

Sunday Sermon Guide

Central Baptist Church – Crockett, Texas

September 7, 2025 - True and False Prophets: Discernment in the Kingdom

Main Passage: Matthew 7:15-20

Introduction

- Jim Jones and Jonestown illustrate how a charismatic, religious leader can deceive many.
- Despite good works and recognition, his teachings led over 900 people to destruction.
- Like last week's passage (Matthew 7:13–14), Jesus calls us to choose: the narrow road or the broad road.

Scripture References: Matthew 7:13–14

The Warning of Jesus

- Jesus begins with a command: Be on guard against false prophets (Matthew 7:15).
- The word 'beware' means to stay alert—to recognize the danger.
- False prophets stand at the crossroads, directing people toward the broad road.
- Many will be deceived, but few will find the narrow path.

Scripture References: Matthew 7:15, Matthew 7:22

Who Are Prophets?

- A prophet speaks God's Word to His people.
- In the Old Testament, prophets received direct revelation from God.
- Today, pastors and preachers speak God's revealed Word through the Scriptures.
- A true prophet delivers God's Word faithfully. A false prophet pretends to speak for God but leads astray.
- There has always been a market for false prophets—people who prefer smooth words over truth.

Scripture References: Matthew 24:24, Jeremiah 5:31, Deuteronomy 13:8–9

The Nature of False Prophets

- They come in 'sheep's clothing,' but inwardly are ravaging wolves.
- This likely refers not to sheep disguises, but to shepherd disguises—they appear as leaders of God's people.
- The greatest threat to the flock is a wolf disguised as a shepherd.
- Three categories of false prophets:
 - Heretics: openly deny or distort God's Word.
 - Apostates: abandon the faith entirely.
 - Deceivers: appear spiritual but subtly distort the Gospel.

Scripture References: Matthew 7:15, 2 Corinthians 11:14–15

Identifying Their Fruit

- Jesus says you will recognize them by their fruit (Matthew 7:16).
- Good trees produce good fruit; bad trees produce bad fruit.
- The deceiver often avoids speaking about sin, repentance, judgment, and holiness.
- Their fruit exposes them—look at both what they say and what they refuse to say.

The Judgment of False Prophets

- Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom (Matthew 7:21–23).
- Many who claim to work in Jesus' name will be rejected: 'I never knew you.'
- Their end is destruction in eternal separation from God.

Scripture References: Matthew 7:21-23

“Often, the deception is not what they say, because it sounds right, but in what they don't say.