

“Kingdom Come”

Sermon on the Mount Series: Thirteenth Lesson, Matthew 7.7-12

Introduction

- Missing out Matt 7.1-6
 - See the bonus podcast
 - SUMMARY:
 - Judge (krinoō) often carries the connotation ‘condemn’.
 - We do need to make judgments: Matt 7.6, 15-20; 18.15-17.
 - But done right
 - “In the same way”
 - Implies judgement by God. See Matt 18.23-35.
 - See also: Romans 2:1, 21–23; James 4:11–12.
 - Speck: karpōs, a tiny splinter of wood or straw
 - Plank: beam or rafter
 - Hypocrite
 - Here it’s the disciples who are hypocrites, not his usual targets the Pharisees et cetera.
 - The speck is there. The problem is not the diagnosis. The problem is the inconsistency of applying judgement to another but not to oneself.
 - Sacred: The holy given to the unholy is unthinkable.
 - Pearls: What is meant to be admired forever is instead lost.
 - Tear you to pieces
 - What does this mean? Is it that thoughtless application of truth leads to unhealthy reactions?
 - What of the connection with judgement? Jesus is advocating discernment here.

1. What it means to ask, seek and knock

A. Defining asking, seeking, knocking

- It is not
 - Insincere asking - see warnings about prayer in Matt 6.
 - Persistence is expected, but not a pagan-style bullying/manipulation of God (again, Matt 6 & prayer).
- It is
 - Knocking: Rabbinic literature used the metaphor for prayer.
 - Ask... Seek... Knock
 - present tense, indicating continuous, persistent prayer.
 - See parables of Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8.

B. Providing Biblical examples

- OT: Hannah - 1 Sam 1
- NT: Luke 18.1-8; Acts 10.1-4

2. Learning to trust God

What are the good gifts he wants to give us?

- They are not whatever we want
- They are whatever we need
 - Bread: round loaf would look a bit like a stone.
 - Bread... Fish: Most common food around Lake Galilee.
 - Snake: eel-like catfish of Galilee could be said to look a bit like a snake
 - Evil: Very strong word, also used for the “evil one” in Matthew 6:13.
 - How much more
 - Even though we must persist in prayer (earlier versus) we can be confident of receiving what we need when we need it.
 - Delay is not an indication of a lack of concern.
 - Good gifts
 - Presumably the Holy Spirit, Luke 11:13 (see Romans 8).
 - But not restricted to this given the context of chapter 6 regarding material provision (Matthew 6:25-34).
 - The eagerness of God to give....”how much more”

3. How these truths affect the way we live

A. The unhealthy asking to be avoided

- This means practically....

B. The healthy asking to be cultivated

- This means practically....

Conclusion

- v12
 - A summary of all the SOM up to this point
 - ‘so’: It's presence seems to indicate that this phrase is meant to sum up the previous teaching block - possibly from as far back as Matt 5.17.
 - A good summary of discipleship And the “greater righteousness” expected.
 - "This ‘Golden Rule’ (the Emperor Alexander Severus reputedly had it written in gold on his wall – not a bad example to follow!) is often compared with the negative principle (Do not do to others what you yourself dislike) which is found in a wide variety of ancient literature from the Athenian Isocrates to Rabbi Hillel (Shabbath 31a; cf. Tobit 4:15)."¹
 - A similar formula is used of the double commandment to love in Matt 22:40, and Matthew undoubtedly intends us to understand this rule as spelling out what it means to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’.
- Imagine a home, church, society living like this...!

¹ France, R. T. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary. TNTC