

By Their Fruit

Matthew 7:15–20

Week Two · Matthew 7

EPISODE SUMMARY

Right after the fork in the road, Jesus warns us about the voices that would talk us onto the wrong one. False prophets come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Jesus gives one patient test for telling them apart: "You'll recognize them by their fruit." Grapes don't grow on thornbushes. Then he widens the lens to a principle that runs through all of life — a good tree produces good fruit, a bad tree produces bad, and a good tree can't be faked into existence by tying fruit onto the branches. Which raises the real question: where does a good tree come from?

KEY THEMES

- False prophets come dressed like the flock; a wolf comes to feed on the sheep (v. 15).
- The test is fruit, watched patiently over a season — not charm, crowds, or confidence (v. 16).
- A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good (vv. 17–18).
- The fruit doesn't make the tree; the tree makes the fruit — the root comes first.
- Discernment without paranoia: love with its eyes open, not a witch hunt (vv. 19–20).

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit."

— Matthew 7:17, CSB

TAKEAWAY TRUTH

A root is something you receive, not something you manufacture. None of us grew ourselves into good trees; by nature the whole orchard runs to thornbushes. But Jesus went to a cross and died for us, cutting us loose from the old wild stock and grafting us into himself. The good root was never our effort — the good root is Christ. We're made good by being joined to him, by his blood poured out, and the fruit that follows is the evidence that grace has taken hold, never the payment that buys us in.

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Two things to carry out the door. First, watch the fruit — in the voices you listen to and the teaching you take in. Give it time, stay near the cross, and let fruit prove itself; you can be gentle and still be awake. Second, and most important, get your own root into the right soil. You will never produce your way into being a good tree, but you can be made one. Come to Christ, and let his life grow up through yours. The fruit comes in its season, because of the root.

SERIES FOCUS

The Sermon on the Mount · Matthew 7 · CT081–CT087