

### Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read Matt 7:1-29 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

### Beginning the Conversation

1. Share about a time when you tried to live out the “Golden Rule” (“do to others what you would have them do to you,” Matt 7:12)? How did it go? Did you find it helpful to consider Jesus’ teaching?
2. Skye Jethani in his book, *What if Jesus was Serious?*, distinguishes between the “Silver Rule” (Do no harm), the “Golden Rule” (Do to others as you would have them do to you/love your neighbour as yourself), and the “Platinum Rule” (Love one another as I have loved you; John 15:12).

### Digging Deeper

1. The sermon focused on the “Golden Rule” as a summative expression of how we can “love our neighbour as ourself” (Matt 22:39). How do you understand its significance for figuring out what Christ followers should do in different situations?
2. In the message, it was argued that Jesus applied the “Golden Rule” in his teaching on forgiveness in Matt 6:12, 14-15. How do you understand this connection? What is the importance of forgiveness in following the way of Jesus? (see Ephesians 4:32)
3. Read 7:1-5. What is the difference between appropriate moral judgment from a Christian who has practiced self-examination, and hypocritical judgement or judgmentalism? (see also Romans 2:1-4; Matt 18:15-17; and Galatians 6:21).
4. What is the primary rationale for not judging others noted in Scripture (e.g., Matt 13; James 4:11-12; Romans 14:4, 10-13)? How should recognizing this help us with our attitudes towards others?
5. In 7:6 Jesus seems to say that we shouldn’t give valued things to those who won’t appreciate them. What would this look like on a practical level? Can you think of some current day examples? How would you understand this in the context of not judging others hypocritically?
6. Jesus talks about prayer again in 7:7-11. How might it change your prayer life to see God as deeply good?
7. Near the end of this chapter, Jesus puts before his listeners two ways: the way of Jesus that leads to life and the way of the world which leads to destruction (7:12-14) — and each way is characterized by different sorts of people (7:14-29). From this passage, as well as the entire Sermon on the Mount, what are some of the characteristics of those who follow the way of Jesus?
8. The chapter concludes with a parable about two builders (7:24-27). What are some ways we can “build” our lives on the rock?

### Living it Out

1. Spend some time considering to whom you may need to practice the Golden Rule this week. What might that look like?
2. When you pray this week, begin by acknowledging God as your good heavenly Father who gives good things to those who ask (7:11).

# The Way of the Kingdom (7:1-29)



Discourse 1  
Announcing the  
Kingdom (3-7)

October 12, 2025  
Pastor Tyler Williams  
Greenfield Community Church

## The Way of the Kingdom

1. **The Greater Righteousness of the Kingdom:** The extraordinary character of being a follower of Jesus (5:3-48).
2. **The Practices of the Kingdom:** The simple and hidden life of being a follower of Jesus (6:1-34).
3. **The Way of the Kingdom:** How followers of Jesus are to live in relationship both in the kingdom and in the world (7:1-29).

Universal

## The "Golden Rule"

*"So in everything,  
do to others what you would have them do to you,  
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (7:12).*

Summative

## The "Golden Rule"

"And what you hate, do not do to anyone" (Tobit 4:15).

"Do not do to your fellow what you hate to have done to you" (Rabbi Hillel, 10-80 AD, in b. Shabbat 31a).

*Rather than these negative formulations, Jesus frames the rule positively, so that his followers would use their imaginations and take the initiative in doing good in all of our relationships.*

## The “Golden Rule”

As close to a “hermeneutical rule” or “ethical principle” that Jesus provides for us to follow as we follow him.

Could it be so simple? What if we truly tried to live our lives according to Jesus’ “Golden Rule”?

“Ask yourself, ‘If I were \_\_\_\_\_, what would I want today?’” (Skye Jethani, *What if Jesus Was Serious*, 141).

## The “Golden Rule” Applied

Jesus applies it when he teaches about our *relationships* with others:

- Forgiving others (6:14-15);
- Judging others (7:1-6); and
- Loving others (22:39).

## The “Rule” Applied: Forgiving

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.... For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (6:12, 14-15).

- Jesus calls us to live in the reality that as we have been forgiven, we must also forgive others (Ephesians 4:32).
- Reflects the importance of God’s grace.

## The “Rule” Applied: Judging

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (7:1-2).

- Set out as an universal prohibition.
- Judgement/condemnation vs. moral discernment/correction.
- There are some times where it is appropriate and necessary to provide discerning judgement (e.g., Matt 18:15-17 or Gal 6:21), *but even in those cases the general posture here would apply.*

## The "Rule" Applied: Judging

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?" (7:3-4).

- Comic image that highlights our own lack of self-awareness (Romans 2:1-4).

## The "Rule" Applied: Judging

"You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (7:5).

- Self-Awareness leads to self-judgement: Deal with our own sins first by repentance, and then with mercy and humility, can you see clearly to HELP correct, not condemn, another.
- Ironically, the unnoticed plank is most often the critical spirit itself.

## The "Rule" Applied: Judging

Theological Rationale: We are not God!

- Judgement and condemnation are God's prerogative (see Matt 13; James 4:11-12; Romans 14:4, 10-13).
- We are called to love — not judge — our neighbour.

## The "Rule" Applied: Judging

"We may disagree with our neighbours, and we may discern another person or group to be wrong, but when this discernment leads us to value our neighbour less, that is when we cross from discernment into judgement, condemnation, and ungodly exclusion. Sadly, this sort of rhetoric fills our culture today and has been applauded by many. It has become acceptable, even among some Christians, to condemn those who hold different religious, cultural, or political beliefs. We are quick to call them enemies and reluctant to love them as neighbours" (Skye Jethani, *What If Jesus was Serious?* 127).

## The "Rule" Applied: Loving

"And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour *as yourself*'" (22:39).

- The Golden Rule is the practical working out of how to love one's neighbour "as oneself."
- "Jesus makes explicit what is implicit in the Golden Rule, namely, that love of neighbour and love of God are interdependent. If we are to know how to love our neighbour we must love God as God has loved us" (Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, 89).

## The Way of Jesus

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (7:13-14).

- The Narrow Gate is *Jesus* (John 10:9).
- The Narrow Road/Way/Path is *Jesus' teachings and way of life*.

## The Way of Jesus

"There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between these two ways. Now this is the way of life: first, 'you shall love God who made you;' second, 'love your neighbour as yourself;' and 'whatever you do not wish to happen to you, do not do to another'" (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, The Didache* 1:1-2).

## Invitation

*Jesus is invites us to follow his way...*

- A way where we treat others the way we want to be treated
- A way where we trust in our good heavenly Father
- A way where our lives bear good fruit

*The way where Jesus goes ahead of us and with us.*