**The Sermon on the Mount (Part 17) + Weekly Devotion + 12.11.2024**

**Read Matthew 7:12-14**

*“For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life,*

*and those who find it are few.” (Matthew 7:14)*

“Treat others the way you want to be treated.” That’s what I was taught as a kid, and I’m sure you’ve heard the saying too. Sometimes, it’s called the “Golden Rule” or an “ethics of reciprocity.” Many world religions have this kind of ethic, including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. But something sets Christianity entirely apart from other world religions.

That “something” is a “someone,” and His name is Jesus. Jesus isn’t just any man, He’s Yahweh incarnate, the visible manifestation of the one true God. Indeed, Jesus teaches what appears to be simply another version of the “Golden Rule,” but there’s a lot more to it than that.

Christ says, “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). In other words, the entire Old Testament can be summarized in the Command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18).

The thing that Christianity gets right that no other religion gets right is that we simply can’t do it! There’s no pretending and no excuses. We all stand under the just condemnation and accusations of the Law and the Prophets. We confess that “all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

There’s only one who can truly put the “Golden Rule” into practice, and that’s Christ. Only God can fulfill the Law and Prophets. Only God can “love [His] neighbor[s] as [Himself].” He did this in our stead when He “became flesh” and “dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

Christ put the “Golden Rule” into practice throughout His life and ministry, but He did so most profoundly when He was suspended from a Roman execution post on Good Friday. He demonstrates perfect love for God when He cries out “My God, My God…” (Matthew 27:46). And He demonstrates perfect love for us when He prays “Father, forgive them…” (Luke 23:34).

As Christ says, the way that leads to destruction is “wide and easy” and “those who enter by it are many” (Matthew 7:13). These are the people who think they can reach up to God by their own works and merits. They either pretend that they’re able to live by the “Golden Rule” or they pretend that there’s no God to whom they must give account.

Jesus instructs us (His disciples) to “enter by the narrow gate.” He’s the “narrow gate,” or as He says in John 14:6, He’s “the Way.” Those who enter by Him are few because the Way that leads to eternal life is hard. We suffer with and for Christ now, but (although it doesn’t feel like it!), our present sufferings can’t even begin to compare with the glory that’ll be revealed in the life to come!

Prayer: Dear Jesus, walk with us on the narrow way that leads to life, lest we stumble or stray. Amen.