

FURTHER STUDY:

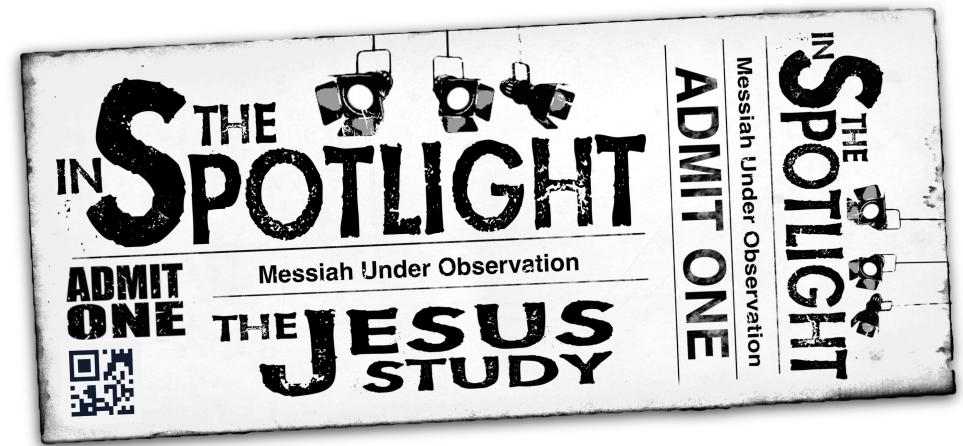
Scriptures (parallel Gospel accounts):

Luke 6: 41-42, 47-49, 11: 9-13,

“The Jesus I Never Knew” Philip Yancey
Part Two: *Why He Came*, Chapter 7: *A Sermon of Offense*

A Blessing from Kate Bowler, concerning the work of love:

Lord, the shadowed world is full of troubles, so give me the good, inconvenient work of love. Link my life to others so their worries become my own. Give me errands I don't want, to relieve the burdens of others. Divert me from the plans I've made to zip from A to B, when you have better ideas. Put my hands to work with a less grumbling heart and let my dreams shift, and let their dreams shift into my own. You've given me tools to use and ideas to fashion that will neither bring me recognition, nor money, nor praise. You've made love such a sneaky thing. The more we love like you do, the less we are keeping track of it.



Lesson #7

“Love Is Hard”

Matthew 7

Focus Scriptures: Matthew 7:7 & 24

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.”

“Anyone who listens to my words and does them is a wise person who builds a house on solid rock.”

Food for Thought: Think of a time when you were not treating someone with love, someone with whom you needed reconciliation. How did the realization come to you? Did you have to “sit with it” for a while before acting on it? Did you reconcile? What was the outcome?

Vocabulary Definitions:

AGAPE: ἀγάπη (*agápē*) One of several words for love in Greek. It is a love willing to do anything for another, including sacrificing themselves, without expecting anything in return. Philosophically, *agape* has also been defined as the selfless love that a person feels for strangers and humanity as a whole.

LIFE (v. 14): ζωή (*zōā*) (from *zō*, “to live”) 1. A living, property 2. Life

DESTRUCTION (v.14): (ἀπόλεια, *apóleia*) 1. Loss 2. Loss of well-being (not annihilation)

FALSE PROPHET: In religion, a false prophet is one who falsely claims the gift of prophecy, or who uses that gift for evil ends.

PROPHECY: (noun & verb) is a process in which messages from God, are then communicated to others by this prophet.

PROVERB: a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice. In The most common structure in Hebrew proverbs, is the couplet. The writer places two ideas side by side such that each complements the other, or is the antithesis of the other.

C. Brief Historical And /Or Cultural Context:

During our time in with the Sermon on the Mount, we heard Jesus assure the crowds that they are the blessed ones (*beatitudes*), he then opens our hearts to right thinking concerning the Law. Then Jesus moves to examples of how to live out our faith. This week the sermon continues with several seemingly unconnected Proverbs about hypocritical judging, persistent prayer, living by the Golden Rule, and one odd and confusing proverb about pearls and pigs. Jesus then uses metaphors concerning discernment, there are 2 gates, 2 ways, 2 destinations, 2 groups of people, 2 trees, 2 fruits, 2 groups, and 2 kinds of foundations. The crowds were amazed but at this early stage of Jesus’ ministry, the gospel was not yet fully known and the people, even the disciples, did not fully understand Jesus, or the cost of following Him.

1. SETTING THE STAGE: Read Matthew 7

2. READING the SCRIPT: read each proverb section

- A. Concerning **judging**, what is the proverb, and how does it fit with Jesus’ gospel of the kingdom? (vv. 1-5)
 - i. Where’s the karma (v.2)
- B. Concerning **pearls before swine**, what is the proverb, and how does it fit with Jesus’ gospel of the kingdom? (v. 6)
- C. Concerning **prayer**, what is the proverb, and how does it fit with Jesus’ gospel of the kingdom? (vv. 7-11)
 - i. In what universe are vv. 7-8 true?
- D. Concerning **the golden rule**, what is the proverb, and how does it fit with Jesus’ gospel of the kingdom? (v. 12)
 - i. In what way could this statement be the sum total of Jesus’ teaching?
- E. Concerning the **gates/roads**, what is the proverb, and how does it fit with Jesus’ gospel of the kingdom? (vv. 13-14)
 - i. Connect vv. 12-14 - Keeping in mind the pre-resurrection meanings of “destruction” and “life.”
 - ii. According to Jesus, is living out of *agape* love easy or hard?
 - iii. Jesus is not speaking of eternal life, (nor eternal destruction). What kind of life is he speaking about?
- F. What metaphor does Jesus use to teach discernment? vv.15-22
- G. Make a connection between the good/bad trees, good/bad fruit and v. 21
- H. What is the "rock" Jesus is referring to concerning the building foundation for your house?
- I. Discuss the values and differences of confessing your faith, vs. living your faith?

3. REVIEWS: Matthew 7

- A. According to what we’ve studied, have you learned something of God’s nature that might be contrary to what you’ve previously thought?
- B. What are some positive changes you could make in your thinking and acting toward others with *agape* love this week?

