MATTHEW 7

Mat 7:1-5  “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

* A significant portion of the Sermon on the mount thus far has been devoted to warning people against hypocrisy.
  + Hypocrites in Jesus’ day, like today, are often quick to judge others while being guilty of the very things for which they judge others.
  + In some cases, the religious leaders of the Jews were making up rules and laws in addition to God’s laws and then telling the people they needed to follow both
  + Jesus sternly warns these types of people that if they judge others harshly and unjustly, they will receive harsh judgment back.
  + The unmerciful in judgement would receive no mercy
* Verse 2 ought to bring to mind the golden rule
  + Imagine if we only judged others with a standard we would like to be judged with.
  + Our judgement would be much less harsh, much less assuming, and much more merciful.
* The godly way to approach correcting another person is to first look at yourself.
  + Do you struggle with a similar problem?
  + If so, correct it in your own life first.
  + Then, rather than passing unhelpful judgement on another, you will know how to help him escape the sin that ensnares him.
* An important point here is that humans have no authority to judge one another.
  + We don’t make up rules and hold other people to those rules
    - If that is what is happening, a person is stepping beyond their authority.
  + Humans, specifically Christians, only have authority to make statements of judgement based on the words of God, Christ, and the Spirit.

Mat 7:6  “*Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”*

* This statement appears to stand on its own in the context.
* Jesus is calling His listeners to discernment when sharing His message with other.
  + We should search out hearts that are prepared to hear the gospel
  + We should not spend all of our time on those who see no beauty or value in Christ and are hostile to the gospel.
* Who are the dogs and the pigs of verse 6?
  + Those who have no appreciation for what is valuable or precious
* What are the pearls of verse 6?
  + The precious message of Jesus that the world needs

Mat 7:7-8  “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened*.”

* Jesus promises guidance and entrance for everyone honest seeker.
  + Those who are not followers of Christ but genuinely want to know the God creation reveals will be assisted by Christ in their effort to find Him.
  + Those who are in Christ but seek opportunity and guidance to pursue the Christian life will be assisted by God in becoming who He wants them to be.
  + God loves all people and wants them to love Him. Of course, He is going to open the door if we come knocking.

Mat 7:9-11 *Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

* Even as human beings who allow evil to creep into our actions towards others, we still capable of caring for others in a loving way.
* If we are capable, how much more capable must a perfectly loving God be at providing for those in His care.

Mat 7:12 - *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

* The golden rule is one of the most famous teachings of Jesus
* When asked in chapter 22 what the greatest command in the Old Testament Law was, Jesus responded with the greatest and next greatest:
  + 1. Love God
  + 2. Love your neighbor as yourself
* The “Law and the Prophets” refers to the Law given to the Jews by Moses
* The golden rule is a one sentence summary of many of God’s instruction in the Old Testament

Mat 7:13-14 *- “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

* Jesus speaks of 2 gates in verses 13 and 14.
  + The first gate leads to destruction (eternal separation from God).
  + The second gate leads to life (eternal life with God)
* There are two paths which lead to each gate
  + The path to destruction is wide and easy to walk down.
    - The ease of the path attracts a lot of people.
    - It’s easy and enjoyable at first, but leads somewhere no one wants to go.
    - The wide path represents a life lived for self and not for God
      * It is easy and enjoyable to live for sin and pleasure
      * But it will lead you somewhere you don’t want to go
  + The path to life is narrow and hard
    - Few people walk on this path
    - It is difficult at first but leads to a great reward
    - The narrow path represents a life lived for God
      * It is difficult to surrender your own self-interest to live for God’s interest
      * But it will lead you to an eternal life of joy.
* It is important to notice that Jesus tells His disciples from the very beginning that they will be in the minority.
* APPLICATION:
  + We shouldn’t let the fact that we are in the minority discourage us or cause us to believe we are doing something incorrectly.
  + We should worry more if we find ourselves in a majority.
  + However, we should always be willing to evaluate if our delivery and teaching of the gospel requires adjustment

Mat 7:15 *- “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*”

* Peter, John, and Paul all address “false prophets” in their letters to churches following Jesus’ ascent back into heaven.
  + A prophet is someone who delivers a message from God
  + If the prophet is “false,” it simply means he/she is lying about either:
    - The content of the message
    - Where the message originated
  + A false prophet was someone who lied to the Church saying they had received a message from God when they hadn’t.
  + John deals with these “liars” in 1 John 2.
* The false prophets were very sly.
  + They had a facade of being genuine but were not born out of humble obedience like a true follower of Christ
  + They had ulterior motives
* They were wolves in sheep costumes.
  + They weren’t interested in the good of the sheep
  + They were interested in serving themselves
* Jesus gives a simple illustration and test to identify these dangerous individuals
* Watching a fruit tree year after year will make it clear what kind of tree you are watching, likewise watching a man/woman for a period of time will make it clear what kind of man/woman you are watching
  + If a tree produces cherries every year… it is a cherry tree!
  + If a tree produces coconuts every year… it’s a coconut palm
  + If a tree produces raspberries every year… it’s not a tree, it is a bush and it is a raspberry bush.
  + If a man produces good and godly works every year… he is genuinely a follower of Christ
  + If a woman produces evil and destructive works every year… she is not a genuinely following Christ
* It is not sufficient to listen to someone’s words to distinguish their true identity
  + A greenhouse employee can put a tag that reads “apple tree” on a cedar but that doesn’t make it an apple tree
  + Many false teachers are very skilled at saying all the right things and making themselves sound really good, but it is only part of their sheep costume. We must watch a person over time to see the fruit (works) they produce.
* Any tree (person) that does not produce good fruit (godly actions) will eventually be destroyed by God.
* God knows what genuine sheep look like and the costume isn’t fooling Him.

Mat 7:21 - *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”*

* In context, this text flows naturally from the verse we just discussed.
* Many people claim Jesus with their words but words are not enough.
* What is particularly scary about this text is that the individuals being condemned had participated in at least *some* works of righteousness but were still condemned by God

APPLICATION:

* There are many today who claim the name of Jesus… but only in part.
  + They claim the parts of which they approve.
  + Other parts are rejected.
  + They even perform good works in the name of Christ
    - Feed the poor
    - Preach a sermon
    - Care for someone in need
    - Attend worship
* We cannot claim the name of Christ if we aren’t ready to embrace His true full identity and everything it entails.
* If we are ashamed of a part of Christ or God or the Spirit and that shame leads us to discard the real identity of our God for something more appealing in our eyes, one day that God will be ashamed of us for failing to represent Him properly to the world.
* Luk 9:26  “*For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*”

Mat 7:24-27 - “*Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”*

* Jesus is bringing His lesson to a close and reinforces the importance of its application.
* Jesus is not only interested in the ears of His audience but their lives.
* He makes 2 promises
  + Those who hear His words and DO THEM will have a solid foundation on which to build their lives
    - No tragedy or storm of life will be able to topple a life devoted to God
    - Not even death can capsize what Jesus protects
  + Those who hear His words and DO NOT DO THEM will have their foundation torn from under them.
    - Those who choose to build their houses on something other than the doctrines of Christ can, in this life, have their sense of worth and purpose torn away from them
    - All who refuse to heed Jesus’ words in this life will lose their lives in eternity.

Mat 7:28  And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

* After hearing Jesus’ message, the people were astounded and rightfully so.
* Rather than being a law reader and interpreter like the scribes, Jesus spoke as a lawgiver and had the power to prove His authority.