

4. Relationships: The Community of Discipleship (7:1-12)

Sermon on the Mount

1. When Jesus begins the sermon, he says, “Unless your righteousness is something extraordinary, in comparison to the ordinary religious practices you are used to, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” As you read 7:1-6, what would be the “ordinary” type of practice we are used to seeing from religious communities? What is “extraordinarily” different about the Jesus community?
2. Bonhoeffer (Cost of Discipleship) says, “If I condemn his evil actions, I thereby confirm him in his apparently good actions which are yet never the good commended by Christ.” What do you think he is saying about this verse?
3. When someone who is doing something sinful says, “Don’t judge me,” how do you respond?
4. For v.1-6, in your own words, summarize what Jesus’ “extraordinary” teaching on this subject of our relationships with others:
5. V.6 says, “Do not cast your pearls before swine.” Often “pearls” is interpreted as the Word/The Gospel, which is a possibility. It would mean, “don’t preach the word to people who despise and abuse it.” An alternative view is that “the holy/pearls” = fellow disciples who have a speck in their eye. In other words, dealing with a struggling, weak member who is on the fringe. If we take this view, what danger is Jesus referring to by the swine trampling “them” underfoot and then attacking you?
6. Greek verbs can be a present “momentary” tense (.) expressing a one time action, or in a present “linear” tense (----), expressing ongoing or repeated action. In v.7, the Greek is showing a linear tense. How would you translate this to bring out the linear idea and what does this teach you about prayer?
7. In v.7-11, Jesus again emphasizes the Fatherhood of God. Compared to earthly fathers who are evil, what can we expect even more from our heavenly Father who is perfectly good?
8. What are some examples of a “good” father giving his son an answer other than “yes” and why would God do this?
9. Look back at the Lord’s Prayer, v.11-13. What are some good things Jesus teaches us to pray for that God will ALWAYS say “yes” to?
10. 7:12 is a summary and conclusion of the main body of the sermon. What does this verse teach us about judging and our relationship with non-disciples?

