

Sermon on the Mount: Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

Opening:

- I was a false surfer
- Guy in target with red polo and khaki pants on

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

- Jesus is declaring that the road to destruction is easy. Most people will go down this path.
- This is the default path that we are born on.
- But narrow is the path that leads to life.
- This path is easy to miss.
- This path is difficult.
- Most people will not find this path.

This is, of course, talking about our eternal life.

We will either spend eternity in a perpetual state of destruction, hell, or we will spend eternity connected with Jesus in heaven and the new earth. This is life. Connection with Jesus.

There are 2 gates

- One easy, one difficult.
- One to death, one to life.
- Which gate are you going through?

The Broad Gate may look one of 2 ways:

1. It may look like the world.
 - a. Pleasure, hedonistic
 - b. Atheism

- c. False Religions
- 2. But much more dangerous is it might look similar to Christ, but lacking some key things.
 - a. This is what Jesus addresses next. And what we will focus on for this message.

Beware of False Prophets

Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

- False prophets are a reality
- Some tell truth, some tell lies. Most tell a mix.
- **Matthew 24:24-25** For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.
- False teachers and prophets are a recurring theme in Scripture.
- False indicates they look like something that is real, but they are not real.
 - Toupee, CNN Airing Dolly Parton impersonator
- Prophet indicates they claim to be speaking on behalf of God.
- False teachers fall into this because even if a teacher or preacher does not say they are speaking on behalf of God – the position implies it for them
 - **James 3:1** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Beware – Look carefully. Pay Attention. Examine.

Wolves in sheep's clothing – They will look like the church. They may come from within the church walls.

- **Acts 20:29-30** For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Why is the bible filled with so many warnings about false teachings?

- Because many, many people will follow them
- That's why this path is wide.
- It looks better to many than the truth – because it does not challenge us to conform to the image of Christ
 - **2 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
- Enemies hide their hostility to the Gospel.
- They are not always obvious to us. They have learned to blend in.

Recognizing False Prophets

Matthew 7:16-18 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.

- Jesus says we will know them by their fruits.
- We need to become expert fruit inspectors.
 - We are better at inspecting watermelons than we are looking at people's fruit.
 - (Me and Avacado).
- But one thing it takes to see fruit is light!
- It is harder to identify false prophets in the dark, much easier the more light there is.

People are for the most part Biblically and theologically illiterate.

- If you don't know the Bible and don't know doctrine – it's hard to identify false prophets.
- Doctrine matters. Theology matters.

Bad fruit:

- **Bad teaching**

- **Deuteronomy 18:20-22** But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ ²¹ And if you say in your heart, “How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?”— ²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.
 - In the OT, since they did not have the full revelation of the Bible – they had to see if it came to pass.
- **Hebrews 1:1-2** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;
 - Now we have the teachings of Jesus and the inspired words of the Bible. We can judge against the Word of God.
- Fresh Revelation that God has never shown anyone
 - Muhammed, Joseph Smith, Ellen G White (rejected hell), Edgar C. Whisenant (88 reasons)
- **Bad Living**
 - **2 Timothy 3:1-5** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
 - They will have a form of godliness, but deny it’s power
 - We can all think of pastors that have fallen in any number of these categories.
 - From such people turn away!

Bad fruit vs good fruit

Galatians 5:19-25 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

- This is the fruit we are looking for. Either to avoid or to listen to.

What do we do when we encounter false prophets/teachers?

Matthew 7:19-20 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

- We must be ready and willing to do something about it.
- When we point out false teachers and prophets, the church gets uncomfortable with it.
- We say do not judge someone's salvation. I have taught that. Because only God knows their actual state. BUT – is this good?
- NO. There is a place for declaring someone as a false teacher. And they are not a part of us.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 ¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

- In the church people avoid taking a stance against unbiblical teaching to be more like Jesus.
- WRONG. Jesus was highly intolerant of wrong views of Scripture. Look at how He treated the Pharisees.

Matthew 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.

- People have developed a distaste for discernment.
- Discernment – knowing the difference between good and evil.
- We are afraid to say that evil is evil. We do not want to declare truth for fear of the judgment of man.

False prophets must be dealt with

- **Titus 1:9** holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.
- **John 10:3-5** To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

Acts 17:10-11 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

Not everything you disagree with makes someone a false prophet. Just because you disagree does not make them a heretic. We do not throw those judgements lightly.

Core essentials:

1. Inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible
2. The Trinity
3. The creation of all things by God
4. The sinfulness of man. The fall of man.
5. The eternal nature of the Godhead including Christ.

6. The virgin birth and incarnation of Christ.
7. The deity, humanity, and sinlessness of Jesus
8. The crucifixion of Christ and atonement for sin.
9. The bodily resurrection of Christ and His ascension
10. Salvation by grace through faith – not works
11. The Holy Spirit residing in believers
12. The return of Christ.
13. Upholding the standard of God's holiness
14. Salvation through Jesus and only Jesus.

There are more, but these are the top 14.

If you teach anything in contradiction to any of these – that is heresy.

There are Pastors that have declared the Bible is not the word of God.

1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

All teachings must be tested. Do not trust any human – test against the Word of God

- **James Talarico** (former pastor, Texas senate candidate) – “I find comfort and wisdom from all faith traditions all over the world and I find that they are all equal pathways to truth.” “Whether it is God, Yahweh, Allah, Nirvana, Great Spirit, whatever – this is all pathways to the same fundamental truth.”
- “ *if you deny your child's gender identity, that's incredibly harmful. And whether or not we label it with the term "abuse" it's abusive, for sure.* ”

- **Zach Helton**, a co-pastor at Glendale Baptist and leader within the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, claimed that King Josiah was wrong for destroying altars and Asherah poles. Helton argued that Yahweh had a wife named Asherah and lamented the removal of this feminine deity, suggesting that ancient Israelite women and girls needed a female god to look up to.
- **Brandon Robertson**, Claiming Jesus was NOT the only way to salvation. Asserting that hell does not exist. Arguing that Jesus sinned. In preaching the account of the fall of man, he called God a liar and said that the only one telling truth was Satan.

Heresy is harmful and will lead others to death.

Even if they are good looking, well spoken, best sellers, huge following...

Because a false message produces false righteousness.

- **Matthew 7:21-23** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'
- The most terrifying words in all the universe: I never knew you; depart from Me

2 Peter 2:1-2 But 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. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

- And if we follow the false teachers, we also will follow them to destruction.

Matthew 7:24-25 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

So the warning isn't the end of the story. Jesus doesn't just tell us to beware of false teachers — He tells us what to do instead: hear His words, and build your life on them. Test every voice against Scripture, hold fast to sound doctrine, and you'll be the one left standing when the storm comes — not swept away with the wolves, but rooted on the Rock.