



## Part 4: False Prophets & False Believers

### INTRODUCTION – What is The Sermon on the Mount?

#### Only for some Christians

- *Medieval Catholic View*... Instruction only for special saints who “would be perfect” (**Matthew 19:21**).
- *Albert Schweitzer*... Only for the first generation of Christians.

#### For all Christians

- *Lutheran View*... Functions like OT law, to make us aware of our need of grace.
- *Calvinist View*... For all Christians and Christian nations (but not all of it can be practically followed).
- *Anabaptist View* (& *Leo Tolstoy, etc.*)... All of it for all Christians. (period)

### LOOK TO THE BOOK – How to Recognize False Faith

**Matthew 7:15-23**

#### QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS...

##### 1. Who are the false prophets, then and now?

- OT...  
**Deuteronomy 13:1-15; 18:21-22**
- Early Church...  
**Acts 20:29-31; 2 Corinthians 14:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1-3, 17-22; 1 John 4:1-3**
- Jesus...  
**Matthew 12:33-37; 21:43-45; 23:25-28; 24:24**
- Sermon on the Mount (false prophets may teach against or fail to teach)...  
**Chapter 7**... Replacing angry judgment with compassionate care.  
**Chapter 6**... Embracing simplicity in our inner and outer lives.  
**Chapter 5**... Pursuing peace and reconciliation with all – friends *and* enemies.

##### 2. How can we recognize them?

The fruit of real faith is the inner character of Christ (**Romans 8:29; Galatians 5:22-23**), manifesting in the lifestyle laid out in the Sermon on the Mount and other teachings (e.g., **John 13:34-35**). The people Jesus (and John the Baptist) most often warned of not producing the right fruit were the religious conservatives of his day (see **Matthew 3:7-10; 12:33-37; 21:43-45**). The chief fruit listed in this context is obedience to God's will, consistent with our prayer “Thy kingdom come, your will be done”.

##### 3. Who are the false believers? Could I be one of them?

- KNEW = *ginosko*; to have intimate, experiential, relational knowledge.
- EVILDOERS (TNIV) = workers of lawlessness; you who break God's laws (NLT)
- LAWLESSNESS = *anomia*; to be without or against law

**Matthew 23:25-28**

### TAKEOUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

#### TAKEOUT #1 – Gifts versus Fruit

Spiritual gifts, especially overtly supernatural gifts, are not a sign of true faith (e.g., see **1 Samuel 19:18-24; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**). We should not trust the teachings of Christian leaders just because of their apparent abilities to heal or work miracles. Neither should we write off someone because of their gifts or apparent lack. What is important for all of us is not our gifts, but our fruit.

#### TAKEOUT #2 – Faith versus Works

Real faith always leads to action based on that belief. If I tell you that I am a secret agent and that I suspect counter agents have sabotaged the brakes in my car and they are about to fail, then get in my car and drive away, you have good reason to doubt my belief. There is no dichotomy between faith and works, since one is manifest in the other. (Compare **Genesis 15:6 & 26:5**; also see **James 2:14-26**.)

#### TAKEOUT #3 – How can we produce good fruit?

Spiritual fruit is not a random list of things to be pursued, but the result of being filled with Christ's Spirit, being in close communion with him, and putting into practice what he teaches (see **John 15:1-17; Galatians 5:22-23**). Are you ready to really follow Jesus as your Lord, and to get to know him as your friend?

### CONCLUSION – Deluded, Deceptive, or Divine

**Matthew 25:31-46**

We cannot escape the fact that Jesus equates his role with God's as the final judge of all humanity. Earlier in the sermon he claimed authority over the interpretation and application of Scripture itself. Either he is deluded or deceptive (and, whichever, not to be trusted about anything), or he is, quite simply, right.

### HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

#### **Warming Up...**

1. After reviewing the rest of this week's teaching, talk about what most encouraged, inspired, or confused you.

#### **Look to the Book...**

2. Read **John 15:1-17**. A) What one verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why?
3. Read **Matthew 25:31-46**. A) What one verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) What does this passage teach us about Christian worship? C) Note that Jesus clearly presents himself as the final judge as in **Matthew 7**. What does this say about his identity? What implications result from this? D) As Keith Green points out, “The only difference between the sheep and the goats is what they did and didn't do.” Yet, the Apostle Paul is clear that we are saved by faith and not by works (e.g., see **Ephesians 2:8-10**). In your own words, how would you respond to someone who claims that Jesus and Paul taught different truths. Try to use principles in **James 2:14-26** to inform your answer.

#### **So What?...**

4. A) In what ways are you personally living like a sheep/goat? B) Greg Boyd says, “Unless we wrap our resolutions with accountable, structured, intentional community, we will tend not to follow through with our own best intentions.” What are ways your Home Church does (or could) offer accountability and/or community to live as sheep?

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