

Matthew 7:15-20

I. Verse 15

A. Beware

1. When Jesus says “Beware” we would do well to _____.
2. Jesus never raises a _____ alarm.

B. “Sheep’s clothing... ravenous wolves” (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14-15)

1. The main point here is that we are all susceptible to being _____.
 - a. We somehow think that if a wolf comes into our midst, he’ll look, talk, and smell like a _____!
 - b. So we can be very easily taken in when he ends up looking _____ a sheep.
2. What might the sheep’s clothing look like?
 - ✓ We can assume from Jesus’ warning that it will be very, very _____.

C. The message of the “false prophets”

1. In the end, a false prophet is any person who *teaches* a distorted, watered-down _____ that is powerless to _____.
2. False prophets teach that the way to life is not really so _____ and that the gate is not really so _____ (verses 13-14; cf. 1 Kings 22; Jer. 8:11; 23:17; 2 Tim. 4:3).
3. Perhaps what makes some of these false prophets so dangerous is that they are so very “_____” (self-deceived).

- II. Verses 16-20 – “You will recognize them by their fruit... Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”
- A. We must always be _____ the fruit of our teachers (cf. Acts 17:11).
- B. We must be intimately familiar with the _____ and _____ and _____ and _____ of the good fruit.
- C. The fruit of true holiness in the teacher.
1. Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)
 2. Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
 3. Qualifications for elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7)
 4. Beware that sometimes the true character of a teacher is not apparent all at once. Only _____ will tell.
- D. The fruit of true holiness in those under the teacher’s ministry (see above!)
- E. The fruit of sound doctrine (the teacher’s teaching)
1. Is his teaching _____-centered and _____-centered versus man-centered?
 2. Is his teaching _____-centered?
 3. Is he _____ centered?
- F. False teaching in today’s church.
1. False teaching often begins with subtleties and slight nuances that many (even *strong*) Christians will think _____ of.
 2. “Emergent” teaching *in the church*

3. Feel-good, self-help, how-to, pop-psychology teaching *in the church*

4. Open Theism teaching *in the church*

5. The “New Perspective on Paul” *in the church*

6. WATCH...

Conclusion

- A. Within the context of this local congregation, your responsibility is to _____ the fruits of your teachers.

- B. Our responsibility is to make sure by God’s grace that we are bearing _____ fruit to the glory of God.
 1. James 3:1-2 – Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.
 2. 1 Timothy 3:1-8

- C. We (as teachers) are also responsible to diligently _____ this congregation from all the subtle deceits of false teachers.
 1. Acts 20:28-30 – Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.
 2. Titus 1:9 – 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.
 3. Cf. Hebrews 13:17

- D. In the end, our goal should *not* simply be to *avoid* false doctrine, but to attain to _____ teaching and doctrine possible in _____ area of God’s revealed truth!

Teaching our Children

I was not sure that young children need to have the concepts of these verses taught to them on an individual and more personal level. Perhaps they are not yet ready to face the reality of spiritual wolves in sheep's clothing?

At this point, I think the best way for us to "teach" our children this text (or prepare them to apply it in the future) is to make sure that we ourselves are faithfully bearing the good fruit of holiness and sound doctrine as our children's teachers in the home.

Let us continue to immerse them in the "genuine article", and when the time is right, warn them about the counterfeits.