

Series: Sermon on the Mount
Lesson #31
Title: Ye Shall Know Them
Text: Matthew 7: 15-20
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BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

The Lord taught us that few go in by Christ the Straight Gate, and continue in Christ the Narrow Way. He said that many go in the wide gate and broad way. So then the majority of prophets are false.

Matthew 24:11: And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS IN SHEEPS CLOTHING

We are talking about men who wear the outward dress of Christ's sheep. Clothing is the outer garment which you can see. False prophets will appear in the same outward dress as the sheep. They will do many wonderful works, **but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.**

1. Outward obedience can be imitated by a lost man to a degree. Paul said when he was a Pharisee, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." That is, blameless, as far as man's eye could see. But the Spirit of grace can not be imitated.

Matthew 7: 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits.

God's sheep have spiritual discernment. The natural man does not.

The Lord said, Joh 10:27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

John 10: 5: And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

I Corinthians 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10: But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit:...12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Matthew 7: 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes? Do men gather figs from thistles?

Of course not!

Matthew 7: 17: Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Now be sure you get this next verse.

Matthew 7: 18: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

A GOOD TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH EVIL FRUIT

The Lord is speaking of the new man, the new heart, which God has made. This fruit is through the work of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 12: 33: Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. 34: O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good

things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35: A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

1 Corinthians 12:3: Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 7: 18: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

This good fruit begins and continues the same way.

James 1: 17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Illustration: How did God create life and light in the beginning?

Genesis 1: 3: And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

There is no variableness, neither shadow of turning with God.

James 1: 18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Those begotten by the will of God with the word of truth, know the word of truth. They know that it is God's will to rebirth his saints with the Word of Truth. The Father of lights shines the light into sinners hearts to see his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This same way in which God rebuked us, turned us, and set us on Christ in the first hour is the way he does it throughout this life of faith. Through the Word of Christ Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The messenger God sends will do this in his words and in his practice:

- 1) He has repented to God, and he believes Christ who is all his salvation.
- 2) He declares the word of Christ the Truth, the singular message of Christ and him crucified, simply, clearly, without leaving man room to glory. And because he trusts God, whether it is a sinner uncovered or a brother who is in error, he declares the good news of Christ and waits on God to work effectually in the hearts of his people.

James 3: 11: Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? 12: Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. 13: Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. 16: For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. 17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure,

The lust of the fleshly preacher is a covetousness for the glory that belongs to the triune God alone. He cannot speak the truth plainly and clearly because he does not believe God.

- God chooses whom he will. God has mercy on whom he will. Salvation is of God's will not mans will.
- Christ redeemed a particular number of people given him before the world began and he shall call each one out by name and they shall follow him.
- The Holy Spirit alone can create life, repentance and faith in sinners.
- When a man has been born of God he knows this word of truth. Therefore, he ceases using wisdom of words, handling the word of God deceitfully, but he speaks to needy sinners in honesty.

Illustration: James here says the unbridled tongue, the unregenerate heart, will bless and curse men with the same mouth. In the sermon on the mount when our Lord said, Do not forswear thyself, let your yea be yea and your nay,

may—it is this pureness of heart, this honesty that God creates in the heart of the believer. He cannot bring forth the corrupt fruit of man’s crafty, wisdom of words. He has turned from that in repentance toward God.

There was once an envy of God, an envy of men, and strife with both in the heart, but now because he has been created anew by the Spirit of Power and Wisdom, he does not attempt to force anything from sinners by wisdom of words, but instead:

James 3: 17:...then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits,

(Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance)

Love does not expose sins, does look for sins, does not set sinners in front of their brethren to make an example of them. That is the work of grievous wolves, of ravening wolves. God’s ambassadors are:

James 3: without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Partiality and hypocrisy is the fruit of false prophets. God’s ambassador do not speak of mercy but then in deed rejoice in judgment. When the wolf makes the sinner to think that his worthiness is in himself—how well he has put away his sin or walked morally before men—he always promotes a respect of persons among his followers.

The man in the congregation who appears rich in good works—will be told, “you sit here” but the sinner who appears poor in good works will be told “you sit there.” You can sit at the Lord’s table and take communion with us because you have made yourself worthy; but you oh sinner cannot because you have unconfessed sin in your life. And the man who is rich in temporal goods somehow always seems to be rich in good works and never rebuked so as to run the risk of him leaving the flock.

Mercy rejoices against judgment, against hypocrisy, against partiality. It does so by setting forth Christ and him crucified who alone is the sinners worthiness, his complete righteousness and holiness and every sinner who is restored—reconciled to God—is brought to the feet of Christ only through the grace of God working effectually in their hearts through this precious word of truth.

Here is the sum of these good fruits:

James 3: 18: And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Not: biting and devouring, not encouraging sinners to cut their flesh, not casting the pearls as if they were stones, not turning men to their fleshly obedience...

Philippians 3: 2: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 5: 16: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh

The Lord told the Pharisees, John 8:15: Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man (after the flesh).

Luke 16:15: And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

LET’S SEE THIS IN CHRIST JESUS

John 6: 28: Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Jesus answered and said. Remember Paul told the Ephesians, I have taught you and showed you? The Lord is teaching them the work of God is to believe on Christ Jesus whom God has sent. And he is showing them the work of those who trust Christ alone, by simply declaring to them the word of truth and trusting his Father to draw his people.

John 6: 30: They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31: Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

The carnal man seeks fruits of the flesh. His religion is carnal. He understands scriptures only on a carnal level, in letter, rather than in spirit and truth.

John 6: 32: Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33: For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Christ is God. He could speak and give them life if they were his sheep. But they asked him what are the works of God. So he is teaching and showing the work of God: believe on Christ, bear witness of Christ, and wait on God to do the work he did in you and continues to do in you.

John 6: 34: Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

They are still thinking of their belly. But does the Lord resort to any other method but the simple declaration of the Truth? Listen:

John 6: 35: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36: But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38: For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Do you see the perfection of faithfulness here? Because Christ came to do the will of the Father, he declared the will of the Father, the truth of what he came to do. God's faithful witnesses do not do their own will, but the will of Christ who sends them.

John 6: 39: And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40: And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Lord's witnesses do exactly what Christ did here. Christ Jesus is declaring his Father's will, we declare God's will and the work Christ has accomplished.

John 6: 41: The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42: And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Christ is teaching us and showing us the work of God. He believed his Father. The believer believes God and believes on his Son whom he has sent.

He finished the work his Father gave him to do (all the believer's salvation), in this case we see him bearing witness of the faithfulness of God by his own faithfulness to God in declaring the Word of Truth. We fulfill the law of God by faith in his Son. The only work he has given us to do, is to bear witness of what he has accomplished to sinners.

But when some did not believe, did he change the word of truth, did he stray from simply declaring the word of truth? No, he declared it more plainly and more boldly.

John 6: 43: Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Hebrews 5: 7: Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8: Though he

were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9: And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Matthew 7: 18: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20: Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.