



**SERIES: July Series “OFF ROADING”**

**SPEAKER: JACOB WIRKA**

**Friday, July 16, 2021**

**Scripture: Matthew 7:15-20**

**TITLE: Don't Be Deceived**

[Jacob Wirka fills in for Pastor Nat today]

Google, Instagram, Wikipedia, TikTok! In the age of the Internet, we have access to a lot of different voices and opinions. Some are good and useful; many are not. With so much information readily available to us, how can we make sure we're not being led astray? Looks can be deceiving, and so can words.

Today, I went to explore what the Bible has to say identifying “false prophets.” Biblically speaking, a false prophet is someone who claims to teach God's truth, who's teaching a lie.

In Matthew 7, Jesus gives his disciples this warning: “15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”(Matthew 7:15-20, ESV)

So how can we know who's teaching the truth of God and who is the deceiver? As Jesus said, “You'll recognize them by their fruit.” This means by their actions - the things a person does shows what they believe in their hearts. We must ask ourselves if the life of the person claiming to teach the truth is consistent with the teachings of Jesus.

The best way to identify false prophets and not be led astray is to be grounded in the truth. It's easy to spot a lie when you know the truth.

This reminds me of the game called “Alpha wolf” we played at the summer camp I worked at for several summers. The game works like this: cabins were sent out in the dark to find the “alpha wolf”. Every few minutes, the cabins would howl, and the alpha would respond. The only problem was that there were also deceivers all over the forest, who would respond at the same time. The only way to win the game and find the alpha wolf was to distinguish their voice amid all the deceivers.

In this world, there are many deceiver wolves dressed as sheep. They might look good, they might sound good, but they are deceiving you. We must know the voice of truth. The only way to be confident of the truth, with all these voices and opinions around us, is to know the truth of

God for ourselves. We must read our Bibles, and know the words of Jesus so well, that we know when we hear something that isn't true.

You've got to pay attention to the actions, or "fruits", of those who claim to teach the truth, including me! Don't take my word for it; know the Word of God for yourself! The best way to protect ourselves against the false prophets of this world, is to be firmly grounded in the truth of God's Word.