

**Text: Matthew 4:17-7:29**

Section 1

*17From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)*

Our passage for today begins with Jesus declaring the necessity of repentance. The Lord does not indiscriminately save all, even if they remain in a pattern of unrepentant sin—turning away from sin is necessary for salvation. Without repentance, we die in our sins.

**3"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)**

Even the simple presentation of the Gospel in Romans 10 includes repentance.

**9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; (Romans 10:9)**

Where is repentance mentioned here, you ask? With the statement that Jesus is Lord. If He is Lord, then He is Master. If he is Master, we will do what He says. He has commanded us to repent of sin and to follow after Him. Since He is without sin, to follow Him means that we will make every effort to live without sinning. Will we succeed? No, and he graciously forgives when we ask. But, the life of the Christian is to be marked by consistent effort to be more like Jesus, continually turning away from sin, and toward the Will of God.

Section 2

*18Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 21Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. 22Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. (Matthew 4:18-22)*

I love this passage, for it truly shows the power of the call of God upon a person's life. Can you imagine some guy—or even someone you knew—walking by and telling you to drop everything you're doing, your family, your livelihood, your way of life, and follow him, much less to do something so absurd as to be "fishers of men?" Yet, these men came, and we have no evidence of resistance or deliberation on their parts (though they might have done so). Jesus called, and they responded. Such will be the case with all that are destined for salvation. The call of God upon their lives is irresistible, even though they might try to resist at first. They will respond by following Him.

**37"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. (John 6:37)**

Section 3

*23Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. 24The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. 25Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. (Matthew 4:23-25)*

Jesus' healing ministry served at least two purposes. First of all, it fulfilled part of the Messianic prophecies.

**4Say to those with anxious heart,  
"Take courage, fear not  
Behold, your God will come with vengeance;  
The recompense of God will come,  
But He will save you."  
5Then the eyes of the blind will be opened**

**And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.  
6Then the lame will leap like a deer,  
And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy  
For waters will break forth in the wilderness  
And streams in the Arabah. (Isaiah 35:4-6)**

Secondly, Jesus modeled for us an effective pattern of ministry. A ministry to the poor, hungry, sick, etc. will not be effective if their physical needs are not first met. In fact, it will seem arrogant and inconsiderate if you tell a hungry man "I know you're hungry, but what you *really* need is to read the words of this Book." My guess is that the person will at least ignore you, or perhaps respond with words or gestures that are not fit to be repeated!

**14What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (James 2:14-17)**

Show people the Love of God by first meeting their needs, then by introducing them to the Lord that commanded you to do so. This pattern of ministry was certainly good enough for Jesus!

#### Section 4

*1When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, 3"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. 6"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:1-12)*

Lord willing, I could spend weeks of lessons just going through these verses. But, time will not allow this. In short, the Beatitudes promise God's Blessing not upon those that are self-righteous or self-exalting, but those that live a life of simplicity, faith, and mercy. Self-denial (though not to the point of Stoicism, which is even prideful in its own way) should be a pattern of life for God's children.

**23And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)**

This self-denial may extend to verbal, emotional, or physical persecution. In fact, the Bible promises that those who seek God will endure persecution.

**12Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12)**

When this happens, we are to follow the example of the apostles, who rejoiced in the fact that Jesus allowed them to suffer for His sake. To endure persecution is indeed a form of confirmation that the Spirit of God is indeed in us, and we can rejoice!

**40They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. 41So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. (Acts 5:40-42)**

#### Section 5

*13"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. 17"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19"Whoever then*

*annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:13-19)*

The Christian life is one not of profession only, but of action. The true Christian's life will be marked by works through which God uses him as "salt and light" in the world. Those professed Christians that would turn God's grace into an excuse for flagrant disregard for the moral Law are at best living carnally and need to repent, and at worst are not saved at all. Faith without works is dead!

**23**Jesus answered and said to him, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24**'He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. (John 14:23-24)

**21**Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22**But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23**For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24**for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25**But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:21-25)

## Section 6

*20*"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. *21*"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' *22*"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. *23*"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, *24*leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. *25*"Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. *26*"Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent. *27*"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; *28*but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:20-28)

The Pharisees observed a strict moral code that emphasized an outward show of obedience to God's Law, or at least their interpretation of it. Jesus rebuked them, however, indicating that the outward appearance of righteousness is meaningless if the inner man is consumed with sinful desires. Our worship is worthless if it does not come from a heart truly set to seek and obey God.

**7**But the LORD said to Samuel, **"Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."** (1 Samuel 16:7)

**22**Samuel said,

**"Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices  
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
And to heed than the fat of rams. (1 Samuel 15:22)**

## Section 7

*29*"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. *30*"If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell. *31*"It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; *32*but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. *33*"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' *34*"But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, *35*or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. *36*"Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. *37*"But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil. (Matthew 5:29-37)

Jesus is not preaching self-mutilation here, but rather is employing a figure of speech to emphasize how vital it is for us to make every effort to avoid sin and immorality. When we allow and maintain influences in our lives that promote sin we are inviting trouble.

**18Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18)**

I will not go into a long discussion of marriage and divorce here. Jesus is quite clear: there is only one acceptable ground for a Christian to leave his or her spouse, and that is adultery. Jesus does not allow Christians to leave their spouses for any other cause (though Paul does state that if one spouse becomes a Christian and the other does not, and the unbeliever leaves, the Christian is not “under bondage”).

Jesus also forbids the careless taking of oaths. For one thing, to always swear oaths devalues a man’s common “word.” If one must swear something if he is to be expected to do it, then apparently his “yes” really means “maybe” or “if I get around to it.” Jesus commands us to be simpler—when you say you will do something, make every effort to do it! Another danger in swearing oaths is that when an oath is taken, one is even more strongly bound to fulfill it. But, sometimes this is not within our power—we do not know what tomorrow will bring. In swearing an oath to do something, one presumes to be able to know and predict the future, a quality belonging to God only.

**13Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." (James 4:13-15)**

Section 8

*38"You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' 39"But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40"If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41"Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42"Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. 43"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46"For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47"If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:38-48)*

Jesus tells us not to be jealous for our own honor, nor to believe ourselves better than others. We are to show consideration to all men, and we are not to take vengeance when insulted. This is God’s place.

**19Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)**

A side note: the admonition to “turn the other cheek” is an argument against revenge; it is not an argument for pacifism. Jesus both allows and commands self-defense when physically attacked.

**35And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." 36And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. 37"For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment." 38They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22:35-38)**

Section 9

*1"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2"So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3"But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. 5"When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6"But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:1-6)*

Earlier we mentioned that God looks at the heart, not at the outward show of “religion.” To make a show of one’s worship only exhibits his pride, not his love of God. In fact, such worship is not accepted.

**9**And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: **10**"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**"The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12**'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' **13**"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14**"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

**1**And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. **2**And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. **3**And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: **4**For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had. (Luke 21:1-4)

### Section 10

*7*"And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. *8*"So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. *9*"Pray, then, in this way:

*'Our Father who is in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.*

*10*Your kingdom come  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.

*11*Give us this day our daily bread.

*12*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

*13*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]' *14*"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. *15*"But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:7-15)

The Lord's Prayer is not a "mantra" to be repeated word-for-word (though praying these exact words at times is not inappropriate), but rather a pattern after which we are to model our own prayers. Prayers that delight God are simple and honest—big words and florid oration have no place in our prayer lives. Besides, God knows what we need better than we do. And, the Spirit's intercessions for us are extremely powerful, and employ no words at all!

**20**Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, **21**to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

**26**In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; **27**and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

### Section 11

*16*"Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. *17*"But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face *18*so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. *19*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. *20*"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; *21*for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. *22*"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. *23*"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! *24*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:16-24)

Notice that Jesus says "when" you fast, not "if" you fast. This is a part of the Christian life that is sadly ignored and misunderstood in our day. Fasting, like praying and other forms of worship, is not to be made into an outward show, but is to be a private matter between oneself and God, in which a person denies himself food for a time in order to mortify the body, bringing the desires of the body in subjection to God. When done with a right heart, fasting is a form of self-discipline that brings honor to God.

**24**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. **25**Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but

**we an imperishable. 26Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)**

We are also exhorted here to not love and seek money and worldly pleasures. Surely Solomon knew more of this than anyone, having been granted great wealth by God. In the end, having been turned away from God by the deceitfulness of wealth and pleasure, he realized that these pursuits were vain.

**1I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility. 2I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?" 3I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. 4I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; 5I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; 6I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. 7I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. 8Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men--many concubines. 9Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. 10All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. 11Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)**

## Section 12

*25"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27"And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? 28"And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! 31"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32"For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:25-34)*

God tells us to seek Him, and trust Him to provide our needs. This does not mean that we should not be prudent in financial planning, or that we should not save or seek to leave an inheritance for our descendants, but that we should not worry about these things. Instead, we can trust God to supply every worldly need when we seek Him wholeheartedly.

**21Adversity pursues sinners,**

**But the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.**

**22A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,**

**And the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. (Proverbs 13:21-22)**

Before being turned away, Solomon demonstrated great humility by responding to God's offer to give him anything he wanted by asking for wisdom. God honored this by granting wisdom, and also worldly provision. We can trust God to meet our needs when we seek Him in all things.

**7In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you." 8Solomon said to God, "You have dealt with my father David with great lovingkindness, and have made me king in his place. 9"Now, O LORD God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?"**

**11God said to Solomon, "Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, 12wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you." (2 Chronicles 1:11-12)**

Section 13

*1"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2"For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3"Why do you look at 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,' and behold, the log is 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 what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. (Matthew 7:1-6)*

“Do not judge” does not mean that we are to excuse sin in our brothers and sisters, but rather that we are not to set ourselves up as standards of right and wrong. God’s Word is the only Standard by which all are rightly judged. Jesus does give us a disciplinary model to follow when a Christian brother or sister is caught in sin. His call for multiple witnesses also eliminates the chance of “trumped up” charges being used by a self-righteous person to expel a believer from the body.

**15"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16"But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)**

The admonition about “pearls before swine” is hard to understand, and often ignored. We are to desire and to seek the salvation of every individual. We are to share the Gospel with as many people as we can. However, when a person consistently and perhaps even violently refuses to believe, we are not to continue pressing that person. We can still pray that God will change his heart and bring him to faith in Christ, but we are not to waste our time and effort in such a battle.

**4And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean From now on I will go to the Gentiles." (Acts 18:4-6)**

Section 14

*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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9"Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10"Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! 12"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:7-12)*

God is our Father, and desires the very best for His children. Assuming that we are not asking for things that are sinful or contrary to His will, He will answer and provide.

**14This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (1 John 5:14-15)**

However, God does sometimes refuse our requests. He does this not out of spite, but out of love, and of wisdom that knows that often we do not know what is best for us. No (good) earthly parent will give his child something that is inappropriate or dangerous, no matter how badly the child thinks he wants it. Likewise, when God “says no” in response to our requests, we are to trust that He has done so for our own good, and for His glory.

**7Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself! 8Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness " Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (1 Corinthians 12:7-9)**

The “golden rule” encountered in this passage is, in effect, a restatement of the “second greatest commandment.”

**28One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR**

**SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31''The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these.' (Mark 12:28-31)**

### Section 15

*13''Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14''For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. 15''Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16''You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17''So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18''A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19''Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20''So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21''Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22''Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23''And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (Matthew 7:13-23)*

The path that leads to eternal life is narrow and difficult. While the gift is free to all who will repent and believe, saving faith places us on a path that requires self-denial, endurance of trials and tribulations, rejection from the world, and perhaps even physical danger. The one that will gain eternal life must not love his life in this world!

**23And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24''For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)**

Many professing Christians, and even many ministers today reject this idea, and twist the Bible's message into one promising wealth, abundance, and worldly happiness. God may very well provide these things, but he is under no obligation to do so—His only promise is to supply all of our needs, not our wants. Those that preach otherwise deliver a false gospel, which Paul warned would come.

**I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)**

The true Christian will obey God. Again, we do not always do so perfectly, but we are to strive to do so nonetheless. Jesus commands us to “abide” or “stand firm” in Him, and we do this by obeying His commandments.

**4''Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5''I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6''If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7''If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8''My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9''Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10''If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:4-10)**

### Section 16

*24''Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25''And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26''Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27''The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall." 28When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:24-29)*

Jesus Christ is the only “Foundation” that will stand at the last day. At the end of time we will be judged by our works, and any work that is not of God will be burned up, but those that are of God will survive, and will yield a reward. Only those whose “Foundation” is Jesus Christ will survive. Even if all of the Christian's works are burned up, if he is grounded in Christ, he will stand.

**10According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13each**

**man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)**

At the final judgment, those that built their lives on some other “foundation” will be cast into eternal torment. Coming to Christ through faith and repentance places our names in the Book of Life. If your name is not there, you will suffer—consciously—forever. Jesus promises eternal life with Him, away from the lake of fire and from all sin, death, pain, and hurt, to all who will repent of sin and believe on Him. This is the “Good News,” and we are to share it with all who will listen!

**11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)**