

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7:15-20 Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2015

Compare with
Mt 12:33-35
Lk 6:43-45

Two Trees

The Sermon on the Mount ends with
four warnings offered in pairs:

- (1) Two Gates / Ways (13-14)
- (2) Two Trees (15-20)
- (3) Two Claims (21-23)
- (4) Two Foundations (24-27)

All deal with:

- Kingdom of Heaven
- Righteousness
- A Choice
- Eternal Judgment

False Prophets

- *Jer 6:13-15; 8:8-12;
- *Ezek 13; 22:27;
- *Zeph 3:4
- *Mt 24:4-5, 11, 23-24
- *Mk 13:22
- *Acts 20:28-31;
- *2Co 11:11-15;
- *2Pe 2:1-3, 17-22; cf.
- *1Jn 2:18, 22; 4:1-6

What are the motivations
of "false prophets?"
-Phil 1:15-18

^{15c} 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?

James 3:12

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*.

Mt 3:10

²⁰ Thus *you will recognize them by their
fruits*.

Questions for Discussion:

- (1) What is the healthy tree?
- (2) What is the diseased tree?
- (3) How do we distinguish a healthy tree from a diseased tree? What are "fruits?"
- (4) What is the key to being a healthy tree? (Eph 2:1-10; James 14-26)
- (5) What happens to the diseased tree?

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7:15-20
Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2015

Compare With

Matthew 12:33–35 (ESV)

³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

Luke 6:43–45 (ESV)

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

False Prophets

Jeremiah 6:13–15 (ESV)

¹³ “For from the least to the greatest of them,
everyone is greedy for unjust gain;
and from prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely.
¹⁴ They have healed the wound of my people lightly,
saying, ‘Peace, peace,’
when there is no peace.
¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?
No, they were not at all ashamed;
they did not know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown,”
says the LORD.

Jeremiah 8:8–12 (ESV)

⁸ “How can you say, ‘We are wise,
and the law of the LORD is with us’?
But behold, the lying pen of the scribes
has made it into a lie.
⁹ The wise men shall be put to shame;
they shall be dismayed and taken;
behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD,
so what wisdom is in them?
¹⁰ Therefore I will give their wives to others
and their fields to conquerors,
because from the least to the greatest
everyone is greedy for unjust gain;
from prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely.

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7:15-20
Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2015

¹¹ They have healed the wound of my people lightly,
saying, ‘Peace, peace,’
when there is no peace.
¹² Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?
No, they were not at all ashamed;
they did not know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among the fallen;
when I punish them, they shall be overthrown,
says the LORD.

Ezekiel 13 (ESV)

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy from their own hearts: ‘Hear the word of the LORD!’ ³ Thus says the Lord GOD, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! ⁴ Your prophets have been like jackals among ruins, O Israel. ⁵ You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the LORD. ⁶ They have seen false visions and lying divinations. They say, ‘Declares the LORD,’ when the LORD has not sent them, and yet they expect him to fulfill their word. ⁷ Have you not seen a false vision and uttered a lying divination, whenever you have said, ‘Declares the LORD,’ although I have not spoken?”

⁸ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Because you have uttered falsehood and seen lying visions, therefore behold, I am against you, declares the Lord GOD. ⁹ My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord GOD. ¹⁰ Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash, ¹¹ say to those who smear it with whitewash that it shall fall! There will be a deluge of rain, and you, O great hailstones, will fall, and a stormy wind break out. ¹² And when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, ‘Where is the coating with which you smeared it?’ ¹³ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath, and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger, and great hailstones in wrath to make a full end. ¹⁴ And I will break down the wall that you have smeared with whitewash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the LORD. ¹⁵ Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall and upon those who have smeared it with whitewash, and I will say to you, The wall is no more, nor those who smeared it, ¹⁶ the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her, when there was no peace, declares the Lord GOD.

¹⁷ “And you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own hearts. Prophesy against them ¹⁸ and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the women who sew magic bands upon all wrists, and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature, in the hunt for souls! Will you hunt down souls belonging to my people and keep your own souls alive? ¹⁹ You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, putting to death souls who should not die and keeping alive souls who should not live, by your lying to my people, who listen to lies.

²⁰ “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against your magic bands with which you hunt the souls like birds, and I will tear them from your arms, and I will let the souls whom you hunt go free, the souls like birds. ²¹ Your veils also I will tear off and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand as prey, and you shall know that I am the

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7:15-20
Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2015

LORD. ²² Because you have disheartened the righteous falsely, although I have not grieved him, and you have encouraged the wicked, that he should not turn from his evil way to save his life, ²³ therefore you shall no more see false visions nor practice divination. I will deliver my people out of your hand. And you shall know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 22:27 (ESV)

²⁷ Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain.

Zephaniah 3:4 (ESV)

⁴ Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men;
her priests profane what is holy;
they do violence to the law.

Matthew 24:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.

Matthew 24:11 (ESV)

¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

Matthew 24:23–24 (ESV)

²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Mark 13:22 (ESV)

²² For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Acts 20:28–31 (ESV)

²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

2 Corinthians 11:11–15 (ESV)

¹¹ And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

¹² And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7:15-20
Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2015

2 Peter 2:1–3 (ESV)

¹ But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

2 Peter 2:17–22 (ESV)

¹⁷ These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸ For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

1 John 2:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

1 John 2:22 (ESV)

²² Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:1–6 (ESV)

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Recognize Them by Their Fruits

James 3:12 (ESV)

¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7:15-20
Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2015

Thrown into the Fire

Matthew 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Being a Healthy Tree

Ephesians 2:1–10 (ESV)

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

James 2:14–26 (ESV)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.