

The Uncommon Kingdom: Prophets & Disciples

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Matthew 7:15-23

April 27, 2025

Discussion and Reflection Guide

Towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us some words of caution about false prophets

He is after more here than just naming an external threat to Christianity.

*Why is there a temptation to read passages like these with others in mind? Did you think of someone that you consider to be a false teacher right away?

False prophets can be discerned by their fruit

Read and discuss Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)

¹⁵ “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

*What does this passage say about being wise and discerning?

*What are examples of ‘good fruit’? Is this fruit actually about works – doing good things?

As Christians, we need to be discerning in every area of life

The goal is to listen and watch and consume WITH the Holy Spirit.

*How do you find being discerning challenging these days? Are there places you tend to check out from discernment?

*What questions do you find useful in assessing or auditing things in your life?

Jesus moves the focus from false prophets to false followers

Read and discuss Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

*How does this passage hit closer to home? What does it tell us about the true disciples of Jesus?

*How has relationship and communion with Him shaped you into a disciple?

The invitation is to let God give us a new heart and put His spirit in us

Our identity changes from a bad tree that bears bad fruit – into a good tree that bears good fruit.

*What sort of fruit is my life bearing? Am I growing in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

*What is the Spirit showing me needs to be cut down and thrown into the fire in my life?