

Matthew 7:12
A Tale of Mutual Love
How to Summarize the Whole Bible?

Introduction

- Q: If you were to summarize all of the Bible in a sentence or two, how would you do it?
- A: Story of God sending his Son to redeem a people who would praise his glorious grace.
- A: How God has saved sinners from hell and wrath through Jesus's death and resurrection.
- A: The theologians: creation, fall, redemption, glorification pattern.
- Jesus sums up the Bible: Whatever you wish others would do for you, do also for them, for this is the Law and the prophets.
- That's his summary of the whole Bible - the Law and the Prophets.
- I would argue his summary of his own sermon as well.
- From here it's really a series of warnings and calls to decide.
- But this is his summary of sermon and the OT.
- "Yeah, but we have NT" - 25% of NT is a quote or allusion to OT and there's no difference anyway.
- Most memorable of all Jesus' statements; quoted by every mom 10 times a day.
- Even quoted by people who don't know it's from Jesus.
- There are secular versions and variations of this saying: "Treat others the way you want to be treated."
- Jesus did not originate an equal-treatment statement; there are earlier ones.
- But most - if not all - of them negative:
- Confucius: "Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself" (Stott, J. The Msg. of the SOTM, p. 190).
- (Apocryphal) Tobit 4:15: "What you hate do not do to anyone."
- Best we can tell: Jesus is the first to say positively; not enough for his followers to simply not do bad things.
- Mounce: "In its negative form, the Golden Rule could be satisfied by doing nothing. The positive form moves us to action on behalf of others." (Blomberg, C. Matthew, p. 131)
- Jesus calls us to a life of where we actively do good to those around us.
- Christianity not just a sit back/do no harm religion.
- Not libertarian: live and let live; you do your thing, I'll do mine; leave each other alone.
- Christ calls us to proactively love others in the same way we want to be loved.
- And not just love in words, but love through action: whatever you wish other would **do, do** also to them.
- Principle of mutual love; love in action - Faith & works.
- **Jas 2:14-17**: What good faith but no works? Poorly clothed, lacking in food. "Go be warmed and filled. What good is that?" Faith by itself without works is dead.
- Jesus is calling us to love people in a tangible way - to **do** for them what we'd want done for us.
- What Jesus calling for is radical generosity, mutual love.
- This is what the whole Bible is really about.
- Basics for generosity, extent of generosity, activities of generosity

1) Basis of Generosity: God the Father Read 7-12

- SOTM has context and flow - not just unrelated proverbs.
- Jesus just talking about how generous God the Father is to his children → switches to treating others
- Why? Now issue: what is our response to others?
- NIV / NASB / Greek typically keeps **Vs. 12** with **Vss. 7-11**, rather than with **13-14**.
- Connecting word "so," NASB "therefore" - connecting words.
- **Vss. 7-11**: If ask/seek/knock what happens? Receive/find/opened - God is lavishly generous to his children.
- Most people usually imitate their parents: Seahawks fans / frugal / likes Chevys → children do likewise.
- Here: Our Father in heaven is lavishly generous to us - more so than we are to our own children.
- What's the implication for how we treat others? We will treat them like God treat us.
- We are proactive and generous and loving toward others.
- **Eph 1:3**: Blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
- **Rom 8:17**: We joint heirs with Christ of all the glories of heaven.
- **Matt. 25:34**: Jesus says we will inherit the Kingdom of God!
- We are rich in Christ but we don't act like the rich high school snobs, we are to act like our generous heavenly Father.

- Since through the gospel God has made us heirs and is generous to us, we go preach the gospel of the Kingdom and are generous to others.
- Put a different way: If you call ourselves Christians, and don't treat someone the way we'd want to be treated, we might not actually even be in Christ.
- Christians act like our Father acts.
- And this is how God has always ordered things; not new in the NT.
- Jesus says this is the summary of what? The Law and the prophets.
- Many want to make a distinction b/n the "God of the OT and the God of the NT" - no it's the same God in both.
- Jesus upholds the Law and prophets.
- Look at **5:17-20**.
- We saw this passage some time ago.
- If you remember, Jesus seems to be answering the question on everyone's mind at the time: what's his view of the Law? Is he here to overthrow Moses? **Read**
- Jesus does not undermine the Law, he says that to follow him we are ultimately required to obey intrinsically all that God has written.
- God's character never changes.
- What follows then in most of the sermon is how he understands the Law in relation to him.
- And then our verse is a summary of his view of the Law: treat others the way you want to be treated.
- That's his summary.
- And the summary is based on the character of the Father.
- So we know this generous attitude is from the Father because 7:12 begins with "so" / "therefore" and ends with "this is what God has always said."
- Question: How far do we go? Are there limits to this?
- I really want people to just give me their car, does that mean I just give my car away?

2) Extent of Our Generosity. Read 12

- ESV is usually great, but really does this verse no favors.
- NIV / NASB: In everything - that's the actual word - in all things.
- What spheres does our generosity toward others include?
- Not just "whatever" - whatever seems so passive, non-inclusive.
- No, it's in everything thing, all things.
- Every aspect of life is on the table is on the table for serving/being generous to other people.
- Balance in a minute, but here are categories:

Physical Realm:

- **Jas 2:14-17:** Give people food and clothing.
- **Luke 10:25-37:** (Good Samaritan) - time to stop, effort to bandage, money for inn, additional \$ for costs.
Read
- Interesting: hospitals, thrift stores. schools are usually founded by Christians?
- Good Samaritan, Deaconess, St. Mary's, Sacred Heart, Providence, Holy Family, Baptist Hospital, Mt. Zion, so on - Christians value helping people medically.
- Give rides to doctor visits, help people around their house, etc.
- Jesus heals, feeds, creates wine - we can't do it on his scale, but we are called to imitate him.

Spiritual: Share the gospel / encourage their hearts

- Why called Sunday School? Because this is where most of America hundreds of years ago learned to read and learned the Bible.
- Harvard (Calvinist congregational puritans), Yale/Dartmouth (calvinist congregationalists), Princeton (calvinist presbys), Columbia (anglican).
- All liberal now, but Calvinists have always valued reading, higher education. proclaiming the gospel
- All valued spreading the knowledge of God through teaching and preaching and reaching out to their communities.
- We are to invest in others - listen if you are not investing your life in raising up disciples of Jesus, you need to. Not optional.
- We are to proclaim the gospel, share the gospel, live the gospel.

- **Rom. 15:14** - competent to counsel

Relational: orphans/widows/sick/

- Sometimes the most generous thing we can do is spend time with people.
- **Turn Matt 25:31-40.** This is Jesus talking about the final judgment. **Read**
- It's all this stuff we're talking about isn't it?
- You're not going to heaven or hell based on number of times visiting inmates / visiting hospitals.
- Going to heaven or hell based on faith in Jesus.
- But if you have faith in Jesus, you know where you'll find yourself? Visiting people in their affliction.
- James 1:27 (ESV): Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Response to suffering/persecution.

- When reviled we bless
- When we suffer we endure
- Don't take vengeance because that belongs to God
- There have been many times in our lives where we were in the wrong and by God's grace the other person either ignored us or didn't give us what we deserve.
- Sometimes it's a holy blind eye to these injustice that is treating people how we would want to be treated.
- Love covers a multitude of sins.

3) Activity of our Generosity. Read 12

- This is most important thing about this passage: the word "Do."
- James says don't be just hearers of the Law but what? Doers. (**Jas. 1:22**)
- If you're just a hearer, James says, you're just lying to yourself about following Jesus.
- Ironic: This verse has become a slogan for so many companies / organizations.
- "We just follow the Golden Rule" but they don't actually do anything.
- Important: This is not just a slogan / feelings / generalizations.
- Not just plans / strategies / ideas.
- This is actually **doing**.
- Some phrases that say we're not doing: "I've been meaning to..." / "I've been fixing to..." / "I've thought about..." / "I'd really like to..." / "I've got this idea" / "I should really spend time, reach out..."
- The road to hell is paved with what? Good intentions.
- Jesus says that the road to heaven - begins by faith in the gospel - but is paved with doing.
- **Eph. 2:10:** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we might walk in them.
- It's not enough to not do bad things.
- It's not enough to simply have ideas about the good we should do.
- Jesus says the whole of the prophets is to go do, go treat others how we'd want to be treated.

Are there Limits? / Exceptions?

- Of course.
- This doesn't mean we get taken advantage of - we are to be wise.
- **But** we will get taken advantage of - that's okay.
- Doesn't mean just empty our bank act - Jesus expects us to be wise with our money
- Doesn't mean let other responsibilities fall - we have to balance our lives.
- What this is is a virtue to consider.
- Remember WWJD? Huge fad in the 90s with bracelets.
- For all the flack we might give to that, it actually wasn't a bad idea.
- Jesus doesn't just give us a bunch of theology and tell us go sort it out - though he does give us theology.
- He also doesn't just give us a whole bunch of morality and tell us to go do it - though he does.
- He also gives us an example - he lives out everything we read about here.
- We can look at Jesus's life to give us an idea about what he would expect us treating other people.
- He would want us to stop and help our enemy, like the Good Samaritan.
- He would want us to pay attention to the lady who is destitute and has spent all her money on doctors trying to heal a shameful disease.

- He would want us to talk to the prostitute at the well who has had 5 husbands and is living with someone who is not her husband.
- Let me encourage you this week to be proactive with this command.
- To be lavishly generous with your time, money, effort doing for others what you would want them to do for you.
- To not seek payment in return.
- To remember it is more blessed to give than receive.
- To reflect the heart of your Father in heaven, who has lavishly given us all things in Christ.

Pray