

2.10.19 Sermon - Pastor Jordan Gades, Matt 7:1-14

Grace and Peace be to you From God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Luther has this Famous line "SIN BOLDLY" I'm sure you've heard it once or twice. But do you ever wonder where he came up with it? Jesus seems to keep telling people not to sin. Especially in this passage in Matthew.

So we start with don't judge. Which through some very savvy Greek translations that I read about, Jesus is probably telling these groups of people don't condemn people to hell. Stop doing that! But still we understand what Jesus is talking about here in his great sermon on the mount. He's telling us stop judging first. And if you're not judging you are opened up to all these other possibilities like actually listening to a person or getting to know them. Like Jesus did with every person that he met.

Then Jesus says this kind of weird thing about giving pearls to pigs, which, I gotta figure, we are never going to do. I wouldn't do that anyway. But again we understand what Jesus is trying to say. Don't just waste or destroy what is good and holy. Use it for what it was meant for.

And then we get to the huge thing, Ask, Seek, Knock.

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."

Yup. Seems pretty easy and self-evident. So much so that we'll be coming back to that. Then Ask Seek Knock leads perfectly to the golden rule, it points right at it. This is how God Acts in the world, this is how we are supposed to act. **Do to others as you would have them do to you** But this great universal rule which is innate within us, built into us from the moment of creation, this rule that would completely change the face of the earth, is insanely, improbably, impossible for us to follow. We can't do it. And our next section about the narrow path being hard makes a whole lot of sense. Which is why it's so important that we built our house, our faith, our lives on the Rock, the Word, the Logos, Jesus Christ.

We could ask the question "why can't we just do unto others as we would have them do to us" but I think today we should ask today why don't we Ask, Seek, and Knock. These seem like small things and yet over and over they show themselves to be the harder things to do.

Ask. Seek. Knock.

These seem like a pretty self-evident things to do AND YET... We don't over and over and over and over and over we DON'T ASK! Directions, understanding, improvements, never wanting to SEEM like the lesser, never wanting to seem like we have it all together, never want the illusion of what we have wrapped ourselves in to be broken or pierced, how could we not know? We are dealing with that as a whole society. We don't seek because we might not find, We don't knock because we might be afraid. Afraid of the change that might come, the whole different thing that might be on the other side of the door. Or our own apathy might get the better of us. We have to be so guarded all the time. In all circumstances, to every person we meet.

At what age does it stop being ok for us to simply ask questions? Get out of school and you're supposed to be the master? Get out of Sunday school and through confirmation and

you're never supposed to wonder about God now? Somehow you've learned it all? I can't say that's anywhere near true for me. The more I have learned, the more questions I have to ask. And the questions only get harder and harder. For me to even ask, for others to answer and for me to receive an answer for. For those types of hard questions to be asked you need a safe place to ask them. As much as we try we judge others based on their questions. You need a relationship with the people around you before you ask your hard questions. Church is supposed to be that place with those people. As I told the 9th graders and their mentors on Wednesday, Church is just a bunch of sinners confessing their faith in Jesus Christ and receiving the forgiveness and love of God. We are not a bunch of people who have it all or know it all, or even close to that. This is the place where we get to abide together and talk about the things we are wondering about and where we are on our faith journeys.

But here is something that we can turn to. We are all seeking something right now. We are searching fervently. We have come today seeking the heart of God. We are seeking peace, forgiveness, hope, love, understanding, acceptance. We know they come with God and we are willing to go the distance to seek them out. We have built this discipline to seeking out God first and it is showing up in our lives daily.

Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said this. He knew his audience he knows US, that we need to hear these words. Here this mandate of do these things followed every single time with **and it will be given to you**. Jesus is telling us to us get together and as these questions and seek the truth. Knock on new doors and see what is truly available to you. I can't tell you how many times one person ask a question and its, 5 people say I had that same question. Or one person puts the time or effort in and does that one small action that opens up a person to life and love. Our questions will be answered because we want the best for one another as God wants the best for us. We seek because what we need is within our grasp because God has put it there for us. We knock because we have been empowered and incredibly blessed by our amazing God.

We are in the midst of asking hard questions, seeking things we never knew we needed, and knocking on doors we didn't know existed. But we do all these things in faith and hope, and in the promises of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. While we all ask seek, and knock sometimes in our lives the answers never come fully, we search and search and search and never find and sometimes we knock and pound and yell and the door never seems to move an inch. In the midst of this frustration and anguish we start asking a whole different set of questions and just start searching out ways to escape or pain. We are not the first, we probably won't be the last, (being angry at God is incredibly biblical) but our faith has endured it because we are never alone in it. We hold onto to God in these times because our God is the God who answers, who finds the lost, and who opens THEE Door. Who loves us to death and beyond through into new life.

Lets go back to that Luther "Sin Boldly" quote.

"If you are a preacher of mercy, do not preach an imaginary but the true mercy. If the mercy is true, you must therefore bear the true, not an imaginary sin. God does not save those who are only imaginary sinners. Be a sinner, and sin boldly, but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where justice resides. We, however, says Peter (2. Peter 3:13) are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where justice will reign."

We live a life knowing true mercy. So go out into the world boldly! Go out and live the Golden Rule. Go out and Ask, Seek, and Knock! Go out rejoicing that we live in the light of a victorious Lord today tomorrow and forevermore. Amen!