

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

January 27, 2019

“Do unto Others”

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King's Kids

11:45 Meeting Q&A

NEWS

Potluck on Superbowl Sunday, February 3rd

Survey deadline February 7th

Valentine's Party, February 9th 5:30pm

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Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com

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1) What is a “Good” gift?

2) In verse 12, what does “In everything” mean? What is indicated by “This is the Law and Prophets”?

3) Is the Golden Rule a universal axiom of great worth?

MATTHEW 7:7-11 ~ ⁷NASB“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹“Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰“Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Give us what is _____. That's the essence of these verses.

Hebrews 13:21

God repeatedly tells us all we need to do is ask, yet... We must ask in
_____.

Hebrews 11:6, James 1:5-8

Why do we need wisdom? From our salvation through our sanctification and on into our future glorification, it is all about fulfilling God's Will, which is to His eternal
_____.

While the hard part is asking in faith - the even harder part is still being met with
_____. In those times, God's answer is, "You already
_____."

Our problem is rarely that we don't know what to do, our problem is we don't
_____.

In such times, God is saying, you have My _____, you have My
_____, you already _____, move
forward in faith.

That may be the greatest *good* gift God can give to you.

While the principle here is about church unity, Jesus uses the nearly identical principle in Luke 11:9-13. There the context is quite different, showing the
_____ with which Jesus used this concept.

Nothing is without _____ - especially, nothing that is worthwhile.
With complete confidence in God, “Ask, seek and knock,” knowing that the answer He gives will be the good gift you need to move forward with Him...

MATTHEW 7:12 ~ ^{12NASB}“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

This verse confirms that Jesus never changed _____.

By adding the phrase, “For this is the Law and the Prophets,” Jesus also extends this summary beyond this _____.

The title for this Sermon came in 4:17, which is, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” It means, turn from your human ways of doing things and do them God’s way, because the Kingdom of Heaven is _____.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the _____.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The thesis statement came in 5:20, where He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Within the thesis there is a central theme word, which is "Righteousness."
How we define "Righteousness," is _____.

According to Aristotle, the Golden Rule is unworthy of being considered in ethics at all and Immanuel Kant essentially called it "Trivial nonsense."
They were _____ exactly right.

This has nothing to do with you treating other people how you, as a person, what to be treated! This has to do with you treating other people how _____ would treat them, because _____ is the you, you're supposed to be.

The ethic behind Jesus's use is _____ ethic as described in the Sermon on the Mount.

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 7c ~ 012719

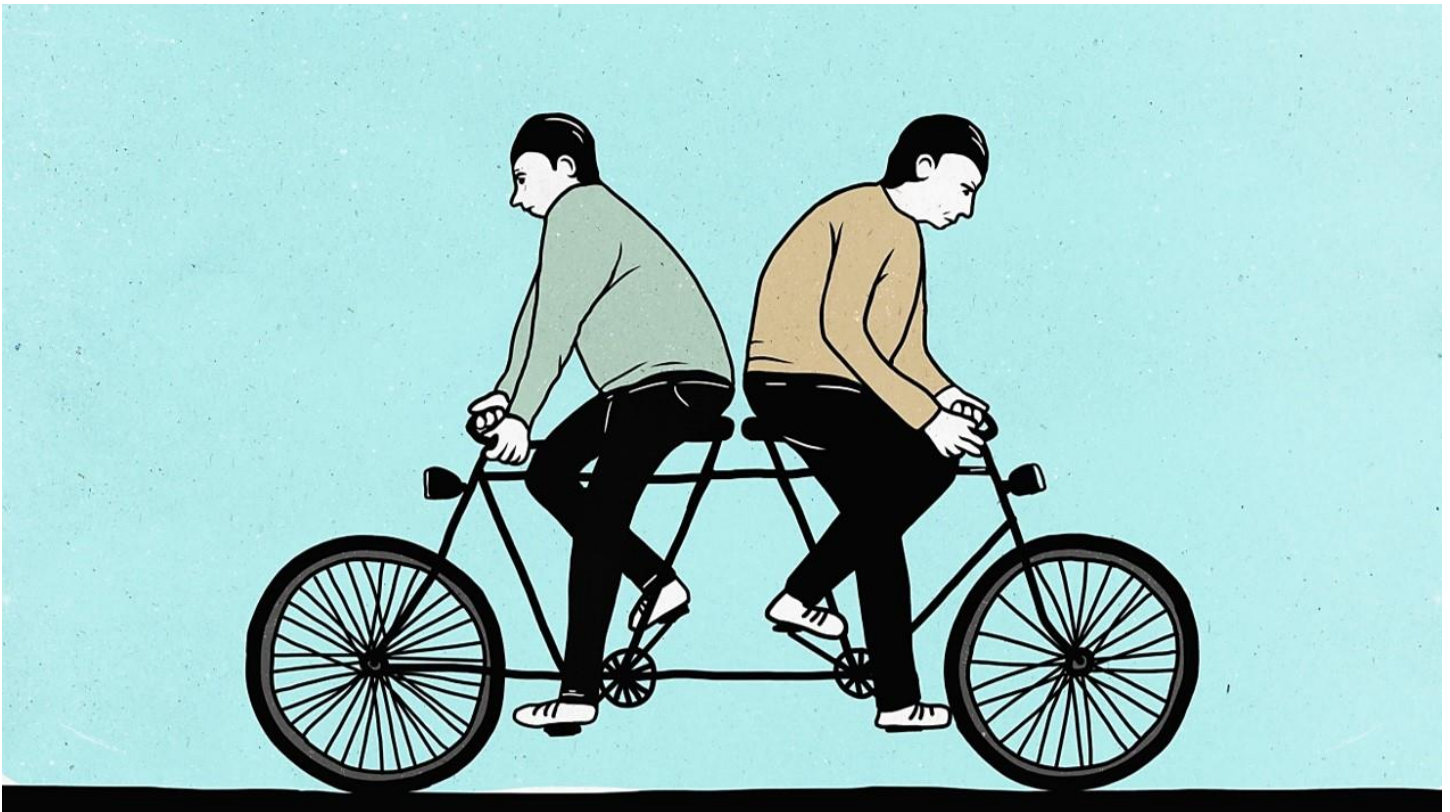
Welcome Friends



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

Two weeks ago, we began chapter 7 with the first 5 verses. There Jesus opened the subject of judging. Primarily the judging of others in the church.



Last week we covered that the often-quoted verse 6, 6NASB “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine... We saw, that in context, it is primarily about deescalating the confrontation that arises when judging becomes necessary. It is therefore primarily about maintaining church unity.

Jesus brought up a topic that is extremely difficult, because of the hidden motives and inner agendas of self-serving human beings.

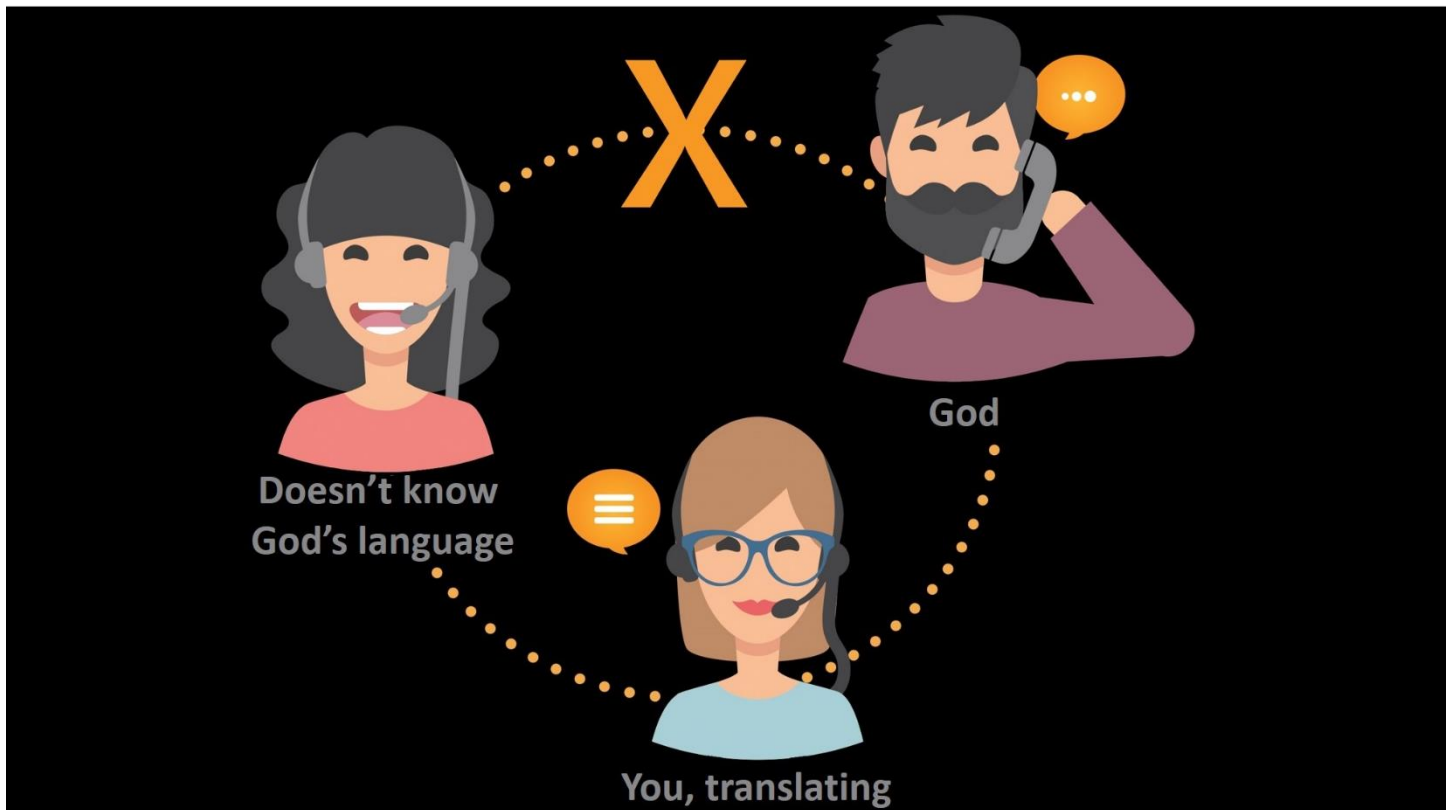


If we were all perfectly behaving like the children of God we are, it would be easy. Of course, if that were the case, everything would be easy, because it would be the Kingdom of Heaven fulfilled.

We'll get there one day, but until that day, we earnestly, eagerly, whole-heartedly pursue it with the power of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and for the glory of our Heavenly Father. That's what we must do.

If we work for God, it must be His agenda, rather than our agenda - right? So, His ministry to another person

through us, is really an interaction between God and them.



We are merely the conduit - the interpreter. The President plans to meet with Kim Jong Un again next month. Regardless of your feelings about such a meeting, imagine that you are the President's interpreter. How appropriate would it be for you to add your own thoughts - change the message - get emotionally involved in the conversation?

Our job as conduits of the Lord's grace to another is simply to connect the two of them, without interfering in the process, beyond that role.

The other person get's angry and lashes out, they get defensive and make excuses, they want to argue and fight. Don't take it personally - they're upset with God and/or themselves.

They want to shoot the messenger because that's the easiest thing to do, but you don't need to stand there and take it - walk away. You especially, don't need to add fuel to the fire. "Ah, yeah, put some more wood on that, no, the big logs, and more gasoline, we're going to have us a fire!"

If you are mature enough, sensitive enough, savvy enough, you might be able to walk away before there's ignition. Give them room to wrestle with God over it. If it turns into an argument, you've made it about you.

Why do people argue? My parents used to say it takes two to argue. Well, they were right. We argue when two or more are invested in the outcome. Usually, the investment is pride.

Sometimes humble maturity means reading a situation and having the patience to wait for the right time -

perhaps indefinitely. Sometimes you're not the right person for the task and it will fall to someone else.

How can we properly examine the facts, the necessity of intervening and our motives in judging?

How can we know when to judge, how far to go with our judgment, who else to involve in the process, when to confront the subject of the judgment and how and when to walk away? How do we know when and if, to reengage? How can we navigate these tricky waters?



Matthew 7:7-11 ~ 7NASB "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be

opened to you. 8“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9“Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10“Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!



The Lord's Prayer in the previous chapter is a framework for at least daily prayer. The 4th petition is asking for the Bread of Life we need to get through today. We need to ask for, and be mindful of, that dependent reality each day, as a minimum.

Well then, each and every day, we are to glorify the Father, seek the Lord's Kingdom, obey the Spirit's leading, depend on the Manna from God, acknowledge our imperfections and forgive people who happen to be as human as we are. Then, every day, we conclude with this... Please don't let the things of this world distract us, tempt us, entrap us, but instead Lord, please keep us. Give us what we need to be Kingdom of Heaven people on earth.

Give us what is good.

That's the essence of these verses. Jesus is telling us to pray - to actively, intentionally seek the Lord's counsel and to rely upon His providence.

He will give you every good thing you ask for. The Book of Hebrews closes with this thought in chapter 13, verse 21 - that God would, equip us, in and with every good thing necessary to do His will. That He would work in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The plea is that the Lord would guide, equip, and enable us to do His Will, for His glory.

God repeatedly tells us all we need to do is ask.



Some might say, I have asked! Here's the hard part. We must ask in faith. We actually must believe that God hears us, that He answers us and goes before us. Hebrews 11:6, 6NLT And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

To believe that God exists means that the God of the Bible exists as depicted. A God Who sacrificed everything because of His love for us - a God Who wants to hear from you, wants to reward you with every good gift. A God, Whom Jesus said, would give to all those who asked.

It is precisely what James was on about in the opening of his letter. James 1:5-8, from the Reader's Bible, 5NirVIf any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault. 6But when you ask, you must believe. You must not doubt. People who doubt are like waves of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. 7A man like that shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8He can't make up his mind. He can never decide what to do.



Why do we need wisdom? Why is God eager to grant it to those who truly seek it from Him in faith? Those trusting in Him to deliver on His promise? To reward those who sincerely seek Him? Drop down a few verses to 17&18, 17NlrVEvery good and perfect gift is from God. It comes down from the Father. He created the heavenly lights. He does not change like shadows that move. 18God chose to give us new birth through the message of truth. He wanted us to be the first and best of everything he created.

From our salvation through our sanctification and on into our future glorification, it is all about fulfilling God's Will, which is to His eternal Glory.



Our verses today, speak of that reality. You want to avoid temptation and be delivered from evil - sincerely, desperately, actively ask, without any doubt at all, about His goodness and His generosity.

Seek, knock and He will give what you need to navigate life here as citizen of there.

Now, if you've been Christ's disciple for more than a day, you know that oftentimes you do precisely that and you are met with silence.

Well, I said the hard part was asking in faith - the even harder part is still being met with silence.

You might think that He did not answer, he did not give, you did not find, He did not open. In those times, God's answer is, "You already know enough."

Our problem is rarely that we don't know what to do, our problem is we don't want to do it. I knew for years that I was supposed to walk away from my career and serve God full time.

When we seek His wisdom on a matter - and again, in this place, we're primarily talking about the matter of dealing with a fellow Christian who has a speck in their eye - when we seek His wisdom on a matter and we don't seem to get any help from Him, it is because He is trying to grow us through the process.

In such times, God is saying, you have My Bible, you have My church, you already know enough, move forward in faith. Get out of the boat and come to Me,

That may be the greatest good gift God can give to you.

We know the limited scope of this passage. We must always be cautious when extrapolating Biblical principles beyond their original range. This is one that is easy to expand.

While the principle here is about interpersonal interactions that affect church unity, Jesus uses the nearly identical principle in Luke 11:9-13. There the context is quite different, showing the versatility with which Jesus used this concept.

As an example, we, as a church are faced with deciding how to move forward. Some would say, if the pastor would ask, seek, and knock, with enough faith, God would give him clear direction.

Yes - that's true. Sometimes that is so clear it must simply be obeyed. Sometimes it is clear, but part of the task, is to patiently get everyone else prepared first. Sometimes it is clear that the thing the Lord wants is for all of us to wrestle with Him to get a corporate answer and sometimes God is telling us, you have My Bible, you have each other, you already know enough, move forward in faith.

Essentially, figure it out. We can only ever do that by checking our ego at the door and then sacrificing to come up with and implement the best imperfect solution.

See what I mean? Best imperfect solution. No matter what we do, as individuals or as a group, there will be change. Nothing in life ever stays the same. We could elect to keep everything the same, but that simply means we will ignore what's going on, because nothing in this world ever stays the same.

Do nothing and the children still grow into teens - new people still flood into our valley whether they are people who need to meet Jesus, or are people who just need a church family to belong to.

All choices, including the choice to do nothing are imperfect in the sense that they will all require effort and sacrifice, because they all require change. I know it seems like, if we could just discover God's perfect Will, His perfect plan for us, then everything would work perfectly and there would be no pain.

Nothing is without challenges - especially, nothing that is worthwhile. I would say, in my experience, that

following the Lord's plan, will bring more struggle, not less. The difference is your perspective and so, your attitude.

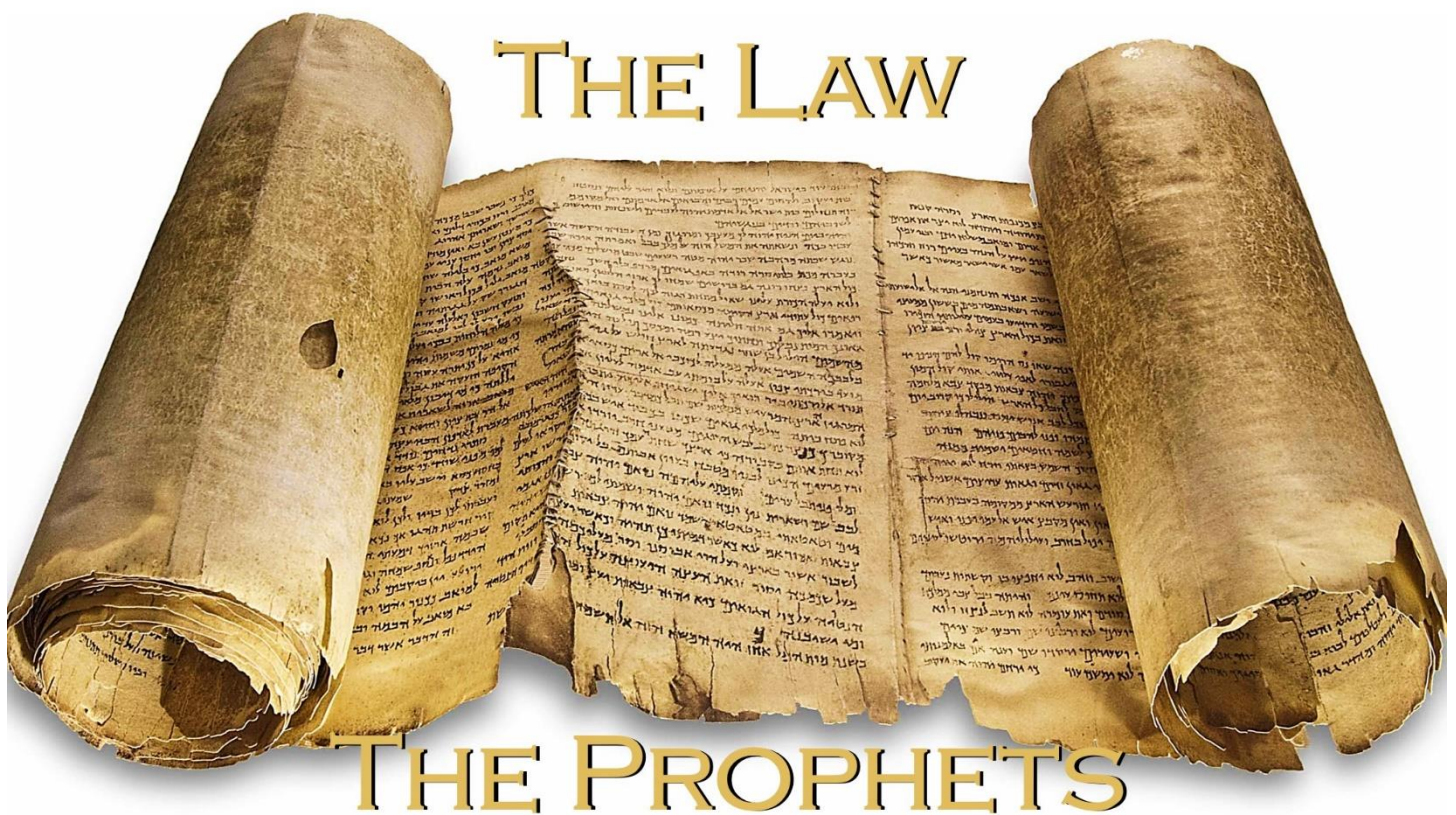
With complete confidence in the Goodness and Abundance of God, "Ask, seek and knock," knowing that the answer He gives will be the good gift you need to move forward with Him... Even if that answer is, "Come on my child, you already know what needs to be done."



Matthew 7:12 ~ 12NASB "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

This verse confirms that Jesus never changed subject, but was always talking about working through the inevitable difficulties of Kingdom of Heaven life, which is to say, church life.

His treatment of that topic culminates with what is called the Golden Rule. It makes perfect sense.



By adding the phrase, “For this is the Law and the Prophets,” Jesus also extends this summary beyond

this section, to summarize the entire Sermon on the Mount.



We said at the outset, that the title for this Sermon came in 4:17, which is, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” It means, turn from your human ways of doing things and do them God’s way, because the Kingdom of Heaven is here and now to the maximum extent, we physically bound human creatures are able to wrap our little brains around it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the church - any deficiency in the church is not due to God’s lack of generosity - it

is due to our inability to get it - to accept the present reality of it and act accordingly.

To “Repent” is to allow God to make us “Righteous” and then live as though that were true. We are so full of ourselves and so devoid of God, there is very little to distinguish the church from any other human organization. Repent!

Remember Jesus’s thesis statement for the Sermon came in 5:20, where He said, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Those people Jesus was talking about devoted every waking hour to the religion handed to them. Please understand. God Himself established the true faith and practice among a select few people. They did their best to honor that faith and practice that became known as Judaism.

Did it evolve into something God never intended, did the people become unfaithful, did the leadership use it for their own purposes... Sure, and don’t we?

There is a religion broadly called Christianity that is as full of foolish distraction and human intent as the Judaism practiced then.

Being religious - even if your religion is called Christian - will not get you anywhere. That's what Jesus has been saying.

Within the thesis there is a central theme word, which is "Righteousness." When we covered that in detail, I said, how we define "Righteousness," is vital.

Jesus has shown us how He defines "Righteousness." Through the Beatitudes, and Antitheses, and the Lord's Prayer, and the admonishment not to worry, and the treatment on judging others, He has demonstrated what "Righteousness" looks like.

Yet, Christians constantly revert to a legalistic religiosity of dos and don'ts.

Look it's very simple, Love God - Love others... Start there! If we took ourselves less seriously and God more seriously, it would be a step in the right direction.



It sounds harsh, but it is the most loving thing I can say, “Get over yourself - it’s not about you.” We all need to remember that daily.

What does that look like as an easy to remember axiom? “Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.” Rather than doing to others what they have done to us, or giving them what they may deserve, we are to treat them the way we want them to treat us.

If you’ve been paying attention, you’ll notice that I just said, it’s not about us and then Jesus said, use yourself as the litmus test for properly treating others.



Disclaimer: Don't freak out about the pagan symbols here - it serves a purpose...

I could go into a very long, detailed and tedious explanation of why the Golden Rule has been discredited as hack philosophy by everyone from the ancient Greeks to Augustine, and from the Enlightenment Philosophers to liberal Christian scholars today.

It has been put forward as the highest ethical good by practically every culture, religion and philosophy worldwide. What smart people for at least 25 centuries have realized, is any ethical axiom based upon an

individual's idea of good and bad, is problematic at best.

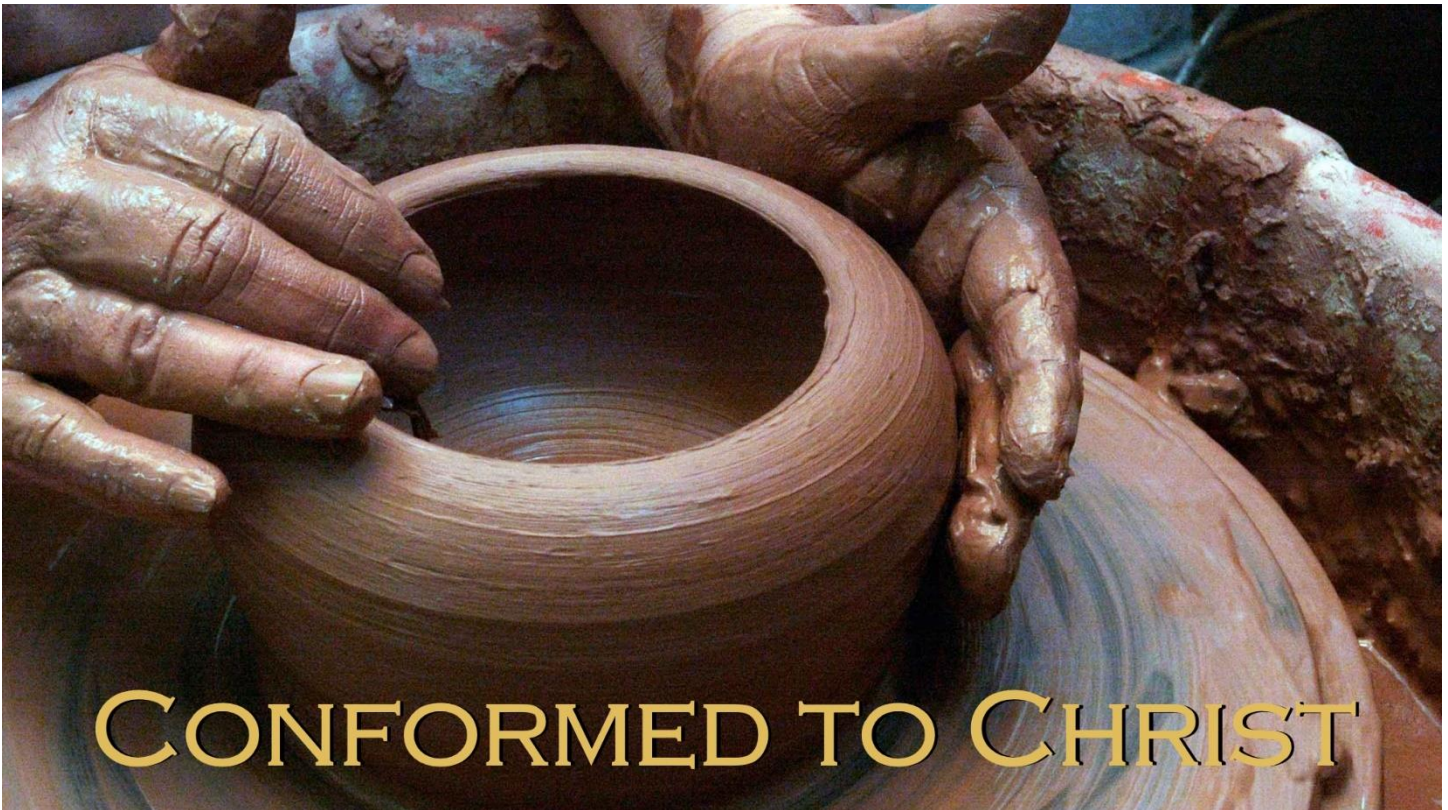
I have actually heard Christians say I treat others very strictly, because I treat myself strictly - it's how we stay on the straight and narrow.

According to Aristotle, the Golden Rule is unworthy of being considered in ethics at all, because the basis for it is on each person's interpretation and standard - the individual becomes the measure of ethics.

So, while the Rule appears long before Jesus's formulation, in the writings of Confucius in the East and the Sophists in the West, it is universally dismissed as a sound ethical axiom - Immanuel Kant essentially called it "Trivial nonsense."

Well, my friends, Kant and all the others are exactly right. If Jesus simply put this already worn out saying in His sermon, it doesn't mean much, and it actually runs counter to what He has taught so far.

But, that's not at all what He did. It's very easy to miss the point and most people do, but not us, not today.



CONFORMED TO CHRIST

The Rule applies from the perspective of a Kingdom of Heaven person. When Jesus says, “As you want,” He’s not talking about human you. He’s talking about the you that fully understands, embraces and lives life like the kind of Kingdom of Heaven citizen He’s been describing for 2 ½ chapters.

This has nothing to do with you treating other people how you, as a person, what to be treated! This has to do with you treating other people how Jesus would treat them, because Jesus is the you, you’re supposed to be.

The ethic behind the original saying is purely individual and purely human. Nothing in Jesus's Sermon indicates that we are to think in those terms.

Some Christian scholars have actually proposed that this axiom was a later insertion - that it never came from Jesus because it runs counter to what Jesus taught.

Well they're correct in that, if we take this as it is commonly understood by people without the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, it is out of place.

That's why we must recognize that Jesus wasn't just regurgitating an old maxim - Jesus was doing what Jesus always did - He turned the common saying on its head.

The ethic behind Jesus's use is God's ethic as described in the Sermon on the Mount. Be the person described in these pages. Think like the person described in these verses and you will understand how people are to be treated.

When you use this verse as a mandate to evaluate your personal human feelings and then act from that basis, you have entirely missed what Jesus taught.

When you use this verse as Jesus intended it becomes another way of saying and applying Leviticus 19:18, 18NASB “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Remember, Jesus, by His own authority as the Word of God, said, 43NASB “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 “If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48).

When taken the way Jesus intended, the Golden Rule is a tremendous aid. As a Christian member of God’s

own family, eternally saved, forever loved, and presently enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

From that starting point and that ethic what is the right way for me to be treated? Then... How can I treat anyone else any less than that?