

Beware False Prophets

The Sermon on the Mount

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As we rapidly move toward the culmination of the Sermon on the Mount, we've come as we looked on last week, to this last section where we see these four comparisons or these four juxtapositions, if you will, we've come to this moment where Jesus actually applies the Sermon on the Mount, where he brings his message to a conclusion in a very pointed way, basically calling for a response from his hearers. And in the first of those four segments we saw on last week, he calls his hearers to recognize these two roads, that there are two entrances, there is the broad gate and the narrow gate; there are two paths, there is the easy path and the difficult path; there are two crowds, the many and the few; and there are two destinations, one leads to life, the other leads to destruction. In these middle two sections they're actually combined, if you will, so we're going to look at this week and then again on next week the same group of individuals. What we've looked at, these two groups of individuals, those who go in through the narrow gate and those who go through the broad gate, we've looked at those who basically, in one sense, hear the Sermon on the Mount, believe the Sermon on the Mount, apply the Sermon on the Mount, are converted by this message that they hear from Jesus, and those on the other end who choose another route, whether that route is something that's far away from Christ as imaginable, or whether that route is something that is as close to the route that Christ prescribes as possible without actually coming to repentance and faith. And here we see that there's another obstacle along the way and that obstacle along the way is false prophets. We'll see them in the next two paragraphs, the false prophets.

Today we look at the false prophets and Jesus' illustration of the trees and the fruit beginning at verse 15. If you'll join me there, Matthew 7:15 through 20 and he says,

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.

Now before we even begin, let me say that we are allergic to the kind of teaching that Jesus puts forth here in this passage. Our culture has rendered us allergic to this kind of teaching that Jesus puts forth in this passage. We'll talk more about our allergy as we continue on here but it makes us very uncomfortable when we talk about this issue because Jesus identifies the fact that there are, first and foremost, false prophets. There are false prophets. There are people who are out there who are false prophets. There are those who speak the truth and there are those who tell lies. There are false prophets.

Listen to D. A. Carson as he puts a finer point on it, "Warnings against false prophets are necessary or are necessarily based on the conviction that not all prophets are true, that truth can be violated and that the gospel's enemies usually conceal their hostility and try to pass themselves off as fellow believers." There are false prophets. This is not new, by the way. Listen to this, just a few passages of Scripture. Matthew 24:11 we read, "For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Matthew 24:24, "For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs," I'm sorry, Matthew 24:11, "many false prophets will arise and lead many astray," what I read to you the first time was Matthew 24:24. Mark 13:22 is a retelling of this teaching of Christ, and in Luke 6:26 reads this way, "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets." Acts 13:6, "When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus." And in 2 Peter 2:1 we read, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction."

So again, this is not an isolated incident here in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus brings this up a number of times in his ministry and we also have this in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles, the idea that there are false prophets. We have to be aware of this fact, there are false prophets. The second thing we need to know is this: false prophets are not always easy to spot. Notice what Jesus says here, look with me if you will again in verse 15, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." In other words, Jesus says, the first word he uses there is "Beware. Be alert. Look carefully because there are false prophets and these false prophets will clothe themselves outwardly in the clothing of the sheep but inwardly they are not so."

Usually we think it's easy and, by the way, that's not what we're allergic to in our culture, we're not allergic to the false prophet whose an obvious false prophet. That's not it, we don't mind that at all when someone stands up and tells just blatant boldfaced lies, we have very little problem saying, "Well, that's a false prophet." Or if false prophets are doing horrendous things and hurting people and manipulating people, you know the Jim Jones's of the world, we have no problem saying that a false prophet but Jesus puts a finer point on it here. Jesus says beware of false prophets not because they're going to be easy to spot, they're going to be out there for you to see and for all the world to see and you'll

be able to know, "Hey, that's a false prophet." Ding, ding, ding, ding, red flag. No, Jesus says, "You need to beware, you need to be on the lookout because these individuals will dress themselves in the uniform of my sheep. They will hide who they truly are. They will learn to use narrow gate language. They will learn to emulate hard road living. They will learn to masquerade as small crowd people and they will learn to trick you into thinking that they are on the road that leads to life and yet they are false prophets."

Here's why it's difficult for us to identify false prophets. 1. Because of biblical and theological illiteracy. That's our first problem, biblical and theological illiteracy. That makes it difficult to identify false prophets. If we don't know the Bible, if we don't know doctrine, if we don't know theology, it is virtually impossible for us to identify false prophets. That's also, by the way, why we're allergic to those who identify false prophets. We're allergic to it, we really are, we don't like it, it makes us uncomfortable. Somebody is identifying an individual as a false prophet and we'll just kind of go, "Well, no, that person is not a false prophet because they actually stand up and they use Bible verses." And of course, if it was a false prophet, they would stand up and use, what, the Bhagavad Gita, do you think? Do you think that would be a successful false prophet if he stood up and didn't use Bible verses? No. Of course they use Bible verses. Of course they use narrow gate language. Of course they do, and what they do is prey on individuals who are biblically and theologically illiterate.

Secondly, it's difficult because of the prevalence of ecumenism and syncretism, as a friend of mine calls it, Rodney King theology, "Can't we all just get along?" The answer is a resounding no. We cannot. What do light and darkness have to do with one another? Can't we all just get along? Do you know the problem with can't we all just get along is that it flies in the face of what Jesus just said here, "Beware of false prophets." "Yeah, I know Jesus but can't we just all get along?" No, I'm trying to tell you they have sheep's clothing on on the outside but on the inside they are ravenous wolves. "Yeah, Jesus, I know but really, wouldn't it be more like you to just get along with them regardless of the fact that they are lying on you doctrinally and theologically?" No, what he said was beware, not go along and get along. He said beware, but we're allergic to that. Why? Because of this false and dangerous notion that somehow drawing a line in the sand and saying this is true and that is not is somehow unchristian. Because, remember, the new John 3:16. Remember the old John 3:16 is actually John 3:16, the new John 3:16 is Matthew 7:1. It used to be that everybody knew the old John 3:16. You put John 3:16 up and everybody goes, "Yeah, I know what that is." You know, now you put John 3:16 up and people go, "What is that?" Of course they don't know the verse Matthew 7:1, they don't know, you know, if you put that number up they would have no idea but if you just started it, "Judge not lest," they could finish it, "lest ye be judged." Never seen a Bible a day in their life but if you start Matthew 7:1, trust me they will finish it. Here's what's interesting. Matthew 7:1 if you just use a little logic here, comes just before what we're reading now. Did you figure that out? We're in Matthew 7:15 which means Matthew 7:1 just came a very short 14 verses earlier and those who would manipulate Matthew 7:1 would have you believe this, that basically Jesus said in Matthew 7:1 that you should not judge under any circumstances, therefore when we read Matthew 7:15, we have to understand it in the context of not ever judging. Beware but don't judge. "Yes, Voddie,

yeah, um, I was just wondering if I was gonna, um, beware and, you know, watch really closely and discern if somebody was true or false, I was just thinking, you know, maybe that would kind of by definition be judging?" Give that man a prize.

Here's the other thing, turn with me, if you will, to Titus. Turn to the right with me, if you will, to Titus. I quote this all the time but I want you to go and see it and touch it and feel it and taste it and everything else, all right? Titus 1, just turn there and look at that for a moment, if you will. Titus 1. Because I get letters from time to time and emails from time to time with people who are upset with me because I identify false prophets from time to time and usually basically all I do is send them back this, Titus 1:9. By the way, Titus 1 beginning at verse 5, we have the requirements for elders, the biblical requirements for elders. At the end of those requirements, verse 9,

9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

That's my job description, folks, to know sound doctrine, to teach sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict sound doctrine. That's my job. It's not a suggestion, it's a command, and any pastor who is not rebuking unsound doctrine is not doing his job. If you can't say amen you ought to say ouch. Does that mean we have to be mean and nasty to people? Sometimes. [laughter] Usually not.

Back in our passage. Back in our passage. By the way, that's why it's difficult for us. Again, it's difficult for us because false prophets are difficult to identify, they're there but they're difficult to identify. We're not just talking about the obvious ones who are out there. Jesus says, "These are individuals who have clothed themselves in the garments of my sheep, my followers." You see, the false prophet that's the scary one is not the one who is out there teaching doctrine that is completely in opposition to biblical truth. No, the false prophet who is the scary one is the one who has the meat of a lie covered with the skin of the truth.

Listen to this, John 10:3 through 5 because at verse 13 we need to know that false prophets are not a danger to the true church.

3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of a stranger.

Amen. Do we need to be on guard? Yes, but here's what you need to know: true sheep follow the true shepherd and they do not follow the voice of a stranger. Yet false prophets are still a danger. Why? Listen to what Jesus says. First of all, the admonition, beware. Beware. Why be on guard? I mean, if there's no danger, why be on guard? Secondly, what does he call these individuals? Ravenous wolves, in other words, they come to do

much harm like the thief who comes to steal and to kill and to destroy. Here's what you need to know: a false prophet is ultimately not going to take a narrow gate, hard road, small crowd, on the way to life Christian and turn him into a broad gate, easy road, big crowd, on the way to death non-Christian. We talked about that last week. We talked about the perseverance of God's elect last week.

So that's not the danger but here's what you need to know: a believer can have his or her life turned upside down by a false prophet. A believer who knows God, loves God and is following God can have his or her life turned upside down by a slick-talking false prophet. Sometimes for years a false prophet can have a true follower of Christ twisted and tied all up in knots until they are ultimately delivered from a falsehood. So don't you think for a moment that just because you're a follower of Christ, just because you've been born again, that you don't need to be careful about what you listen to and that there is no danger of listening to false prophets. There is a danger and they can do you and your family much much harm. That's one of the reasons that God has given elders to the church, to protect the doctrine of the church, to protect the teaching of the church, to refute false teaching that would come in and impose itself on the church. That's one of the reasons that God gave the office of elder, to protect the body, especially in those circumstances, because there are people out there who look good, who sound good, they're on Christian radio, they're on Christian television, some of them have household names and are best-selling Christian authors and they are ravenous wolves.

What do they do? False prophets bear bad fruit and they bear bad fruit in two main ways: bad teaching, bad living. Bad teaching, bad living. Look at what Jesus says again, "You will recognize them by their fruits." Outwardly they may look really good but you need to become a pretty good fruit inspector. You will know 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." It can't happen that way. What do you do? Examine the fruit. That's our responsibility as believers, examine the fruit.

Here's what I want you to see. The first fruit is bad teaching. In Deuteronomy 18, I just had to read this for you. Listen to this in Deuteronomy 18:20 through 22,

20 'But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.' 21 And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'

By the way, as New Testament believers, we have an advantage over those to whom Moses was speaking. The advantage that we have is we have God's word. "So God who in times past spoke to the prophets and the fathers in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in his Son through whom he made the world." So understand this, what we're reading here in Deuteronomy, individuals who did not have a completed canon. We, however, do have a completed canon, so we have a different set of

criteria. So as I read this and I'll explain that more in a moment but listen to this. How do we know, how are you going to know that this person hasn't spoken for me?

22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not fear him.

Does what he say come to pass? That's the test Moses gives the people of Israel. Moses says, "Hey, if you were wondering whether someone is a false prophet or not, it's very easy, you just ask yourself this question: did what they said was going to come to pass actually come to pass?" But remember I just told you according to Hebrews 1:1 and 2, that's no longer our test. Our test is: does what he said come from and line up with the Bible? Amen. You see, our Bibles are bound in leather, not three-ring binders, folks, and that's for a reason. We are not in the process of getting continued revelation from God.

So the first sign of a false prophet is he speaks things as though they are from God but they're not found in God's word. He speaks things as though they are from God but they are not found in God's word. We've talked about this before but I have to take a moment to do it again. I beseeched you, I begged you before from this very spot but I'm going to beg you again from this very spot to be very careful and to stop using language like, "God said. God told me. And God spoke to me." Don't talk like that. That's heretical language, people, because when you use words like "said, spoke and told," you are referring to audible speech and you are equating whatever comes after that with what we have in the word of God and that's heresy. Now what we usually mean is, "God enlightened me, God brought something to my understanding, God impressed upon me." Use those words all you want but do not say, "God said, God told me, or God spoke to me," because if you do, you are out of line theologically. That is unbiblical speech because God does not say, God does not speak, God does not tell in those terms anymore, not because I say so but because the Bible says so. We have a closed canon.

So one of the ways that you know that someone is potentially a ravenous wolf, again, there are individuals who just speak these kind of things and they don't mean it, it just sort of comes out because we're so used to hearing it in our culture and we'll say things like, "God told me this. God said that. God spoke this," and we'll say it and that's not what we mean, that's not what I'm talking about. That's somebody who just needs to be corrected and you and I both, all of us in this room are more than likely guilty of having been loose with our speech in that way before. We did not mean, "I am speaking to you with the same authority as Moses or Paul or Jesus." That's not what we meant. We were just loose with our speech, we adopted a bad habit from our culture and that's not what we meant, but there are individuals in our culture who say those things and mean them. They're false prophets. They're false prophets. According to Hebrews 1:1 and 2, they are false prophets. "That just sounds so judgmental." Welcome to the narrow gate.

Not only do we have false teaching like that but we also have false teaching just like the stuff that we found, for example, there in Deuteronomy, people making predictions that just don't come to pass. For example, probably the most famous, Edgar Whisenant.

Anybody know that name, Edgar Whisenant? If you know that name, you probably know that name because of one of the most notorious Christian books ever published, "88 Reasons That The Rapture Will Come In 1988." Anybody familiar with that title? It was a bestseller, sold over a million copies. "88 Reasons That The Rapture Will Come In 1988." How many of you know he wasn't thrown out on his ear in 1989, but yet still had a ministry and still published? False prophet. Ellen G. White predicted that the world was going to end in 1843, 1844, and 1851. Here's what's amazing, by 1851 people were still listening. And who can forget the first Gulf War when TBN was filled with false prophets basically saying, "Folks, this is the battle of Armageddon. Babylon has arisen again. In fact," they would say things like, "you know, Saddam Hussein thinks of himself as the re-coming of Nebuchadnezzar. This is it!" How about all the Y2K crazies? "This is it! Go get all your stuff and get ready. It's over. The clock is going to strike midnight 1999, and that next second will be the end of the world as you know it. Get your stuff and get ready." False prophets, every one. Every one, okay?

Not only is there the bad teaching but there's also the bad living. Look with me, if you will, and this is, well, it's not that extensive a passage but look with me in 2 Timothy 3. We can't talk about this and not read 2 Timothy 3. It would be criminal not to read 2 Timothy 3. Look with me, if you will, 2 Timothy 3, really almost the whole chapter, not almost the whole chapter, we do, we have to read the whole chapter. We just have to, okay? 2 Timothy 3.

1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.

Now here's what you need to know, okay? From a theological hermeneutical perspective, when he uses this term just like when the author of Hebrews uses the term in Hebrews 1, when he uses this term "the last days," what he's referring to is the time between the first coming or advent of Jesus Christ and the consummation of all things. So when he says "in the last days," he doesn't mean, you know, when it's really close to the time of the rapture. That's not what he's saying. This term when we read it in the New Testament, when we read it from the author of Hebrews and we read it from Paul and others in the New Testament, again, it's not like he's talking about the last day, different term altogether. When he says "the last days" here, he's referring to that intermittent period between the first coming of Christ and the consummation of all things when he comes again. But know this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.

2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Stay away from such people. "Well, that sounds so judgmental." Welcome to the narrow gate.

6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

Wow! They are disqualified regarding the faith. That's more judgmental.

9 But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. 10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Here's what's interesting. Do you remember last week? We talked about that term that comes after the narrow gate, that term for the way. It says the way is hard. Remember I told you last week that the word used there in the Greek is the word from which we get the word "persecutions"? So, in essence, Jesus was saying one of the evidences that you are a narrow gate, hard road Christian is persecutions. Here Paul is saying to Timothy, "Do you know those liars? Those liars are not like me and one of the ways that they're not like me," Paul says what? "You know my persecutions. You've seen evidence of my narrow gate, hard road, few friends life." And that's one of the distinctions, Paul says, between himself and the false prophets.

Listen to the rest of this,

12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted [not might, not could, but will], 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

What does Paul tell Timothy? "You're okay because you've got the Scriptures." Two distinctions between the true prophet and the false prophet: number one, their teaching; number 2, their life. Look at the fruit. Look at the fruit of what they teach, look at the fruit of how they live. Does what they teach line up with what the Scriptures say? Does how they live line up with what the Scriptures say? By the way, and if we're looking for the way that they live, where would we look? Again, think about the sermon that Jesus is preaching. Don't disconnect it. Where do we go to find the kind of lifestyle that Jesus is

talking about? How about all the way back to chapter 5 in verse 1, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. He lays out for us what the kingdom lifestyle is like. That's what we're looking for. Go back to the Beatitudes. Go back to the six antitheses. Go back to chapter 6. True prayer, true fasting, true giving. Go back and look at the true religion of Christianity as Jesus has already laid it out in chapter 5, chapter 6, and the beginning of chapter 7, and you have the kind of fruit for which we are called to look.

Finally, none of this matters if we're not ready and willing to test and judge. None of this matters if we're not ready and willing to test and to judge. It's meaningless if we are unwilling to test and to judge. By the way, why do I say judge? The last phrase that Jesus uses is very important, this week and next week, the last phrase he uses in this paragraph is: the tree that doesn't bear good fruit, it's going to be cut down and thrown into the fire. That's what you call judgment. Next week we'll hear, "Depart from me. I never knew you, you worker of iniquity, you practicer of lawlessness." You see, and none of this matters if basically we don't believe that we're supposed to test, we don't believe that we're supposed to make judgments. Again, I'm not talking about being judgmental. Go back to the messages on the early part of chapter 7, all right? We're not talking about turning your nose up at individuals who don't like the things that you like, who don't agree with you on nonessentials. That's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about false prophets and identifying false prophets who are destructive in the life of the church, and if all that we believe that we're supposed to do is read this for reading's sake and not apply it, and not exercise sound judgment, and not distance ourselves from false teaching, and not expose false teaching wherever we find it, then we'll have a problem.

Listen to this, if you will, 1 John 4:1 through 3,

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.
2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

Again, is this the only test? No, it's not the only test. You remember the series we did through 1 John, there are many tests but here dealing with false prophets he says test what you hear from them, test the spirits by the spirits. This is judgment, folks, and it's the way Christians are commanded to live.

Look with me, if you will, at Acts 17:10 and 11,

10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica;

How about that? These Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. What, pray tell, made them more noble than the Jews in Thessalonica? Glad you asked,

they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Folks, this is the Apostle Paul. Do you follow this? This is the Apostle Paul. This guy comes into town and he's been bitten by serpents and lived, this guy has a man listening to him one night falls out of a window and dies, raises him back to life. He comes to Berea and they say, "All that's fine and good but here's what we're going to do, we're going to take what you said today and we're going to go back and look in our Bibles and we're going to search the Scriptures to see if what you're saying is actually true." And the Bible says that made them more noble.

Do you test what you hear? Even from here, from this place? We're far from infallible, folks. We are. Do you test what you hear? That's one of the reasons that we teach the way we do. That's one of the reasons that we come and bring your Bible, open your Bible, look in your Bible, read it, touch it, taste it, see it, because we want you to develop the habit of testing what you hear. Don't you dare trust me, you trust the word. I am a frail, fragile, wounded, broken, messed up individual. By the way, welcome to the club because that's what every one of us is, and as such we've got to have something more than just the power of our own persuasion and personality, we have to test everything by the word, test everything by God's truth, test everything by what's been spoken.

Here's what's sad. I've actually had this seen with my own eyes in churches, disagreements about certain things or disagreements about, you know, what's going on here, what's going on there, seen with my own eyes, heard it with my own ears, "Yeah, you keep opening that Bible, you keep reading those verses. I really don't care what those verses say." I've heard that from people who have been in church for years. For years. We've got to be like the Bereans. We must test everything according to the Scriptures and we must be ready and willing always to identify, expose and flee from false prophets.

Don't like the way that sounds? Turn with me to one more passage. Look at Ephesians 5, and look beginning at verse 6 of Ephesians 5.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Our culture says that's mean and nasty, that's judgmental, that's not Christian. The Bible says test the spirits, beware of false prophets, expose the deeds of darkness, refute those who contradict sound teaching.

And now I will expose myself as a liar because there's one more passage of Scripture and I said that was the last one, but I already told you that I'm a weak and frail and fragile individual. Jude. Jude gives us this, he says, "While I was making every effort to write you concerning our common salvation, I felt the need to write you and urge you to contend earnestly for the faith, to epagonizomai, to agonize greatly, to wrestle." The term is used in classical Greek for wrestlers who were engaged in combat. He says, "I want you to engage in combat, to agonize greatly the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints." Why? "Because certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who do two things: one, turn the grace of God into lawlessness, that's bad living; and number two, deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, that's bad teaching." Jude says agonize greatly against false teachers, war with them, those who turn grace into lawlessness and those who deny the essential truths of the gospel. Agonize greatly in that field of combat. Wage war in that field of combat. Refute those who contradict, expose their dark deeds and hold firmly to that which is true. Why? Because we delight in the combat? No, because we delight in the truth and there is a major difference between those two.

Let us delight in the truth and beware of false prophets, and when you find them, show them much love but no quarter.

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