



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS -
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
SESSION 24 – GOOD AND BAD
FRUIT (Mt 7:15-20)

Good and Bad Fruit (Mt 7:15-20)

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.



Initial Questions

- So is this about false prophets or fruit ?
- What kind of fruit is this?
- Who might be a false prophet?
- What is the cutting down all about?
- What do we look for?

Context

- On the home stretch....
- Several comparisons
- The Broad and Narrow Roads (Mt 7:13-14)
- **Good and Bad Trees (Mt 7:15-20)**
- True and False Disciples (Mt 7:21-23)
- Wise and Foolish Builders (Mt 7:24-25)
- Close: When Jesus finished saying these things... (Mt 7:28-29)

Beware of false prophets

- **Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.**
- **What are the core ideas of this metaphor?**
- **Wolf wants to eat the sheep**
- **Wolf disguises self to infiltrate the sheep**
- **Wolf's total agenda is to savage and destroy.**



Beware of false prophets

- What is a prophet?
- From προ- (pro-, “before”) + φημί (phēmí, “I say”) + -της (-tēs, “-er”, masculine agent-noun suffix).
- Biblically: One who brings a message from God.
- But more ***forth-telling*** than ***fore-telling***.
- NT refers by name to several prophets: eg Isaiah (Jn 1:23, Mk 1:2, Mt 3:3), Jeremiah (Mt 2:27), Joel (Acts 2:16), Agabus (Acts 21:10).
- Some women also – Anna (Lk 2:36), Phillip had four prophesying daughters (Acts 21:9).
- Jesus (Lk 24:19, Jn 4:19), a prophet has no honour in his own home...



Beware of false prophets

- False prophets a big deal when there are no written Scriptures.
- But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will **secretly introduce destructive heresies**, even **denying the sovereign Lord** who bought them —bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their **depraved conduct** and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their **greed** these teachers will **exploit** you with **fabricated stories**. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. (2 Pet 2:2-4)





Even from your own number

- I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. (Acts 20:29-31)
- Same ideas: Savage wolves, flock, among you, distorting the truth, watch out!

A photograph of a flock of sheep. In the center, a person's face is visible, wearing a hat that perfectly matches the wool and shape of a sheep's head, making it difficult to distinguish from the real sheep. The person's eyes are looking directly at the camera.

So, at this point...

- Jesus is saying watch out for false prophets!
- So, the next question is....
- How can we tell?



Fruit inspection

- **By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.**



Fruit inspection

- The corollary is that if you are going to spread God's word, your life needs to back it up....
- There should not be a *glaring difference* between your message and your life – grapes from thornbushes, figs from thistles.

Good and bad fruit

- This semitic way of putting things (that is, both positively and negatively: every good tree bears good fruit, no good tree bears bad fruit, and so forth) makes the test very sure.
- In Jesus's day, everyone knew that the buckthorn had little black berries which could be mistaken for grapes, and that there was a thistle whose flower, from a distance, might be mistaken for a fig.
- But no one would confuse the buckthorn and the grape once he started to use the fruit to make some wine. No one would be taken in by thistle flowers when it came to eating figs for supper. [Carson]

Let's practice...

- [Example #1](#)
- <https://youtu.be/GfaqFN-9gWU?si=5op9jM3DukAhHlrC>
- What do you think?

9:58 pm Mon 26 Feb

< MMOG Ministries Inc



Tim E Kirk

Admin 21 h · 🌐

NEW #WISHLIST FOR A NEW ASSISTED LIVING GROUP & STREET NEIGHBORS:

MMOG SCM (Street Corners Ministries) is going to be #serving a new assisted living facility that survives on #donations & #volunteerism and we need some supplies!

Also, we will continue to #serve our #unhoused street neighbors and it's still cold out there!

We are back to having our bi-monthly service days that include providing hot meals, spiritual ministry & fellowship to the homeless & low income neighbors! We need on-going supplies to be able to provide these services! *Purchase receipts can be used as Tax Deductible for charitable contributions!

Tax Deductible EIN # 88-4024269

**@everyone MMOG Ministries Inc
#BuildingCommunity #JudgmentFree #MoorePlace
#AllWelcomeAtTheTable #GiveHopeDaily
#CourtyardFellowship #SCM #StreetCornersMinistries
#MightyMinistriesOfGod**

Become & Pledge Partner:

<https://www.mmogministries.org/contribute>

Let's practice...

- Example #2
- What do you think?

In practice

- How might we be fooled? What sort of tricks?
- What would you look out for?





Fruit

- The **acts of the flesh are obvious**: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- **But the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have **crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 5:19-23)
- What fruit stands out for you here that you could recognise?
- Trees eventually reveal their true nature by their fruit...



The message

- What is the immediate context of this passage?
- Narrow gate v broad gate. (Mt 7:21-23)
- The false teacher will water this down.
- Does the message sound like what we have just been listening to?
- Thoughts on this?

Importance of Relationships

- Consider how Jesus taught and built his ministry.
- Personal relationships, example, service.
- Can I have an authentic relationship with this “teacher” or do they maintain a separation or remoteness?
- **I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. (3 John 9)**

In your own words

Watch out for false prophets...

By their fruit you will recognise them.

How would you say it in your own words?



Reflection

- Am I susceptible to the wily false prophet?
- Am I more impressed by success, polish and wealth or by character?
- How much am I watching out?