

Kingdom Community

“Recognizing False Prophets” - Matthew 7:15-20

Introduction:

I. The Presence of False Prophets

A. “Be” Aware

1. On the alert (not witch hunts or paranoia, but wise, attentive discernment)
2. From the start
 - a) **2 Corinthians 11:12-15**
 - b) **1 Timothy 4:1-5**
 - c) **2 Peter 2:1-3**
3. Throughout the early church
4. Continues today
5. The “prophets” are those who presume to speak on behalf of God

B. Their Nature

1. **Matthew 7:12 & 5:17**
2. Look like sheep

- a) Clothing (look the part)
 - b) Cloaked (sound the part)
 - c) Appearance of innocence
3. Live like wolves
 - a) Extortioner
 - b) Thief

C. Their Message

1. Their message is telling of their nature... what produces personal gain
 - a) Could be Pharisees and Sadducees, future Judaizers — more general application is most appropriate
 - b) Pope & Indulgences during Reformation
 - c) Prosperity gospel
 - d) May not always be extreme and probably is more subtle
2. The false teachers taught falsely about the Law and their evidence of their lives showed this
3. Be discerning according to the content of the Sermon on the mount
 - a) For God’s glory or the glory of men?

- b) For the good of others or the pride of men?
- c) For Christ's righteousness or self-righteousness?
- d) For the joy of giving or for selfish gain?
- e) Essentially, is Christ ALONE the one exalted to reconcile men to God?

II. The Produce of False Prophets

- A. Good fruit doesn't come from bad trees
 - 1. Grapes from thorn bushes? / Figs from thistles?
 - a) (Good fruit) Nourishing and savoring
 - b) (Bad fruit) Stinging and painful
 - 2. Natural / supernatural impossibilities
 - 3. Results...
 - a) Good fruit builds up the body
 - b) Bad fruit is only fuel for the fire
 - c) 2 Ways to live / 2 Paths to walk
- B. A note about priorities...

III. The Perspective of True Believers

- A. They see truth and recognize falsehood...How?
 - 1. Healthy tree bears good fruit
 - 2. Diseased tree bears bad fruit
 - a) There is no "narrow way"
 - b) **Matthew 3:8-10**
 - c) **Matthew 12:33-37**
 - d) Know doctrine and you'll know what is false
 - e) Know the Christ of Scripture and you'll know the Christ of men's fancy
- B. The path people follow is consistent with the teachers they listen to
 - 1. Do not tolerate false teachers
 - 2. Encourage faithful teachers
 - 3. What you believe about fulfillment of the Law will determine the teachers you listen to.
 - 4. THIS IS THE POINT OF THIS SECTION...

Conclusion: