

Day One – Recap of Matthew 7:1-12

I have heard that Matthew 7:1 has now eclipsed John 3:16 as the most often quoted verse in the Bible, a fact which does not surprise me in the least. I see or hear it all the time. Our culture loves this image of Jesus; a nice guy encouraging others to be nice and letting people do what they want without feeling bad.

I think many people cling to this verse because, as it turns out, the rest of the Bible seems to be commanding us to “Judge rightly.” Despite many, the Bible is really just a big book that actually “puts God in a box” and teaches us how and when to judge. We are told numerous times to judge others by their actions to determine whether or not they are sincere. The Bible is deeply concerned with our ability to see everything clearly and soundly, that is, to judge.

We are, in fact, given a strict system for categorizing others in verse 6, with the terms “dogs” and “pigs.” That sounds pretty judgmental. Further down we are told of a narrow gate and a wide gate, with the obvious implication that we need to be able to judge which one is which. We are told of wolves in sheep’s clothing, those who we will have to examine closely in order to judge. We are then told that God himself will one day judge everyone according to their inward devotion and not their outward behavior. That’s just this chapter; I think it is clear that some degree of judgment is pretty important.

As he has often done throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is taking the focus off the external and turning it toward off our hearts. We do have to exercise judgment in many areas of our lives, but is judging others what characterizes us? Would we rather fight over some doctrine than actually agree? Would we rather see someone fail than succeed so that we can build ourselves up? Are we constantly inspecting others’ lives without inspecting our own? I don’t think that we should stop judging the actions of other people, but our primary responsibility is to judge ourselves.

I also think Jesus is pointing us heavenward. Final justice is not to be had within this life, and therefore we shouldn’t be looking for it. Behind this commandment is the important principle that our entire life is lived before the Father, and thus HE will be able to judge rightly. It’s not our job to pronounce judgment upon others, because we do not always see clearly. God does, however, and he will judge rightly.

Day Two – Read 7:13-29

In verses 13-27 we see four vivid contrasts between true and false.

Describe these contrasts

Verses 13-14:

Verses 15-20:

Day Three - Read 7:13-29

Verses 21-23:

Verses 24-27:

Day Four – Read 7:13-29

Why do you think Jesus finishes His sermon with these contrasts between true and false?

What is the reaction of the audience? Did His teaching demand a response? Explain.

Day Five – Read 7:13-29

What did you learn about communicating the truth of the gospel? How do we apply this when we have the opportunity to share the truth of God's Word?

From the Teacher's Bible Commentary:

Truth for today.—Although spoken almost 2,000 years ago, these words have never been more relevant than they are today. In a pluralistic society where one religion is supposed to be as good as another, and one way of life as good as another, Jesus still stands on the great divide and says, "Choose!" Every man will walk the broad way with the crowd unless he deliberately chooses to leave it, by a strong

and decisive act of faith, and follow Jesus up the narrow way. Every man's house will be swept away on the surging sands, unless he carefully chooses to build it upon the difficult and demanding rock.

With an eloquence which is undimmed by myriad translations and rolling centuries of time, Jesus has set the alternatives once and for all—follow me into the life that will never fade away, or go with the world into everlasting destruction.

Day Six

If you are looking to go a little bit deeper in your understanding of the text for this week, try one of these resources:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getBookSections&cid=1&source=1>

<http://www.evangelibrary.org.uk/members/com/nt/jcr/mt/mat-Index.html>

Sermons Transcripts:

Ligon Duncan - http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/matthew_vol_1-2/matthew_vol_1-2/index_Matthew_vol_1-2.html

Audio:

John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/14/>

S. Lewis Johnson - http://sljinstitute.net/sermons/new%20testament/gospels/matthew/matthew_master.html