

S.N. March - 14, 71 P.M. W.K.I.

A stranger entered the church in the middle of the sermon and seated himself in the back pew. After a while he began to fidget. Leaning over to a white-haired man at his side, evidently an old member of the congregation, he whispered: "How long has he been preaching?" "Thirty or forty years, I think," the old man said. "I'll stay then," decided the stranger. "He must be almost done."

"THE GOLDEN RULE"

Matt. 7:6-12

INTRODUCTION

This section is a continuation of the subject of judgment which we began last Sunday night. "Judge not that ye be not judged". Please don't say anything about my devilment. The scripture says "Judge not." It all goes together. Now the principle which we discussed last week was the fellow who carried around a folding judgment seat and every time something momentous happened or some fellow's conduct was not according to his standards, he would sit down and pass judgment upon him. That is what he is talking about when he discussed the little speck in your brother's eye but fail to notice that there was a great big log protruding from your own eye. And so the habit of judgment in a condemning way, in a critical way, is what Jesus is pointing out to the Kingdom man. Now keep in mind that all of this discussion ~~is~~ is for the Christian. This was given to the (kingdom man) the encouragement was to illustrate how you are to live, and you were not to be able to sit back and formulate your condemning judgments upon others. Because Jesus said the main work of the Christian is to what? It is to help a brother. It is to see what you can do to lift his load and to make him discover, or help him discover the wonderful grace of God.

Now tonight, as we approach this next section, it is still upon the

idea of judgment.

I will deal with it under three heads: the discriminating judgment,
 in V. 6, the Christian man's quest, V. 7 - 11, the royal principle of the Christian
 life in V. 12. I have chosen the subject of the Golden Rule to tie this together.
 I think it very appropriate.

I. The Christian Man's Discriminating Judgment, V. 6

Now we discussed this at length last Sunday evening about the matter
 of judgment. Now this word proceeds by a warning, and it is a strange word, and
 he has left now the unkind judgment which a man may render in saying that we won't
 do this. We won't set ourselves up as a judge because this will come back to us;
 and Christians never should be busy-bodies.

Now, in this verse Jesus tells us that there are people who live like
dogs and swine, dogs and hogs. There are people whose minds are shut tight against
 the high and holy things. And they live by the law of the jungle.

Now, instead of sitting in judgment on these brethren, Jesus said you
 must have some moral discrimination when it comes to the matter of giving holy things
 to dogs or casting your pearls before swine, because the dogs will rend it and the
hogs will trample the pearls under foot, so there must be moral discrimination. Don't
give them the holy things. Now this is where you are going to have to have spiritual

insight to determine between hogs and non-hogs, and dogs and non-dogs. Well, you know what dogs do and you know what hogs do, and this will take the matter of discrimination on your part, to discover, because by their fruits you are going to know them. And ~~the~~ you know who they operate and you know what they do. Now they ~~were~~ are not people that the kingdom man should refrain in other words from sitting in judgment, critical judgment, condemning judgment, but he is going to have wisdom in the practical sense of every day dealings with those on the outside. There are people who use religion for their own ends. They think that they can get God to serve them. They want to make good contacts within the church so that they can use the church. They are dull of heart and slow to learn because men must come to God because of love. And here is a challenge for us not to give these holy things to dogs. Sometimes in our zeal we do not use this discriminating judgment which we are instructed to use here. Herod wanted to make a circus out of the appearance of Jesus. But how did our Lord ~~handle the situation?~~ handle the situation? He answered him not at all. Jesus did not act like a puppet.

There are people today who would syphon off the tithes and offerings of Christian people, and they send them some kind of financial statement, and they say that by this razzle-dazzle showmanship, they are going to do something in the name of righteousness.

I heard a man once over the radio whoop and holler about 30 minutes repeating himself and using half of his time calling for financial help, and then explained how that your Sunday School class could do so-and-so. But Jesus is saying to the disciples, Don't lower your standard. What is going to happen if you throw the pearls before those who know not their value? They are going to laugh at you, and they are going to say, Oh, you compromise. Jesus is saying there ought to be no compromise in the matter of the spiritual.

Suppose you were to commit your life to carry the gospel to the bowery of New York where there are drunks and down-and-outers, or if you had to go to Tokyo and be a missionary there for Christ, and work in some industrial center. How would you do? What would you do? Would you get on the radio or the television or try to teach the international Sunday School lesson? Suppose you were sent to people who had never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now what kind of a rule would you live by? Now, this is how the golden rule is tied into this matter of judgment? How would you begin Christian work? What do these words mean? Simply that there are some people who are not ready for Sunday School and church. The explanation of the doctrines of the Christian faith would be trampled under foot. The verities of the virgin birth would have no meaning at all. They would laugh at it. There are some who are intellectually proud. Their minds are closed.

They are ignorant to spiritual things. This is not to say that people are incapable of appreciating the gospel. But there are some, for example, the Australian aborigines. They wouldn't really be prepared for a revival meeting by Billy Graham. Now Jesus spoke these words to prepared the people who were going out into the world and face those who were largely & morally blind and spiritually insensitive. And he sent them out - "Whosoever will not receive my word or hear your words, go forth from that city, shake off the dust from your feet." Matt. 10:14.

Their hearts may not be ready as Paul discovered as he felt in the city as he left Athens. He debated on Mars Hill. A handful of people were won. But those philosophers and those professors stroked their beards about these spiritual mysteries which they had heard. But Paul did not remain there. He never returned there. He never wrote a letter back. He quit Athens because they did not appreciate the gospel. And quite often we try to help people with problems, such as those with a drinking problem, but school the ~~spirit~~ of experience tells us that sometimes these varying circumstances it is difficult to penetrate a man's heart. Those who are hostile and profane and seem to hate everyone - some people hate their wives, hate doctors, hate preachers, hate the community, hate the government. And if you have ever done very much visiting for the church, you have met a few people whose spirit has not always been sweet as you tried to share the wonderful grace of God with them. The ~~spirit~~ atmosphere

was not very clear. What does this all mean? It means that we are to make a discriminating judgment here. And it may take time to cultivate the gospel for six years before ~~somebody~~ somebody may come to accept it.

It means exactly this: ~~that~~ that we must demonstrate the gospel, live it in our families, in our homes, and set up this standard of the Golden Rule which Jesus is talking about here. I believe that a missionary going overseas, one of the best things that he can do in spreading the gospel in a foreign land is not getting on a street corner. That living in his family the gospel of Jesus Christ and giving a demonstration. I think that this is the classic example which we ~~discover~~ discover in Lottie Moon and ~~some~~ of the other missionaries. They lived it. And I think the Christian church today must begin this. We must continue to visit in order to try to enlist people in Sunday School and so forth. However, we must make some discriminating judgment, because it is like casting your pearls before swine and giving that which is holy unto the dogs. ~~The~~

These dogs roamed Palestine in packs, and they were always howling and fighting over food. The priest may be coming on his way to the temple. He met a hungry dog, and should he take a piece of meat intended for sacrifice, and give to the dog, it relieved his hunger for a while, but to what use that meat and to the cause that it was designated, it was useless to feed it to the dog. A man may be bearing a

bag of pearls and meet a hog and give some to the hog. He would only trample them under foot. Now Jesus said the chosen people, the kingdom people, should be careful in this regard. There were those who would profane the gospel. Jezebel trampled under foot the message of Elijah. She had no idea of believing in the Living God. The dog will turn to his own vomit, the sou will go back to wash in her wallow and in her ~~mixx~~ mire. A man's heart and nature must be changed. Noah sent out the raven, and it will feed upon dead bodies, but the dove he sent out will return to Noah's ark until she can find natural food to feed upon. Now there are hogs and dogs that will rend the heart of the faithful Christian, and when you are invited out by some of them and into ^{their} ~~mixx~~ gathering, how sad it is for quite often they interfere with a person worshipping.

II. The (Christian man's quest), V. 7 - 11

V. 7 - In the realm of prayer. Now we are going to discover here two or three lines just a like poetry. Just like three tiny parables here all thread together. It's about bread, fish, and eggs. Now we speak often of man's quest for God. Now here is an illustration of the wonderful quest which man is going to make, under the leadership of the golden rule as his principle. You have heard the ~~mix~~ story that many preachers ~~mixxmixx~~ peddle about the man who had a garden and his neighbor was admiring it, and his neighbor said, 'You and God have made a wonderful

garden." To which the man replied, "You should have seen the mess when only God had it." Now that's really a miserable story, because God gave the seed, the soil, the wind, the sun and the rain, and the seasons. And furthermore, God made the ~~garden~~ gardener, and all his hopes, and gave him the skills. Now when we think of it in that way, just how much ~~is~~ is left of the story?

Scientist speak of discoveries, but they can discover only what has *Been* - what is there to be discovered.

Our asking would be vain without a vast giving. Our seeking would be folly without waiting, and our knocking really would be with frustration. Not always does God give just what we ask. It must be in line with his will. You must seek because ~~we~~ every man is stricken by a discontent. You must knock because some doors only open from the inside.

Now, this is more than just a credit card which you can pay your bills the first of the month. This word ask is not cheap. Why does God require ~~us~~ us to do this? God cannot really force his gifts upon us.

The word "ask" - he repeats it four times in these verses for us. Now men shrink from asking a favor, but a little child has no reserve in asking for what he wants.

Emmerson tells us that he preached his first sermon from these words.

And he got his inspiration from a laboring man who told him that a man who prays always has his prayers answered. And so he followed this outline: Men are always praying first, second, all their prayers are granted, and third, we must beware then what we ask. Perhaps he had a point.

Too many of us, there is the failure in the art of asking.

Ask is the word for simply requesting. It denotes dependence. Jesus did not use it in his own praying. He approached the Father as an equal. We should ask the Father like dependent children on him.

This is perhaps why many Christians fail to develop. We are left entirely without excuse. Everything we need is available. Why then are we what we are?

Why are we not conforming & more and more to the pattern of Jesus Christ? Why do we not avail ourselves of it as we should? He shows us why we have not received and why we have not found, and why the door has not been opened to us. He helps us to see that if we are going to live triumphantly, we must first come and recognize our need, and in this regard, he puts it in these terms, "ask" and emphasizes this thing, that a person should ask. This is a lesson in prayer and for successful living. Instead of seeking specks and infractions in other people's eyes, we ought to be praying and trying to get some zip in our own lives. This is a wonderful injunction. Don't be afraid to live. Don't be afraid to explore. Don't be afraid to make a wonderful

discovery. Don't be afraid of a big prayer. Examine these words. The person who is not on speaking terms with God is really not living.

We would say today * he is not plugged in. He walks, he talks, but he looks like a robot. I don't care what your address is, or where you spend your ~~x~~ vacations, you are not really living unless you are able to talk with God. How do you treat the privilege of prayer? First, there are some who make practically nothing over prayer. They face the rich promises, many within the church today are not praying, and they think very little about this. How much do you pray?

Enter thou into thy closet, shut and door, and pray unto thy Father ~~whi~~ which seeth in secret, and he shall reward you openly. Have you tried that out? Do you have a secretx place of prayer? Is it a habit of your life to meet God alone each day? How about today? Have you ~~xxx~~ prayed about the needs of your own life and about the church? And living the golden rule? Did you ask God to prepare you and to bless you and to bless the Sunday School teachers and to bless the preacher, and to bless the ~~music~~ music, and to bless all that was to be a part of the service in God's house?

We are decent respectable people. We love the church after a fashion. But we have fumbled the ball to use modern language. We blunder in the use of prayer. Jesus said "seek". You must ask. The key word is ask. And to do this we first must have a ~~an~~ sense of need at this point. No one ever really prays without he felt some need.

And prayer is the thing that helps you to discover God's will. And you ought to ask in accordance with His will. Jesus urges this and he ~~is~~ is going to give some illustrations of this. The mother of St. Augustine said that she always prayed about her wayward boy, and she prayed that he might not go to Rome, because she felt that it would ruin him. But he went there, and in ~~his~~ spite of her prayers, that is the place where he found Jesus Christ. You remember Paul prayed in confidence that God would remove the thorn, but God did not grant his request. The point is that we must ask, and ask in His will.

Dr. A. T. Robertson used to spell this out for his students. A-S-K. Ask, seek, knock. You will notice that the first letter of each of these words will spell out "ask". "Ask, seek, knock, A-S-K." And this is the thing that is going to sum up the golden rule. It's going to help the Christians to get in line with God's will. Therefore, they are going to ask in prayer. This is going to be their ~~request~~.

They are going to seek. Now this appears to show an increased concern, having acknowledged your dependence upon God and asking, the next ~~is~~ thing is you are going to ~~seek~~ seek earnestly to know his will and again this is prayer. You remember the parable of the woman who swept the house for the coin. She was seeking, and she searched. And if you seek something you have lost, or for some valuable treasure, then it is going to - this is the thing that Jesus is saying that you are to seek. Men ought to be seeking

the peace of God today because that is the place you can find it, in seeking in
 the right place. Now this frames your mind to the matter of searching intensely.
 Perhaps I could illustrate this if you could envision children on an Easter egg
 hunt. They search, they seek. Or maybe I could illustrate it with a rescue party.
 Quite often in our area here somebody is lost in the water from a boating accident
 as last week there was a man who was lost in the river. And they searched until
 they found his body. Or someone lost in the forrest. Now, the thing is that ~~there~~
 here is an intensive effort that you are going to be seeking what? You are going to
 seek the answer to the spiritual needs and problems. And you are going to seek God's
 will, in your life, for your vocation in life, the many things that concern your
 life. This is going to be the thing that you are going to seek as a kingdom man
 and God is going to help ~~you~~ you discover the answer, as you seek. "Give us this
 day, our daily bread." We seek. Now, it ~~x~~ doesn't mean that you are just going to
 ask God to give you your daily bread and sit down. No, you are going to be like the
 farmer. You are not going to sit down, ~~x~~ but you are going to go out and plant the
 wheat and cultivate the field, and work it, and you are not going to just say, "Oh,
 God give me something to eat." You are going to plant the garden, and ~~you~~ you are
 going to work the hoe, that's the prayer and the Lord's going to send the sunshine and
 the rain, but you have got to promise to keep down the weeds. And the same thing is

true in the spiritual realm. And we seek and we grow.

I remember reading a little note once that Billy Sunday said, that the carpet in front of mirrors is worn thread bare, while the carpet by the bedside is just as good as the day it was put down. He indicated that the carpet by the bedside ~~ought~~ ought to be the place that is worn where you kneel down in prayer. Now this is the matter of seeking. And quite often at this point, we are so guilty because we begin to talk to the Lord about the church not being full and we are not having revival, and people are not being saved, and we have our critical criticism for it. Now, here is the point. ~~You~~ You don't say, "Lord, just go out in the highways ~~the~~ and the hedges and compel these people to come in. Now that's what the Lord said. He told us to go and seek - seek these ~~people~~ people. And so a part of this praying is going to be that we are going to be seeking to find His will and way in our lives. *

Knocking. Now this is still more of an intensified effort. It blends in with the dependence upon God, but it means to literally, keep on knocking. Keep on asking. Keep on seeking. It's like the parable of the good shepherd when the sheep was lost. He went out and he searched and he kept in a persistent way until the sheep was found, and he brought back the one that had strayed away, into the fold.

Now this knocking means that plus asking, plus seeking, here is an extra plus.

Now Jesus made this plain in the story about the man who came at midnight and was knocking. His pantry was empty so he knocked at his friend's door, and he kept on knocking until he received the answer. Now Jesus' remark here was not just something beyond reach, but it is something very plain if we work at it.

It's just like sometimes people say "well, you know, the Bible is hard to understand. Why didn't God make all of these revelations to man so transparent that all could see them at a glance?" But here is another way that Jesus is saying, If you want to know life, if you want to keep your mind busy, then seek these hidden things. This is the task for a lifetime here, to ask, to seek, to knock, and the idea is of continuous action. Jesus literally is saying, If you will ask and ask and ask and keep on asking, it will be given you. If you will seek patiently and persistently finally you will ~~fix~~ find. If you knock long enough, it will be open unto you. Why did God not make this set of spiritual laws so hard, why did He do it? Why doesn't He answer our prayers more quickly? Sometimes you wonder the same thing when you are studying geometry ~~ixx~~ in school. Why couldn't you just open your head up and pour all sorts of knowledge in without any study? Now, that's daydreaming. But life is filled with pursuits, and God's answer to prayer is not always immediately. We know that prayer changes things. Coach Bear Bryant says that when the going gets

tough, the tough get going." So the rule is that life has to be going according to this coach in Alabama. This is exactly what Jesus is talking about. Now if you want to be on the "in" crowd and with it as we would say today, then this is the admonition which he gives. The Christian man's quest.

You will never get into the house of a friend without knocking, and so you patiently knock and you wait, and then this is the ~~hindrance~~ hindrance of getting in. And finally he is going to open that door. The emphasis is on the persistence of importunity. That is what the theologians call it - importunity. Perserverance. The man who landed suddenly at midnight, he had no g bread. ~~Thexman~~ He knocked at his friend's door. The man had already gone to bed. But because of his importunity, the friend gave him some bread, as taught in Luke, the 18th ~~xxx~~ chapter. What progress am I making? Is life moving for me? If you and I are ready to obtain the blessings which God has for us, we must go on asking for them. Simply, we must continue to seek them. We must knock ~~xxx~~ and we must persist. I don't think that I can exaggerate this too much, that a saint, a Christian, must not be content with passive desires. If he really wants to know Christ and know God and know his place in the world, he must be hungry and thirst after righteousness. Am I experiencing this? Is this a realization in my life?

V. 8 - you have the answer. Jesus said, "Every one that asketh receiveith,

he that seeketh findeth; he knocketh, it shall be opened."

Now, here is what the Father is going to do in answer to your quest.

He is going to give you his best. V. 9 - 11.

The realization is that God is our Father. If you ask, a son asks of his father, a loaf of bread will he give him a stone? Here is a little round flat rock in the river bed. Now, will the man take this and give it to his son and say son, "Here is something. You be filled."

V. 10 - or if he asks a fish, will he give him a serpent?

V. 11 - If ye then being evil know how to give good & gifts to your children, how much more ~~will~~ ^{does} your Father which is in heaven? The discussion then is not whether God will answer prayer, but whether he will exercise good judgment in the answering. If you will notice here, the earthly father is not devoid ~~x~~ of intelligence as to make a mistake or to pull a prank on his son that should ask him a piece of bread and he give him a rock. Here is the principle. God is our Father, and here is a familiar method of argument from the lesser to the greater. Now, if the earthly father does so much, how ~~xxx~~ much more so will God do. Now, this is one of our main problems is it not, the failure to know that ~~xx~~ God is our heavenly Father.

Now he proves this by the nonsense. If ye then being evil, you are human, your nature. You see the significance of this. He did not say it because he knew he was essentially different from them, but the speaker here is the Son of God. And there is no such thing as we think here of God doing otherwise than to satisfy our needs. And God being God never makes any mistakes. The Father in heaven never makes any mistakes. He would never give us anything that is harmful or bad, and if we ask something, he is going to give it. Now, this may be a slippery word here tonight, and the Heavenly Father is going to give us better than our asking. How do we know that ~~the~~ potato is good, or a poem or a man? There are vastly different ways of knowing. We know that ~~the~~ God is good. Now what father among you if his child asked bread would give him a stone? The child might break his teeth and still go hungry. If you then being evil - Jesus did not ignore human nature. If you know how to give good gifts. ~~ANEXXENE~~ And here is a striking argument. You know that your Heavenly Father is going to do much more.

The analogy here is bread and fish, the simple food and fare of the Galilean peasant. Bread the necessary staff of life, fish, an appetizing addition. Now little children in simplicity, might mistake a stone for a small loaf, or a serpent for a fish. Now that would be an evil thing for a father to do. But Jesus

would not do that. He says God gives out not only the necessities, but luxuries and the comforts of life. If my boy should ask me for something that I knew would not be good for him and would be harm, I should refuse it, and I would do this because of my love. I ~~kw~~ read of a man some time ago whose son had been killed in a brawl. He turned out to be a criminal. His own father accounted for the tragedy in these words: "I gave him too much money. I allowed him to have his own way."

We often make mistakes, and we often hurt our children by answering their ~~fxk~~ foolish requests. But God never does ~~x~~ this. He has perfect wisdom. And if you look back over your yesterdays, you will thank God not only for the prayers that God answered in a positive way, but the requests that he did not grant.

It is necessary to persist because the answer to prayer is ~~xxxxx~~ sometimes delayed. Of course, this delay is often the fault of ourselves. There is a delay because our request is of such a ~~xxxx~~ nature that it cannot be answered at once.

III. The Royal Principle of the Christian. V. 12

V, 12 All things therefore whatsoever you would than men should do unto you, even so do ~~ye~~ ye also unto them. Now translating this into common English language, it means this: "Put yourself in another's place. Treat him as you would wish to be treated under similar circumstances. Do ~~x~~ not deal with him as you would not wish to be dealt with." The Lord in effect, goes back to the words at the beginning of this

chapter. Judge as you would like to be judged. Measure as you would like it to be measured to you.

The principle of course he says is witness "by the law and the prophets."

Now you find this the second great commandment. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as ~~thyself~~ thyself."

The fundamental foundation to the whole structure of human society is here based upon this wonderful royal principle, and we call it the golden rule.

An extraordinary statement, which our Lord weaves together as he has given us the word, "wherefore," or "therefore" which tells us that ~~is~~ it is not a detached statement, but it is bound together with the subject of judgment of others. That in living the Christian life we must not waste our testimony and spiritual things upon the wicked dogs and hogs, and that we must make life a matter of seeking and knocking and asking.

Why do men forsake this golden rule? Why do they not keep it? Why do they not live their lives in this way? The disputes that go on between nations and between families, and between two people. Sometimes these quarrelings and unhappiness, you hear of two people who say, "Well, we just don't speak to each other, we avoid each other. We don't even like to look at ~~each~~ each other, and

we are jealous of each other, and we backbite, and these other things." What is the matter? Oh, ~~for~~ foolish people. You take the Sermon on the Mount, the gospel here, you cannot keep the golden rule, the fallen man cannot, and the carnal man cannot do it. It is useless for a man without Christ who hates the law. He does not want the law. He does not like the ~~lawy~~ law.

The "sin crowd" the "with it" people according to Jesus can live the Golden Rule -

Give your seat ~~to~~ another
Speak to people after the service not during the service -
Remain for the Benediction instead of disturbing others -

Secure a substitute to take your place in S.S. etc

Before leaving town

Help solve the church's problems instead of becoming a church problem.

Did you ever see a child put on a jacket and put button number one in hole number two - what happened -

The jacket ended buttoned up incorrectly
 So it is that the starting point for Christian living is important - Start right.