



SERIES: Walking with Jesus

SPEAKER: DAN COKE

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 7:15-20, John 10:11

TITLE: Fruit Inspection

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

A friend told me a funny story about a wedding he attended one time. He said, the hosts paid a professional impersonator to come and perform during the wedding reception. He said this professional impersonator was an amazing singer and dancer just like the R&B artist he was impersonating. The only problem was that the whole situation was awkward. Everyone knew that the performer was good, but definitely not the real person. After all, the impersonator was actually a man, who was pretending to be a woman R&B singer!

That would make for an awkward wedding reception. In a similar way, it's awkward to sit under the teaching of false prophet pretending to be one of Christ's shepherds. Jesus warns us to be aware of these guys. Meaning, they might sound good, they might look the part, but they're not the real thing.

These false prophets or teachers look like sheep but are inwardly, ravenous wolves. They're not the real thing because, like ravenous wolves, they want to devour the people or devour the people's goods. **Jesus encourages us to be discerning. To be fruit inspectors. And the way to spot a counterfeit, is to make yourself a student of the real thing.**

In John 10:11, Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” This is not what the false prophet or teacher does. In fact, often the false prophet or teacher will seek to manipulate the sheep into sacrificing everything so that he might gain from them. Jesus is the exact opposite of the false prophet. He laid down his life for us and we gain from His sacrifice.

Would you like to become a discerning, fruit inspector? Just remember three things:

1. Jesus isn't implying that we should never trust anyone or that we should never give sacrificially. That's not His point.

2. His point is that, because we are called to be people of God's Word we need to expect the teachers of God's Word to reflect the character that God's Word produces.
3. To know or discern the between the real and the fake, spend the bulk of your time becoming familiar the real and you'll be able to quickly spot the fake.

And brothers and sisters, Jesus is the real and true prophet. All of God's Word points to him. Get to know Him and His ways and you'll be able to quickly identify false prophets and teachers. Amen.