

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Series: Sermon on the Mount

Title: Seeking the Kingdom

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WARM-UP

Jesus doesn't want us to misunderstand. He did not come to abolish the law of Moses, he came to accomplish its purpose. (see Mt 5:17). Later in Mt 23:2-3, he tells his disciples to obey whatever the Pharisees tell them, but don't follow their example. These can seem like contradictory statements. How do they co-exist with your understanding of the good news of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ?

DISCUSSION

There has been a regular emphasis in this series on the Kingdom of God in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus himself refers to the Kingdom or the Kingdom of Heaven on many occasions throughout the sermon. Having a kingdom mindset can bring Jesus' words into greater understanding. This is more than a list of topics that we should follow, they are life-giving understanding of why God established the law and what he intends it to be, Therefore we can use his teaching on things like not judging others, to help clear out a better understanding of how to seek God and find God in deeper ways. He wants to connect and give us what we ask, but coming to him with a Kingdom mindset makes all the difference.

1. What is Jesus trying to tell teach us by his use of, 'The Kingdom' throughout the Sermon on the mount (some references Mt 5:3-10, 19, 20; 6:10, 33; 7:13)
2. Compare Jesus' statement in Mt 5:17-18 about why he has come with his summary of the law in Mt 7:12. Do these statements connect and does he answer his own purpose?
3. What is the difference between how we judge others (Mt. 7:1-5) and the judgment Paul talks about in Romans 14:10-12? NOTE: By the way, there is another Kingdom of God reference from Paul a few verses later (v.17). It may shed further light on Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

DISCUSSION

4. What do you think Jesus is saying about having discernment in Mt. 7:6? Pearls, pigs, and dogs? Using the five building blocks mentioned in Ruth Haley Barton's book on pursuing God's Will i) Discernment only takes place through the Trinity, ii) Christ gives us a desire to want to discern iii) a deep belief in the goodness of God iv) Love is our ultimate calling v) Doing God's will as it is revealed to us.

Using these thoughts, what's the difference between judging and discernment?

5. Jesus wants us to keep asking and seeking. He wants to give good gifts (see Mt 7:11). Do you believe in God's Character that he really does want to do this? Or is there some doubt about it? Share your honest level of trust when it comes to this promise.

6. How does not judging others change our mindset as we come into prayer?

Application:

What is God telling you personally to get rid of in your view of others or in your opinions of others? In other words, what misguided thoughts about others is standing in the way of hearing clarity from God? Ask yourself (and share with the group if you wish) the answer to these two questions:

What is God telling you to do through this study?

What are you going to do about it?