

“Wednesday Refuel” Matthew 7:15-20

“Beware of false Prophets”

Mat 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Observation: **Beware of false prophets,**

Interpretation:

BEWARE:

Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone **cheat you** through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

FALSE PROPHETS:

Matthew 24:4-5 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one **deceives you**. 5. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will **deceive many**."

2Peter 2:1 But there were also **false prophets** among the people, even as there will be **false teachers** among you, who will secretly bring in **destructive heresies**, even **denying the Lord who bought them**, and bring on themselves **swift destruction**.

1John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- Jesus has just warned us of the 2 gates one that leads to life and one path that leads to destruction.
- Now He reminds us that there are many who would try to guide us along the broad path that leads to destruction.
- **False Prophets:** false prophets are present today just like they were back then. They are among us.
- Jesus says here: **Beware**. The word means to take heed, guard, watch, keep yourself. The word is forceful; the warning is clear and strong.
- **Jesus warns us:** one of the major things that keeps us from seeking the right gate and the right way (salvation and heaven) is **false teachers**.
- **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Ti. 4:3–4).**¹

¹ Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (2004). [The Gospel according to Matthew: Chapters 1:1–16:12](#) (Vol. 1, p. 160). Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide.

Application:

Stick to the Bible, Know the Word, be in the Word, **Don't forsake the assembly**, be involved.

Observation: who **come to you in sheep's clothing**, but **inwardly** they are **ravenous wolves**.

Interpretation:

The chief trait of false prophets is that they "**come to you in sheep's clothing**, but **inwardly** they are **ravenous wolves**."

Sheep's clothing: *outwardly* they appear as pastors, ministers, Men and Woman of God ,loving, kind, understanding, people you can trust, their doctrine always starts out solid.

Ravenous wolves: *inwardly*, they are vicious unbelievers who prey on the *immature people not rooted in the word or have no knowledge of the word*, the *unstable*, and the *gullible*. **false teachers are anything but sheep**.

Lets talk about some of these false prophets or false teachers.

- Some false teachers are not aware that they are false.
- They go about doing what they know to do, not knowing that what they do is corrupt and evil.
- They appear as sheep, but consume all they can in order to fill whatever appetite they have whether it is **personal conviction or the big one false doctrine**.

2Timothy 3:13 But evil men and impostors **will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived**.

- **Paul knew that Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse.**
- False teachers always become more subtle in their methods and more bold in their attacks.
- **Hears what's interesting** Not only do they deceive others, but they themselves become trapped by the very false teaching with which they sought to trap their hearers.
- After having pushed their lies for so long, they actually come to believe them personally.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way *that **seems right*** to a man, But its end *is the **way of death***.

Some false teachers are just like wolves in that they are **out for themselves** and for **personal gain!**

Romans 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, **contrary to the doctrine** which you learned, and **avoid them**. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, **but their own belly**, and by **smooth words** and **flattering speech** **deceive the hearts of the simple**.

2Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, **peddling the word of God**; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. **KJV uses corrupting the word of God**.

Either way what these people teach and preach is heresy because it is contrary to what the bible has to say!

2Peter 2:1-2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will **secretly bring in destructive heresies**, even **denying the Lord who bought them**, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many **will follow their destructive ways (wide gate)**, because of whom the way of truth will be **blasphemed**.

These people while professing to be ministers of righteousness, they **secretly bring in** soul-destroying **heresies: and what do they do? they bring it alongside true Bible doctrine**.

It is a deliberate deceptive mixture of the false and the true.

Primarily, what they do is sell a system of denials, they deny this, they deny that, this isn't true.

Here are some of the denials which can be found among certain groups or religions:

- They deny the bible is the inspired word of God Bible,
- The Trinity,
- The deity of Jesus
- His virgin birth,
- His death as a Substitute for sinners.
- They are especially aggressive in their denial of the value of Jesus shed blood.
- They deny His bodily resurrection,
- Eternal punishment,
- **salvation** by grace **through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**,
- The reality of miracles in the Bible.

These false teachers may say nice things about Jesus, they may even refer to His "holiness,"

His beautiful ethics,

His superb example,

Yet they fail to confess Him as God and Savior.² They downplay who Jesus is!!!!!!

² Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (2004). [*The Gospel according to Matthew: Chapters 1:1–16:12*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 160–161). Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide.

So how will you know False prophets?

Mat 7:16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

Observation: You will know them by their **fruits**.

Interpretation:

There is one revealing mark: **the fruit**.

A false prophet is known by the fruit he eats and the big one the fruit he feeds others³

By "fruits" does not necessarily mean their outward works in life or how they talk to people or how they treat people; remember they appear as sheep.

Remember the Pharisees were outwardly righteous before men;

2Timothy 3:5 " having a **form of godliness** but **denying its power**. And from such people turn away!

When looking at the fruit you need to pay attention to the **content of their teaching**.

Is it true fruit from God's Word and Gods word alone. or is it man-centered, is the "fruit" appealing to the ears that want to be tickled?

Another tell all is the effect of their teaching. Are people growing in Jesus or are they growing in false doctrine, or are they being merely being entertained, and do they eventually falling away?

Application:

³ Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (2004). [*The Gospel according to Matthew: Chapters 1:1–16:12*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 162). Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide.

Observation: Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

Interpretation:

Thorns and thistles are false food.

Grapes and figs are true food.

There is only one true food for the soul of man: the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

A prophet must feed upon the truth of the Lord and His Word, and he must feed the same food to others.

Any other source of food for the human soul is false food: it is thorns and thistles. If eaten or served to others, it will choke the life out of the soul.

We cannot always tell a tree by its appearance (bark and leaves), but we can always tell it by its fruit.

Fruit has to do with two things.

1. What a person bears in his own life.
2. What a person bears in the lives of others.

A prophet is to be measured by the fruit borne in his own life and the fruit borne by him in other lives.⁴

Application:

Mat 24:23-25 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' **do not believe it.** 24 For **false christs and false prophets** will rise and show great signs and wonders to **deceive**, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.

1Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit expressly says that in **latter times** some **will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**, 2 **speaking lies in hypocrisy**, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 **forbidding to marry**, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

1John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because **many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

When you tie in the above verse and these cross references you cannot *read this section without thinking of the rise of the **cults churches "deny Jesus is God"** and the watered down Christian churches" they barely use the bible and the churches that just downright misinterpret the word and they hold fast to their interpretation..*

The way these false religions and beliefs have spread is so accurately described here in these verses.

⁴ Leadership Ministries Worldwide. (2004). [The Gospel according to Matthew: Chapters 1:1–16:12](#) (Vol. 1, p. 162). Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide.

What's sad is a great part of the cult membership is made up of persons who were formerly in so-called Christian churches.

When you look at these so called Christian churches: Perhaps at one time these churches had been sound in the faith, but then they drifted toward the social gospel.

Mat 7:17 **Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.**

Observation: Even so, every **good tree bears good fruit**, but a **bad tree bears bad fruit**.

Interpretation:

From lowly bushes we now move to trees, but the basic reasoning remains the same.

The argument now concerns the **quality of the fruit: rather than the kind**, and it extends to the tree that bears it.

Jesus contrasts the *sound* or good tree with the *worthless or bad* ⁶⁶ tree.

The sound tree produces **good fruit**, but not so with the worthless one.

The worthless tree bears only **bad fruit**; the nature of the tree makes any other result **impossible**.⁵

Application:

⁵ Morris, L. (1992). [*The Gospel according to Matthew*](#) (p. 177). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

Mat 7:18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.

Observation: A **good tree cannot bear bad fruit**, nor *can* a **bad tree** bear **good fruit**.

Interpretation:

Jesus makes the point a little more powerful by showing the impossibility of trees bearing fruit that is completely opposite to their nature.

If the tree is perfectly healthy, it simply cannot bear the same kind of fruit that a worthless tree does.

So with the worthless tree; it lacks the ability to bear good fruit .

The point here is obvious, but it is important, and Jesus brings it out clearly.⁶

When you look at this verse even though it takes time for the harvest to come - the good or bad fruit is evident, and it clearly reveals what sort of “tree” we are.

Application:

⁶ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (pp. 177–178). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

Mat 7:19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Observation: Every tree that **does not bear good fruit** is **cut down** and **thrown into the fire**.

Interpretation:

In Matthew 3:10 John the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees: “ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”.

Jesus now moves from the fruit of the rotten tree to its fate.

Jesus now reminds his hearers that people who run orchards do not put up with rotten trees.

With trees that produce no fruit there is no reason for them to exist and no reason why a competent person should let them continue to grow.

*The word “Every” here makes it universal; **no bad tree is allowed to continue producing its bad fruit**.*

Jesus here does not speak of what the tree does, but of what it does not do: it is not the tree that bears bad fruit that is condemned here, but one that fails to produce good fruit.

The tree that does not bear GOOD FRUIT *is cut down*, and not only *cut down* but burned.⁷

So the destiny of the false prophets is to be **thrown into the fire**.

What a frightening verse against Christless pastors, false teachers, and the people who follow these heretics!

Application:

Bear good fruit!!!!

⁷ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 178). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

Mat 7:20 **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

Observation: **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

Interpretation:

This section of the teaching is complete;

The rest of the verse simply repeats the opening part of verse 16.

The fruit is the test of the tree; if there is no good fruit there is no good reason for the tree to exist.

And the fruit is the test of one who claims to be a prophet.

If there is no good fruit there is no good reason for the person to be treated as a prophet.⁸

Application:

Acts 17:10-11 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received the word with all readiness**, and **searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**

⁸ Morris, L. (1992). [*The Gospel according to Matthew*](#) (p. 178). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.