

Matthew Lesson 12

Last week we looked at the Lord's Prayer through a more literally Jewish understanding of the idioms and words that were used. You could sum up what we covered like this:

Our Father - These words tell us that no one is excluded! All are included. G-d is all about family.

Who art in heaven - Our Father rules in heaven and earth and He sees us and knows us from this perspective which is all encompassing.

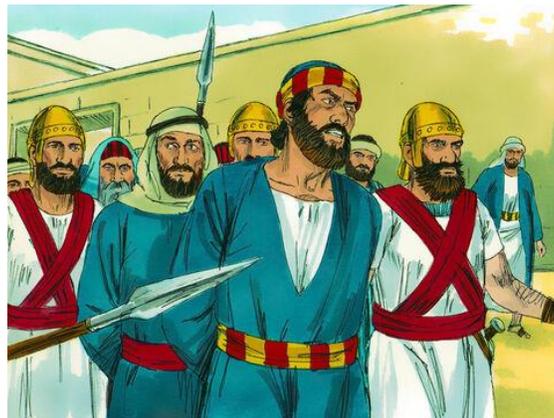
Hallowed be Thy name - To Hallow His name, we are constantly pursuing righteousness, and we are willing to lay our lives down to bring glory to His name.

Thy kingdom come - is not a date on the calendar, but a longing for His eternal reign to be established on earth. We partner with G-d to bring this about as we spread the good news and as He redeems His people.

This week we will continue with the Sermon on the Mount and look specifically at judging and discerning.

First we want to remember that if we are persecuted for righteousness sake, it is a blessing.

Acts 5:40-42 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.



1. What is the mindset we need to develop when persecution for His Name comes to us?

With this in mind, let's move into Matthew 7...

Matthew 7:1-6 Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, Let me remove the speck from your eye; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Do you see the concept of mercy in these verses?

Remember we discussed that to receive mercy, we are to give mercy.

Now we see this concept applied to judging others.

If we have to judge someone, do the judging as you would want to be judged.

And this brings up a question.

What is the difference between judging and discerning?

Because **I Kings 3:9** says: Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to **judge** Your people, that I may **discern** between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?

First we need to see that this verse is talking about judging G-d's people, and we see both words judge and discern contained in this verse.

To judge: is shahpat (sheen, pey, tet) means:

shaphat: to judge, govern, vindicate, punish

From an article called: "Jewish Judges Who Are They and What Are Their Qualities?" And this article proceeds to tell us:

"The seven fundamental qualities of a judge are "wisdom, humility, fear of God, disdain of gain [money], love of truth, love of people, and a good reputation." A judge must have "a good eye, a lowly [humble] spirit, must be friendly in intercourse [pleasant in company], and gentle in speech and dealings with others; he

must be very strict with himself and control his passions; he must have a courageous heart to rescue the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, cruelty, and persecution, and eschew wrong and injustice."

From this we see that judging of G-d's people should be done from the position of fear of G-d and a humble spirit, not a spirit of payback or meanness, or getting even in some way.

First we need to check our own motives and consider our own hearts when judging:



Jeremiah 17:9–10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Our judgments should always be impartial and with a humble and friendly heart.

Leviticus 19:15 You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich: judge your kinsman fairly.

So we have a picture of G-d's heart when it comes to judging: judge as you would want to be judged and with an impartial motive.

And we remember that I Kings told us we needed to "discern between good and evil." **To discern** is to consider carefully, gain understanding or to be instructed. We see the concept used in a verse in

Deuteronomy 32:10 He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; **He encircled him, He instructed him (He taught him to discern(binnah), He kept him as the apple of His eye.**

2. What are the things you see in this verse that bring out the loving care of our heavenly Father?

I Kings 3:9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

King Solomon asks for a listening heart to the Lord, in order to **discern (bin)** between good and evil.

In our day of "fake news" everywhere, we have to be able to discern between good and evil. Discernment will always point us toward the Word of G-d, so that He can instruct us in how to see and understand people, things or situations clearly. **We gain skill and insight by studying the Word and living what we study.**

A wonderful Jewish book called Pirkei AVot 2:5 tells us

"Don't judge your friend until you are in his situation."

Being in someone else's shoes, so to speak, gives you discernment you would not otherwise have. It gives us compassion.

Then the Lord goes on to say:

Matthew 7:6,7 Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

In the days when the Temple stood and people brought sacrifices, it was known that you did not give any part of a sacrifice to a dog, in other words the sacrifices are to be holy or separated out to the Lord - they are not to be given to the dogs. Dogs were unclean creatures according to the law.

"And don't cast your pearls before swine."



This is a metaphor with pearls representing something so valuable that mere money cannot purchase them.

Matthew 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,.....

In this verse we are clearly told the kingdom of heaven is being compared to pearls so great in price that it is worth selling everything to purchase it. Nothing compares to the greatness and worth of the kingdom.

How does one get to the Kingdom? By knowing and accepting and living the truth.

However, Yeshua is warning us that not all will accept this truth regardless of its critical importance.

Proverbs 23:23a Buy truth and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

You cannot sell truth, a heart must be willing to accept it. Not all will.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your **truth**. Your word is **truth**.

So it is a question of "discernment" – if you have shared the Gospel with people, you come to discern those who will resist. Paul (Rabbi Shaul) tells us all of us "were enemies" echthros, in Greek meaning Hostile toward G-d.

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Though we may all resist to some degree, there are those who will be clearly hostile to the Good News. These are the ones who may turn violent and harm you for telling them they are sinners and need to repent.

Only the discernment given to us by G-d can tell us when to shake the dust off your feet and keep moving.

And there are others who are more than hostile.

This is what Paul tells Timothy to deal with those who are anathemous (436) -

opposers, those who actually oppose the gospel . Timothy was to turn away or

Avoid (apostrepho in the present imperative = **command** to **keep avoiding** them.

(Complete Word Study dictionary - New Testament)

This is where Paul says:

2 Timothy 3:3-5 unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. **Turn away (or keep avoiding)** from such as these!...

Proverbs 9:7 He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, And he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself.

Proverbs 9:8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

Now the Lord is going to put a punctuation mark on what He has just taught by saying:

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The Greek word for **"enter"** is (1525) and has an urgency attached to it - in the **imperative** form. It means **Don't Delay! Enter Now!**

Put the principles of the Sermon on the Mount into action. Just knowing about Yeshua and what he's teaching is not enough. We must know Him intimately and Do what He is telling us to do in these teachings.

The **"narrow gate"** speaks of the truth that there is one door to enter heaven. Yeshua is stressing the truth of this.

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." **Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. The bottom line is that Yeshua is punctuating the fact that not all roads lead to heaven. There is one way, and not



all will want to hear about it.

Matthew 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

All of our lives we are producing something. This is telling us that we will be known by the products or outcomes of our words and actions. The natural processes of who we are and what we do produce results. In other words, our daily walk matters, because, each of us - as a tree - will be known by our fruit.

What is "good?"

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Good is the opposite of evil.

Nahum 1:7 The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

And because some people are producing "bad fruit", the Lord will say:

Matthew 7:21- 23 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.

These are possibly some of the most terrifying words in the Bible.

Yeshua is re-emphasizing the importance of the motive of our works and emphasizing whether our works brought glory to G-d.

If not, they were all about ourselves.

Are we doing the will of our Father?

4. What is the will of our Father?

Now the Lord is going to sum up what He has said by thee words:

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

5. How do we build our lives so we will be able to endure the storms?

Matthew 7:28,29 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

They were the ones who so meticulously preserved the Law and encouraged others to do so. However, they took a turn and man-made traditions more important than the Word of G-d. Though their role was to preserve the Word, they actually nullified it by making traditions more important. Matthew was confronting this hypocrisy.

Mark 7:13 Making void the word of God for your tradition, which you have handed down. And you do many things like such.

6. What are traditions of man today that cause people to ignore the Word of G-d?

**How has the Sermon on the Mount affected your thinking or your life?*