



Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

Don't Judge

by Kevin Little

Jesus mastered the mouth-agape, mic-dropped, walk-away comment. It helped that Scripture often tells us that he knew what they were thinking, whether they were the crowd or the Pharisees or his disciples. He knows exactly how to challenge your mindset with one question or one statement and invite you into a better way of life. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus does it once again as He sums up all the Law and the Prophets by saying, “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.”

By what he says and what he doesn't say, Jesus challenges us toward two major mindset shifts:

1. From ME to YOU

It seems like we are hard-wired for selfishness. How quickly toddlers learn the word “Mine!” We easily move through life with a backpack filled with wishes, desires, and expectations. Whether we could bring those into our conscious mind is another story altogether, but we have wants for the other people around us. And Jesus, being the master teacher and shepherd, invites us to use those wants to guide the way we treat those other people: To take my desire for encouragement as a catalyst to encourage others. To take my wish for someone listening to my problems without feeling the need to solve them as a trigger for me to listen empathetically to those around me. To take my need for grace and forgiveness when I mess up as an invitation to show grace to those who mess up around me, even by not showing me grace.

2. From DON'T to DO

This week, we learned that a contemporary of Jesus summed up the entire Law and Prophets by saying, “So whatever you wish that men would not do unto you; do not do unto them.” This rabbi missed matching the Son of God by one word, but it is a significant revision. Too often, I measure my righteousness by those things I do not do. I avoid unkind words or put-downs or sarcasm (well, two out of three isn't bad). By removing the word “not,” Jesus invites us to a path filled with right thoughts, giving others the benefit of the doubt, right words, of praise and encouragement rather than meaningless silence, and

with right actions, compassion, and service rather than passing by. And too often in those moments, I find myself comforted by the thought that I did nothing wrong, rather than grieved by the thought I did nothing of benefit.

Question: So today, where is Jesus inviting you to move your mindset from ME to YOU and from DON'T to DO?