

Wide Gate Prophets

Matthew 7:15-20

Halifax: 3 October 2004

Introduction:

Last week, I showed you what Jesus does now as He begins to conclude His sermon—the sermon we call the Sermon on the Mount.

- He urges you to enter God's kingdom by the narrow gate that leads to life instead of the wide gate that leads to destruction!
- Here are set before you two very different ways to enter into God's kingdom...
 - two gates of entry into the covenant...
 - two portals by which the baptised come in...
 - two ways of access to the visible church.
- Jesus is not talking about those who are outside the covenant people...
 - He is not talking about those who have no time for religion or who have turned to other gods...
 - He is talking about two ways into the kingdom of God...
 - a right way and a wrong way.
 - There are always two kinds of people in the church.
 - There is the wheat and there are the tares...
 - There are those sown on the good ground and those sown on the rocky or thorny ground...
 - There are the branches on the vine that bear fruit and there are the branches that bear no fruit and are cut off and burned.
 - There are those who are blessed in the kingdom and those who are cursed...
 - And it all has to do with the way one enters the kingdom.

I showed you that the narrow gate is none other than Jesus Himself...

- and that the broad gate is every other way that men come into the kingdom.
 - The narrow gate is the way of divine accomplishment...
 - The broad gate is the way of human accomplishment.
 - The narrow gate is the way of God's grace...
 - The broad gate is the way of man's works.
- Those who enter the narrow gate fit the description Jesus gives of the blessed person in the beatitudes...
 - They are poor in spirit because they realise they have nothing to offer to God...

- They have given up on themselves
- And so they look to Jesus to save them.
 - They look to Him to give them a new heart to change their character...
 - And the look to Him for the forgiveness of their sins by means of His death on the cross.
- They would not think of trying to save themselves, but look to Jesus alone.
 - Jesus says that only a few come in by this way that leads to life...
- But He says that there are many who enter by the wide gate that leads to destruction.
 - This wide gate has a lot of variety in it:
 - There is the moralist who says,
 - “I will go to heaven because I try to be a good person and to love others.”
 - There is the sentimentalist who says,
 - “I will go to heaven because God is love and would never send anybody to hell.”
 - There is the ritualist who says,
 - “I will go to heaven because I was baptised and go to church and say my prayers...”
 - There is the doctrinalist who says,
 - “I will go to heaven because I know the catechism and have rejected all the heresies.”
 - There is the Enthusiast who says,
 - “I will go to heaven because I have spoken in tongues performed miracles, and because God speaks to me all the time.”
 - There is the Experientialist who says,
 - “I will go to heaven because I made a decision and asked Christ to come into my heart.”
 - The whole reason Jesus came into the world was because we are all ruined sinners who cannot save ourselves:
 - That is why you must trust in Him alone as He is offered to us in the gospel.

This is the narrow gate and there are but few that enter it. I gave you three reasons why there are so few:

- First, the narrow way is rejected because it requires a person to humble himself
 - (to see himself as such a wretched sinner who cannot be forgiven apart from the substitutionary death of Jesus in his place)
- Second, the narrow way is rejected because it often involves rejection and persecution from those who are on the broad way...
- And third, the narrow way is often rejected because it calls for self-denial—
 - we must turn from our own way and follow Jesus.

But I showed you that even though there are so many difficult things about this gate,

- It is the only gate that leads to life!
 1. It leads to eternal life instead of eternal destruction!
 2. It leads to life renewed in God's image...
 3. And it leads to life in full communion with God.

TRANS> Jesus urges us to enter by the narrow gate because it is the way to life.

- This is what we looked at last week...
- The connection between this and the passage we are looking at today (Matt 7:15-20) is very obvious...
 - You can be sure that since there is this narrow way and this broad way into God's kingdom...
 - there are also prophets who represent each way...

I. There are wide gate prophets and narrow gate prophets...

- A. A prophet, of course, is someone who speaks for God.
 1. When he speaks prophecies, he represents God and is God's mouth to the people.
 - He often says things like, "Thus says the Lord."
 - a. If He is a true prophet, then he truly brings God's word to the people...
 - God says of such prophets,
 - Deut 18:18: "I will put my words in His mouth and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."
 - b. But if the prophet is a false prophet, he brings a message that is not from God.
 - In Jeremiah 14:14, the LORD complains to Jeremiah about such prophets, saying:

- Jer 14:14: “The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.”
 - Such prophets claim to speak for God, but in reality only speak for themselves.
2. There are what we might call big “p” prophets and little “p” prophets.
- a. A big “P” prophet is one hears **directly** from God and so brings a message directly from God.
- 1) Such a prophet is used by God to bring new revelation to us.
- He speaks under the superintendence of God’s Spirit so that what He says is the infallible word of God.
 - Such men were used of God to present God’s salvation to us and to record His truth in Bible for us.

TRANS> Now of course it is very important to know that these prophets are truly bringing God’s word to us...

- 2) And so, to give us assurance that these prophets were truly speaking for Him,
- God gave them signs and wonders to perform among His people.
 - When Moses wanted to know why anyone would believe that God had sent him, God gave Him signs to perform before them.
 - Soon, it was obvious even to the Egyptians that God Himself was with him.
 - When Jesus was accused of speaking His own words instead of God’s word, He said to His detractors:
 - “If you do not believe me, believe the signs.”
 - The miracles He performed were God’s attestation that He was speaking the truth of God.
- 3) Some people today do not take big “p” prophecy seriously enough!
- But God takes it very seriously!
 - In fact, He told His people that if a prophet gave one prediction that did not come true, that prophet was to die...
 - Even if he had performed signs!
 - It is a very sacred thing to speak God’s holy word, and God will not allow anyone to trifle with it!
 - He wants us to know for certain that His Word is pure.

TRANS> Big “p” prophets include apostles and all who directly speak God’s word.

- A little “p” prophet also speaks for God...
- b. But a little “P” prophet speaks for God only as an expounder of the word that has been given to us by the big “P” prophets.
 - 1) In other words, a little “P” prophet does not claim to speak infallibly or to hear directly from God...
 - Nor does he claim to bring new revelation...
 - A little “p” prophet claims to be sent by God to study God’s word and proclaim it to His people.
 - Pastors or teaching elders are little “p” prophets.
 - 2) The big difference in his ministry is that it is indirectly from God rather than directly from Him...
 - The little “p” prophet is not sent directly by God, but is rather sent by the church—
 - He is sent by the Presbytery who is to carefully examine his teaching and life and then lay hands on him if he meets the qualifications.
 - The Bible says that we are not to lay hands on anyone to hastily.
 - That is why the Presbytery is so careful about making sure that men get the training they need and are thoroughly examined before ordaining them.
 - The little “p” prophet’s ministry is to be tested by its conformity to the word of God that was given by the big P prophets rather than by signs and wonders.

TRANS> Now which kind of prophet is Jesus speaking about in Matthew 7?

3. I would suggest that He is speaking about both kinds...
 - Those who claim to speak directly from God as well as those who claim to speak indirectly for Him as ministers of His word.
 - And in the case of false prophets,
 - it is those who pretend to speak for God but actually present another gospel.
 - They are prophets who call people to enter by the wide gate and to continue in the broad way that leads to destruction.

- B. Jesus is showing us here that there will continue to be many false prophets even though He has come into the world.
1. The History of God's Old Testament people shows that there were usually more false prophets than true ones among the kingdom people...
 - a. In the time of Moses, there were the 12 spies that were sent to spy out the promised land...
 - These spies were little "p" prophets
 - And of those 12, only 2 spoke the truth to God's people.
 - The rest discouraged them and told them that they would not be able to defeat the people of Canaan.
 - This was in direct contradiction to God's word through Moses.
 - God's people listened to them and refused to believe the truth.
 - b. Then in Jeremiah's day, the Lord complains about big "p" prophets as well as little "p" prophets who were not speaking His word...
 - Jer 6:13-14: "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone *is* given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When *there is* no peace.
 - God later says of them:
 - Jer 23:21: I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.
 2. Some of the Jews thought there would be no false prophets after the Messiah came, but Jesus makes it clear that there will be...
 - a. In our text, He shows that just as there will be many who enter through the wide gate, so there will be many false prophets who lead them there...
 - He later speaks about the blind leading the blind and how both will fall into the ditch.
 - He also says that many false prophets will come in His name and if possible, would deceive even the very elect.
 - b. And His apostle Peter says to us:
 - 1 Peter 2:1-2: 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. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.
 3. And just as Jesus said these false prophets would continue, so they have!

- a. The Apostle Paul had to contend with them so that he testified:
 - Titus 1:10-11: For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.
- b. False prophets have continued throughout church history so that by the day of Wyclif, it was hard to find a faithful expounder of the word anywhere.
- c. And so it is today that we have false prophets who are moralists, sentimentalists, ritualists, doctrinalists, enthusiasts, and experientialists.
 - The many who go through the wide gate have many prophets of the wide gate to guide them there!
 - These wide gate prophets direct multitudes along the wide way that leads to destruction!

TRANS> What should you do with all these false prophets around?

- Jesus tells you...

II. Beware of them!

- “Beware of false prophets!”
 - Here are three reasons why you should beware of them...
- A. First, beware of them because they are extremely dangerous!
 1. The word “beware” does not mean simply be aware that they are around...
 - It means, be watchful at all times to guard against them...
 - It is God’s will that you should be engaged in continual warfare against them until the end of the world.
 - Do not suppose that there is no threat from them or you will surely fall into their hands!
 2. Jesus says that they are ravenous wolves...
 - a. Wolves prowl about wherever sheep are found in order that they might devour them...
 - They look for the one who wanders away or the one who lags behind and seize upon it to tear it apart with their teeth.
 - If they can, they will take an entire flock.
 - b. And the destruction false prophets bring is far worse than the destruction of those who merely kill the body!

- False prophets actually make their disciples the sons of Hell!
 - Jesus says:
 - Mt 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.
 - Paul warns the Ephesian Presbytery in Acts 20:
 - Acts 20:28-31 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.
 - His words show us plainly that their threat is not just theoretical!
 - These wolves actually draw away disciples after them!
 - Paul is very concerned that the church will become unconcerned about them as a real threat!
 - That is why he professes that: "for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."
 - He was urging them to beware of false prophets, but he knew they would tend to grow lax about this!

3. Do not think that you do not need to beware of them!

- a. Oh there are so many proud Christians that pay no attention to these warnings!
 - 1) They will follow whatever teacher comes along!
 - They won't look for sound teaching or diligently apply themselves to it!
 - They are simply unconcerned about the whole matter!
 - 2) They act as if it doesn't matter what kind of doctrine they are being taught!
 - They chose a church because it is convenient or has a spiffy youth programme or a nice building or nice people!
 - For them, truth is secondary.
- b. I tell you that there are millions who are following the prophets of the wide gate to destruction!
 - Do not think these ravenous wolves will not devour your children if you let them!

- Do not be so naïve as to suppose they cannot destroy your soul!
- Jesus' words are very plain!
 - "Beware of false prophets!"
 - The difference between narrow gate people and wide gate people is that narrow gate people hear this warning and wide gate people don't!
 - Beware of false prophets...
 - They are extremely dangerous!
 - That is the first reason to beware...

B. Secondly, beware of them because they are not always easily detected!

1. Jesus says that they appear in sheep's clothing.

a. This is the great difficulty about them...

- They pretend to be speaking for the Lord...
 - That is why they are so dangerous!
- They claim to be His servants, leading people into His kingdom...
 - They bring people into His covenant, baptising them and bringing them into the church.

b. If they were obvious, there would not be so much danger...

- If they were calling you to follow the Muslim god or the Hindu God, or if they were openly denying the Lord Jesus...
 - they would be obvious...
 - But they are not like that...

c. They come to you in Jesus' name...

- And then, slowly and surely, they lead you through the wide gate...
 - Every so subtly, they teach you to trust in yourself instead of in the Lord...
 - They gently affirm your own wisdom...
 - gradually build up your pride...
 - appeal to your flesh rather than to God's word.
- And soon you ready to put aside God's word in certain areas...
 - To neglect certain duties that God has given you.
 - In short, to start trusting in yourself instead of Jesus.

2. You have to be especially on guard because deception is their main tool.
 - Paul says that they appear as angels of light!
 - a. They come to entice you and seduce you as Satan seduced Eve...
 - The wide gate is a very attractive gate, and they point to all its most attractive features—
 - See how natural it is?
 - See how good it makes you feel?
 - See how many people are going in this way?
 - See how pleased everyone will if you take this way?
 - And just look at what freedom there is!
 - Nothing is taboo!
 - You are free to live as you please as long as you love.
 - b. As for the narrow gate...
 - They show you all that is unattractive about it!
 - That is a difficult way...
 - There is no honour if you go in that way!
 - Everybody will think you are foolish...
 - That is the way of bondage and suffocation.

TRANS> Beware! False teachers are not what they appear to be!

- They come to you in sheep's clothing...
- That is the second reason to beware of them...
- Now the third...

C. Beware of them because so many follow them!

1. When God speaks of the false prophets in Jeremiah, He adds words that are very disheartening...
 - a. In Jer 5:31, He says:
 - “The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their *own* power; **And My people love to have it so.**”
 - b. Think about it!
 - People want to be confirmed in their errors!
 - If you are doing something that bothers your conscience a little, you love it if someone comes along and tells you its okay!
 - And if it is an ordained minister, all the better!
 - Let him tell me that I have nothing to worry about...

- They love to have Bishop Spong tell them, “you are a good person...”
 - They love to have Robert Schuler tell them, “God is love, he will not reject you...”
 - They love to have their Roman Catholic Priest say, “You are a member of the church, you have nothing to worry about.”
 - Or their Presbyterian minister say: “You know all the right doctrines...”
 - Or Benny Hinn say, “You have been slain in the Spirit...”
 - Or Dr. Jack Hyles declare: “You asked Jesus into your heart...”
- People love to have a prophet who will say “peace peace when there is no peace.”
2. And because there are so many who follow false prophets you must be on your guard...
- It is easy to get swept into the current of the masses and follow the crowd as they go after one of these highly esteemed teachers...
 - What is appealing to others will be appealing to your flesh also!
 - If you are not on your guard, you will follow them too...
 - One man suggested that the narrow way runs right through the middle of the crowd that is on the wide way going in the opposite direction.
 - You have to swim upstream in a world that is going downstream.

TRANS> These are the three reasons you need to beware of false teachers:

- Because they are extremely dangerous...
- Because they are not easily detected...
- Because there are so many who follow them.

Surely this is enough to make you reject all prophets!

- If there is such a great danger, surely the best thing is to avoid them all!
- But that is not what Jesus calls you to do...
 - Prophets (all kinds of ministers of the word) are His gift to the church...
 - Ephesians 4:11 says that He gave ministers of the word to His church as a gift to guide His people into His says:
 - Eph 4:11-16: And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the

unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- Think about it,
 - without prophets, we would not know the way of salvation!
 - There would be no Bible for us if God had no spokesman in the world!

But I can see how you might despair when you see that there are so many false prophets!

- What if you should end up following one of them through the wide gate that leads to destruction?
- Child of God, do not despair!
 - The Lord offers you great encouragement and consolation, for He says in verse 16:

III. You will know them!

- Do you see what this is saying!
 - A. If you truly belong to Jesus Christ, you will be able to tell who the false prophets are!
 - you will know them!
 - 1. This promise is stated in a different form in John 10...
 - a. There Jesus says that His sheep will
 - “by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers!”
 - And notice that they don’t just recognise that he is someone different...
 - They also flee from him, they refuse to follow him.
 - b. If you truly belong to Jesus you will not only be able to tell who is not speaking for Him...
 - You will also flee from them!
 - 2. But you will only do this if you are a true sheep!
 - a. As we have seen, there are many who do follow the wide gate prophets to destruction...

- Instead of listening to the true shepherd, they follow the stranger to destruction.
 - What makes the difference?
- b. The difference is that Jesus' true sheep have an anointing with God's Spirit.
- In other words, they are born again.
- 1) In 1 John 2, John is talking about those who had left the congregation to follow false teachers...
- And he comforts the people with these words:
 - 1 John 2:18-19: Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.
 - With these words he shows that those who went out were never truly Christ's sheep.
 - If they had been His sheep in truth, they would not have followed the stranger.
 - He goes on to say...
 - 1 John 2:20-21: But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.
 - Then in verse 27, He explains that this anointing is what guarantees that they will stay with Jesus:
 - 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.
- 2) The reason you abide in Him is because of this anointing of the Spirit.
- a) It is not primarily an intellectual thing—that Jesus' sheep are just smarter than others...
 - Nor it is primarily an intuitive thing—that they can just sniff out a false teacher...
 - b) It is primarily that their hearts are changed by the anointing of the Spirit so that their rebellion and corruption is taken away...

- The result is that they **want** to follow Jesus and to remain in the truth.
 - They are no longer blinded by their corrupt hearts!
- c. You see, the main reason people are so easily led astray by false prophets and don't seem to recognise them is because **they don't really want to follow Jesus!**
- 1) As soon as God's Spirit comes, your heart is changed and you go looking for the truth!
 - a) As I showed you a couple of weeks ago,
 - you see your need of God's salvation and you become a beggar!
 - b) You receive the word of God that tells you about yourself and how helpless you are to save yourself...
 - how destitute you are of righteousness and how greatly you have offended God...
 - And you also see clearly what God has done in Christ...
 - bringing the Holy Spirit to convert us...
 - and dying on the cross to atone for our sins...
 - And you enter by Him with rejoicing faith!
 - You ask and it is given
 - You seek, and you find...
 - You knock, and it is opened to you!
 - 2) The main reason people are not able to know a false prophet is because they don't want to know!
 - In John 7, Jesus said very plainly that those who want to do God's will (that is, those who are born again) will know the doctrine!
 - Here are His exact words:
 - John 7:16-17: Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*."
 - It is nothing else but the anointing of God's Spirit that causes us to want to do His will...
 - And when we want to do God's will,
 - the great difference in us is that we don't to follow those who try to make us feel good about not doing His will.

TRANS> The anointing that changes your heart is the thing that makes you able to recognise a false prophet when he comes along,

- but what is it about the false prophet that gives him away?

B. Jesus says, “You shall know them by their fruits.”

1. This suggests that you are to inspect them, and indeed you are!
 - a. God gives us certain guidelines for ministers and you are supposed to apply these to them...
 - They hold a public office and are to be publicly scrutinised.
 - If you know something about them that disqualifies them, you are supposed to say so.
 - b. This fruit inspection is not something you do alone either—
 - 1) Teaching God’s word is very serious matter and is not to be taken lightly...
 - There is a much stricter judgement for a minister than there is for a church member.
 - In 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, God sets forth the standard.
 - 2) And the minister is not to be ordained until he has been thoroughly evaluated.
 - He is to be evaluated by the Presbytery who is responsible for examining His doctrine and life.
 - They are not to lay hands on him until they are satisfied that he meets the criteria...
 - That is why churches ought to be very careful about who they ordain, and why we have Presbytery exams for ministry students.
 - He is also to be evaluated by the congregation—
 - They are not to submit to him until they are convinced that he is a faithful shepherd...
 - And even after he is ordained, the elders are to keep watch to ensure that he preaches sound doctrine and reject him if he is a heretic.
 - 3) There is a serious problem in the church today because this is not taken seriously!
 - We do not listen to Jesus when He says beware of false teachers because we think it won’t hurt us!
 - We have publishing houses that publish books by men whose lives have not been examined!

- And we have television preachers whose lives are not biblically examined...
 - And we are so casual to just let anyone preach that wants to.
 - This is certainly not the way it was in the early church except at Corinth where everyone spoke at once!
 - Paul made he clear when he wrote to Titus and Timothy that no one was to teach unless he had been thoroughly examined.
2. What do you look for in this examination?
- Jesus says you look for fruit... You know them by their fruit.
 - a. This includes the fruit of life...
 - A minister needs to have a pattern of God's grace at work in his life...
 - If he repented last month of some major sin, that is a good enough reason to receive him at the communion table...
 - but it is not a good enough reason to let him serve communion and preach God's word.
 - He must first be proved over time, demonstrating consistently the fruits of the Spirit in his life.
 - Jesus says that a good tree will not bear corrupt fruit.

TRANS> Not only should you look at the fruits of his life...

- b. Secondly, you should examine the fruit of his doctrine...
 - 1) This is one of the reasons it is so important to have a confession of faith by which to test a man's doctrine...
 - Paul referred to this as the pattern of sound words which is taught...
 - You are to see if a man holds to the leading doctrines of scripture.
 - 2) The Bereans were commended for searching the scriptures to see if what Paul said was so...
 - Do not blindly believe whatever an ordained man says, but check it out from the Bible.
 - 3) In examining the fruit of teaching and doctrine, it is important to consider not only what a man says, but also what he does not say...
 - Many false teachers today do not say things that are blatantly wrong because they don't want to upset people...
 - For example, if they don't believe in the virgin birth, they won't necessarily preach against it, but neither will they ever proclaim it.

- If they do not believe in Hell, they just won't talk about very much...
- If they don't believe that people need to repent, they will never call them to repentance.

4) You must also look at where the teaching leads...

- not necessarily where people go with it (even Jesus' teaching was grossly applied by the multitude)
- but where the teaching leads if it is followed and believed—
 - does it lead to pride or to humility?
 - does it lead to Christ or to self?
 - does it lead to confidence in man's wisdom or God's word?
 - does it lead to the exaltation of the mighty God or to deprecation of Him?
 - does it lead to self-sacrificial love, or selfishness?

TRANS> What a tremendous comfort it is to you if you belong to Christ that you will know a false prophet by his fruit.

- If you truly belong to Jesus Christ, you will be able to distinguish his voice from the voice of strangers.
 - Even though wide gate people and wide gate prophets will speak against Jesus with great forcefulness,
 - you will be able to discern the truth if only you want to know the truth.
 - You will know them by their fruits!

C. Here are two wonderful examples of this clear knowledge from the gospel of John.

1. The Pharisees were highly respected leaders, but they proved to be wide-gate prophets.
 - How could a simple person ever know what to do when these highly acclaimed leaders were speaking against Jesus?
2. In John 7, the Jewish leaders sent officers to arrest Jesus, but when they heard him speak, they could not do it because they could tell his words were true...
 - You can see how clear and obvious everything became for anyone who wanted to know the truth about Jesus...
 - John 7:45-53: Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is

doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." And everyone went to his *own* house.

- If you really want to know God's word and you honestly search for the truth, you will surely find it.
3. Here is another example where the high power leaders desperately tried to discredit Jesus life and were again foiled and made to look very foolish:
- This account is found in John 9. In this chapter, we find Jesus healing a man who was born blind.
 - The Pharisees are totally frustrated and keep questioning the man and then his parents.
 - They wish like anything that they could deny that he was born blind, but they can't.
 - It is clear that they do not **want** to know the truth about Jesus, and so they accuse Him of being a sinner without any evidence...
 - They are shown their folly by a man who was born blind... a simple man... an uneducated man!
 - Here is the account when they call to inquire of him the second time:
 - John 9:24-34: So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for this fellow*, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

Conclusion:

So there is truly great comfort in this passage for everybody!

- Everybody gets what he wants!
 - If God has renewed your heart and you really want to know the truth, you will know who is speaking the truth...

- You will take Jesus' warning to beware of false teachers seriously and you will not follow them...
- And you will know them by their fruits—
 - It will become perfectly obvious to you...
- But if you are not really interested in knowing the truth, there will be plenty of wide gate teachers for you to follow.
 - They are always there, always ready to tell you what you want to hear.
 - You will all get what you want.
- But let me tell you that you are an absolute fool if you do not want Jesus...
 - The wide gate prophets will lead you straight to destruction...
 - That is where they are going and that is where all who follow them will go also...
 - In verse 19, Jesus says that they will be cut down and cast into the fire.
 - The wide gate prophets will lead you to destruction...
 - But Jesus will lead you to eternal life.
 - If you want to be away from joyful communion with God now, you will get that for all eternity...
 - If you want to know God and inherit His kingdom, you will hear the voice of Jesus and He will lead you there...
 - You will all get what you want.