

Tuesday Devotional

August 17th, 2021

“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. - Matthew 7:15–16

Have you ever seen one of those signs that says, “Beware of dog!”? It is an obvious warning not to go near the house or the dog. It is telling you that the dog is not safe, and you need to stay away from it as best you can. It is a clear alarm telling any passersby to be careful. We see warnings like this throughout the Bible. Instead of warnings for big, barking, scary, dogs, it is a much more serious warning concerning false teachings; or as Jesus calls them, sheep’s in wolves clothing.

These verses are a wonderful reminder for us all that our teachings, preachers, and pastors are not infallible. They are just as human, just as prone to mistakes, just as sinful as the person in the pew. We all need to hear this, because sometimes we can put our spiritual leaders on unhealthy pedestals. The question then is, how do we know who is a sheep and who is a wolf in sheep’s clothing? Jesus gives us the answer in verse 16, *“You will recognize them by their fruit.”*

False teachers are not a new thing. Throughout history we see men who are considered spiritual leaders for a time. However, after a while we see these spiritual leaders no longer leading in a Godly direction, but falsely leading people astray. So what are we supposed to do? J.C. Ryle writes, *“What is the best safe-guard against false teaching? Beyond all doubt the regular study of the Word of God, with prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit.”*

If you are currently attending a Church that is not centered upon the Word of God an prayer, then this is the warning sign you need to hear today. If your leader is no longer focus on the Word of God, then you need to run. If I, as your pastor, stray away from the centrality of God’s Word, come, and speak with me. Again J.C. Ryle writes, *“Sound doctrine and holy living are the marks of the true teacher.”* Again, emphasizing the truth that you will know them by their fruit.

This is not just a call for pastors to be cautious and church members to call them out. This is also a call for every single Christian to know the difference between a sheep and a wolf in sheep’s clothing. The only way you are going to know if a Church leader is going astray from the Word of God is if we know the Word of God ourselves. J.C. Ryle once again writes, *“Nothing supplies false teachers with followers so much as spiritual sloth under a cloak of humility.”*

Are you a spiritual sloth? Can you tell the difference between a sheep and a wolf? Do you know the Word of God? Are you on guard for the Church of Jesus Christ? Do not be dazzled by what is on the outside, rather, know them by their fruit (sound doctrine and holy living). Let us beware and be on guard while praying for Godly leaders for our own Church.

For Further Study: Acts 20:28-30; 2 Timothy 4:3-4