

"The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

Part 8

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: In our recent studies of the Sermon on the Mount we have been looking at the conclusion/purpose of the sermon. Throughout the teaching of Jesus in the sermon He has been contrasting the false teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees with the Truth of God's Word. He has brought all of His listeners to Matthew 7:13-14 and He has now pressed them to make a decision. The Sermon on the Mount was designed to strip them all of their self righteousness and bring them to the place where they would cry out for God's mercy and then they would come through the "strait gate".

Now Jesus knew there was a great danger lurking in the shadows and the danger was the false teachers.

Notice Matthew 7:15

The teaching of Jesus was very narrow. He taught that man was completely helpless and unable to please God with his life. Jesus knew that Satan would bring in false teachers who would do everything they could to convince people that it was possible to please God with their good works. Jesus knew the false teachers would lead many people blindly down the broad way straight into hell. He knew the false teachers would have a message which would be really appealing to man's flesh. For these reasons Jesus then gave the warning concerning false apostles which we find in Matthew 7:15-20.

Now so far we have considered several points about false teachers. We have looked at:

1. The Description.

2. The Danger.

3. The Deception.

I told you there are really 3 categories which all false teachers fall into:

- a. **Apostates** - These are people who were under the teaching of God's Word but were never saved. They then turned away and they now deny the Bible.
- b. **Heretics** - These are people who will stand on the Truth of God's Word but they will twist or deny certain doctrines.
- c. **Deceivers** - These were the people Jesus was so concerned about. You can easily spot the first two groups but the deceivers can be very difficult to recognize.

Notice Matthew 7:15 again:

Jesus told His listeners that false prophets would come in sheep's clothing. Sheep's clothing was a wool garment which was the clothing of a shepherd. Jesus was telling all those who would hear that false prophets would come dressed just like a shepherd. They would not look any different than a true teacher of God's Word. They will come in under the banner of a Bible teacher. They will present themselves in a very professional way making it look like they have a heart for God's people, but inwardly they are ravening wolves waiting to destroy the sheep. Peter also gave us some insight into the deception of false teachers.

2 Peter 2:1

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

This is the very same idea Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7. So, understanding the deceptiveness of the false teachers we must ask a question: How can we know them? This is the very question we began to answer last week.

Notice Matthew 7:16a, 20

Here in these 2 verses Jesus gives to us a promise of assurance and the promise is that we can know the false teachers by their fruits. Now last week in our study we started to look at what "fruit" is and just what it is that we are to be looking for. The first point we considered about fruit is:

I. Fruit is Conduct

One way that the "fruit" is manifest is through the way people live their lives or in other words, their conduct. Jesus was saying here that one possible way to know false teachers is to watch their lifestyle. Now to see this we looked at some words which were spoken by John the Baptist and his listeners.

Luke 3:8

⁸ *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto*

you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Luke 3:10-14

¹⁰ And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

¹¹ He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

¹² Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

¹³ And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

¹⁴ And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

We can see from the words of John the Baptist that when a person has repented of their sin and they bring forth fruit worthy of repentance they will:

- a. Be generous with what they possess. (:11)
- b. Not abuse the authority entrusted to them. (:12-14a)
- c. Treat others with respect. (:13-14a)
- d. Be content with what they have. (:14b)

Here we find 4 points to test anyone who is a teacher of God's Word. These are an example of the fruit which should be found in every Bible teacher's life. But we must also know that teachers can be very

deceptive even with their conduct. Therefore we must consider another way in which fruit is seen in an individual's life.

II. Fruit is Attitude

Before we look at "attitude" let me show you how the false teachers can mask their conduct. Peter talks about it in his second letter.

2 Peter 1:4

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The idea is that we as believers have, through Christ, escaped moral decay. Now let me show you what Peter says concerning false teachers.

2 Peter 2:1

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

I show you this verse so that you can see that in chapter 2 Peter is talking about false teachers.

2 Peter 2:19

¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

We as believers have escaped moral decay but the false teachers are servants of moral decay. They cannot help but to live in moral decay

because they have no power to escape it. Now let us notice what Peter says next.

2 Peter 2:20

²⁰ *For if after they have escaped the pollutions [outward defilement] of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

Here is something very interesting. The false teachers are servants to moral decay but Peter tells us some have escaped the "pollutions of the world" for a time. Don't miss this! When Peter refers to the "pollutions of the world" he is talking about what is on the outside. The corruption speaks of what is on the inside but the pollution is on the outside. He is saying this, "They have cleaned the outside of their lives up to look like they are saved but on the inside they are servants of moral decay". In other words we may not be able to recognize them by what we see in their conduct.

This is exactly why we must examine their attitude. Notice what Jesus said to the religious leaders:

Matthew 23:27-28

²⁷ *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*

²⁸ *Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

A true Bible teacher will have a spirit of humility and selflessness. The true teacher of God's Word will have a Be Attitude attitude. Here is what they will manifest in their attitude: deep humility, mourning over sin, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, longing for mercy, peacemakers, willing to be persecuted and reviled and despised and hated for the sake of Christ.

The false teachers are the opposite. They are proud, they are jealous of others. They are impure, self-indulgent. They're not mourning over their sin. They are not meek before God. They are not seeking the back places. They are not standing in weakness and fear and in much trembling. The false teacher is all about himself. Notice the Words of Jesus in Johns Gospel.

John 7:16-18

¹⁶ Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

¹⁸ He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Jesus said the person who speaks of himself seeks his own glory. That is exactly what the false teachers will do. With the false teacher it is all about personal profit and promotion.

Now Jesus says something else in John 7:17 that I want you to see.

John 7:17

¹⁷ *If any man will do his will [God's will], he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

Jesus says here that when we are in fellowship with the Father we will be able to know True doctrine from false doctrine. This brings me to the last point about false teachers and how we can know them.

III. We Can Know Them by Their Doctrine

Notice Matthew 7:16-19

There is a principle within these verses that is very clear and that is that false teachers cannot produce good fruit. But we must understand that their fruit will look the same as good fruit on the outside but only with a close examination will we find the fruit to be corrupt. **That means even their followers will look like true believers** but when you look deep on the inside you will find that even their followers are corrupt. The reason is because of the doctrine they teach.

Now we could look at several doctrines in which they may twist but I want to keep this thought in context with what Jesus is concerned about here in Matthew 7. The doctrine which false teachers will twist and distort is the **Doctrine of salvation**. That is exactly what Jesus is concerned with here in the text we are looking at. There are several ways in which they will distort the Doctrine of salvation:

1. They will say that a person is saved by works plus grace. The works can include many things:
 - a. Baptism.
 - b. Church membership.
 - c. Conformation classes.
 - d. Communion.

e. Living "right" after accepting Christ.

Now when a person is truly saved they will live a life of obedience to the Word of God but it is not the life of obedience that keeps us saved. It is God who keeps us saved. If it depended upon our "living right" after we accepted Jesus Christ then we would be in trouble because we sin every day and you and I cannot keep our selves saved.

2. They will preach salvation without repentance.

This is the main way in which the Doctrine of salvation is distorted and twisted. They will teach that all a person needs to do is believe. There is no mention of sin and the need to repent.

The Bible is very clear that until a person comes to hate their sin and is willing to turn from there can be no salvation.

Matthew 7:22-23

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

This is one of the saddest pictures we find in God's Word. These people prayed to God, they served God, they did many marvelous works in His name but they were never saved. Jesus told them to depart from Him and then He referred to them as people who work iniquity. This actually means they were people who lived like there was no law or no Bible. In other words they had never turned from their sin. They were

not living in obedience to God's Word they were still practicing their sin. There was no repentance. **They have eliminated the narrow gate!**

Watch what Jeremiah says about the false prophets and their message:

Jeremiah 6:13-14

¹³ For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

¹⁴ They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

The false prophets "slightly" healed the people. They only placed a band aid on the problem.

This is exactly what happens when there is no preaching of repentance. The narrow gate is eliminated and people walk right through the wide gate and onto the broad path.

Conclusion:

I really appreciate one man's understanding of repentance:

"Repentance means you realize you're guilty. A vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, that you're hell bound. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you and you long to get rid of it and you turn your back on it in every shape and form, you renounce the world whatever the cost, and you deny yourself and take up the cross and go after Christ. Your nearest and dearest in the whole world may call you a fool

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or say you have religious mania. You may have to suffer financially but it makes no difference, that is repentance."

Let me show you the words of John Bunyan who wrote "Pilgrim's Progress".

"I endured at the time of my salvation an agony of repentance that lasted eighteen months."

Eighteen months, he agonized over his sin.

True salvation comes after a hatred of sin and repentance over sin.