

FALL, 2023 | SERMON ON THE MOUNT
Life Group WORKSHEET
Week 7 - “Distinctive Lens” | MATTHEW 7:1-20

INTRODUCTION

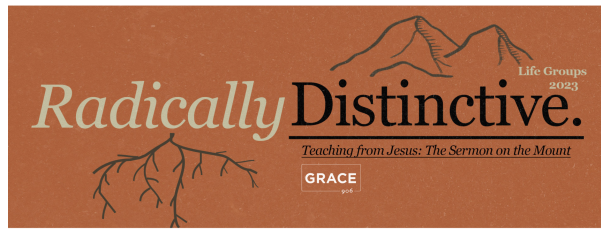
We have titled this entire series “Radically Distinctive.” The English term “radical” comes from a Latin term, “radix,” which means “at the root.” In this series, we are going to see in the teaching of Jesus that life in the Kingdom of God is distinctive at the root. Followers of Jesus are radical in that they are rooted in Him. And being connected to Him and rooted in Him, followers of Jesus are to be distinctive in the culture around us. That is at the heart of the message of the Sermon on the Mount.

Gospel Foundation

Before reading this week’s passage in Matthew 7:1-20, remind yourself that all of us need a Savior. Left to ourselves, none of us on our own possess a righteousness that is adequate before GOD. That is why Jesus came. By virtue of the redeeming work of Jesus on our behalf, the LORD has offered to us a salvation that we can humbly receive by faith.

Whenever a man or woman receives by faith the person and work of Jesus for us, trusting Him and Him alone for salvation, the Bible says one becomes justified – declared righteous by God who has loved us (Romans 5:1). In Christ, there is no longer condemnation for those who believe (Romans 8:1). We’ve been “positionally” given the righteousness of Jesus (II Corinthians 5:21).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is saying that new life in Jesus is displayed through an ongoing desire to practically walk in righteousness. While this side of heaven our practical outworking of righteousness is imperfect, we press on toward the goal of the upward call of Jesus (Philippians 2:12-13, 3:12-16). **Followers of Jesus no longer obey the law of God merely out of duty. Instead, we want to magnify and please the One who gave Himself for us. We want to resemble the One who did all this for us.**



INTRO to Matthew 7:1-20

Verse 1 of Matthew 7 is perhaps one of the most often quoted and least understood verses in the Bible. “Judge not, that you be not judged.” There are some who take this verse to mean that we are not to make moral judgments at all – live and let live. Yet ALL of us make moral judgments. We are making decisions and moral judgments all the time. The real issue relates to the actual worldview foundation on which we are making decisions and the interpretive LENS through which we are making moral evaluation.

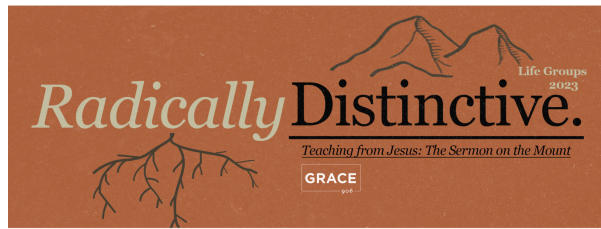
Jesus made moral judgments all the time. What was distinctive about Him was the lens through which He made those judgments. In the Kingdom of God, those who follow Jesus are, in fact, called to make moral decisions. Followers of Jesus do evaluate the decisions and behaviors of others, but what is the lens through which choices and behaviors are evaluated?

There are times when Jesus makes what appear to be “contradictory” statements. However, in the paradox of His statements, there is rich and valuable Kingdom truth to be discovered and embraced.

We really see this in Matthew 7:1-20. And it is convicting. It is humbling. It is very instructive.

Today, we are looking at the distinction between self-righteous judgment and healthy discernment. We are going to see that Jesus commends the practice of evaluating what we see in our lives and in the lives of others. The real issue relates to the “lens” through which we evaluate and make moral decisions.

In the passage we look at this week, Jesus is asking of us a deeper obedience than we might otherwise offer. May God give us ears to hear His words afresh this week.



Matthew 7:1-20

1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Ask, and It Will Be Given

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are 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!

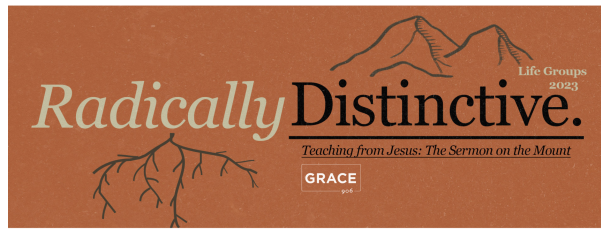
The Golden Rule

12 “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

A Tree and Its Fruit

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.



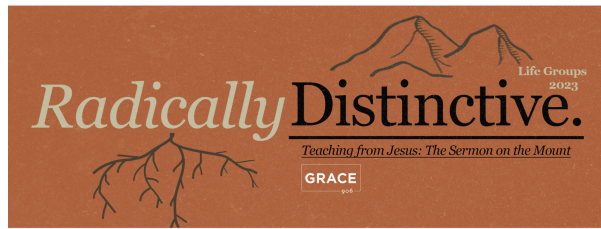
DISCUSSION BODY

(Before meeting, please read through Matthew 5:1 - 7:29.)

1. Why is self-righteousness toxic and offensive? As you look honestly into your own life, do you ever see self-righteousness in yourself? What provokes it, and how does it manifest itself when it appears?

In the last several weeks, we've been evaluating the righteousness that's being shaped in us. In what way is self-righteousness different from the righteousness that Jesus has been calling us to in this series?

2. In his message, Pastor Tim asked the question, "Is Jesus telling us in verse 1 that we are not to make any moral judgments?" How does the larger context of verses 1-20 speak to that question (look at verse 6 and verse 20)?
3. Through paradoxical statements, Jesus seems to be saying that He wants us to evaluate and make moral judgments about what we see in the lives of others. However, there is a healthy way to SEE and an unhealthy way to SEE. What is the "**Kingdom lens**" through which Jesus wants us to make decisions and moral judgments?
4. In what way does this week's passage in Matthew 7:1-20 follow on the heels of the statement Jesus made in Matthew 6:33 about "seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."
5. Who are described as dogs or pigs in verse 6? Why would they be referred to that way? How does that practically affect how we relate to those Jesus is referring to here?



6. (Verses 7-11) Jesus urges us to ask, to seek, and to knock in prayer. What is encouraging, or what perhaps might be troubling to you about this statement from Jesus? In verse 11, what really is Jesus promising?
7. How does verse 12 relate to what Jesus said earlier (in v. 1-5) about the danger of self-righteousness and the deception of judgmentalism?
8. (Verses 13-14) In what ways is the broad way so attractive? How are the two ways or roads different? In what regard is the road of Christianity narrow?
9. (Verses 15-20) Jesus urges us to be discerning. What does Jesus ask us to evaluate in our discernment of others?

CONCLUSION

10. Based on verses 1-5 and 17-20, are you evaluating the fruit in others through the **same lens** as you evaluate your own fruit?