

Sunday, November 22, 2020 am

**TEACHINGS OF JESUS (27)**  
**The Sermon on the Mount (26)**  
**“The Golden Rule”**  
**Matthew 7:12**

As we continue our study of this sermon Jesus preached, we come to a principle that ties together the applications taught by Jesus thus far and in all His teachings. This is a sentence that mankind has titled, “The golden rule”. And it truly is golden as we consider how much better all of society would be better if we all followed this principle. But let us put it in context with this sermon and study what Jesus actually said.

**I. The golden rule**

- a. Like usual, this is a step above normal. Jesus describes the pinnacle of behavior.
- b. I have heard of other “rules” that people live by
  - i. The iron rule – basically states that you do unto others before they can do to you or “might makes right”. This is the most selfish of all these “rules”, but also one far too many live with. They seek to force their way on everyone else, by overpowering anyone who resists.
  - ii. The bronze rule – do unto others as they have done unto you. This is the “eye for an eye” attitude. While there is a place for judicial punishment, and even discipline in the Lord’s church. We should NOT live by this rule as Christians.
  - iii. The silver rule – “Don’t do to others, what you do not want them to do to you.”  
Some have said (often critics) that Jesus borrowed from other philosophies and might cite the golden rule as an example, BUT upon further examination, what most philosophies taught was this “silver rule” (some came closer to the Golden rule). Consider:
    1. Confucius said, “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others”
    2. Rabbi Hillel (the Jewish Talmud), “What is hated to you, do not do to your neighbor”
    3. Tobit in the Apocrypha says, “And what you hate, do not do to anyone”While this rule sounds good, it does not go far enough in how we ought to treat others. This is still a somewhat self-serving rule as it only applies to the negative.
- c. The “golden rule” is far superior to these. It is a *positive* rule. By that I mean, it is not about what we should NOT be doing to others. This is going the second mile. This is asking, “What if I were in His shoes? How would I want to be treated?” And then I act accordingly.  
As one source noted, this is about how you treat others, regardless of how they treat you!

**II. How has this applied to what Jesus has said thus far?**

- a. Jesus began this verse with the word, “Therefore” which leads back to what has already been taught. Some wonder what He is dealing with – the section just concluded – “ask, seek & knock” or perhaps the judging of Matthew 7:1-5. Or could it be all that Jesus has taught about dealing with others throughout this sermon? Is see this as a summary of true righteous living. Consider:
- b. **The beatitudes** (5:1-12) begin with true self-examination which results in true righteousness that we are hungering for (God gives us what we need).  
THEN, it governs how we treat others – merciful, peacemakers, and purity of heart (with pure motives)
- c. **Salt and light** (5:13-16) – is our influence reflecting the light of God and His word. Are we the seasoning the world needs?
- d. **Murder, adultery & divorce** (5:21-32) – all of these are affected by whether or not we apply the golden rule.

- e. **Our honesty** and integrity are affected by this (5:33-37) – do we stand by our words?
- f. **Our willingness to go the extra mile and not retaliate** show this rule (5:38-42)
- g. **The way we treat, not just our friends, but our enemies** (5:43-48)
- h. **Are we self-seeking in our giving, prayers and fasting?** (6:1-18). One who seek to draw attention to himself, even with supposed good deeds, is NOT practicing the golden rule.
- i. **The way we judge others is reflective of this rule** – (7:1-6)
- j. **Finally, as we ask, seek and knock spiritually** – (7:7-11), we show our appreciation for how God has practiced this rule in dealing with us. As noted, He gives us what we need. Will we do that for others?

### III. Concerning the text

- a. **Whatever you want...** - Notice also that Jesus said was “whatever you want...”, NASB, “In everything” – this does NOT exclude anything.
- b. **“Do”** – we have yet another present, imperative in this sermon – meaning, an ongoing command.
- c. **For this is the law and the prophets** - Jesus is emphasizing that if you consider this rule, it will affect EVERYTHING you do and are in service to Him.
- d. Consider this in light of Matthew 22:37-39. Will not love be the governing factor in how we treat others? This IS the golden rule! This is about doing what is best in Christian love – remember our definition of Christian love – “*caring enough to sacrifice for what is best.*” It is described in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a.
- e. Philippians 2:3-4 – look out for the interests of others.
- f. Luke 10:30-36 – the parable of the good Samaritan. Who did Jesus say the neighbor was? You have in this parable 3 of the 4 “rules” we mentioned. The thieves practiced the “iron rule”, the priest and Levite, at best, practiced the silver rule – they didn’t further harm the man, but they did not do anything for him either.  
The Samaritan practiced the “golden rule”. He had compassion, took action and even sacrificed for one perceived to be his enemy – (Jews and Samaritans considered each other as enemies).
- g. Applying the golden rule:
  - i. If I have done wrong, would I want my brother/sister to come to me about it?
  - ii. Would I spread gossip about others?
  - iii. If I were hungry or in need, would I want others to help me?
  - iv. If I were lost, would I want someone to take the time to at least try and lead me to Christ?
  - v. Would I be willing to sacrifice personal pleasures, time and resources to help someone in need?
  - vi. If I were misunderstood because of something I said or did, would I want others to give me the benefit of the doubt?
  - vii. Do you want others to be patient and compassionate in dealing with you?
  - viii. Think of this also in terms of various relationships in life.
    1. What if the golden rule were practiced in **our homes**? Husbands and wives treating each other the way they want to be treated? Parents loving and caring for their children, and children honoring and respecting their parents?
    2. What if the golden rule were practiced **in business**? Companies acted honorably with their customers, and customers did not try to cheat the businesses?
    3. What if the golden rule were applied **in our communities**? Neighbors speaking to one another kindly, and helping each other? Children being respectful to their elders, and elders saw the good potential in children and the younger. What would happen to the crime rate? What would happen with the needy?
    4. What if the golden rule were practiced **in our government**? We wouldn’t have political parties hating each other, and self-serving laws?

There might be disagreement, but there would be civil treatment of each other (everyone), patience as we tried to work through our differences, laws passed that genuinely considered their citizens instead of themselves, there would be consistency between the personal behavior of politicians and the laws they passed.

5. What if the golden rule were practiced **in our churches**? How many problems would NEVER appear?
- ix. Can ANYONE deny that our society would be better if we ALL practiced the “golden rule” in our lives?

These are just a few areas where we might apply the teachings of our text. The more we study this sermon, the more impressive it becomes as a standard by which to live our lives. Truly we can see how God determines true righteousness. What about you? How is your righteousness?