

“Knowing Truth in Knowing Jesus.” Matthew 7:15-23.

Series: Pure Discipleship in a Corrupt World” Part 14. Mother’s Day
May 9th, 2021 Rev. Dr. Scott T. Arnold. FBC of Los Angeles

Key Thought: Pure discipleship seeks the truth, a personal knowledge and relationship with God our Creator and Redeemer. Jesus, as God’s Son, warns us that there are false prophets, and we must be careful and discerning so as not to be misled. Only in Jesus may we come to the most personal and perfect relationship with God the Heavenly Father possible.

Introduction: Celebration of mothers and women of faith, the gift of faith, hope, love, and wisdom. A woman, or mother, of faith never stops praying, never stops asking for God to be revealed to those she loves, to her children, to her neighbors, to her family. She never ceases to pray. ¹⁶ *I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.* ¹⁷ *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* ¹⁸ *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,* ¹⁹ *and his incomparably great power for us who believe.* Ephesians 1:6-19

I. Jesus warned disciples to be alert to deception. (7:15-20)

- A. False prophets will come appearing benign. (15a)
- B. False prophets have evil and destructive motives. (15b)
- C. False prophets evidence bad fruit in their lives (16-17)
- D. False prophets are to be discerned (18)
- E. False prophets shall be judged and destroyed by God (19)
- F. False prophets should be recognized by disciples. (20)

II. Jesus warned disciples to discern insincerity. (21-23)

- A. Jesus calls for more than lip service (21a)
- B. Jesus calls for faith and obedience to God’s will (21b)

- C. Jesus will determine the sincerity of faith (22)
- D. Jesus is given authority to discern good from evil. (23)
Jesus will judge all people as to their motives and heart, not simply according to their words or outward appearance.

Application Point: Deception occurs from the work of evil and the devil in the world. Deception aims at disrupting the purity of discipleship through corruption, diversion and destruction. Jesus calls for disciples to be discerning, faithful and sincere. Women of faith are often vanguards of wisdom from God, and we honor their courage and contribution of prayer, hope, faith, and love today.

15 “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (Matthew 7:15-23 NIV)

Questions:

1. Why was it important for Jesus to warn the disciples and the crowd gathered on the mountainside about false prophets?
2. What are some examples of false prophets in our time? Why is it difficult for people to be discerning when someone is misleading them?
3. What does Jesus teach about bearing good fruit and recognizing bad fruit that pertains to daily faith and discernment?
4. What are we to understand about the Lordship of Jesus and His role in God’s judgment? (v.21-23)