

Fruit Growers

Matthew 7:15 – 20

I. Intro

- A. **READ Matthew 7:15 – 20**; Jesus speaking here of false prophets but can be applied to every person
- B. Before this passage, Jesus speaks of two paths that every person must eventually choose to travel – a wide path, and a narrow path
- C. God has set before each person these two options for us to choose from; each path leads to a final destination – one to eternal blessing, and the other to eternal condemnation; the problem – both paths are labeled “Heaven” except that one is a lie and the other is true
- D. Scenario of those taking the broad (wide) path: You notice that many of your friends and family are heading through the wide gate and down the broad way. The road looks smooth; the walking appears easy and comfortable. You can take all your “stuff” with you. Some carry burdens of sexual sin, partying, drunkenness, or lies. But most are good people, talking about Jesus along the way. But these are still carrying pride, unbelief, bitterness, self-sufficiency or false religious ideas. Not many on that road will criticize each other much as they walk along it. They are very tolerant and open-minded. After all, their baggage looks much the same as those choosing the narrow path.
- E. Scenario of those taking the narrow path: The beginning of the narrow road seems difficult. The narrow gate only has room for very, very, few to go through at a time. You certainly can’t carry all of your baggage with you. You have to somehow unload your burdens of sins (your baggage) and leave them behind to travel this way. In fact, all you can really see is that a cross stands right in the middle of the road just ahead with piles of baggage laying at its foot. It’s obvious to you that you can’t even start down that road until you go to the cross. The road beyond the cross looks a little rough and has an uphill grade to it. You can pick out only a few lone travelers up ahead, no great crowds of people traveling down this path.
- F. **v. 13, 14**: Picture that Jesus is giving us
- G. **v. 15**: Jesus speaks of false prophets, false teachers, those who appear to be one thing outwardly (sheep clothing), but inwardly they’re another (ferocious wolves); they’re harmful, and even deadly
- H. **v. 16 - 20**: Jesus uses fruit trees as an illustration to describe anyone who appears to be spiritual, religious outwardly but inwardly their lives yielding bad, rotten fruit; it’s people who have chosen, traveling the broad path of deception leading to eternal condemnation, but want everyone else to think the path they’re traveling is the one that leads to eternal blessing

- I. **Speak today on inward signs of a true believer in Christ, inward signs of a pretend believer and finally, final destination of each**

II. **True Believers**

- A. **Question:** What determines who are true followers of Christ? Who are those truly changed, transformed by power of the Gospel?
- B. **Question:** Determined by the profession they're in? No, in this passage Jesus specifically calling out false prophets, false teachers of the Gospel actually teaching a false gospel
- C. **Question:** Determined by the behavior they exhibit? No, most people behave according the circumstances, situation they find themselves in at any given moment
- D. **Question:** Is a true believer determined by the words they speak? No, in passage even these false prophets claimed to *prophesy* in the name of Jesus
- E. **Personal song composition illustration – some words:**
- i. *We take off our good clothes and change into our grubby things, like we put on an act for God and change into our old ways*
 - ii. *We try to act holy for some of our friends, try to act cool for others*
 - iii. *We all seem to live one life, really lead another*
 - iv. *We seem to be living for Jesus, but really living for ourselves*
- F. **True believers in Christ are distinguished by the life-fruit they produce; REFER v. 17, 18**
- G. **** SLIDE ** Life-fruit of true believer**
- i. **Matthew 3:8-10 (NIV)**
 - 8 Produce fruit **in keeping with repentance.**
 - 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. **(True believer in Christ doesn't come through natural birth)**
 - 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.
 - ii. **John 15:5 (NIV)**
 - 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man **remains in me and I in him**, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **(Good spiritual fruit can only be produced through being connected with Christ through a personal relationship with Him as Lord and Savior)**
 - iii. **Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)**
 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
 - 23 gentleness and self-control. ...

iv. **Ephesians 5:8-9 (NIV)**

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in **all goodness, righteousness and truth**)

III. Pretend Believers

A. **First, if you're pretending to be a believer, follower of Christ you're not a believer at all; pretending means trying to be something that you're really not**

B. **Illustration: Playing church as a child; too many people attending churches today that are just playing church**

C. **REFER v. 16**

D. **Question: How can something outwardly good come from something that's inwardly bad? It's impossible – we might hope that that could happen but it can't**

E. **Question from earlier: How do we know who pretenders, deceivers are? By profession, by behavior, by words? Not necessarily – remember talking about pretenders**

F. **** SLIDE ** Answer again, life-fruit produced in their lives – what type of fruit would that be?; Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV)**

¹⁹ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and **debauchery**; (**debauchery – extreme indulgence in pleasures of flesh; sex, drugs, alcohol, even food in general**)

²⁰ **idolatry** and witchcraft; **hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition**, dissensions, factions

²¹ 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.

G. **Luke 12:2-3 (NIV): Jesus says ...**

² There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

³ What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

H. **Not trying to shake confidence of anyone's salvation – but am asking Question – what kind of spiritual fruit is being produced in your life? Good or bad?**

I. **Question: Which road/path have you chosen to travel in life? Same path that many in this world are traveling, being deceived into thinking their good living, good deeds, church attendance will get them into heaven? Or, path that few choose to travel down, path of truth – of righteousness,**

holiness, godliness – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

IV. Close: Final Destination

A. One of most heart-breaking passages in all scripture; READ v. 21 – 23

B. Luke 6:45 (NIV)

⁴⁵ The good man (**inferring one who is in right relationship with God**) brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man (**one who is separated from God**) brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

C. It's never too late for anyone to make things right with the Lord

D. Romans 8:1 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

E. Romans 8:5-9 (NIV)

⁵ Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

F. Question: Who, or what, have you surrendered your life to? Who, what is sitting on the throne of your heart? god of self, god of greed or power, god of bitterness or hatred, god of pride

G. Everyone is bearing (growing, producing) some type of fruit in their life; Question: In seriously considering, examining your own life, is the fruit being grown is it the kind that's from life truly changed, transformed in Christ, or the kind that's rotten, decaying, dying?