

SERMON ON MT. THE CHRISTIAN AND VIGILANCE

Matthew 7:15-20

Today we continue our series on the Sermon on the Mount.

Easter week my four year old grandchild was here and
 She loves to swing in our basement.
 Her favorite record we listen to had been Disney's "It's a small world after all"
 But then I found an old record about dragons—scary record
 With noises and heinous laughter of the witches.
 I played it--After that when we went down to swing
 the only record she wanted to hear was the dragon record.

Americans have an enormous appetite for horror fiction.
 Movies, and books, and DVDs. about
 Chainsaws, and attack dolls, demons, warlock, and vampires
 Our fascination with evil seem to help us deal with the depth of human evil.
 That's why Adult seek after these for the same reason a child
 Wants to hear the story of the "Three Little Pigs" over and over again,
 Each time delighting in the resourceful third pig
 Who heats a pot of boiling water in the fireplace,
 And scalds the big bad wolf when he sneaks down the chimney.

Children love the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tales,
 Because they're full of villains, evil stepmothers,
 wicked witches, trolls, and dragons.
 Children instinctively know that evil exists and they want to hear the stories
 That reveal the bad and scary things in life
 And then show how those characters are soundly defeated by the good.

Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim says well meaning parents who refuse
 To read these stories are not doing their kids a favor.
 Instead they're denying them a chance to face their very real fears within
 While they are safe in the realm of fantasy,
 And where the witches and goblins disappear with the words
 "they lived happily ever after"(How now Shall we Live- Colson)

We all know our modern society today is full of evil.
 We can't even show some of the events on our evening news.
 What we do to one another,
 And yet today Jesus is warning us of a more sinister evil
 That doesn't just destroy our bodies,
 But that which seek to destroy our soul
 By distorting the truth,
 And deceiving the children of God.
 That is why Jesus says: Watch out: Beware!

I. WE ARE VULNERABLE.

¹⁵"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

Sound like a fairy tale?
 Believe me it isn't.

The Pharisees were a perfect example of deception and fraud. twisting and turning the words of the Law and the Prophets to lead poor and ignorant people into false beliefs.

What made Jesus angry was that the people trusted these Pharisees and teachers
They trusted them in interpreting the law.
They trusted them in being truthful.
Pharisees were the scholars, the professionals of their day.
The respected elders.

Even today the law is very severe on Pastors, Attorneys and Physicians, Teachers, and politicians, who misuse their position of authority To swindle, abuse, deceive widows, or children.
Society looks with disdain on them.

Jesus said we must always be on our guard.

An English teacher was doing just that. She was the head of the pastoral search committee for a new preacher and they were interviewing a very young candidate. She was concerned that the future pastor spoke properly. “When the hen is on the nest, does she sit or set?”. The hopeful pastor was frustrated. He didn’t know what to say, and his career was on the line. Finally he replied, “It really doesn’t matter if she’s sitting or setting. What I want to know is: when she cackles is she laying or lying?” (Source unknown.)

Jesus was very angry that the Pharisees were

Laying down the Law, but lying about its meaning.

And he burst forth with the woes on the religious elite,

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering in to go in.” Matt. 23:13

A False prophet: is a person who is viewed to speak for God legitimately with authority, but who uses that gift to enforce fear, and power over people for evil, or personal gain.

We are so vulnerable because False prophets are smooth.

Jesus said they are like wolves in sheep’s clothing.

They are great at deception: and many are deceived.

Mat 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

They teach with quick wit, lies, and twisted words.

They will make up stories.

2 Pet 2:3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. (Selected)

They will bring into question the very character of God’s word.

And deny the deity of Jesus Christ himself.

And the way in which one becomes a Christian.

We know speakers, bishops and even Famous TV Hosts who teach

A thesis that Jesus isn’t the only way to salvation.

When you give your heart to God it is not

a literal belief in events described in the Bible.

Or a belief in a literal Jesus,

Such teachers believe that the church made Jesus into a messiah.
 And that what you believed as a child,
 Is no longer believable as an adult.

Peter

2 Pet 2:1 [NIV] 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.

We have pastors even in our own community who are wolves in sheep's clothing.
 Who teach about the issue of lifestyles and alternative marriage
 From a secular viewpoint as though they speak for the gospel
 They even suggest that the church must change its Biblical outlook on sin and sexuality.

But they are not debating the question of our sexuality.
 They are begging to question Biblical authority.
 They are undermining the integrity of the early Apostles and teachers.
 Who stood solidly on the word of God.

Jude 4 describes false teachers as, "...Godless men, who change the grace of God into a license for immorality..."

Once the Word of God is undermined then the false prophets of our days
 Have opened a flood gate of humanism and immorality
 and anything can go in our lifestyle and our society.

2 Pet 2:2-3 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers, will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. II Peter 2:2-3

Can they do good?
 Can they help people who are poor and neglected?
 Can they lift the burden of the oppressed and abused?
 Sure they can!
 They can even do miracles. Great signs and wonders.
 But the greatest danger is that they can turn you
 And your children away from your Biblical faith.

Jesus knew about wolves and who they really target.

Dr. W.B.Riley was staying with a Scottish sheep herder. He noticed one day that the old shepherd was uncommonly quiet. Dr. Riley asked him why. The shepherd replied: "I lost 65 of my best lambs last night to the wolves who got in." Dr. Riley asked how many of the older sheep were killed. The surprised shepherd said: "Don't you know that a wolf will never take an old sheep as long as he can get a lamb?"

What is so dangerous about the cults such as: **Heaven's gate, Twelve tribes, Mormonism, Jehovah witness, Scientology,**
And the talk show hosts Is that they use just enough of Biblical Christianity to give them credibility,
 They twist and turn the rest into their own liking.
 And it's our children who are brain washed to deception.
 Because we are easily captivated by a beautiful life and an eloquent speaker,

We give up our right to reason on Biblical grounds.
 But we give them honor just because their charitable,
 And give matching money to our state.
 We must beware of our vulnerability,

II. WE MUST MAINTAIN VIGILANCE.

¹⁵"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them.

Jesus is saying there is a test for false prophets.
 Watch the fruit of their lives,
 And second, watch if their words speak Biblical truth.

A false prophet may have his own life in perfect balance and beauty
 He or she may look good,
 Treat their family right,
 Even be a good employee.
 Call themselves a Christian,
 But if their fruit and their words do not match.
 And they live outside the law of God,
 And the redemptive blood of the cross.
 They are an abomination to God,
 And he will cut them down and throw them into the fire.
 Their fruit is our cue.

Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Matthew 7:16-20

Slide----- Can you tell by looking at this tree if its an orange or apple?
 Sometimes I can't tell in the spring when the
 Fruit trees are budding with their beautiful flowers
 Slide---- But wait: Their fruit will give them away.

Jesus is describing dangerous teachers in the same way.
 If we listen when they start to speak
 Their inward spirit will come out and reveal who
 Their true Father really is.

Even Adolph Hitler made free use of Christian vocabulary.

He talked about the blessing of the Almighty God
 and the Christian confessions which would become pillars of his new German
 government. He handed out pious stories to the press, especially to the church papers.
 He showed his tattered Bible and declared
 that he drew the strength for his great work from it
 as many welcomed him as a man sent from God.
 Indeed, Adolf Hitler was a master of outward religiosity—with no inward reality!

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Hitler's fruit betrayed his words.
 He had no fellowship with the Jews.
 He was a false Prophet.

When we walk in the light there is

Nothing folded up,
 Nothing to hide,
 We will be ok,
 What about your life?
 What are you pretending?
 What are you hiding, that needs to be uncovered?
 What dishonesty needs to be revealed?

If your calling yourself a Christian and you don't put God first in your life.
 You are not a Christian.
 If you call your self a Christian and you continue to lie, your not a Christian,
 If you call yourself a Christian and
 You continue to steel--and continue to lust, and covet, and
 Takes Gods name in vain.
 You are a deceiver,
 Saying you believe in Christ but not living it out in your life.
 He will say to you depart from me you workers of iniquity
 Into the fire I have prepare for the devil and his angles.

Why do we live a life of pretense?
 Saying or giving the impression that we live for God,
 When in reality we don't.
 We are called to the truth in all ways in our lives.
 And sure we may make a mistake but its not our lifestyle.
 We should get discouraged,
 And we should be concerned.

However, we should not give up,
 Because the very concern and discouragement about our own lives,
 is an indication of an attitude within us that
 we want to do what is right.

The best evidence that you have been born again
 by the Spirit of God is a growing discomfort
 about the things that did not make you uncomfortable before.
 And pretty soon we are not content
 just go along with the world, laugh at its ludeness,
 .OR float like a dead fish downstream.

There is something within us that want to stand against the tide.
 To stand against the crowd
 Even if we're called an oddball.
 Because

III. WE CAN BE VICTORIOUS

Jesus promise is underlying in this next verse.

Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 7:21

Jesus was saying: The Christian life is not easy,

**But those who do the will of my Heavenly Father
Will enter the kingdom of heaven.**

There is a promise in this verse.

Did you hear the story of the big lazy ol’ hound dog a guy had. One day he was sitting in his room with a friend and he said “watch this”, and tossed an old golf ball in his dog’s direction. The dog, seemingly asleep, suddenly sat up and caught the golf ball in mid air. He didn’t chew...he didn’t spit it out...he swallowed it. GULP! No problem. It was gone. His friend asked if that didn’t cause problems with the dog’s intestinal tract, and he said, “Naw, he’s swallowed lots of them and they always come back.”

Friend, the world will toss you a lot of balls and bull.

And we need to discern about what we gulp.

So that we don’t just swallow everything.

There is a lot of good ideas out there that is just not the truth.

It sounds good,

May even do some good,

But it is not the Gospel

Half truth and false prophet produce, false Christians,

Because they are using works and performance for their salvation.

Jesus was saying Good works will never replace free Grace.

Carrying your own cross will never replace carrying Jesus’ Cross.

Our victory lies totally in surrendering our will to God’s

And accepting his Word as truth.

And allowing him to equip us to discern the evil of our day.

Because there is a judgment coming and.

We will have to give an account.

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 perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!” Matthew 7:15-23

Friends today, If you have been moved, squeezed, even badgered by the

Spirit of God, that your life is not right, that your mouth is not right,

Your habits and actions have been an abomination to him.

You have offended your family and alienated your children.

Then make your confession before God.

And bow you knee and ask His forgiveness,

Because without Christ, There is no hope.

But with him, There is an eternal hope,

That give us victory to know that when

We stand before God in the judgment,

He will then say to us.”

**Well done, good and faithful servant!...Come and share your master's
happiness!'Matthew 25:21**

Make sure today that your heart and life are right before God today,

And Let Jesus be your savior and make all the difference in your life.