

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TARENTUM BIBLE CLASS

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Discipleship—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Lesson #50—The Sermon on the Mount-The Disciple and the Unbelievers (Part II)

Matthew 7: The Community of Disciples Is Set Apart

A. We get what we give (Matthew 7:1-12)

- Jesus' struggle for the other person, his call, his love, his grace, his judgment are all that matters.
- Thus the disciples do not stand in a position from which the other person is attacked.
- Instead, in the truthfulness of Jesus' love they approach the other person with an unconditional offer of community.
- When we judge, we encounter other people from the distance of observation and reflection.
- But love does not allot time and space to do that.
- For those who love, other people can never become an object for spectators to observe.
- Instead, they are always a living claim on my love and my service.
- But doesn't the evil in other people necessarily force me to pass judgment on them, just for their own sake and because of our love for them?
- Love for the sinner, if misunderstood, is frightfully close to love for the sin.

- It is that unconditional love, in which Jesus' disciples should live in following him, that achieves what their own disunited love, offered according to their own discretion and conditions, could never achieve, namely, the radical condemnation of evil.
- If the disciples judge, then they are erecting standards to measure good and evil.
- It is he who judges me and reveals what according to my own judgment is good to be thoroughly evil.
- This prohibits me from applying a standard to others which is not valid for me.
- Judging is the forbidden evaluation of other persons.
- It corrodes simple love.
- Love does not prohibit my having my own thoughts about others or my perceiving their sin, but both thoughts and perceptions are liberated from evaluating them.
- They thereby become only an occasion for that forgiveness and unconditional love Jesus gives me.
- Neither I nor the other person is right. God alone, God's grace and judgment is proclaimed to be right.