

## Jesus' Sermon on the Mount Sermon Series

### Sermon 28

#### The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:12 "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Here in one comprehensive statement Jesus summarizes all human relations. God's will for our lives is that we love each other. This is the main message of the Holy Scriptures. Some people think that the main message of religion is to understand that God is one. This is important but it is not the main message of scripture. Our goal in life is not to understand the nature of God. Our main goal in life is to love each other.

When we try to obey this word we understand how much we fail to do this. We recognize our selfishness. We are then led to mourn for our selfishness and seek healing from God. God provides the healing and forgiveness of sins that we need through Jesus Christ. We must be born again. This is the message of the Bible.

In the original Greek of this verse there is a word that has not been translated in the Turkish version we are reading. It shows up in the English version for this sermon. It is the word, "Therefore." I would like to share with you that word in another Turkish translation. This is from the Kutsal Incil translation.

Matthew 7:12 "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The word "therefore" points to a conclusion. "For this reason" we should do to others what we want others to do for us. What is that reason? Let's go back to the previous verse and discover the reason we love each other.

Matthew 7:11 "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 good things to those who ask Him!

Our behavior toward each other stems from the reality that God is good and that He loves us. Thus when we understand the love that God has toward us, it gives birth to love toward others. This is the law and the prophets.

Some people will say that Jesus' statement is not unique with Him. They say that the golden rule is found in almost every culture of the world. This simply proves that God has not hidden His requirements from people. The whole world knows the requirements of God and they are without excuse in the judgment. If you know the truth so well, why aren't you doing it?

How does Jesus' command find its practical application in our lives? We must first put ourselves in other people's place.

Let's say you have been in line waiting to pay your bill at the post office for fifteen minutes. You need to get back to work or school and it is getting late. There is a line, but no ticket system. Suddenly someone enters the post office, goes straight to the front of the line and starts asking the postal worker questions. The postal worker stops giving service to the person in line and gives attention to the newcomer. The newcomer has cut in line and it is making you late. How do you feel? Are you happy? Why are you unhappy? You are unhappy because the newcomer has behaved selfishly and you are paying the price for that selfishness.

If you don't like it when others do that, why would you do that to them? If you cut in line are you not really showing disrespect for other people's lives? Are you not putting yourself above others? This kind of selfish behavior will not enter the kingdom of heaven. It is contrary to the law of God. Examine your life. Are you really obeying the golden rule?

Many people are comfortable to let others around them do the work. Perhaps the wife works all day at her job and the husband works all day at his job. When they come home the husband relaxes in front of the T.V. and the woman cleans the house and prepares the food and washes the dishes. He sits there. Is that not selfishness? Didn't his wife work all day long too? Why should she do all the work in the home?

Some people are lazy at work. They hardly do anything, yet when payday comes they want that money. If you get paid and you don't work for that money are you not stealing the money? If you were the owner would you want to pay people money to talk on their cell phones and smoke cigarettes? Laziness is a violation of the principles of God's kingdom.

How many of you like to be scolded? Not many. When we deal with people are we unkind? Do we look down our nose at them? Do we behave coldly toward them? If so, we have not received the love of God in our hearts.

When you have been having a hard day, don't you like to hear words of encouragement and hope? Think of others around you who are suffering. If you would like kind and encouraging words, wouldn't they like them also? Perhaps you can lift someone's spirits with a positive and helpful attitude.

Every talent that you possess comes as a gift from God. You did not create it. So why would you look down upon others who are not as capable or talented as you are? This is just pride. Pride is a sin. When we recognize and appreciate that God has given us all that we have, we will not behave as if we are better than others.

Suppose that you were an atheist and you had no hope of salvation from death and a future life. You live a hard life only to expect an eternal grave at the end. Wouldn't you wish to learn that

there really is a God? Wouldn't you want to know that you really could live forever? Of course! Then if we really obey the golden rule, shouldn't we tell others around us about the love and care of God and the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ?

Let's say you believe in God but you think that you have to earn enough merits to go to heaven. Your whole life you are under a heavy load of trying to be good enough to please God. But in your mind you have no assurance that God accepts your labor. You don't know if you are good enough. You think you might be saved but you are not sure. Maybe God will not accept you. You are not happy with this. You feel depressed so you try not to think about it. Wouldn't you wish for someone to tell that you are accepted with God in Jesus Christ? Would you want to know that Jesus has paid the price for your sins? Wouldn't you want to know that you can know that you will be saved? If so, we are under obligation to tell people the truth about Jesus Christ.

What if you were sinning and unrepentant? What if you were living in such a way that you could not possibly go to heaven? Would you want someone to help you get back on the right way? Yes.

In the same way, God does not let us continue in sin without a warning. If we are behaving badly to others, God will allow us to experience similar mistreatment. He does this because of love. He wants us to understand what it feels like to be treated that way so that we will repent and obey the golden rule.

Sometimes in this life when we do good, we receive goodness in return in a similar manner from others. But even when we do not, the love that God has toward us finds expression in our treatment of others. This is the kingdom of God and its richest reward.