

Jesus on Discernment

Matthew 7:15-20

Protecting the flock from false prophets means recognizing three things:

1. Sheep (Psalm 100)
2. Wolves (v15, Acts 20:29-31)
3. Fruit (v16-20)

FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

1. How good are you at identifying trees? What would it take for you to identify an apple tree? Can you identify one by its bark? By its leaves? By its fruit? Which provides the surest way to identify a tree?
2. Read Jeremiah 27:1-7 and 28:1-4 and 10-11. What does a false prophet accuse a true prophet of? How do you know which is true?
3. Who are the “prophets” of our day? What means do they use to get their message out? How do they attract followers?
4. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. How would you summarize what’s needed in an elder? How does that protect against false teaching? How long does it take to discern those things? What are some implications?
5. Read Acts 17:11. Why did Paul say the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians? Name some ways we are exposed to teaching today. What is to be our standard for evaluating the teaching we receive? How do we do that?
6. John Chrysostom said, “In essential things, unity; in non-essential things, liberty; in all things, charity.” How do we distinguish between essentials and non-essentials? What do we do with each of those categories?
7. Read Galatians 5:16-23. What is the main contrast in this passage? What is Paul’s warning about the former? How does the fruit of the Spirit grow? Is there more of it in your life than there was 5 years ago? If not, what do you need to do?