

MATTHEW 7 15-20 "FALSE TEACHERS"

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. With Jesus' qualification of "NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME" we could read it, Jesus said, "I am the **ONLY** way, the **ONLY** truth and the **ONLY** life.

It is not about sincerity or the amount of faith you have. You don't arrive in God's presence by being a good person. If there was any other way but Jesus then He would **NOT** have had to die on the cross.

People like to pick and choose from different religions, and put together their own belief system. Individual freedom is the ticket. There's only one problem – this multiple-option orientation flies in the face of Jesus' words in **Matthew 7 verse 13** "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Jesus cuts our choices to **2** - **2** gates, **2** ways, **2** crowds, **2** DESTINATIONS... It's either ETERNITY IN HEAVEN or ETERNITY IN HELL. When you enter eternity there's just **2** sections - **smoking or non-smoking. PRAY**

When I was a youth pastor I loved to prank the kids. As time went on my wife Hannah developed devious and masterful ways of doing so. April fool's day was a day authorized to do so.

Cup cakes salt but didn't rise well... next time she used white pepper

PEARL ONIONS COVERED WITH CHOCOLATE... homemade malt balls

OREO COOKIES carve out the center of the icing and put in horse radish sauce.

Oh they looked good on the outside but the deception put a foul taste in their mouths... spiritually the same deception is happening to millions.

Matthew 7 verse 15... Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears

bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

In other words, **beauty is only fleece deep**. Don't be deceived by a pleasant, even pious appearance. Jesus says in verse 16, "You will know them by their fruits..." In one sense, we're not to judge, but in another sense, we are called to be fruit inspectors. We've got to be careful. Jesus warns us in verse 21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father..." There will be people who prophesy in Jesus' name, cast out demons, and even work wonders... but Jesus will say, "I never knew you, depart from Me..." Works are not fruits. Remember, **IT'S NOT WHAT WE DO, IT'S WHAT WE BE**. Always ask, is the man's ministry characterized by the nature of Jesus - the beatitudes? Are the fruits of the spirit evident in his life? Does he preach and teach the whole gospel... including sin, repentance, judgment? Let's take a deeper look.

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

This is and has always been a serious problem for the Church. Whenever and where ever "**TRUTH**" is being taught you can be assured Satan will be near to offer a counterfeit. **R Kent puts it this way**, "Jesus does not give false warnings. He does not put up a "wet paint" sign if there is no wet paint. His warning is based on historical reality. Israel had been subjected to a steady stream of false preachers throughout her history, and more would come in the future.

Jesus dealing with the last days says in **Matthew 24:11** *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.*

Acts 20:29-31 *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

False Preachers are a real hazard for sheep seeking healthy places to graze. The implication of Jesus' words are that many false prophets have

come, will come and keep coming. Never before has the church more needed to be grounded in **"TRUTH"**.

Our context tells us much about the false prophet's preaching... **No narrow gate is mentioned.** It appears that the real problem is not what he preaches but what he leaves out of his preaching. So many right things are said, but what he leaves out is what causes death to the hearer. Nothing offensive to the natural man is said. Comforting, soothing **BUT NEVER WARNING.**

Guy Pastor Mike Pallotto met at the pastor's lunch... No mention of sin, judgment, hell, repentance and he was proud of it... WOLF!

2 Cor. 11:13-15 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

Watch out church, watch out.

Verse 16 says, You will know them by their fruits. This means paying attention to many aspects of their life and ministry. We are not to be judges, but we are to look for fruit. The fruit we are to look for is not flawless, because we are all full of flaws and shortcomings. No, the issue is **NOT FLAWLESSNESS**, but **fruitfulness**. The tree that has a lot of leaves but no real fruit is going to be dealt with severely when it is hewn down and cast into the fire.

I join with many in believing **the fruit** is revealed in 2 categories...

One... What the teacher says (the doctrinal content of his teaching) and

Two... the way he lives (his moral life)

False teachers... The absence of **ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE...**

* Is he preaching the truth about **holiness, righteousness, justice, the wrath of God?** We will never understand the love of God without understanding His wrath against sin.

We should pay attention to the *effect* of their teaching. Are people growing in Jesus or merely being entertained, and eventually falling away? Entertaining 20 minute sermonettes produce anemic believers. Topical series after topical series creating shallow believers that never seem to mature in the Lord.

**** Final Judgment and hell...** If all you get is smiles your best life ever.

Matthew 25:41 "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels": **Jesus spoke more of hell than He did of heaven...** He does not want anyone to go there.

Why don't people believe in Hell

We don't believe in it because we don't want to answer for what we do
 We do not want to hear that what we are doing is wrong.
 We do not want to hear that our sin will be punished.

False prophets don't teach on it!

1. Fire (Lake of Fire) "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
2. Darkness CONSTANT Fear
3. No rest... Never ending torment and torture
4. Thirst (No relief)

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: "In hell there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying—the hope of being annihilated. They are forever—forever—forever lost! On every chain in hell, there is written "forever". In the fires there, blaze out the words, "forever". Above their heads, they read, "forever". Their eyes are galled and their hearts are pained with the thought that it is "forever". Oh, if I could tell you tonight that hell would one day be burned out, and that those who were lost might be saved, there would be a jubilee in hell at the very thought of it. But it cannot be—it is "forever" they are cast into the outer darkness."

Mental torment... Memories of shunned salvation opportunities
 Utter hopelessness (mind will know NEVER any hope)

Physical torment... suffering and pain that is endless

Spiritual torment... Present consciousness in eternity

"Depart from me" you have rejected my son. Over the door they will read condemned forever, First moment and forever present of your mind. you will see His glory, and the joy of His presence. after the first thousand years you will look above the sign and see "condemned forever" you will hear those words depart from me.

The greatest joy of heaven will be God's presence

The greatest agony of hell will be God's absence

The lost will be spiritually tormented in hell

The Terrors of Hell...I cannot leave without one final word to those who think they are converted, but are not; and also, to those who know themselves to be unconverted. Can you conceive of eternity? Stop now and try to imagine being tormented unceasingly, forever, without end. Does this not terrify you? Never a chance for a moment's rest. Never a drop of water to cool your parched throat. Think again of how long eternity is. Try to imagine it: day and night, forever and ever, burned with fire like a spider in a furnace of flames. Shrieking, howling, wailing, cursing the day you were born, and being cursed by the devils and damned souls around you eternally. Remembering, forever remembering, how you were warned on earth and how you ignored those warnings: self-satisfied and self-deceived that all was well with your soul. Job's wife told him to curse God and die. Unless you repent and flee to Jesus Christ, who is your only hope, you shall curse God eternally and be tormented by Him in His presence in the awful fullness of His wrath, and you shall never die. You shall never die. You shall never die! Eternity is forever!

Flourishing cults like the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses would never teach on hell... because they are false prophets!

***** Depravity of mankind** In the last days Paul warned, "people will be lovers of themselves" (so we tailor a self-esteem gospel) "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (so the health, wealth and happiness gospel is taught).

False prophets elevate experience over authority.

Acts 20 says they will draw men unto themselves... Any ministry that does not point to Jesus is worthless! Pointing to Jesus is an essential.

2 Peter 2 verse 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, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;

Another translation says these ravenous wolves will make “**merchandise of you.**” They’ll go for your pocketbooks, concerned not so much about **FEEDING YOU** as they are about **FLEECING YOU**.

The writings that circulated among the early church, called the Didache, specifically stated that if a man said, “Thus saith the Lord. I have need of a steak dinner and a new garment,” he was to be branded as a false prophet immediately. Beware of any man who preaches about his own needs.

TWO... the second area we will know the false prophet by their “fruit” is in the way they live. (moral life) ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.

The connection between what comes out of us and what we are is undeniable. False prophets don’t have the radically changed life a true believer has. A wolf can wear sheep’s clothing but it cannot grow a sheep’s coat. **Authenticity!**

They are **PEARL ONIONS** posing as a **malt balls**... or an Oreo cookie full of **HORSE RADISH**. Wolves in sheep’s clothing...

As Jesus has taught us already in this wonderful “sermon on the mount” a true follower of Christ will live the Beatitudes.

poor in spirit, **spiritual bankruptcy,**

⁴ **Blessed approved of God are you when you mourn over sin.**

⁵ Blessed are the meek, **those who have power under control... Tender Steal** For they shall inherit the earth. **Meek people have a gentleness about them because they trust God.**

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

MERCY and compassion... **Litmus test for followers of Christ** "THE MORE MERCY I SHOW, THE MORE MERCY I'LL KNOW."

⁸ Blessed are the **pure in heart**, For they shall see God.

Rejoicing under persecution...

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT... Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control.

We all must look at our lives and check for authenticity... This fleece on me; did I really grow it or is it just a uniform that comes off.

Trees, what kind of fruit are you bearing? Is the fruit really yours? Does it come from the life within or is it just an ornament hanging on the outside?

Jesus goes on to say in verse 19... Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

One of Aesop's fables is about a hungry wolf that put a sheepskin over himself and cruised into the sheepfold. It just so happened that the same night, the shepherd also had a **strange craving for mutton**. So he went out to his sheepfold and plunged his knife into the biggest sheep within the flock, which, of course, turned out to be the wolf.

The wolf who was disguised as a sheep was eventually dealt with by the shepherd. So, too, our Good Shepherd watches out for His flock.