# Lesson 9 Matthew 7:1-23 Sermon on the Mount - Piety

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

1. A. What is the difference between judging the state of a person’s immortal spirit and making a judgment about whether a particular course of action is morally right or wrong?

Matthew 7:1

1 “Stop judging, that you may not be judged.

2 For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you

B Are there particular actions which may be objectively judged to be right or wrong? What are some of those actions and what is the basis for making an objective judgment?

C If someone suggests to you that there is no such thing as “objective truth” that applies to everyone, what is intrinsically contradictory about such a suggestion being accepted as “objective truth?”

1. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a series of pilgrimage allusions to the city of the Great King as an example of Christian living. If you are on a pilgrimage to a new city (which all Christians are), how do you find your way to the place of worship?

Matthew 7:7-11

7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

8 For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

9 Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread,

10 or a snake when he asks for a fish?

11 If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

1. Who will receive, who will find, and to whom will the door be opened? Why may it not always be what we are asking for, seeking, or the door we want? How does God tell the prophet Jeremiah he must seek to find God?

Jeremiah 29:11-13

11 For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—oracle of the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.

12 When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you.

13 When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart,

1. A. Continuing the pilgrimage allusion, not all entries into the great city lead the pilgrim safely to the desired destination. Similarly, not all life styles of the Christian pilgrimage lead to heaven. What do the broad and narrow gates represent? See Catechism 1696

Matthew 7:13

13 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction and those who enter through it are many.

14 How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.

Catechism 1696

1696 The way of Christ "leads to life"; a contrary way "leads to destruction." The Gospel parable of the two ways remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation: "There are two ways, the one of life, the other of death; but between the two, there is a great difference."

B In what ways is the narrow gate of Christian living not as narrow as it sounds?

* To whom is it open?
* If we make a wrong turn, how do we return to the right path?
* What is the purpose of the rules and commandments?
* When we struggle, what helps are available?

1. In the Christian pilgrimage, we encounter many false prophets. Describe some of the false prophets we encounter on our journey and how do their fruits reveal them?

Matthew 7:16-17

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves.

16 By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?

1. A. Not all our fellow pilgrims are faithful to the journey. Recall that it is not ours to judge the state of anyone’s immortal spirit, but one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is discernment. What helps us discern what actions and attitudes are consistent with “the will of My Father in heaven?” Consider John 14:11-12.

Matthew 7:21-23

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?’

23 Then I will declare to them solemnly, ‘I never knew you.\* Depart from me, you evildoers.’

John 14:11-12

11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.

12 Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.

B In the Catholic Church, we have specific terms for these works. Last year was a year dedicated to these particular works. What are the two specific sets of works that Christians should pay particular attention to accomplishing? Do you find any to be especially difficult?

C The Catechism gives us specific guidelines to follow in making life choices in keeping with the Father’s will? Which one do you find most useful?

1789 Some rules apply in every case:   
 - One may never do evil so that good may result from it;   
 - the Golden Rule: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them."   
 - charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbor and his conscience:   
 - "Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience you sin against Christ."  
 - Therefore, "it is right not to do anything that makes your brother stumble."

D. The Catechism tells us how to discern what is the will of God. When you pray, do you spend time meditating and listening as well as talking?

2826 By prayer we can discern "what is the will of God" and obtain the endurance to do it. Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing "the will of my Father in heaven."

1. The allusion to the wise man who built his house on a rock and the fool who built his on sand refers to a specific Old Testament character.

Matthew 7:24-27

24 “Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

25 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock.

26 And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand.

27 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

* The wise man is King Solomon. To what two things does his house refer?
* What was the Old Testament rock?
* The wise man became a fool and built his house on sand? What was the sand, the great sin near the end of Solomon’s life that turned the wise man into a fool?
* What became of the fool’s house (both houses)?
* In the Christian life, who is the Rock?
* What does the fool do that makes his house foundation sand in Christian living?