

**“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.”** Matthew 7:15-20

I am constantly amazed at the amount of false teaching that permeates the church today. I am assured though, as I study Scripture that there is “nothing new under the sun.” In other words, I am assured that it has always been this way and will continue to be so until the Lord returns. It is my contention that most professing Christians do not spend much of their time in the Word of God. They may go to church once a week (if that), but the daily study of and therefore application of Scripture is not a very big part of their life. Therefore, they are very susceptible to false teachers and false teaching. Despite not really wanting to dig into the Word of God, many self-styled evangelicals will however spend their time and money on books, seminars, and other forms of media from false teachers. I am of the opinion that most of what is labeled “Christian” in the bookstore, online or real, is not worth the discerning saint’s time.

This week we are going to begin looking at Matthew 7:15-20 and the Lord Jesus Christ’s admonition to be very wary of false teaching and false teachers. In the passage we studied last week our Lord gave an invitation to **“enter by the narrow gate,”** to come to God the only way that it is possible to come to Him, the only way that He has provided. Jesus warns us that not everyone who claims Christ as their Lord and Savior or speaks on His behalf is part of the family of God. We need to remember that the true way to God is narrow and the false way is a very wide boulevard. The true way to God is difficult and demanding, and the false way is easy and permissive; the true way has very few followers, and the false way has many.

Jesus is essentially saying to us, “As you try to enter the narrow gate and walk the narrow way that leads to life, be careful of those who will mislead you. Just as there is a misleading gate and a misleading way, there are also misleading preachers and teachers who point to that gate and promote that way.” Just like the false gate and the false way, they are going to claim to show you the way to heaven and to abundant life, but they actually show you the way to hell and eternal damnation and destruction. The false gate and the false prophets and teachers who are standing in front of it seek to lead people into the false way and hinder them from entering the true way to genuine and real salvation.

Over the next several days we are going to see our Lord Jesus Christ giving us a warning and call on us to be watchful and discerning. Just as He described the true and false ways, He is now going to describe the true and false teachers and their ways.