

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TARENTUM BIBLE CLASS

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Discipleship—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Lesson #5—The Sermon on the Mount-The Disciple and the Unbelievers (Part IV)

Matthew 7: The Community of Disciples Is Set Apart

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

- All our urging, running after people, proselytizing, every attempt to accomplish something in another person by our own power is in vain and dangerous.
- The world will turn violently on those who want to force on it what it does not desire.
- It agrees with the directive in Matthew 10 to shake from their feet the dust of any place that does not hear the word of peace. (Matthew 10:13)
- For the Word, there are such things as hardened hearts and locked doors.
- The Word accepts the resistance it encounters and bears it.
- Disciples may retreat, or even flee, as long as they are retreating and fleeing with the Word, as long as their weakness is the weakness of the Word itself, as long as they do not abandon the Word in their flight. (Matthew 10:23)
- The Word's power is veiled in weakness.
- If the Word came in full, unveiled power, that would be the final judgment day. (Matthew 10:14)

- What should the disciples do in the face of hardened hearts? When their approach to others is unsuccessful? They should recognize that they have no right or power over others at all, and that they have no sort of immediate access to others.
- Disciples should know that their worry and concern about other must lead them to prayer.
- The promise given to their prayer is the greatest power they have.
- The fact that disciples know what they are seeking distinguishes their searching from the nonbelievers' search for God.
- Thus disciples seek God, whom they have found in the promise Jesus Christ gave them.
- In summary, it has become clear that in dealing with other people, the disciples do not possess any special right or power of their own.
- They live completely out of the power of communion with Jesus Christ.
- Jesus gives the disciples a simple rule, by which even the most simpleminded can evaluate whether their dealings with others are right or wrong: they need only reverse the I and the You in the relationship. (Matthew 22:36-40; Matthey 7:12)
- So disciples will always encounter other people only as those whose sins are forgiven and from now on live solely from God's love.