

Series Series: DIFFERENT/ Sermon on the Mount

Sermon title: One Rule to Rule Them All

Scripture reading: Matthew 7:12

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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We come today to what is called **The Golden Rule** in the Sermon on the Mount.

You might be surprised to know that this ethical teaching, this standard way to treat others....is found in many religions and civilizations around the world.

Egypt: *"Now this is the command: Do to the doer to make him do."* *The Eloquent Peasant* (c. 2040-1650 BC)

India *One should never do something to others that one would regard as an injury to one's own self. In brief, this is dharma. Anything else is succumbing to desire.* – *Mahābhārata* 13.114.8 (Critical edition) usually dated to the period between 400 BC and 400 AD

Greece *"In the next place, dealings between man and man require to be suitably regulated. The principle of them is very simple: Thou shalt not, if thou canst help, touch that which is mine, or remove the least thing which belongs to me without my consent; and may I be of a sound mind, and do to others as I would that they should do to me."* Plato, *Laws* Chapter XI. (c. 420-c. 347 BC)

Persia

The Pahlavi Texts of Zoroastrianism: *"That nature alone is good which refrains from doing to another whatsoever is not good for itself."* Dadisten-I-dinik, 94,5, and *"Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others."* Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29 (c. 300 BC-1000 AD)

Israel

Hillel the Elder: *What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn.* (c. 110 BC - 10 AD)

China

子貢問曰：有一言而可以終身行之者乎？子曰：其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。

Zi Gong (a disciple of Confucius) asked: *"Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?"* The Master replied: *"How about 'shu': never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself?"* Confucius, *Analects XV.24* (c. 551-479BC)

So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Jesus Christ, Matthew 7:12, (c. 30 AD)

This is an ethic that is common to man and all would admire— to treat others the way we want to be treated.

What makes Christ's teaching on this different from others'? How can we live out this teaching by Jesus?

Let's pray.

I. The General Context

Well, as we begin to examine this Scripture text, the first thing we need to do is to look at the first word.

It begins with the word, "So" or "Therefore".

This indicates that this Golden Rule is not an isolated little phrase but is somehow connected to what comes before it.

What does it point to?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has shown us what it looks like to truly live righteous from the heart...and one of the areas that he has addressed is **how we relate to other people.**

How do we treat those who persecute us?

How do we live differently as salt and light in the world?

How do we respond to our enemies?

How do we respond to those who sin?

He has just addressed this in **Chapter 7** and he told us NOT to judge others but be more concerned with our own sins.

I believe Jesus is saying, "So, in light of all that I have been teaching about how to live differently in your relationships.....

I'll give you ONE RULE TO RULE THEM ALL....

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

So, that's the General Context.

If we want to live DIFFERENTLY in the world....here's one thing we can do.

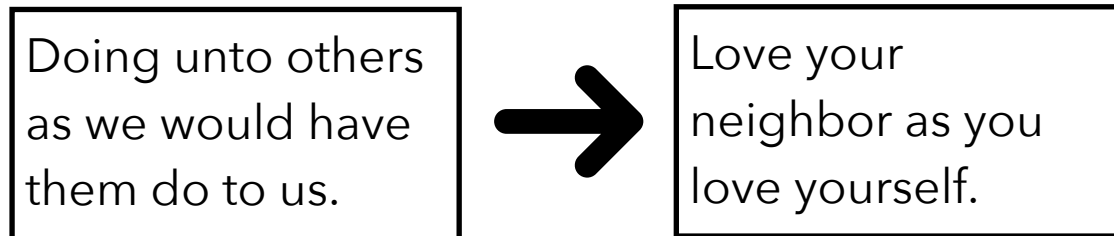
II. The Golden Rule

In **Matthew 7:12** Jesus said, "So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The word here in the ESV '*Whatever*' sounds much weaker than the Greek.

The Greek means '*in everything*' or '*in all things*'.

“In every single thing...in every area and in every way....that we would like others to do to us....do to them. This one rule sums up how we are to treat others in the Law and the Prophets.”



Why do I say this?

Let's take a look at some other Scriptures.

Matthew 22:36-40

36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” **37** And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Galatians 5:14

14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Romans 13:8

The one who has loved another has fulfilled the Law.

What makes Christ's teaching on this different from others'?

I don't know if you noticed by almost all of the civilizations that I mentioned who have a saying like this, express it in the negative...."Don't do unto others as you would not like them to do to you."

Or, "Do to others so that they will do this back to you."

What makes Christ's teaching on this different from others'?

Jesus frames it in the positive. He makes it proactively 'doing' to others as we would wish that others would do to us. Not AS they do to us but as we would LIKE them to do.

Confucius' version, *"never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself".....creates non-action.....it means that you can be righteous by not bothering people. It can be lived out in a cave.*

Jesus's Golden Rule is different, "So, whatever you wish that others would DO to you, **DO** also to them.

It means that we live proactively thinking about, '*What would I like in this situation?*' And then loving others by DOING something.

This is a life of selflessness.

This is a life where we....³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **Philippians 2:3-5**

The Golden Rule leads us to The Gross Reality.

III. The Gross Reality

When we look at our lives and line them up against this Golden Rule, how are we doing?

Can any of us say that we live each day proactively treating others in every way....the same way we want to be treated?

Some seem to think that we can live this out in our own strength and effort.

Greg M. Epstein, a Humanist chaplain at Harvard University,

said...." 'do unto others' ... is a concept that essentially no religion misses entirely. But not a single one of these versions of the golden rule requires a God."

Our response to this RULE should be our response when we look at the Law of God; I fall short in so many ways. I am a sinner and I can't keep these rules perfectly.

The Golden Rule leads us to the Gross Reality of our sin and selfishness, which leads us to The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

IV. The Gospel

If you're not a Christian, you just can't just try to be better. You can't just work harder at being less selfish. There is a way to be changed but it isn't by human effort. A metamorphosis needs to happen.

How can you be righteous?

2 Corinthians 5:21

He (God the Father) made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

1 Peter 2:24

Confess that you are a sinner and turn to Jesus Christ to save you. He died for your sins on the cross. He rose from the dead and is alive...so he is able to give you new life and eternal life.

Christian, you may be like me today and find yourself saying, *"I really am selfish and need to be changed to where I actually can treat others the way that I want to be treated. I don't even think about this as I go throughout my day. I need God to work in my heart."*

What do we do Christian?
How do we change?

"Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" **Galatians 3:3**

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if BY THE SPIRIT you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **Romans 8:13**

Don't try to just be better or behave!

First, one thing we can do is memorize and meditate on **Matthew 7:12**. It's got to be in our minds and our hearts or in the moment we won't even think about doing it.

We hide God's word in our hearts that we might not sin against him.

Secondly, some of us may need to confess our sin to the Lord, the sin of living by The Golden Rule in a twisted way.

We **DO** live by the Golden Rule but what we mean by it is not what Jesus means.

So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them....

How is it that I want others to treat me?

"I wish to be left alone. Don't anyone bother me. Leave me to myself." "That's the way I want people to act toward me, so I don't bother people myself."

Jesus didn't mean to make our preferences or our feelings the truth.

He means us to proactively LOVE others not just keep clear of others. You see how that's a twist on Confucius and others....but not what Jesus meant.

"As long as I am not causing mafan or disharmony or pain to anyone, then all is ok."

Jesus wants us to proactively DO good to others.