

## Matthew 7:15–29

### Beware of False Prophets and Professions

**Saturday, May 4, 2024** ▫ **Read Matthew 7:15–29**

*Questions from the Scripture text: With what command does v15 begin? Of whom must they beware? To whom do these false prophets come? What do they look like on the outside? But what are they, actually, on the inside? How will we know them (v16)? What rhetorical question illustrates this? What does a good tree produce (v17)? And a bad tree? What can't a good tree produce (v18)? And a bad tree? What happens to a tree that does not bear good fruit? What else happens in accord with their fruits (v20)? Who will say what to Whom (v21)? What won't everyone who says that do? Which ones will enter?*

**Of what must we beware?** Matthew 7:15–29 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these fifteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **we must beware of false prophets and false hope of salvation.**

**Two sorts of Prophets**, v15, 28–29. False prophets are attractive. On the outside, they look (and sound!) gentle and friendly. Their words open a wide gate. Their words present a wide path. They might easily gather large churches. We might easily want to listen to them. But what is inside false prophets, and what comes out of their pleasant-sounding mouths, will actually destroy you—will actually lead you to the destruction of v13, the banishment of v23, and the disaster of v27.

The true prophet is not surprised or moved off of the narrow gate or confined/difficult way, when the whole world or church are against him. He bears the fruit of clinging to Christ, no matter what, and his words will proclaim that gate, and that way, to the few who are willing to hear him. He is a true prophet, not only because his words are true, but because his words are Christ's (v24). He is genuinely sent. He is not his own, and he says things not because he wishes it but because his master says them.

The Lord Jesus was not like their scribes (v29b). He taught with the authority of the One Who gave the Scriptures (v29a), so that His hearers were astonished (v28). A true and false prophet may both seem to have this authority, so true prophets must be detected in another way: their fruit. Those who are called and ordained according to Scripture, and whose authoritative preaching comes from a submission to Christ's authority in the Scripture—the Lord, Who gives the increase, will show what sort of tree they are by giving them fruit.

**Two types of Produce**, v16–20. A true prophet will be bearing the produce—the fruit—of the true path. He will have gotten there by entering by the true portal, the true gate. His own heart, and therefore his mouth, will be full of Christ's glory, Christ's exclusively divine claims, Christ's exclusively atoning and justifying and saving claims. Because his own feet are on the path, his mouth also will be full of the path of genuine (not scribal/pharisaical/hypocritical) holiness. And this is the fruit that can be "gathered" from him (v16). Not only is the Word producing fruit in his own life, but as a preacher truly sent by Christ, Christ blesses that Word to bear the same fruit in those who are willing to hear him. We trust the God Who sends him, and the God Whose word he preaches, that this God will make his preaching bear good fruit (v18a).

On the other hand, the hearer must not be deceived by the best appearances, intentions, or feelings in hearing a false preacher. That bad tree cannot bear good fruit (v18b). He and those who hear him will be cut down and thrown into the fire (v19), so it is of the utmost importance to discern whether his life and ministry are bearing the fruit of holiness.

**Two Plights**, v21–27. Discerning the true nature of a preacher, or of yourself as a hearer, may be difficult, but it is extremely important that you do so now. For the Lord Jesus warns that many (v22) who are still saying "Lord, Lord" (v21) "in that day" (v22) will be banished from the favorable presence of Christ the enjoyment of God in the kingdom (v23). It is especially those who know to say "in Your Name"—emphatic in the word order of the original all three (!) times—who must pay attention to this warning. If the house of their life is not built upon the foundation (v24) of being known (!) by Christ (v23a), then it will not be built up in holiness but in lawlessness (v23b). The false prophet and his hearers are joined by one last group in v26—those who hear a true prophet but do not enter the narrow gate or walk in the confined way. Like the others, these do not keep God's law from the heart the way that Christ has taught (v23b, cf. 5:17–48).

Dear reader, do not suffer eternal disaster. Beware false prophets. Enter by the narrow gate. Hope entirely in Christ's knowing you (5:1–16). And from Him, and by His means, bear the fruit of keeping His law from the heart (5:17–48). Having Him as your reward (6:1–24). Trusting Father to provide whatever you need (6:25–7:12). He sends you preachers to teach you this, and using them, He produces His fruit in your life.

What are some examples of false prophets in our day? What are some things someone who is not growing in holiness might plead "in Your Name" to the Lord? What hope do you have of not ending up like them?

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving Yourself to be our righteousness, our forgiveness, our life, and our holiness. Grant that we would receive and heed only those whom You have sent, and use Your Word to build us upon Yourself and fit us for glory, we ask in Your Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP6 "Be Gracious, Lord" or TPH459 "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"**

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Matthew 7 verses 15-29. These are God's words. Beware of false prophets. Who come to you in sheep's clothing. But inwardly, they're ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from Thorn bushes or figs from thistles. Even so every good tree Bears, good fruit. But a bad tree bears, bad fruit.

A good tree cannot bear, bad fruit nor can a bad tree bear. Good fruit. Every tree that does not bear. Good, fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits, you will know them. 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. Many will say to me, in that day. Lord. Have we not prophesied in your name? Cast out demons in your name and done many wonders in your name. And then I will declare to them. I never knew you.

Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. 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? 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.

But everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them. Will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain descended. The floods came. And the wind's blue and beat on that house and it fell. And grit was its fall. And so it was when Jesus had ended these sayings.

That the people were astonished at his teaching. For he taught them as one having Authority. Not as the scribes. And then this ends this reading of Inspired. And erring toward

Lord Jesus. Here. Teaches us. To be aware of false prophets. There are two different. Sorts of profits. And then, They may be distinguished. By their fruits, to different sorts of. Produce. And then in the last place, the reason it is so important. To distinguish true prophets from false prophets, so that you get good fruit instead of bad fruit, just because there are Two different plates.

Two different conclusions. One is Disaster and destruction. And the other is, Uh, entering. Into the kingdom. In the first place. Then there are these two different types of prophets. He says, to beware of false ones. In other words, there are true ones. There are prophets that Jesus himself sends.

And they teach the truth. That is from Jesus. And then there are prophets who send themselves. And among these prophets, who sell themselves are those who are obviously wolves. Those who do not believe in the Bible, those who Uh, do not, uh, teach the gospel of Salvation, by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone.

Those who do not teach that. Jesus makes a difference. In the lives of those. Who believe in him. There, those are obvious, those are Wolves and wolves clogging. But then there are also false prophets who look like sheep. And in second Corinthians 11. The Apostle Paul, by the spirit warns.

That many false prophets look like sheep. Because they are really. Agents whether intentionally or or conscientiously consciously or not of Satan, Who himself appears as an angel of Light, a messenger a preacher. Of light. And those two things are tied together. In second Corinthians 11. And so we must be aware.

Especially of false prophets. Who appear to be Christians appear? To be. Called and ordained. And Installed. And yet, they're not from the Lord Jesus because they're preaching is not going to produce in you. From Christ and from his life in you, Righteousness, that is unto salvation Holiness that is unto seeing the Lord.

But, They're preaching. Is going to devour you inwardly. They are ravenous wolves or vicious devouring. Uh, wolves. And so a true Prophet is going to Bear the fruit of clinging to Christ. Whereas a false prophet is not going to Bear that fruit. A true Prophet will bear the fruit.

Entering by the narrow gate, both himself and Those who hear him. Uh, believably conscionably. By the mercy and power of God, the Holy Spirit to them. So both for he and for those to whom his ministry is blessed by the Holy Spirit, both for him. And for those to whom His ministry is blessed by the Holy.

The true Prophet. Bear. The fruit of entering by the narrow gate and walking in the confined way of trusting only in Jesus Christ as Savior from sins and living entirely for Jesus Christ. As our Lord and our life. False prophets. Um, very attractive. Not just because Uh, some of them appear in sheep's clothing, they have the appearance of being genuine But the false prophet is attractive because Um, if you have a false prophet, especially that appears good.

You may think that you're safe even though you enter by the wide gate. You may think that you're safe even though you Uh, walk upon the broad or easy way. And so false prophets can gather to themselves. Large churches. And people love to have large churches, not that we wouldn't cry out to God for Revival.

The multiplication of the Almighty redeeming. Work of his holy spirit, applying Christ and his Redemption. Um, we do pray that God would God would do this. Uh, but a false prophet can much more easily gather without. Any sort of Revival or powerful work of God. He can gather to himself a large church and so you see Uh, how tempting that can be, which is why Um, the Lord here tells us, not just about the, the two sorts of prophets, but the two sorts of produce Um, When he says you will know them by their fruits beginning in verse 16 and and closes that little section off in verse 20, therefore by their fruits

You will know them.

He's giving us a test that which is not immediately obvious. And this actually takes some time. Uh, to detect. And so we need to be seeking good fruit Desiring and hoping for good fruit and the one whom we hear in his life, And good fruit, especially. Uh, in the lives of those.

Who are willingly hearing him, not that everyone under a faithful Ministry. Is going to believe or everyone under the faithful Ministry is going to grow. Holiness of life and Devotion to the Lord obedience to his Commandments, especially Um, as we'll see. Um, verse 21 and following. But, We are to look for good fruit and where to watch for bad fruit.

Now, those who know such things. Um, tell us about the Thorn bush. That was a Blackberry Thorn that had Um, Uh, little black fruits on it, that looked sort of like grapes. Uh but as the fruits were produced, if you were trying to make wine out of them, you would be disappointed.

You would not be able to get wine. And apparently, there was a thistle that had Flower pods that looked like figs. Um, Of course ancient near Eastern botany is not my strong suit. So we have to rely a little bit on them but whether that is the case and it really is Uh, this long Discerning process or whether he's just describing something obvious, which seems to be more of the sense.

Of verse 16. Uh, Uh, telling us that The preaching that you sit under. Uh, is a process of trying to gather fruit from that preacher. Um, we're not just seeing what is produced in him. But we are looking to the Lord Jesus to produce in US, by the preached wart Uh, the fruit.

That is unto salvation, repent. Good works that are in keeping Uh, with repentance or fruit and keeping with repentance. So what will the good fruit or? The bad fruit looked like. Well, the good fruit will look like what? Jesus describes good fruit as Now, Jesus is True Prophet Capital 2 T capital P.

And he has distinguished for them between what they have heard from the Bible. But what Jesus says to us you have heard, it said he says, but I say to you several times in chapter five And Jesus has presented himself. As the narrow gate, by which we enter. Uh, The blessedness that comes.

For those who do not find any hope at all in themselves because they're having older hope. In the Lord, Jesus Christ Alone. And so, Good fruit is having a heart and a mind. That are full of how glorious Christ is. Um, that he is God himself in the flesh.

Uh, and Uh, and he alone atones for Sam makes men righteous. Saves them. Because, Uh, True prophet's own heart is full of these things. His mouth will be full of these things. Because the true prophet's own feet are on the confined path, his mouth Will be full of the confined path of genuine Holiness.

Not that, which the scribes and the Pharisees. Proclaim that which they felt was within their reach that which could be done for the eyes of men and seen by men. No, that was a hypocritical Holiness. That was a false Holiness. That was bad fruit. And so,

The false prophet. We'll leave things out. You remember? When the Lord Jesus was teaching about these things, especially in chapter five. A false prophet may say many true things. Often, it is in those particular things that he is leaving out. Uh, the impossibility of having Uh, Uh, worthiness in yourself.

He may Proclaim to you Christ is worthy but he doesn't tell you. That you are completely and utterly unworthy in yourself. Uh, he may tell you about how Jesus will transform your life, but he doesn't tell you. That it will be like taking up your cross and that you have to die.

And that it is a hard life which includes persecution blessed. Are you when you are persecuted He doesn't tell you about the level of perfection in righteousness and Holiness that is necessary for entering heaven. And that we must seek from our Father in Heaven. To be working in us and to remove all of our sin.

Um, And so, there are things. Um, There are. Uh, false prophets, who will present to you that, which looks like It could be good fruit. But over time, you discover that by

what is left out, Uh, the Lord has not sent him and the Lord is not by his words bringing people.

Into the narrow gate and making them walk. Uh, in the confined. And we must remember then that it is the Lord. Is Sovereign over a false prophet or a true Prophet. Here's the one. Who gives the increase. He is the one who gives the fruit fruit and he tells us here, Every good tree Bears, good fruit.

But a bad tree bears, bad fruit. A good tree. Cannot bear. Bad fruit. And so, if you have a Whom the Lord, Jesus has called, and the Lord Jesus is using and he is preaching, the whole Council of God, you know, that in the Lord's own decision to appoint.

This means and his own faithful attending. These means with his Almighty power, The fruit will come. Then he says a bad tree. Cannot bear. Good fruit. And so, the hero must not be deceived. By the best appearances, intentions or feelings. As they hear a false preacher. Many do this with Those whom the Lord, Jesus is obviously not sent women preachers.

And Uh, female preachers and teachers in the church. The Lord. Jesus does not allow a woman. To have authority or to preach to teach. In his church, but you'll hear some say. But she knows the Bible so well, and she presents it in a way that I can understand and I have really been growing under her Ministry.

Well. Obviously. This false prophet. Because Jesus has not sent her, is not producing this good fruit. And so, someone who speaks like that is simply self-deceived About the fruit that is being produced. The bad tree cannot bear. The good fruit. The false prophet, the one who is not sent by Christ ordained.

By Christ, is not actually bearing. Good fruit. So there's the two sorts of prophets and the two sorts of fruit. And then there are the two plates. And it is important for us to know, right now. What sort of fruit we are producing. Because Jesus tells us that there are those who come Right to the moment.

Of when they are about to face Jesus Christ. Uh, when they leave this world disappointed to men to die once. And after that the Judgment Right to the moment, when The Walters of the flood will come that distinguish. Between those who will perish and those who will be saved.

The same Waters that lifted, Noah up and saved his family. In the ark. Destroyed. And were judgment upon. The whole rest of the Earth. And you do not know. Uh, that you are. That you are in the right path and that you will be safe in the last day, simply because you say Lord Lord, he says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord shall enter.

The Kingdom of Well, what is the distinguishing Mark if saying Lord, Lord is not the distinguishing Mark? Trusting him as Lord is how you enter the way. But saying that he is Lord is not the same as trusting him as Lord. And so, if that is not the distinguishing Mark, what is the distinguishing Mark?

The distinguishing Mark is Jesus knowing you. Jesus, knowing you and producing in you obedience. So 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. And what is that will? While men like to focus on that, which is impressive and external.

Things like, Verse 22, prophesy. Casting out demons. Doing many wonders. And we can add to that that which is very impressive to man strong emotional experiences. Or many. Um, Uh, charitable works, the kind of Uh, socially. Act active. And temporally Earthly beneficial Works to neighbors. That. Visible and feel good and commended by men.

But we have had the Lord Jesus draw for us a distinction. Between those who do things for how they appear to men and those who are doing things in the secret, place in the heart with the Lord. And so, The real distinction, then the distinguishing work is the one who is doing the will Of the Father in heaven because he is Christ's father.

And Jesus has only begotten son produces in all of the adopted Sons that which pleases the father from the heart. And so, if Jesus knows you Then you will love God, more and more, and you will obey his law more and more. Because this is how it becomes evident that you love the god of the law.

As you do, the law of that, God. Just as the Lord, Jesus himself says, if you love me, if you love him, You obey his Commandments. So these people in verse 22. Um, they know about the narrow gate. And they know that the life is to be transformed. Uh, so they say Lord Lord and All three times in the original, in your name is an emphatic position in the phrase.

Uh in your name, did we not prophesy and in your name, cast out demons and in your name Do many wonders. So just knowing That salvation is in the Lord Jesus's name. Is does not mean that you are saved and just believing that you have. Uh, believed in his name.

Does not mean that you are saved. And just knowing that The Lord, Jesus produces evidence in your life. Does not mean. That you are saved. The one who enters by the narrow gate, their hope is not in the things that they have stacked up. Even though the Lord produces in real Believers, the evidence of Holiness, they don't have their hope.

In their obeying, the Commandments they don't, you should not have your hope. In your holy living. Your hope is in the Lord Jesus and that he knows you And this We Gather from verse 23, he says, then I will declare to them. I never knew you depart from me.

You, who practice, lawlessness? And so obedience to the law. Is an Evidence. Of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. And, Those who enter? Enter. Because Jesus has known them because Jesus has saved them. But it is evident that they will enter. Because Jesus having known them, he produces. Law, keeping in them.

Now, these two plates are. Uh, repeated in a different way. In verses 24 through 27. Uh, and they introduced to us. A new category so far. We have been thinking Of. Those who are destroyed and those who are Um, banished depart from me those who are disowned. I never knew you.

We've been thinking of them as primarily the false prophets and those who listen to the false prophets. But there's an entirely new category in verses 24, 20 to 27 and that is those who sit under the ministry of a true Prophet. And who perhaps? Even. Flatter themselves to think that they are in the narrow way.

Notice that About both the man whose house stands and the man whose house Falls. In the illustration here these sayings of mine. So, verse 24. Whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them. But verse 26, everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them. And so there are those who sit under The preaching of Christ himself, they sit.

The preaching of a true Prophet. But they do not give themselves. To believing what the Lord teaches. What the true Prophet from the Lord Jesus. Teach us from the Bible. And they do not give themselves to doing what the Lord Jesus commands. And what the Lord Jesus preaching from the Bible commands.

From Jesus. And so, in order, Uh, Survive and not have this disastrous. Destruction. That verse 27 is describing As verse 19 called it to being cut down and thrown into the fire cast into the fire. It is not enough. That one sit under true preaching. It is not enough that.

Enjoy true preaching. It is not enough that one. Agree with true preaching. It is not enough with that one. Praise to preach troop reaching. No. Jesus says, That the one who is entering the kingdom, the one who will stand in the day of the Judgment will be the one who does.

What the true preaching says. He hears these sayings of his and Does them.

Notice there is not just. Recognizing. The place to raise the house. There's actually the raising of the house, the building. Of the house. On the Rock. And so if you recognize that Christ is God himself come to save us. And that all of our hope is in him. The fruit of recognizing that will not just to be to agree that, that is true.

But having trusted in him and by his life in you, To actually build your life. Upon him. And so, this is Vitally important to us. If we are not To suffer Eternal disaster. We must enter by the narrow gate and walk in the confined way. And the way that the Lord Jesus has given us to do that.

Is by his Blessing upon true preaching. And so we must be aware of false prophets. Uh, but not just have a true Prophet. But heed the word of Christ. That we would hope entirely in Christ's knowing us. Like you taught in the first part of the sermon chapter 5 verses 1 through 16.

And from the Lord Jesus, and by the Lord, Jesus's own means, especially his Blessing upon troop reaching. That we would bear the fruit of keeping his law from the heart. The way chapter 5 verses 17 through 48 taught. That we would have God our Father and the Lord Jesus, of course, As our reward.

Chapter 6, verses 1 through 24. And that we would trust the father through the son by the spirit. To provide the Holiness that we need as our greatest need. In chapter 6, verse 25. Through chapter 7 verse 12. And so, Jesus sends us preachers. Uh, to teach this to us and he uses those preachers.

To produce in our lives. The fruit That confirms So we are on the confined path and have entered by the narrow gate. And that at last we will come Into life. So may the Lord give you to enter by the gate. And to walk in that path. And to have him ultimately as your reward.

Forever. Must you be destroyed?

Our Father in Heaven, we pray that you would help us as we Think about this passage as we prepare. In a day's time or so, to preach it. And Uh, to hear it preached. And pray that your spirit would be using it even now. To be producing fruit in us.

And so, Glorify Yourself by bringing. Into everlasting life by your salvation. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.