

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16* "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. 22. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall." 28 When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

Previously, we have learned that the call to discipleship and commitment to discipleship are very serious. Following Christ is a very demanding way of life, it is a narrow way but the narrow way leads to life. It is a demanding way yet, everything we need to live this life is provided by God our Father. Our Father, who is in heaven, is pleased to give and to continue to give us the good gifts that we need to live this demanding way of life. It is a demanding way because it is a life that is brought about by the grace of God. It comes from Him through Christ our Lord and is evidenced by a changed heart and the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

God's way is not the natural and broad way of life that leads to the destruction of the soul. It is not the life that has man bound and helpless in his sin, separated from God, a God hater who is of like kind with the Devil.

The demands of discipleship are real and now in His sermon, Jesus tells us that there will be people who will be a threat to our way of life and who will want to lead us astray. There will be people who will be deceived as disciples and finally the narrow way of discipleship is proof of that a person is wise in the things of Christ.

Jesus has prepared those who will become His disciples with the hard truth that persecution will come their way. Now He warns them of another enemy, the false

prophet, who will do all they can to dissuade them from the narrow way of Christ and lead others further down the broad way in the name of God.

15* "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Jesus does not tell us exactly what these false prophets will prophesy. The prophet is not limited to those who tell of future events but they can also be any teachers of false doctrine. However, in light of what Jesus has presented concerning the call and commitment to discipleship it would seem that the prophets who are coming to potential and realized disciples, come in sheep's clothing. They want to be seen as one of the sheep, they want to be trusted by the sheep, they want to look and smell like sheep, walk and talk like sheep. These prophets intentionally come to tear apart the faith and practice of those who would walk in the narrow way. These wolves are ravenous creatures with an ungodly purpose and a Satanic heritage.

Jesus says beware of them!

The dogs and the pigs may violently reject the Gospel, but these wolves will bring a false gospel and a false discipleship, possibly in making the way seem broader than it really is and in denying the harder things of the way, like persecution.

On the other hand, they may try to make the way even harder than it is and church history is filled with both kinds of false teaching.

These wolves will not be hungering and thirsting after God's righteousness but rather will want to take advantage, in any way possible, of the sheep. They may desire power, prestige, fame or financial gain.

There already were numerous false prophets in Israel's history and there were already false prophets on the scene in Jesus' day.

In the Acts we read, When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:6). And Peter writes, But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves (2Pe 2:1).

Today we hear the soft sell gospel without mentioning sin and repentance, being saved with no commitment to discipleship and being saved because God wants you to be

happy and God wants you to have all your heart's desires met and just feels bad when this is not occurring. The church for many is one big marketplace of have it your way theology and a group for everyone to belong to and way of life that gets broader and broader. Doctrine does not matter but what matters most is - does *my* concept of Jesus make me comfortable.

We have the same heretical teachings about Jesus existing today that existed in the early church. They were declared to be false and anathema in various Councils yet they are embraced today. False teachings concerning the Trinity, Christ's nature and the Holy Spirit abound. God is no longer omniscient and His Sovereignty is limited.

The Da Vinci Code is not a problem. Seminary professors, so called televangelists and their mass marketing techniques and pastors who no longer hold to the teachings of Scripture are where many of the real problems are found.

Some of our ladies were at a Ladies Conference last week and I praise God for their discernment. Some of the teaching was so horribly unbiblical and filled with man's psychology and human behavioral studies, that they skipped some meetings and got together and had a bible study on Daniel's high view of God and how Daniel prayed as part of the sinning nation of Israel for repentance and revival. How different this is compared to learning that Jesus' personality was a combination of the four temperaments. By the way, whether some Christian teachers are aware of it or not, Temperament analysis is historically rooted in Cults and Astrology before so called psychology.

"The four temperaments and other personality type systems did not originate from Scripture. They are part of that philosophical/psychological pool of man-made systems and personal opinions which attempt to explain the nature of man and present methods for change. Christian authors promoting the four temperaments and similar typologies base their ideas on unproven psychological theories and subjective observations which are based on neither the rigors of scientific investigation nor the rigors of exegetical Bible study. Personality theories and temperament typologies are filled with human notions about the nature of man, how he is to live, and how he changes. Temperament tests and personality inventories also are based upon the same flimsy foundation of psychological subjectivity rather than on science or the Bible. "Martin and Deidre Bobgan *FOUR TEMPERAMENTS, ASTROLOGY & PERSONALITY TESTING*

There is much that is false today and although some false teachers may be ignorant and genuinely convinced of their particular errors, we are faced with the fact that Jesus

said there would be intentional, deliberate false prophets whose only desire is to ravage the sheep.

However, we have hope, because Jesus said,

"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

We have the assurance that we can detect a false prophet as we see the fruit of their lives. He uses an illustration of fruits that one in His day could easily observe and know what the fruit was. Grapes did not grow on thorn bushes and figs did not grow in thistles.

When we purchased our present home a retired man, originally from Sicily, lived behind us. He planted the equivalent of three city lots with vegetables. It was so interesting to me that I dug up our entire yard and did the same for a few years. We even had three rows of corn one year.

He had grape vines growing right above our fence. There was no mistaking it for something else. He had a fig tree beneath the vines that he had to keep trimmed and he had to bury the upper portion it in the ground over winter to keep it productive in the growing season. He had good vines and a tree that were properly cared for and produced what they should in season. They did not produce leaves or something that mimicked the fruit - they produced the real fruit.

In the end, false prophets cannot produce the real fruit of the Christian character.

When put under proper observation and scrutiny their fruit is seen as bad. They may have all the ornaments of truth but the tree itself is bad. The thing that produces the fruit is bad and deserves nothing but to be burned in the fire. This is the language of judgement.

We are not talking about small or minor differences of how we might practically accomplish evangelism or organize some ministry in the church.

We are talking about the fundamental doctrines of the faith and what Jesus has taught us concerning the norms of the narrow way of the Christian life. And every false prophet will be in conflict with these things whether it is preaching a false gospel or

teaching a false path of discipleship. The fruit of the life of the false prophet will reflect the fruit of false teaching. It will eventually betray them and all who follow them.

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. 22. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'24 We already know that the bad tree, the false prophet will be burned in judgement.

Now Jesus tells us that those who follow the false prophets, no matter how zealously they seem to attach the name of Jesus to the false prophets and their teaching, will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

There are three things here that we must contend with. These people have used the name of Jesus and have prophesied, cast out demons and performed miracles. Now it is important for us to remember that these kinds of things were all done by Jesus disciples before Pentecost and before they were actually saved, yet believing His claims.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. (Matthew 10:1-4.)

Notice, Judas was involved, the betrayer of Jesus, a man who was never saved.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus sends out seventy disciples in pairs of two to proclaim Him to the people.

Lk.10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." 17 ¶ The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

They were sent out to do things in the authority and name of Jesus, but were not yet saved but were believers in who He was. Mark's Gospel says,

Mr 9:38* John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us."

This one was not even among the disciples.

So these, some of whom may be followers of the false prophets and the false prophets themselves and others will approach Jesus on judgement day and claim validity for their works. They will say they belong in the kingdom because of the things they have done in or by the name of Jesus. But these things do not prove that one is or has been a genuine disciple of Christ and one who has been saved by grace. Both Baalam and Caiphas prophesied. Scripture tells us not to be like Balaam and Caiphas was an enemy of Christ, who during a fit of rage against Jesus, prophesied truth.

The works of these who are before Christ in judgement were accomplished without living according to the will of God the Father. There was no changed heart concerning Christ. Perhaps we should note that they are saying Lord, Lord recognizing Him for His authority as judge. For every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, but they do not say My Lord, My Lord recognizing Him personally as King, as Master, as Sovereign or as Savior. And in response He says He has never known them to be His disciples.

Neither good works nor powerful works can cause one to gain entry into the kingdom of heaven. Narrow is the way to life and broad is the way to destruction.

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'²⁴

Jesus never knew them as His servants, as His brothers or as His friends. They are commanded to depart from Him forever because they practiced lawlessness.

Here Jesus invokes a Messianic quote from Psalm 6:8. They have rejected the Law of God, which is the Law of Christ. They did not live according to the fundamental norms of the Christian life as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. They did not demonstrate the inner change wrought by God in the way they lived their lives. They did not truly walk in the narrow way of life.

They are no better than those who participated in the theater of piety and whose righteousness was man made and not God made.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not

fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."

Jesus concludes His sermon with a parable. All who hear His words in this sermon and all who do not hear the words of His sermon are illustrated by this parable. In this parable we see a contrast between hearing and doing. In the previous verses we saw a contrast between saying and doing. Both are important if one is truly living according to the will of the Father.

Both of these buildings look secure in good weather. There is no reason to believe that either house should be in danger of collapse. This is significant because in Palestine torrents of rain can turn dry desert areas into flooded raging rivers. Only a storm can determine the viability of the building structure.

The wise man considers all the weather conditions that may prevail and chooses to build on a rock to withstand extremely violent storms. Those who hear Jesus words about discipleship and commit to do them and who take discipleship seriously do them and will endure all that may come against them in the circumstances of life especially the final judgement of Christ. The house will stand and the wise will end in life.

The person who builds on sand has not built on any thing that is solid. Those who hear and have not taken seriously the words of commitment to discipleship are just as foolish. The sand will eventually wash away and the building will collapse. So it is for the one who hears but does not act. When the circumstances of life are difficult the foundation will collapse and a false profession of faith will not endure Christ's final judgement. The house will have a great falling with a great crash. It will be completely ruined. The foolish will also be ruined. Their end will be destruction.

The alternative to obedience to Christ is disobedience. The alternative to living in the kingdom is to not have entrance into the kingdom. The alternative to the Lordship of Christ and submission is rebellion and condemnation.

28 When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus teaching was unparalleled in teaching because all things have their substance in Him. They had heard things they had not heard before. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The author of Hebrews wrote,

HEB 1:1 ¶ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Christ is the authority and speaks with the authority of God the Father and they were astonished at His authority because He is the word and His words greater than those of any before Him because in Him the Law and the Prophets are fulfilled. They had never heard of blessings in such a manner, they had never heard of judgement in such a manner and they had never been challenged in such a manner with words that came from God. They were simply awestruck.

How do we respond to the words of Christ? How do we respond to the living Word, to the One who challenges us to commit to discipleship? Do His words ring in our ears and swell in our hearts? Are they something we cherish or chuckle at? Do we delight in His words or do we deny His words? Do we hunger for His words or do we hate His words? Do we long for more of His truth or do we laugh at it? Do we hear Jesus and act or do we hear and give lip service? You know the answers to these questions for yourself.

The sermon on the mount has revealed to us the norms of the Christian life and how we are to live them out. It makes it very clear that the life of a disciple living in the present kingdom is one that is demanding yet it is one that can be lived because God has promised that we can live it through the authority of the living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. He is the King of our kingdom, He is the Lawgiver of our kingdom and He is the Judge of our kingdom.

In Christ's words there is certainty and hope for the believer and there are warnings for the unbeliever. Rejoice believer and cry out for forgiveness and mercy if you do not believe. God is gracious to show us in advance what is waiting for the believer. There are good things and hard things for the blessed of God. His narrow way demands a commitment to discipleship for those who do come to Him with genuine repentance and faith.