

Beware the Wolves

Matthew 7:15-20

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."

Why this warning? Why now in the Sermon on the Mount?

Two ways, two gates, two crowds, two destinations ... **two prophets**

A couple of **contemporary problems**:

1. We often don't see the _____.

"Beware"

"ravenous wolves"

We suffer from:

Simple _____.

Spiritual _____.

Selfish _____.

Syncretic _____.

2. We are too easily _____.

They _____ like us.

They _____ like us.

They _____ what we expect them to _____.

But ... We are not _____. We can _____ them.

It may not be _____, and it may not be _____, but there is a way ...

"... you will recognize them by their fruits."

A tree and its fruit ... Tests that expose false prophets and teachers:

Two **presuppositions** ...

1) A 'wolf' may _____ himself indefinitely. A 'tree' _____.

2) Every 'tree' will _____ what it is. This is inevitable.

Three **tests**:

1) What are his _____? (1 Tim. 6:3-5)

2) What is his _____? (2 Peter 2:14-19a)

3) What is his _____? (1 John 4:1-5)

Conclusion: What's at stake?