relationship, we want to be that kind of person, when it comes to all of those illustrations of the Law that He gives in the later part of Matthew 5.

For instance, He talks about murder and anger. He talks about adultery and lust. He talks about divorce and about false vows. He talks about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and loving our enemies. All that is potentially possible as the Spirit of God produces those qualities in our life and we become that kind of person.

And then we got to Matthew 6 and He said the self-righteous person is always public. Now we know Christians who are public. They are living in the flesh and they really want others to know how much money they've given. And He talks about giving, praying and fasting, remember?

And when praying, they always want others to know about their prayer list and how long it is and how many wonderful answers to prayer. It's subtle how they just kind of work it in about how much time they really spend before the Lord.

And then we've been around Christians too that really brag about the fact that they've been on a fast for three or four weeks. It's self-righteousness too, and that's from the flesh, not from the Spirit.

He says anytime we go public with our private disciplines, we're self-righteous rather than really righteous in our walk with God.

In our last study we talked about wealth and worry. And we said, “Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth, put your treasures in heaven.” And we discussed how we can send ahead treasure to the Lord. The various ways that we can give ourselves and of our means to put treasure up there, and we looked at several illustrations of that.

And then we talked about worry, which was the last thing. The self-righteous person is always worrying. He has never really learned to turn it over to the Lord. And the thing we bring as worry is that which we have not yet given to God in surrender. We can't believe that God has the ability to handle that thing, so we have to worry about it. Because if we really believed it, we wouldn't worry about it. God would take care of it, if we'd just trust Him and let Him handle it.

But always self-righteously we want to get in the way and help God. We try to make it a joint-venture type of deal. And that's a believer.

Now what we're looking at in Matthew 7 is that the self-righteous person is always pointing his finger at the other person. He is judging and criticizing somebody else. The real righteous person is always judging himself.

The people who really know God have found that their spirit of judgment has full employment at home base. They have learned to recognize before God that they have a heart that is bent on sin and it's selfish.

Paul said:

Romans 7:24

O wretched man that I am. Who'll deliver me from the body of this death?

Some people read that and say, "Boy, he couldn't be a Christian." Oh yes he could. Spiritual giant.

Isaiah said:

Isaiah 6:5

Woe is me, for I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips.

Job said:

Job 42:6

Therefore I abhor myself.

Daniel said:

Daniel 9:20

I confess my sin and the sins of my people.

Invariably we'll find the people who walk with God are people

who are not afraid to tell others that they have flaws in their lives. They don't have to come on with the perfection standard. They hit the critical stance that's so perfect and everything is great and everything is going fine.

There's no relationship where everything is going fine. It's just that we have produced that self-righteous stance so we can't be honest with ourselves when it's really falling apart.

Because if we're honest, then people are going to start criticizing us because they're self-righteous too and they're going to say, "Naughty, naught, mustn't do that. That's another foul on you." They start making us feel bad so we can't be honest.

What we're talking about in this study is the whole spirit of CRITICISM. We need pray with David after this study is over.

Psalms 139:23, 24

Search me O God and know my heart,
try me and know my thoughts.
See if there be any wicked way in me...

If we're acting self-righteous and we're faking that stance, we have our finger pointing in somebody else's face and we've been making some critical remarks, the Spirit of God needs to deal with us about that. And that's what this study's going to do.

Now in order to make this study kind of effective, we're going to quote from three writers. They're so spiritual and they're so loving and they're so kind—each one of them—in the way they write. But when they come to this, it's like eating our lunch.

The first one we would never think he would ever say anything without the deepest heart of compassion. It's the book *The Kneeling Christian*. Talk about a book that just exudes love, talking about the prayer life. Listen to what this guy said. It doesn't even have the author of this one listed.

(The Kneeling Christian by unknown author)

Again, self asserts itself in criticizing others. Let this thought burn itself into your memory. The more like Jesus Christ a man becomes, the less he judges other people. It is an infallible test. Those who are always criticizing others have drifted away from Christ. They may still be His, but they have lost their spirit of love. Beloved reader, [and this is what is so cool] if you have a criticizing nature, allow it to dissect yourself and never your neighbor. You'll be able to give it full scope and it will never be unemployed.

(source unknown)

That comes from a guy that's just filled with the love of the Spirit when he talks about it.

Thomas á Kempis wrote *The Imitation of Christ*. That's a great devotional piece of literature to read sometime if we want to fall more deeply in love with Jesus Christ. This is

what he said:

(The Imitation of Christ by Thomas á Kempis)

[You] will never be inwardly religious and devout as a man unless [you] pass over in silence the shortcomings of [your] fellow men and diligently examine [your] own weaknesses.
(source unknown)

Good thought.

David Augsburger is the other one. He wrote a book called *The Freedom of Forgiveness*. This is what he said:

(The Freedom of Forgiveness by David Augsburger)

Someone remarked rather cynically once, “There are only two kinds of people on earth, the good and the bad. And the good decide which are which.” That’s getting at the root of the problem.

Most people feel that they are good enough to criticize and categorize others into their proper classes; so they go on and on pigeon-holing each other under appropriate labels and closing the door to understanding, acceptance, friendship and brotherly love. As one sage put it, “Great minds discuss ideals, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people.”

Criticizing another rarely gives us a valid insight into life and living. Certainly criticism inspires feelings, but they’re feelings of superiority not sympathy. No, in most critical comments about people, there’s more enmity than empathy.

Like the husband asking his wife, “Say, have you heard the latest about Myrtle?” “Heard it?” she replies, “I started it.”

We criticize because it does something for us, something we’re not willing to name and face, but something that makes us feel good for the moment; which should reveal to us that chronic, critical attitudes are symptoms of emotional disturbance. The knocker, complainer, belittler or gossip is sick. People who make trouble are generally troubled people. (source unknown)

Good things to set the stage, because we’ve got a **NEGATIVE COMMAND** that starts our study when we open chapter 7.

v. 1 Stop judging in order that you may not be judged.

“Stop judging in order that you may not be judged.”

The Lord says, “Stop it! Don’t do it! Stop judging people.”

One writer says:

God Himself does not propose to judge a man until his life is over. So why should we be busy doing that?
(source unknown)

Here’s a poem that really illustrates this first verse:

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a heave and a ho and a lusty yell

They swung a beam and the side wall fell.
I asked the foreman, are these men skilled?
And the kind you'd hire if you wanted to build?
He laughed and said, "Why, no, indeed,
just common laborers is all I need.
They can easily wreck in a day or two
what has taken the builders years to do.

So I said to myself as I went on my way,
What part in the game of life do I play?
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,
carefully measuring with a rule and a square,
patiently doing the very best I can,
or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
content with the labor of tearing down?
(source unknown)

It's usually the characteristic of a green-eyed monster of jealousy and envy that is dissatisfied with one's own performance and jealous of somebody else's success that is involved in criticism. And we are not to pass rash judgments upon others.

He said "Stop" doing that. And then He gives us a REASON in verse 2, which ought to really scare us.

**v. 2 For in the way you are judging, you will be judged;
and by what measure you are measuring, it shall be
measured to you.**

“For”—REASON—“in the way you are judging, you will be judged; and by what measure you are measuring, it shall be measured to you.”

Now there are plenty of other verses to get us shook a little bit about that. Here are a few:

Jesus says in:

Matthew 12:36

“I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by your words, you shall be justified and by your words you’ll be condemned.”

That’s getting a complete record of the whole thing, just exactly what we said played right back before us. God is going to be justified in the judgment that takes place.

Luke 12:2, 3

For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever you have spoken in the darkness shall be heard in the light and that which you have spoken in the ear in the closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Revelation 20:12

I saw the dead, the small and the great, stand before God and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

One thing in the Sermon on the Mount is putting all the concepts together so they flow into a meaningful oneness.

For instance, we don't find many writers who will show the conflict between self-righteousness and real righteousness. And we don't find many writers who will take this whole passage and put it in the area of the critical spirit, which is a manifestation of self-righteousness.

We have to do that in order to be fair to the Lord. His mind isn't just flipping from one thing to another. He's dealing with specific issues.

He dealt with WEALTH and WORRY in our last study.

Now He's dealing, in this section of His sermon, with another manifestation of self-righteousness and that's the CRITICAL SPIRIT.

So all of this goes together. This illustration we're getting ready to look at now, we're going to depart from the Law with many contemporaries. This fits best in the context and is a valid illustration of what He's just finished saying.

What did He say? “Stop judging others because by the way you judge, you’re going to be judged.” Now He’s going to give us an illustration. The Lord just works that way.

v. 3 And why are you looking at the speck of wood in the eye of your brother and not noticing the log that is in your own eye?

“And why are you looking at the speck of wood in the eye of your brother and not noticing the log that is in your own eye?”

v. 4 Or how is it that you will say to your brother: ‘Let me take the speck of wood out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye?

“Or how is it that you will say to your brother: “Let me take the speck of wood out of your eye,” and behold, the log is in your own eye?”

v. 5 You play-actor, first take the log out of your own eye; and then you will see clearly to take the speck of wood out of the eye of your brother.

“You play-actor, first take the log out of your own eye; and then you will see clearly to take the speck of wood out of the eye of your brother.”

Now what have been the interpretations of that which we’ve heard?

We have a guy with a great big sin in his life, running around looking for a guy with a little bitty one in his life. Right? Wrong.

We have a guy with a great big log and it's a redwood log. It's a gigantic tree. Every time he swings his head around, he's batting somebody upside the head. And he's walking around criticizing everybody, and he has a big old log sticking out of his eye.

He's going around and he's looking for a brother who's got a little tiny speck of sawdust in his eye. A chainsaw just happened to flip something and it got right in his eye. And he's coming around with a big old log in his eye and he wants to take that little speck out of the eye of his brother.

It has nothing to do with the type of sin.

The log in the eye of the one guy is the **CRITICAL SPIRIT**. The minute we start to criticize somebody else, we flat have a log sticking out there nine yards long for everybody to see. Because that is foreign to the child of God.

For us to run around in our self-righteousness, criticizing our brothers and sisters is totally wrong. An individual has no right to an opinion until all the facts are in and we only look on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. We look at the act, He knows what the attitude is.

So it's God's business to do the judging, to handle this part of

it. So the log is the minute we start criticizing, we have one, because we're blind. We don't really know how to go and deal with the brother who's got a speck or a sin in his life. And to the Lord, the log is the critical spirit which is bigger than the speck we're trying to get out of the eye of our brother.

So the critical spirit is a beam compared to a speck of sawdust when it comes to what we're trying to criticize.

Now, he says this to us in verse 5:

“first take the log out of your own eye;”—how do we do that?

The opposite of the critical spirit is LOVE.

When the Spirit of God is dominant in our life, He will always produce love—unconditional and eternal. And when the critical nature is gone and love is there, we're going to see clearly to go and minister to our brother and deal with his problem and help him. We do have a responsibility for each other. Not to criticize, but to bring healing and help into their lives.

But first the Spirit of God must produce agape love in our life so that begins to happen, and we're able to do it. With love we can see clearly our brother's fault and bring healing and ministry into his life.

Alright, here's a principle:

We will never bring healing with a critical, self-righteous spirit.

We will only get a **NEGATIVE RESPONSE** when we start criticizing.

Now some of us grow too soon old and too late smart, because we're always trying to set all of our brothers and sisters straight. And we criticize! And we pick and nothing happens and we get so frustrated and we keep living with that irritation.

Why don't we change our approach? Just pull out our log and plan on loving a little? We need to ask the Spirit of God to produce love in those places where there's a source of irritation. Then we can watch God begin to work.

F.B. Meyer says our big problem is we use a microscope on everybody else's fault and the wrong end of the telescope on our own. (source unknown)

We just don't want to get too close to ourselves. The really righteous person is not threatened by that.

Charles Alexander was a great musician and one guy came up to him after a service and he said, "You know, I don't like the way you lead people to Christ." And Alexander says, "You know, I really don't really like my approach either. What do you use?" He says, "Well I don't know if I use one." Alexander says, "Well I like the way I do it better than the way you don't

do it.” (source unknown)

Sometimes it’s good for somebody who is so censorious in nature to show them how real healing ought to come and it’s not by criticizing.

Luke 6:36, 37

Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you’ll be forgiven.

Here the Lord is dealing with the woman caught in the act of adultery. When these guys question Him, as He’s writing on the ground, He straightens up and says:

John 8:7

“If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the one who is throwing the stone.”

To throw the stone is to throw sharp remarks of criticism at those people who are having a hard time, really down, really rough.

Oswald Chambers said this:

In the spiritual domain, criticism is love turned sour. In a wholesome spiritual life, there is no room for criticism. The critical faculty is an intellectual one, not a moral one. If

criticism becomes a habit, it will destroy the moral energy of the life and paralyze spiritual force. The only person who can criticize human beings is the Holy Spirit.

(source unknown)

Now the scripture does say, “Let a man examine himself,” in 1 Corinthians 11. (ref. 1 Corinthians 11:28) We each have a responsibility to judge ourselves for the sake of the body of Christ and allow the Spirit of God to work and to judge our thoughts, our actions, our attitudes, and the relationship of our heart to His Word in all of these things. But we only look on the outward appearance.

Robert Foster in his weekly newsletter “The Challenge” said this:

...be careful of becoming a self-appointed wheat inspector... Most every community has its prosecuting attorneys and its self-deputized sheriffs in the body of Christ. There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us, that it hardly becomes any of us to talk about the rest of us.

(source unknown)

v. 6 Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before the hogs, lest they are trampling them under their feet, and having turned, tear you to pieces.

“Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before the hogs, lest they are trampling them

under their feet, and having turned, tear you to pieces.”

Okay, what'd He say in verse 5? He says, “Get the log out of your eye so you can see clearly to take the speck out of the eye of your brother.” Just plan on when, even coming in love, to cast our pearls and our gems and our holy things before a person, they can trample on us! We're not always guaranteed of getting a positive response.

Most of the time we will get a negative response so be ready to run, because the human nature of an individual who a lot of times, even in the best intentions with love, will turn and trample on us.

Now there is another concept here. We ought to be very careful who we're witnessing to. Don't ever judge our message and the ineffectiveness of it, or our witness by the response! We are not obligated or responsible at all for the response, but we are to be a witness. We're to be salt and be light, right? That's where it ends.

We have nothing to do with the response and the response does not verify the fact that we're a good witness or a bad witness. It doesn't verify whether our message is real or not, at all. Because we might be bumping into some green fruit, so just relax. Just back off.

And when we run into the negative and they aren't responding, don't get down.

2 Peter 2:22

Of them, the proverbs are true; a dog returns to its vomit and a sow that is washed goes back to wallowing in the mud.

Don't give advice, don't give help to the non-receptive. If they're backing off and they don't want it, they aren't seeking it, don't waste time.

Remember when Christ came before Herod? How much did He say to him?

Luke 23:9

He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.

Why? Christ was not going to give him the time of day. He'd had plenty of opportunities before and Herod was not responding. He says be careful by how we spend our time and your efforts.

Hebrews 10:29-31

How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, and who has treated as unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the spirit of grace? ...

We come to a place sometimes with people. Just remember that in the context of the critical spirit, it can be misunderstood and it can be thought of as self-righteous criticism rather than real love trying to bring healing. And we might get trampled, those insights that we're bringing to these people.

Now how does prayer fit into this?

v. 7 Keep on asking, and it shall be given to you; keep on seeking, and you shall find; keep on knocking, and it shall be opened to you.

“Keep on asking, and it shall be given to you; keep on seeking, and you shall find; keep on knocking, and it shall be opened to you.”

v. 8 For everyone who is asking is receiving; and he who is seeking is finding; and to him who is knocking, it shall be opened.

“For everyone who is asking is receiving; and he who is seeking is finding; and to him who is knocking, it shall be opened.”

This is a homemade translation of the scripture. The King James translates it:

“Knock,

“Seek,” and

“Ask.”

But this is in the PRESENT TENSE and it is PRESENT IMPERATIVE.

Whenever we have the present imperative in the Greek it means “keep on doing it no matter what!”

“keep on seeking,”

“keep on asking,”

“keep on praying—knocking.”

How does that fit into the context?

What is the usual nature? Criticize, isn't it?

What is the result? What is the opposite of that?

LOVE.

What does love do in order to bring healing?

LOVE PRAYS.

It's awfully hard to criticize somebody we're praying for. And if we really love somebody and we want to help them, we're

praying for them. We're knocking, we're seeking, and we're asking. And when we have an opportunity in love to share in the situation and get some more insight, the Spirit of God has already prepared the heart for it.

In marriage we need to look at our approach and change if necessary.

And has there been any change? NO.

Has there been any resentment? YES.

Has it gotten bigger? YES.

Has there been some hurt? YES.

Are you closer or are you further apart? FURTHER APART.

Then we're using the wrong approach.

Let's replace it with love. Let's replace it with prayer for each other rather than criticism.

And that's why the Lord puts that right here in the text.

But also makes it possible for us to recognize what the Lord is saying in the next verses.

v. 9 Or what man is there among you, who, should his son ask for a loaf of bread, he will not give him a

stone, will he?

“Or what man is there among you, who, should his son ask for a loaf of bread, he will not give him a stone, will he?”

v. 10 Or should he also ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?

“Or should he also ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?”

v. 11 If you therefore, being evil, are knowing how to be giving good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who are asking Him?

“If you therefore, being evil, are knowing how to be giving good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who are asking Him?”

He wants the relationship to be closed. He wants to work and give us good things.

James 1:16-18

All the good things come down from the Father of lights...

Spurgeon said:

...the lips ask and the heart seeks, and the life is the one that knocks.

(source unknown)

God is the one who gives the good things when we wait for Him.

In Genesis 13 Abraham waited, he let Lot do the choosing, but God gave him all that which he could see to the east, the west, the north and the south.

In Genesis Joseph and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are going to go see daddy for the last time. Jacob is just about ready to flick it in and it's time for the blessing of the two boys. Jacob's blind, he can hardly see. He recognized it's Joseph's boys.

And while they're talking together, Jacob all of a sudden says, "And who are these?" He says, "Well, dad, these are the sons God gave me here in Egypt—Ephraim and Manasseh."

Jacob said, "Son, you know, as far as I am concerned, I thought I'd never see you alive." Twenty-two years he was sold down in Egypt and he thought when he got that bloody coat way back there, he was already gone.

But he said, "Who'd have ever thought that I'd get to see my two grandkids." That's the way God does things. When we really let Him work, He's always surprising His children with the unexpected, which always exceeds our anticipated

expectations.

God is delighted to do that.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundant above all that we can ask or think...

Now we come to the one verse in the Bible that everybody has memorized and it's the verse that we call the GOLDEN RULE.

It's been altered in the business world to:

"Do it to others before they do it to you."

Or as one guy said:

"Them that's got the gold makes the rules."

There's that possibility too.

So many are getting ready to take a verse out of context. This is the last word on criticism.

Whenever we have a "Therefore" He's winding it down. We always find out what it's there for, right?

v. 12 Therefore, all things whatever you are desiring

men to be doing for you, in the same manner also you be doing for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

“Therefore, since I told you to stop judging, I told you it was like a log in your eye you’ve got to take out before you bring healing into the life of a person. And I told you to be careful about the response you’re going to get because they tramp you under foot. And I’ve told you if you really love instead of criticize, you’re praying for them instead of picking on them.”

Now He’s going to say “Therefore.” It’s so sensible!

“Therefore, all things whatever you are desiring men to be doing for you, in the same manner also you be doing for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Now some people take this verse and they say that’s the sum of all theology. That is no more the sum of all theology than “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” is the sum of all astronomy.

What’s it saying? It says what we like, we do for somebody else.

Alright, what do we like? We like somebody to say, “I love you.” We like to hear, “I appreciate you” or “Boy you look nice.” We like to hear somebody say, “Did you get a new hairdo?” or “I really appreciate what you have to say!”

“You know I know you really had a rough time, but I really

understand because I've been there too."

Are those things which we love? There are some husbands that just wish that they could go home and their spouse would say, "You mean a lot to me. What you do really fills me with excitement, because you're taking such good care of me."

There are guys who, because they're ten minutes late, get the axe. And they live with constant criticism and questions where they've been, what they did, and why they did it.

And are they anymore spiritual because of what they did? No.

No wonder they're sitting with their beer watching Monday night football. No wonder they're trying to draw off from anything which is spiritual because they can't stand it! They never can measure up or live up to it! They never can be what we think they ought to be.

Now that's speaking hard to the ladies, but men need to listen too. Women are responders. Men are too. We all are.

We basically regurgitate what we receive. Women will blossom if we tell them we love them and we're excited and thrilled about them and they look pretty and all of those things. And they're important to us and they have a very valid contribution to our life.

That's what we like! So the Lord says deal out what we like. And what we like we're going to get in return! Criticism will

get us nowhere! Period.

It's so easy to criticize and to pick. That's the way we are by nature. But that is not God's way of love. Instead of criticizing, He moves in and makes a miracle happen by reinforcing the positive things in building a person up. And that in essence is what we're supposed to do for each other.

In verse 13 He tells us what to do. Now we're going to look at these two verses and say, "I've always heard it this way.: Okay, maybe we have. But let's just throw another one in, okay?"

v. 13 Enter through the narrow gate; because the gate is wide and the way is broad that is leading to destruction, and many there are who are entering through it.

"Enter through the narrow gate; because the gate is wide and the way is broad that is leading to destruction, and many there are entering through it."

v. 14 Because the gate is small and the way is narrow that is leading to life, and few are those who are finding it.

"Because the gate is small and the way is narrow that is leading to life, and few are those who are finding it."

The "narrow gate" is the way of LOVE.

The “broad gate” is the way of the CRITICAL SPIRIT.

It’s just our critical nature. We don’t have to do anything to be critical, but just be normal. That’s just the way we are.

And it always ends up in destruction of relationships, and destruction of people around us when we’re like that. But we have to make a decision that before the Spirit of God we’re going to confess the critical nature, take the log out of our eye, ask God to replace it with an unconditional love that will be positive toward people and we’ll begin to love them and believe in them and seek to encourage rather than tear them down.

Now that is a narrow, small gate. We have to be humble to do it. And it’s going to be a crooked route and there aren’t many people going that route with us.

Notice the words “many” and “few.”

“MANY” get on the “broad” way, and

“FEW” get on the “narrow” way.

Few there are who find it.

In all fairness to the sermon and to those who would believe differently at this point, as the sermon comes to an end there are TWO WAYS, there are TWO TREES and there are TWO

HOUSES with TWO FOUNDATIONS.

In fairness to the total emphasis of the sermon, what would those two be?

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS and

REAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Now in order for us to really realize what's being said here, we would say that the "broad" way is the self-righteous way. We just go like that and it ends up in "destruction," it ends up in hell.

The really righteous person has to make a decision to enter, and we emphasize that word "enter." To "enter" something we have to decide. We have to turn off and make a decision to go another way.

Robert Frost put it this way:

Two roads diverged in the woods, and I took the one less traveled by, and that's made all the difference.
(source unknown)

We have to make a decision at the crossroads. And every person has to come to the crossroads in his life to make the decision as to which way he's going to go.

Now if we had a choice between the Farm-to-Market and the

Freeway, where do we go? Human nature—go the freeway. It's quicker, it's easier, we avoid the stop signs.

What the Lord is saying here is what J. Vernon McGee said:

Life is like a funnel. If it's the funnel for the person who is on the broad way, he just gets on it and he just keeps going and it gets narrower and narrower and finally comes down to destruction. If it a person who is entering at the narrow gate, he's coming in the wrong end of the funnel and it just keeps getting wider and wider and life just keeps getting better and better.

(source unknown)

John 10:7-9

“I tell you the truth. I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved.”

First of all, we have to realize that we have to make a decision about our relationship to Jesus Christ. To do that, we have to give up on our own righteous performance and receive what He has provided for us in the gift of the Son.

The thing that's difficult is the fact that “few there are who find it.”

Maybe some people are very self-righteous. Maybe they're a

very moral person, but they're not a believer. They've never received Christ as Savior. They've never been born again by the Spirit into God's family. They're not His child. And they are not prepared for heaven and they will not be prepared for heaven until they enter in through that narrow gate and find the life which is available in Jesus Christ.

Alright, these are the lessons we get out of our study:

Lesson #1: The measure of judgment that we use with others will be used against us.

Lesson #2: We are commanded to stop judging.

Lesson #3: Let love replace the critical spirit in your life.

Lesson #4: It's awfully hard to criticize somebody you're praying for.

Lesson #5: Come in through the narrow gate because it leads to life.

Lesson #6: We are warned to be careful to whom we give our message of salvation.

Lesson #7: Asking, seeking, and knocking should be the pattern of our lives.

Lesson #8: The Father gives good things to those who are asking.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me." (ref. John 14:6)

There's only one way to get to heaven, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has a right to tell us how we're going to have physical life and He also has a right to tell us how we have spiritual life. And we're only going to get one way for both.

We're going to get our physical life through our mother and our spiritual life through a relationship to Jesus Christ, and that's it. He is the only way. He is the only truth. He is the only life. He's the One.

Physical life through a mother.

Spiritual life through the Master—Jesus Christ.

We have to act. We have to do something. We have to enter through that gate.

Father, we would pray that You'd enable those who do not know You to realize that You're waiting. You're knocking at the door, wanting to come in. Lord, it's far more convicting to realize that we're so quick to criticize and we're so slow to love. Father, teach us how to pray instead of spending our time talking in negative ways about people. And to bring healing into their lives by being positive, by encouraging, by

strengthening and saying those words that help. Lord, forgive us as parents when we're constantly picking on our kids' flaws instead of really commending them for the things that they're contributing. Forgive us in our relationships with each other when we're so negative, when it's the desire of the Spirit that we love by being positive. We just ask now that Your Holy Spirit would search our hearts and our lives. Enable us to fall before the truth and allow the Spirit of God to do His work in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5-7

“The King’s Inaugural Address”

Study Number Seven – Matthew 7:1-14

NOTES

v. 1 Stop judging in order that you may not be judged.

v. 2 For in the way you are judging, you will be judged; and by what measure you are measuring, it shall be measured to you.

v. 3 And why are you looking at the speck of wood in the eye of your brother and not noticing the log that is in your own eye?

v. 4 Or how is it that you will say to your brother: ‘Let me take the speck of wood out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye?

v. 5 You play-actor, first take the log out of your own eye; and then you will see clearly to take the speck of wood out of the eye of your brother.

v. 6 Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before the hogs, lest they are trampling them under their feet, and having turned, tear you to pieces.

v. 7 Keep on asking, and it shall be given to you; keep on seeking, and you shall find; keep on knocking, and it shall be opened to you.

v. 8 For everyone who is asking is receiving; and he who is seeking is finding; and to him who is knocking, it shall be opened.

v. 9 Or what man is there among you, who, should his son ask for a loaf of bread, he will not give him a stone, will he?

v. 10 Or should he also ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?

v. 11 If you therefore, being evil, are knowing how to be giving good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who are asking Him?

v. 12 Therefore, all things whatever you are desiring men to be doing for you, in the same manner also you be doing for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

NOTES

v. 13 Enter through the narrow gate; because the gate is wide and the way is broad that is leading to destruction, and many there are who are entering through it.

v. 14 Because the gate is small and the way is narrow that is leading to life, and few are those who are finding it.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Matthew 7:1-14 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Why are we to stop judging one another, according to verse 2?

3. Describe in your own words the meaning of Jesus' illustration of the speck and the log as it relates to a critical spirit in verses 3-5.

4. What is the meaning of verse 6?

5. What three things are we asked to do in verse 7?

6. What are the promises in verse 8?

7. What are we challenged to do in verse 12?

8. What is the meaning of verses 13 & 14?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The measure of judgment that we use with others will be used against us.

LESSON #2: We are commanded to stop judging.

LESSON #3: Let love replace the critical spirit in your life.

LESSON #4: It's awfully hard to criticize somebody you're praying for.

LESSON #5: Come in through the narrow gate because it leads to life.

LESSON #6: We are warned to be careful to whom we give our message of salvation.

LESSON #7: Asking, seeking, and knocking should be the pattern of our lives.

LESSON #8: The Father gives good things to those who are asking.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
