

What Ever Happened to the Golden Rule?

Steve Berger February 4, 2018

Introduction

- increasingly concerned about what influences us
- tv, news, entertainment, music, movies, social media, peer group etc.

Application — *it seems manifestly obvious that not just the world, but the church is being influenced by devilish forces that seek to divide and conquer, pitting us against one another... there is something loose over this country, knows no bounds!*

Good News — this godless spirit is so prevalent, that if we'll start walking in obedience — we'll shine like lights to the world, we'll be a city on a hill that can't be hidden, leading people to an encounter with Jesus.

FACT — **the darker the world gets the easier it is for the Christian to stand out and shine — unless we become like the world... this concern inspired this series —**
Kingdom Ethics or Cultural Evils

Review — last week Pastor Jimmy started by addressing Matthew 7:1-6 Sermon on the Mount, Condemnation.

- unjust, harsh, mean-spirited, self-righteous, judgmental, critical, condescending etc.
- there is no place for that in the life of the Believer — unless you want that same measure you use — it will be measured back to you.

Today — pick up where Jimmy left off...

What Ever Happened to the Golden Rule?

- **Matthew 7:7-14**
“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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. 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.”
- **Matthew 7:12**
“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Golden Rule — Connection to Context

- Therefore — indicates a transitional connection to previous thoughts
- 1) don't condemn people; 2) give good things to people, like Father does to you
- beyond that — this reality — this single verse summarizes the entire Sermon on the Mount

“With this commandment the Sermon on the Mount reaches its summit and its peak. This saying of Jesus has been called the capstone of the whole discourse. This statement is no doubt the best known of Jesus' teachings and is the highest level of His ethical teaching.”¹
William Barclay, Bible Scholar

- beyond that — doing unto others is the fulfillment of law and the prophets

“This is the sum of the Decalogue, the Pentateuch, and the whole sacred Word. This is The Code Christian. This is the condensation of all that is right and generous.”²
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

LISTEN — the Golden Rule is so huge, so spiritually significant that it envelopes the previous verses, the entire Sermon On the Mount, and the totality of God's will for His children.

Golden Rule — Connection to Importance...

...two interlocking, indivisible concepts that fulfill the law and the prophets

- **Matthew 7:12**
“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
- **Matthew 22:34-40**
But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, ‘**YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.**’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Application — *loving God and loving people, doing unto others, fulfills all the law and the prophets are trying to tell us, it is that important!*

Listen carefully — what **does not fulfill law and prophets is loving God and 1) memorizing Bible, 2) knowing every doctrine, 3) living holy life, etc.**

¹ Myron S. Augsburger, *The Communicator's Commentary Series: Matthew* (Word Books, June 1, 1982), 99

² Charles Spurgeon, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Ravenio Books, June 27, 2014)

Question — *What ever happened to the Golden Rule?*

Answer — Replaced with various substitutes to satisfy our religious cravings, while giving us license to forego the Golden Rule.

Application — *so we say we love God, while attending church, going to studies, and giving money — but then mistreat people and think nothing of it — because we're committed, smart and holy. Wow!*

Fact — **if we're not loving God and people, doing unto others — at best we're misrepresenting Kingdom priorities — and at worst, hurting other people.**

Application — *loving God and people, doing unto others, fulfills the law and the prophets — let's give it that priority, that importance in our daily practice.*

Golden Rule — Connection to History

...Jesus wasn't the first to come up with this idea, He just turned it right side up...

- 2500 BC Egyptians — that which you hate to be done to you, do not do to another.
- 1000 BC Hinduism — one should never do to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self.
- 600 BC Buddhism — hurt not others with that which pains yourself.
- 600 BC Confucius — what you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others.
- 400 BC Isocrates — do not do to others that which angers you when they do it to you.
- 300 BC Persians — refrain from doing to another whatsoever is not good for yourself.
- 100 BC Rabbi Hillel — what is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow, *this is the whole Torah; the rest is explanation, go and learn.*

Interesting — **Jesus turned what was historically a negative and turned it positive!**

- **not** just "don't do to others what you don't like"
- **but** "do unto others what you want them to do to you"
- not just withholding, but providing!
- not just not condemning, but giving good things, **JUST LIKE FATHER DOES!**

SO IMPORTANT:

What God requires of us...

He initiates in us!

He shows the way,

gives the example, and

offers the experience...

...so we can then do to others what we've enjoyed God doing to us.

Question — *What might happen in and through our lives if we aggressively went against the flow of today's society and started doing for others what we would like done to us?*

- Thoughts — charitable, gracious, benefit of doubt, truthful
- Words — blessing, encouraging, affirming, life-giving, loving
- Actions — generous, thoughtful, kind, patient

Grace Chapel —

Let's go crazy extravagant this week in doing unto others,

let's get back to what really matters,

let's be influenced by the Golden Rule of the Kingdom and not the cesspool of society,

let's be proactive in loving people and not just not doing them harm...

let's be like Jesus!

Discussion Questions

- 1.** How can the Golden Rule be greater than the Sermon on the Mount, and all the Law and the Prophets?
- 2.** In our churches today, what do we add to the Golden Rule to fulfill the law, and to show our love for God?
- 3.** What is different in the way Jesus presented the “do/don't do unto others,” than other religions?
- 4.** How can we pro-actively “do unto others” in our lives today?
Thoughts?
Words?
Actions?