

Wolves In The Church

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon focuses on the importance of discerning false prophets and wolves in the church. It emphasizes the need to look beyond outward appearances and gifted ministries to identify them by their fruit, message, and the narrow path of true salvation. The speaker warns against deceptive messages that lead to destruction and encourages the congregation to be discerning and rooted in the true teachings of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 7:15, Matthew 7:13, Revelation 13:11, Isaiah 30:10, Luke 13:24, Titus 1:6

Topics: "Discernment", "True Salvation"

Description

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Transcript

You're all very welcome here this morning as we just gather in the name of the Lord. Hannah has forwarded me a testimony. I just wanted to share it here this morning from friends in Slovakia that she is in touch with.

And this is just them sending a message, a beautiful message. I wanted to share it with you. They say, Hannah, we want to very much encourage you and also Brother Keith.

More brothers and sisters from multiple fellowships across Slovakia are watching your services. We send you thanks for the ministry and brotherly best wishes to yourself, to your husband, Suf, Brother Keith, and the whole church in Limerick. Let the Lord Jesus mightily bless and protect you.

We wish you God's peace and we pray for you. This is the beautiful unity that the word of God creates across many nations with friends. We've never met them face to face.

I don't know if we ever will. And yet through the preaching of God's word, through the teaching of God's word, we are one body. Be in no doubts there is a body of people scattered across every nation and they are under the headship of Christ, washed in the blood of the lamb, indwelt by the spirit of God, led by the spirit, and they are governed by the written scriptures.

And assuredly this morning, not only in Slovakia, but we've got many wonderful friends out across this world that we've come to know in fellowship with the word of God over these recent months. This is a terrible crisis we're going through. There's many discouragements, many dangers, but I want to assure you God's purpose is being outworked in the midst of this.

Let's pray. Let's believe that a church is going to be prepared in this hour to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please turn with me in your Bible this morning to Matthew chapter seven, Matthew chapter seven, and we're going to our next message in this series on spiritual warfare. This is part seven of spiritual warfare and we're reading from Matthew chapter seven here this morning. Matthew chapter seven.

I want to read just two verses and we're going to come back to them. Matthew seven verse one. My message this morning is wolves in the church.

Last week we dealt with sheep among the wolves. That we as sheep and lambs are to go out there in the midst of wolves. But I want to turn that around and now look at wolves in the church.

I wanted to preach this one second. I wanted the other one last week, but now we're coming back to this Matthew chapter seven. Again, the teachings of Jesus Christ and of the word of God.

Matthew chapter seven verse one. Judge not that ye be not judged. Then verse 15, beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Our message here this morning, and it might seem a strange one for some that listen to us, of preaching on wolves on resurrection morning, but I want to show you it's very applicable in this hour in church history. Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for the word of God, the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in an hour of deception, in a dark hour, an hour of confusion.

We have a more sure word of prophecy, more sure than audible voices, more sure than Christ being transfigured visibly and physically upon the mount. We have a more sure word of prophecy. It is infallible.

It is to be trusted more than feelings, thoughts, emotions, visions, dreams, or manifestations. Thank you for the clear line of your word. Thank you.

There is a rule that is straight. Thank you. There's a fire that never dims in the darkness of this hour.

Will you speak to us this morning from the words of the Lord Jesus Christ? We know that the Holy Spirit honors Christ, honors his words, honors the words of this book, and we pray that they'd be applied to our hearts to protect us and to guard us in this last hour of church history. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

We look here at Matthew chapter 7 as we go to our message. Wolves in the church. Wolves in the church.

It says in Matthew chapter 10, 16, we looked at this last week. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

It is remarkable to think that the Lord Jesus Christ sent forth his sheep, his lambs in the midst of wolves. He knew exactly what he was doing when he said to do that, you must be as wise as serpents, but as harmless as doves. You see the church doesn't go forth with weapons and with fighting.

Do you know what they're given? The wisdom of a serpent. You know what that is? The ability to judge, test all things, to discern, to scrutinize, to test everything by the written word of God. We may be lambs, we may be sheep, we may be as doves, but this is what God has given us against wolves.

The ability to judge, to scrutinize, and to think ahead. That's why Jesus said to be as wise as serpents. We are like doves, we are sheep, but we are to be as wise as serpents.

We are to be cunning, we are to think ahead, we are to use our eyes and to use our mind. Jesus had an awful lot to say about wolves and we're going to look at some of it here. Now in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 1 it says, judge not that you be not judged.

It's a clear command from Jesus. It is a strong warning, judge not. Now the church as always goes to one extreme or the other and we have an entire movement during my lifetime that has taught judge not.

You're not allowed to judge. You shouldn't see anything wrong. In fact many this morning may even say why is he preaching and teaching about wolves? We don't like to hear about wolves.

Why talk about it when you don't need to talk about it? Well it's because Jesus commanded us. It's in the word of God. How foolish to think that we're wiser than the great shepherd of the sheep themselves.

You see in Matthew 7 and verse 1 through to verse 5 there is a teaching about judge not, but it's not telling everyone not to judge. It's not saying never judge, but it's actually in verse 1 to verse 5 it's talking about a certain kind of person in the church who should not judge, who cannot judge, who does not have the ability to judge and that person is a hypocrite. It's someone who judges others in the church, but they don't judge themselves.

That person should never judge, but even that person Jesus said not that they should never again ever judge, but they are to judge themselves. Then they can see to be able to judge. Judging is the ability, the clarity of mind and of sight to judge things accurately, but only those who have a clear heart should judge others.

You see Matthew 7 doesn't say don't judge ever, but it says only judge under certain circumstance. Verse 1 says judge not and yet we know the rest of the chapter teaches there are times when we ought to judge. Look at verse 6. It says give not that which is holy unto the dogs.

Dogs is a type of person in the church. In fact, let me go further. It's someone who claims to be a Christian in the church.

They call themselves a Christian. They go to church meetings. They talk about Jesus, but the Bible says they are a dog.

Here Jesus is saying give not that which is holy unto the dogs. You've got to judge. You've got to discern.

You've got to be able to identify who are dogs in the church. Then once you identify them, you don't give that which is holy unto them. Again in verse 6, Jesus goes on.

Neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you. Look at this again. Jesus is calling certain men and certain women swine or pigs or hogs inside the church.

There are certain people in the church. They call themselves Christians. They want to be a part of the church, but Jesus says they're swine.

Do you know what? You are not to cast your pearls, precious things, before swine. In other words, you've got to judge a man. Is he a dog? You've got to judge a man.

Is he a swine? Then you're to use wisdom and act accordingly. God never says in the Bible, never judge at any time under any circumstance. If you get someone telling you never judge, you're not allowed to judge me.

You ought to be very concerned. There's something about that man wrong. He certainly doesn't know the Bible or there's something in his life that he doesn't want you to see.

But Jesus never says that. While he says certain people should not judge other Christians, he actually goes on to qualify and says you must judge dogs and you must judge swine. You must be able to identify them.

But notice as well in verse 15, he says, beware of false prophets. In other words, you need this ability of judging, scrutinizing, thinking, making decisions, using wisdom, having the wisdom of serpents to identify wolves. What a terrible thing that if you cannot identify a false prophet who is symbolically referred to as a ravening wolf.

Can I ask you this morning, do you know how to identify a dog, a swine, and especially a wolf? Jesus said, we need to judge these things. When he says don't judge, he's certainly saying, he is not saying that we shouldn't judge wolves. We've got to judge wolves.

We need to be able to identify a man or a woman who is actually symbolically a wolf. We've got to be able to do that. The apostle Paul in Acts 20 and verse 21, he says, for I know this, and he's talking to the elders at the church in Ephesus.

He's talking to leaders, overseers, men who have been put there of the Holy Spirit. He says, for I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not spare in the flock. What a warning.

It's a prophecy. It's a prediction. He knew it was going to happen.

He goes on to say, also of your own self shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, what does he say? All of this is going to happen. You elders at Ephesus, even among yourself, men are going to arise.

What does he say? He actually says, therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. What a remarkable warning this is about wolves coming into the church, that there is going to come a day in the church at Ephesus that wolves are going to arise amongst the elders, that wolves are going to come in from the outside. And in that hour, that leadership, those shepherds of the church, they must be watching.

They need to be aware. Paul actually says for three years, I warned you. Three entire years when I was amongst you, I warned you with tears.

He warned and he wept for three years. Now the apostle Paul taught and preached the full counsel of God. He taught about the blood, the cross, holiness.

He taught many things about the joy of the Lord in the time he was at Ephesus, but also interspersed with that teaching for three years, he warned them specifically that wolves were going to come. Since we live in an hour where you're not allowed to preach or teach or warn the church of God, men and women rise up who say, we don't want to hear that. You'll make people suspicious in the church.

You'll disturb people. It's not right to warn them because they're always going to be looking out for wolves. I want to tell you, we are commanded to watch for wolves.

It doesn't breed insecurity. It breeds security. I assure you, this is a safe church to be in.

You know why? This shepherd is looking out for wolves. I'm not consumed with them. I don't always talk about them, but this shepherd knows how to identify a wolf.

If a wolf appears, this shepherd isn't going to send you out to deal with them. This shepherd is going to guard the flock, is going to look after you, is going to guard you and protect you since it breeds security, not insecurity. It breeds a sense of safety and security in the church.

When you know you've got preachers who are aware of these things, the apostle Paul, Jesus Christ, Moses in the Old Testament, Peter in the New Testament, and certainly Jesus above any other man warned about wolves coming to the church. A wolf, the natural animal, is used as an example of a false prophet. In other words, there's things about that animal that are so like a false prophet when he comes to the church that we ought to note them.

I've got four points for you here this morning, but before I give them from the words of Jesus, let me tell you a little bit about a wolf and how it is like unto a false prophet. Wolves are born hunters from the day they're born. They have a ravenous nature to hunt, to seek after prey.

That is within their nature. Wolves are built together in a pack. They work together in unison to hunt the enemy.

That's their nature. They know by instinct how to operate together in unison. Their unity is brought about to devour the enemy.

Still today, people know very little about the habits of a wolf, the hunting habits. They're very hard to study. They have tried in our technological age to study them, and only now are they discovering some of the tricks, strategies, and devices of wolves.

They've been a very secretive animal, hiding in the dark, but we want to shine a light upon them. They're varied in their hunting techniques. They usually carve out a large area.

That becomes their area, and they protect it. They'll hunt there for five years. Then they'll move on to another area.

They'll leave that previous area alone for maybe five years. There's lots of deer. There's lots of sheep, lots of other animals, and yet they don't touch it.

They'll pass through it. They'll pass by it, but they leave it alone. They let it grow up, and then after five years of absence, they'll come in to devour, to eat, to feed, and then they'll disappear again after a period of time.

The nature of wolves are they give gifts to each other. They're ravenous to the prey, to the innocent, to the defenseless, but to each other, they always give gifts. They actually catch something, and they'll give it to another devouring wolf.

That is their nature. Usually, the average wolf weighs about 94 pounds. That's almost seven stone in weight.

They stand about 30 inches high. It is a remarkable animal. They have large feet, a bit like my beagle dog Shiloh.

They have large feet, and they leave large prints behind them. They may come, and you never see them. They may leave, and you never catch a glimpse of them, but you'll always see the mark, the prints of a wolf that has been there.

I assure you, it's impossible for a wolf to come to church, and not to leave marks. You may chase him away, but he'll always leave marks behind him. This remarkable animal travels at the speed of about 40 miles per hour.

It can cover about 125 miles in a day. It'll just lie down, sleep, get up the next morning, and just run for 125 miles again. They can turn up anywhere within a short period of time, far distant from where they were yesterday.

They just turn up unexpectedly when you least expect them. They can sleep outside in the open at temperatures of minus 40 Fahrenheit, or that's about minus 17 centigrade. It's an animal that can survive the cold.

They operate well in the cold, in a cold atmosphere. When everyone else is locking down, they operate at full strength. Those 42 teeth have twice the biting power of any normal dog.

They concentrate on the old, the sick, the young, but they'll also attack the healthy and the strong among us. They hunt in packs of anything from two wolves through to 20. They're a remarkable animal.

When I was studying this and looking up, I read about one particular wolf that was running from hunters. He fell through the air over a cliff 100 feet, fell down into the snow. The hunters thought, surely that's the wolf finished.

No, it broke out of the snow and just went running. It hardly took a breath or stopped for a second. I read about another wolf that fell into freezing water.

It was submerged under the water, but after a matter of seconds, it come up, got out on the ground again, and just kept running. Wolves are created for a cold hour, an atmosphere of coldness. Jesus did warn about the very last days as one of the signs of the times that we are going to see false prophets arise in this hour.

Here's my message this morning. Wolves in the church. I've got four points for you.

The disguise of a wolf, the ministry of a wolf, the fruit of a wolf, and the message of a wolf. Let's look at it here this morning. Number one, the disguise of a wolf.

This is a teaching of Jesus Christ as the good shepherd, the great shepherd over the sheep, warning the church of Jesus Christ. This is a great hour of coldness, of darkness, of the spread of wolves in the church. We've got to be aware what we're dealing with.

Verse 15, beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. This is my first point that Jesus Christ points out to us. The disguise of a wolf.

A wolf or a false prophet in the church comes in disguise. He never comes as a wolf. You don't get a wolf coming in and revealing that he's a wolf.

He doesn't come as a wolf. It says in verse 15, beware of false prophets. The word beware there.

This is Jesus commanding us. It means to set your mind, to take a close look, to concentrate your thinking, to pay close attention. In fact, before it happens, before the wolf comes, before he comes into the church, before the situation happens, you are to consider these things.

We as a church are to beware of it. Now I know us as a church, we are experienced in these things. As a shepherd, I wish I wasn't.

I have good experience. In fact, when I preach about wolves, I feel like I'm in my element. When I talk about these things of deception in the church, I feel like I'm on home ground because this is the atmosphere I've lived in.

I've had to deal with this so many times. I'm very sad to talk about the wolves I've had to deal with over the years. But we as a church as well have constantly seen this.

That's why when we first started this church, the very first year we started this church, we taught 15 messages on how to judge biblically. It's no wonder then that we've been so tested the way we are. We taught from the very beginning how you judge, what you judge, when you shouldn't judge.

And one of the great things we taught was about discerning wolves or false prophets, how to do it, how to discern it, how to protect the church. It's no wonder then we have an entire history over seven short years of incidents happening. You see, Jesus said, beware of false prophets.

You are to consider the danger before it happens. You're to guard the church. You're to be alert in the church.

What are we to be alert of? Of false prophets. False prophets are symbolized by ravening wolves. In fact, a false prophet, when he comes into a church or rises in a church, there's no animal more acceptable to use for him than that of a ravening wolf.

A wolf is perfect to identify, to describe his hunting habits, to survive that realm of living in coldness and prospering in it. Jesus says here, beware of false prophets which come to you. Notice here, the wolves come to the sheep.

They come to the house of God. We may think a wolf would never come to church. Oh yes, that's just where false prophets go.

They don't raise up their own churches. They come in amidst the flock. They're looking for a real church.

They're looking for real sheep. They're looking for the lambs. What does Jesus say? They come to you.

How do they come to you? There's my first point, the disguise of a wolf. They come to you disguised. They come to you, and Jesus said that, in sheep's clothing.

When a prophet comes to a church, he is wearing the garments of a sheep. In other words, he is disguised. He is disguised as a sheep.

I want to promise you, a wolf disguise as a sheep is a very dangerous thing. This message is on spiritual warfare. Many people who bind and cast out demons, who are involved in all manners of spiritual warfare, are very ignorant about false prophets.

Many of these teachings actually come out of these movements that are false. From Wilkes himself, Wilkes don't mind teaching you about binding, loosing, about Jezebel. They'll do that.

In fact, they concentrate on this whole realm of teaching on spiritual warfare, but they never expose themselves. They come right into the house of God, and they'll teach you all about these things, but they don't want you to discern who they are. They may look like a sheep.

They may smell like a sheep. Sometimes, they may even sound like a sheep. I want to show you it's all outward.

In verse four, it says, there are certain men, and in the book of Jude in verse four, it says, for there are certain men crept in unawares. What does that mean? It means to enter in secretly, to slip in stealthily, to squeeze in sideways, or to come in and to sit on the seat beside you in a church, in a convention, in a school of Christ. They'll sit right down beside you unawares.

They don't want to be seen coming in. They want to come right in looking like a sheep. You see, why does a wolf put on the garments of a sheep? They don't want to be identified.

This is called deception. Deception. They want to look like a sheep, and I assure you, a false prophet that's wearing the skin of a sheep, a sheep had a die.

You don't get to be a false prophet or a wolf without killing sheep. The only way that you've got to be there, that you function as a false prophet, is because you've killed many sheep to get there. You put on a covering to look like a lamb, but that isn't what you are.

Your nature is not that of a real Christian. What does it mean that they disguise themselves by wearing sheep's clothing? You know what? They call themselves a Christian. They want to look like a Christian.

They want to look Christ-like. They want to look like a follower of the Lord Jesus. They want to sound like it.

They want to look like it. They want to act like it in order to deceive. They also want to put on the character of a sheep.

That's what the disguise of a wolf is. They're a wolf underneath, but they put on the cover of a sheep. What is a sheep? A sheep is innocent, defenseless, harmless.

You don't worry about a sheep. It won't do you any harm. I've never seen yet a sheep attacking a shepherd.

Never in my entire life. Wolves do that. Goats do that.

Maybe a crazy sheep would do that, but it's not within the nature of a sheep. A sheep may get scared and run, but a sheep will never attack a shepherd. I can assure you.

I've seen a few people claiming to be sheep who attack shepherds. You see, this wolf wants to look defenseless, like he's a follower, like he's patient, kind, good, and loving. He wants the outward adornment.

He wants to convince you that he's a loving man, a kind man, a patient man, a good man, that his motives are very, very innocent. He disguised himself. We had a young man come into the church.

He would start photographing all the words of the old hymns. He wanted all of us to see how impressed he was with them. He almost grabbed the tray for tea and coffee after a meeting.

He humbly began to serve everyone. Little did I, or you, any of us, realize what was in that heart. You see, he looked humble, submissive, kind, nice, and yet there was something else in that heart.

I assure you, saints, we're not being suspicious to test all things. I have an open heart. I accept everyone at face value, but that doesn't mean that we don't judge or discern.

You see, wolves come in the guise of sheep. They want to look like they have a Christian testimony, Christian character, and Christian attitude, but how divisive. It is an outward disguise.

It's not in their heart. It says in Romans 16, 18, by good words and fair speeches, they deceive the hearts of the simple. Notice this.

Paul is talking about those that come into the church to split it in two. How do they come in? They're going to split that church. How do they come in? With good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple.

Who are the simple? Those who don't judge, who don't test things. If you're simple, you don't test. You're undiscerning.

You can't identify a wolf or a pig or a dog. It says in Psalm 55 in verse 21, the words of his mouth were smoother than butter. Notice that.

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter. Very smooth, very smooth, but listen, but war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.

Do you see the contradiction? You can have very smooth words, very nice words, and yet war is in your heart. Hatred, bitterness, jealousy, anger, love is on your lips, kindness. Oh, I don't judge.

I love everyone. I don't like to hear messages on wolves, but in that heart is deceit and corruption. Someone has also said that a shepherd dresses in the garments of a sheep and that's understandable.

He is a shepherd. He lives with the sheep. He is one with them.

He identifies with them, but maybe this false prophet, when he puts on the garments of a sheep, he comes in wanting to act like a shepherd. Haven't we seen them? They come in that door of the church and immediately they want to shepherd the flock. You better check what's under those sheep garments.

If they come in wanting to do the job of a shepherd and we don't know who they are, their character, their marriage, and anything about them, you ought to beware. You ought to beware. Be very careful.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 11 and 13, he says, for such are false apostles. In other words, you get men who claim to be apostles. They look like apostles.

They could sound like apostles and yet they are deceitful workers. Listen to what they do. They transform themselves into apostles of Christ.

This word transform means to modify your appearance, to be transfigured, to disguise yourself, to become different than you really are. What do these men do? They actually modify themselves to look like an apostle. They mold themselves to look like an apostle, but really they're not an apostle of Christ.

They're mimickers. They're counterfeiters. You have to realize this.

I don't want to tell a three-year-old girl, a five-year-old girl, a seven-year-old girl, that she shouldn't get in the car of a stranger or take sweets or go with a strange man. I don't want to tell that little girl that. But if you know anything, if you love that little child of yours, your little girl, you're going to warn her.

You may not tell her all the reasons, but you want to warn her. Do you know what? I don't want to do that. I don't want to preach like this.

I don't want to warn the church, but I have to if I love the church, if I love Christ, if I believe the word of God. I want to warn you, there are men, there are ministries that will transform themselves and no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Do you realize Satan, when he comes to church, comes disguised as an angel of light? He changes his appearance.

He puts on a disguise. If Satan comes to this church, he will disguise himself. But notice that's the outward.

Jesus says that false prophets come disguised as a sheep, but inwardly, and this is what exposes them. What does Jesus say? Inwardly, on the inside. Outward, they look like a sheep.

I think they're a sheep. You think they're a sheep. Outwardly, they look like a sheep.

They seem to have the character of a sheep, but inwardly, inside, in the heart, in their mind, in the motives of the heart. Do you know what he says? Inwardly, they're ravening wolves. In other words, in the unseen realm, in their character, their personality, their attitudes, the desires of their heart, all of that, there is a different nature on the inside, and it's all behind the outward cover.

This is the first thing about wolves we need to know. They disguise themselves. Do you know these men that say, no one could ever deceive me.

I always seize it. See it coming. They know nothing.

Deception is very dangerous. You know what? I know I cannot discern apart from the grace of God. Even with all my experience, even with what I know of the Bible, I don't rely on myself.

I'm kind. I'm a lamb. I'm a sheep.

I'm like a dove. Do you know what? I do know that I need to judge all things biblically, and I know only God can preserve us. Look at the inward nature for a second.

On the outward, they're disguised, but inwardly, they're ravening wolves. This word ravening, note this down, is the Greek word harpex. They're ravening wolves.

Their inward nature, behind the lamb disguise, their actual character. If you get in under their cover, they are ravening. Do you know the word harpex there means an extortioner or a robber.

For a wolf, this means it's hungry. It self-gratifies. It wants to satisfy its devourer nature.

That's what harpex means for a wolf. It is driven to devour. That is its nature.

It's not kind to sheep. It wants to satisfy its own hunger. It wants to kill for its own young.

It wants to satisfy its own needs. It's not coming in there to be kind. If you ever find a selfish Christian, you ought to question.

A real Christian ought not to be selfish. Yes, we can all be selfish, but you know what? That goes against the lamb of God. That goes against the new creature born again of the spirit of God.

I have a new nature, not selfish, not arrogant, not willful. My nature, I think about others. When I think about money, I think about others.

When I think about time, I think about others. That is the nature of a lamb of God or a sheep, but a ravening wolf, they look like a sheep outwardly, but in that heart, they only care about themselves. Every word, every action, every sentence, every story, they're actually planning ahead for themselves.

All they do, they're great strategists, wolves. They're always planning their own advancement. This word harpex literally means to grip an iron claw, to seize, to catch, or to bring into debt and bondage to yourself.

It could be financially, or it could be emotionally, or it could be spiritually. You could get trapped by a false wolf where you feel indebted to them. They make you feel guilty.

You owe them something. I want to tell you, you owe me nothing. I'm the shepherd of this sheepfold, but you owe me nothing.

You owe it all to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm only an under-shepherd, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. You're not indebted to me.

Oh yes, we're indebted to this world to give a gospel, but notice the inward nature of this wolf is the harpex to grab you or to make you feel guilty. What a terrible thing. In the first century, during the time of the writing of the Bible, the Roman on their ships, on their great ships when they went to war, created an instrument called a harpex, the exact same word.

Do you know what it was? It was a long metal arrow that they fired off the boat. At the end of it, it had metal hooks, and they would fire these, maybe 50 of them, off their boat under the enemy's boat. It would catch onto the boat and they would pull in the enemy boat.

That's what a harpex is. You grab your enemy, your target, your prey, and you pull them in, and then you destroy them. Do you realize that's what a ravening wolf is? That under the cover of a lamp, they will devour.

They're hungry. They want to satisfy their own desires. There's no sacrifice.

No one laying down their life. They will not put themselves at the end of the queue. They push to the front to satisfy themselves.

In 1 Corinthians 5 and 11, the apostle Paul says, we are not to keep company with extortioners, with harpexes, the very same thing. You're not to eat with such people. You're not to associate.

You're not to enter into unity. When you find someone who has this inward nature of the wolf, you're not even to accept them as a Christian. You're not to sit down.

If they're calling themselves a Christian, but they act like this, and they're trying to get you indebted onto them, you need to distance yourself. That's the first thing that Jesus shows us here in verse 15, that when a false prophet comes to a church as a wolf, he comes disguised as a sheep. Second of all, the ministry of a wolf, not only the disguise of a wolf.

I want you to identify them, not only the disguise, but the ministry of a wolf. What does Jesus teach? In verse 15, he identifies this wolf as having the gifted ministry of false prophet. Notice that.

Notice he's not just coming in as a lamb or a sheep. When a wolf comes to church, he wants to come in as a false prophet. In other words, with a gifted ministry, he loves leadership, the supernatural.

He'll want you to think that he hears from God, that he has dreams, visions, that he sees things that you don't see. A genuine sheep says, I haven't had a dream from the Lord, or a vision, or fallen into a trance. But these wolves, when they come, they come with the gifted ministry of the prophet.

Do you realize wolves love the ministry of a prophet? In Ephesians 4 and 11, and this is Paul speaking about the real church after the resurrection, five ministries given to the church, not talking about the 12 original apostles. There are other apostles that were given after their resurrection and ascension of Christ. Listen to what he says.

And he, that is Jesus, gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and some teachers, five ministries. One of them is prophet. Why did Jesus give them? For the perfecting or the maturing of the saints, for the work of the ministry, to raise up sheep to do the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

A wolf won't do that. You see, there are real prophets in the church. I believe in the gifted ministry of the prophet.

I know it's real. I know it's a real gift. It's in the church today to speak forth under the power of God, to see and to reveal to the church things that maybe we don't see.

There are real prophets that speak from God. When a wolf comes in amongst the flock, he wants to be recognized as a prophet. He wants to be seen as spiritual, as mature, as in tune with God.

You remember what Jesus said about the last days, about the beginning of sorrows, just before the last days and Christ's return. Remember what he said in Matthew 24, 11, and many false prophets shall arise. Many shall deceive many.

This is one of the great marks of the last day. Many false prophets, a gifted ministry, and they're going to deceive a large multitude. They'll become very popular and they will deceive many.

You see, this is the ministry of a wolf. What is the ministry of a wolf? Not a prophet, but they're a false prophet. Some people think when it says false prophet, they can't predict things.

They can't see things. They can't know things. It must be all made up.

Not real miracles, not real prophecies, not real visions. I want to tell you, a false prophet could give real prophecies that come to pass and perform real miracles. Again, in Matthew 24 and verse 24, Jesus speaking about the false prophets of the last day, our generation, and he says, they shall show great signs, not false signs, great signs and wonders, in so much that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Saints, I want to tell you and warn you, not only about local prophets or false prophets, but those that move in the body of Christ internationally, worldwide, across many nations. Be very careful. Can they do real signs? Jesus said so.

Could they even deceive the elect? Jesus said it would be possible, but for his grace upon the real saints of God. We need to be very aware there is a ministry, a gifted ministry, supernatural, spiritual, that can reveal things that couldn't be known otherwise. Doing miracles, this is the ministry of a real wolf.

Someone could say this is a great prophet and all the time it could be a wolf if you don't know how to recognize them. Jesus said in Luke chapter 6, 26, woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for they did it to their father, for so did their fathers to the false prophets. Do you see that false prophets can be very well spoken about? It means to speak about them beautifully, finally, or excellently.

There are false prophets in the church today, very well known, and great multitudes of the church, even real born-again Christians, speak very finely about them. Oh, what a danger this is. Look again in Matthew chapter 7, what Jesus says in warning about these wolves that come with the ministry of a gifted prophet, but they are false.

It doesn't mean the miracles are false or that the prophecies are not supernatural. They are false because of who they are, because of their inward nature, because of their deception. They're playing the hypocrite.

They are not what they seem in their character, and yet the ministry could be very real, very supernatural. Look at verse 21. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father, which is in heaven.

You've got to understand that false prophets, wolves, do not do the will of the father. It's not in their nature. They do not do the will of God.

Verse 22, many will say to me in that day, many, a vast multitude out of this generation, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name. Look what they do. They say, we're prophesying, we're predicting, we're proclaiming, we're speaking forth under the unction of the Holy Spirit.

We believe prophecy is for today. So do I. But look at them. They're saying, Lord, Lord, we're doing the will of our father.

We're prophesying. Do you know these men, these wolves emphasize ministry, not character, not character, not the inward nature. They want to emphasize much about ministry.

We prophesy in your name. We do it in Jesus name. We're for Jesus.

We believe in Jesus. Also it says, and in thy name, we cast out devils. Well, that doesn't sound like the Catholic church or the Baptist church or the Presbyterians.

That sounds like the charismatics and the Pentecostals. Look at them. We prophesy.

We cast out devils. We have a ministry. How could you say I'm of the devil if I cast out devils? If I cast out devils, I must be of Jesus.

I prophesy in his name. I cast out devils in his name. How many devils have you cast out? And yet these wolves will say, we cast out devils and in thy name have done many wonderful works.

The Greek there for wonderful works is the Greek word *dunamis*, where we get in Acts chapter one, verse eight, when the power of the Holy Spirit come upon you, when you're baptized in the Holy Ghost, that power, that *dunamis* is the miraculous power of God. It is the ability of God. Look at these people knocking on the door of heaven.

We prophesy, we cast out demons. We moved in the power of the Holy Spirit. How does Jesus respond to them? Verse 23, and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.

Do you hear that saints? These wolves, those caught up in ministry in the church that are devouring, selfish. They don't care about the church. They're not building up the church.

They want to minister, prophesy, cast out demons. They want you to believe you're filled with demons. They move in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What does Jesus say to them? He pulls back the cover and he says, I never knew you. I never in any way or at any time had any intimate fellowship with you, communion, or relationship. Depart from me.

Notice this you workers of iniquity. The word iniquity there is *anomia*. It means iniquity, lawlessness, to violate the law, to be restricted by no commandments of scripture.

Look at these people. They say I'm not bound. I'm under grace.

Don't put guilt on me. Don't judge who I am. I've got all this supernatural ministry.

I know things you don't know. I've seen angels. I've been taken to heaven.

I've experienced things you can't even imagine. I know things about your life. You better be sure that when wolves come, they come disguised.

Secondly, they come with the gifted ministry of the prophet doing all of these signs and wonders. Number three, the fruit of a wolf, the disguise of a wolf, the ministry of a wolf, but certainly the fruit of a wolf. And this is what I want you to really home in on and learn here.

You see, I believe in this chapter, we also have a message about the fruit, to look for the fruit. I've heard preachers who say you shouldn't be looking at fruit. They make fun and they call them fruit inspectors.

I don't make fun and jokes about that. Look with me in verse 16 here, just before talking about the wolf, what does Jesus say? He says in verse 16, ye shall know them by their fruits. Look again in verse 20, by their fruits, ye shall know them.

Then he begins to talk about these wolves. You see, first of all, he deals with these wolves. He exposes the wolves.

Then he shows the fruit. How are you ever going to identify a wolf that disguises himself, that comes with this gifted ministry? Well, it's easy. Verse 16, having revealed to you about the wolf, he then moves in verse 16 to say, you shall know them by their fruit.

In other words, you can identify them. You can recognize them. Also through personal experience, when you get experience of a false wolf, you never forget it.

When a false prophet is around you, you'll never forget that. You have personal experience. Do you know how you find out that you will know them by their fruits? They're not gracious.

They're not kind. They're not loving. They're not patient.

They don't obey a scripture. They don't submit to godly leadership. They work deceitfully.

They lie. They cause division. I could go on and on here this morning, but you know them by their fruit, not by their sheep garment, not by their prophecies, not by their miracles.

You identify them by the fruit of their inward character. Very important you realize how to identify wolves, not by the gifts of ministry. Don't judge a man by his gifts, the supernatural, his testimonies, or his personal experiences that he tells you.

Also do not judge by miracles, manifestations, or multitudes of followers. Do not judge by that. How do you judge? You judge by the fruit.

You know what the fruit is to do with? The inward nature of the heart, the character, who the person is behind the ministry, or behind the cover of a Christian. Have you ever been with someone and they claim many things, but as soon as you get alone with them, there's something else. A man came to the city Limerick some years ago from America.

He said he was called to walk across Ireland. He claimed to be an evangelist, a soul winner. Jesus had sent him.

He wanted to come speak in our church. I said, no, thank you. I went on his Facebook page, looked at one photograph and said, no man of God, no Christian would appear like that.

He won't be coming in my house. One of the young sheep in our church phoned me up and said, oh, I've talked to this man. Could you keep him at your house? Would you have him to speak Wednesday night? I said, nope, no way, not a chance.

Well, do you know what he done? He took him into his house. He didn't listen to the pastor, didn't listen to me. I couldn't reason with him.

He said, he's such a good man doing a great work for God. Well, he had him in his house. Well, I got a phone call the next day from the son who went for a walk.

This great evangelist, cursed, blasphemed, used the Lord's name in vain. And this young believer in this church was shocked. Well, the man stopped and he said, you're shocked that I speak like that, aren't you? Hey, we're just relaxing.

Hey, we're just having some downtime here. You see, that is a wolf. That is a wolf.

That is the real fruit. It's not when they're on the high street. It's not when they're in a church pulpit.

It's in that home. It's when they're off duty, you'll see who they are. You see, the fruit is not the fruit of ministry or the soul saved or the testimonies.

That is not the fruit you look for. You see, he gives a whole teaching here in between verse 16 and 20, when he says, you'll know them by the fruit. He gives the example, do men gather grapes of thorns or figs off thistles, even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is shunned on and cast into the fire.

I want you to see so clear that a tree is used as an example, a fruit tree, an apple tree, a pear tree. An apple tree brings forth apples. It may take a bit of time, but you'll see it before long.

You won't initially see it, but fruit begins to show up. You can't hide fruit because it reveals the inward nature of who that person is. Fruit represents life, lifestyle, and good fruit reveals it's a good tree.

Don't say it looks like a good tree. Look at the fruit. Don't look at the nice, beautiful tree with its nice leaves and say it's a good tree.

I know it's a tree. Yes, but what is the fruit? Fruit will always manifest and never separate the fruit from the inward life. You may say, oh, I know the fruit is like that, but I know he's a good brother.

You're deceived. You're deceived. Fruit indicates the inward nature.

And do you know what? If your fruit, I'm telling you now, if your fruit, someone the other day criticized me for using the word if you continue the apostle wrote, but they didn't want me to use that. I want to tell you, if your fruit does not line up with the word of God, you better get on your knees and repent. If you have the outward profession of a Christian, but inwardly you're angry and bitter and jealous and envious, you need to get on your knees this morning.

I want to tell you, it's a warning. You better look, take note of that fruit. What sort of fruit are you bearing forth this morning? Fruit represents character, growth, maturity, and it does take time.

Do you know, I'm still in the process of bringing forth fruit. Fruit does take time. A young Christian doesn't always bear the fullness of fruit, but after two or three years, if there's no fruit, there's something wrong.

I give a lot of time to someone just saved. Often they can be more spiritual than older Christians and yet later they turn their back on God. Does that person have a history of trials, tests, of pruning, of dealings of God? You see these wolves come with remarkable testimonies, but is there the mark of trials and trouble? Do you know what they were like? Bad fruit is dangerous.

It reveals something of the character. Fourth and lastly, the message of a wolf. The message of a wolf.

You see, we have it all here in this chapter. We had the fruit spoken about after the statement about a wolf. Now we look before the statement.

In verse 15, we have about the wolf. In the two verses before it, we have about the message, how we can know and make a difference of the message. The message of a wolf, how do you identify a wolf? If he's disguised, if he comes with the gifted ministry, how do you identify him? By the fruit.

By the fruit. But here's another way, by the message. A wolf will reveal himself by his message.

Be sure at some stage, he may look very good for a time, but he'll reveal himself by what he preaches. Verse 13, enter ye in at the straight gate. Jesus is showing here about real salvation.

In other words, the message that we all preach about being born again. How do you tell the difference between a true message and a false message? A true prophet and a false prophet? Well, it's all here. Enter ye in at the straight gate.

Now notice in these two verses, we have the parable of two entrances, two gateways, two pathways. Do you know what it's talking about? It's not talking about Christians and sinners. No.

It's actually shown here, there are two different gateways. Both claim to be salvation or the message of the gospel. In other words, this is how you identify a false prophet.

He's going to preach a different way than the true prophet. What does Jesus say? Enter ye in at the straight gate. What is the straight gate? The narrow way.

The narrow, the gate is narrow. The way Jesus preached of repentance, forsaken sin, humbling yourself, leaving behind the world, turning your back on those that you shouldn't associate with. That is the straight gate.

When you get born again, how do you know you've entered in the right gateway? Well, there's two different gateways. The real gate of Jesus Christ is a straight gate. It is a very narrow gate.

You're not going to bring all your stuff in with you. You're not going to come in this narrow gate and still be the same. That is utterly impossible.

Over in Luke chapter 13 and 24, Jesus says again, strive to enter in the straight gate. The word strive there is the word agonizami. It's where we get our word for agony.

Jesus says you identify the real gospel, the real message of being born again. How do you identify it? How do you know someone is preaching a true gospel or a false gospel? Well, Jesus says you can know the

real gospel. It is a straight gate, a narrow gate.

And you know what? You've got to strive to get in there. There is agony. There is agony.

There are tears. There is brokenness. There is a fight.

It's not always easy. You could really be seeking after salvation and you're going, I'm in turmoil. I'm striving to get in the narrow gate.

It's not easy. Well, John Bunyan, that great man of God had to say he went through hell to get in that narrow gate. It wasn't easy.

D.P. Williams of Wales was another great preacher saved in the Welsh revival. He went through agony of soul and trying to go through the real salvation. There's someone come in the church, they say a sinner's prayer.

It's all joy and happiness. They're rebels against God. There's no change of their inward character.

You know, I watch people struggle, wrestle to go through to real salvation. I'm not God. I can't save them with the sinner's prayer.

I can pray for them. I can preach them. I can point them to Christ.

I can try to help them all I can, but I cannot save them. I've never said, say after me. I've never said that.

I said, if you believe you can be born again today and the person's wrestling, I cannot birth the child. I could be a doctor, a midwife helping that baby, but I cannot create that with words of my lips. I can't decree it and the being utterly impossible.

You see, not only is the gate narrow, but it says that also because straight is the gate and narrow is the way. How do I know that you're living the real Christian life? I'm talking about the message of a real prophet, Jesus Christ. Do you know how I know the gate was narrow and there was agony to get in? And now the way you're walking, how do you know whether you've come in the broad gate or the narrow gate? Well, is the way broad? Then you come in the broad gate.

Is the way narrow that you're walking? Not always easy. Sometimes you fail along the way, but the way is narrow. That's because you're born right.

You're walking a narrow way because you're born at the straight gate. But also Jesus gives a warning here. He says, broad is the way that lead us to destruction.

Two gates, two different ways, two different destinations. Wide is the gate. It means to be spread out flat, no bumps in the road.

Broad is the way you just walk in. Well, I love Jesus. I want Jesus to forgive all my sins.

I want to be forgiven. My name's written in the Lamb's book of life. I'm clean.

I'm a member of the church, but I don't need to change. I don't need to turn from sin. When were you born again? Oh, I was always born again.

No, you weren't. The Bible never says that. Broad is the way that leads to destruction.

Oh, I'm under grace. I don't need to stop cursing or drinking or canoodling with the opposite sex. God understands you're on the broad way.

And many are on that way. Many, few are on the narrow way. There's a big difference.

What's the message of the false prophet? It's a wide gate. Get everyone in there because they're going to tithe to you. Broad is the way.

Many are on there. You don't feel lonely. On that broad way, oh, there's lots of laughter, lots of joy.

There's much smooth words, no conviction, no repentance, no dealing with the heart. No one's going to make you feel bad in church. On this narrow way, I may make you feel bad for a time, but it's to make you glad at the end of this journey.

It says in Isaiah 30 verse 10, concerning the false prophets, which say, sorry, concerning the people speaking to the false prophets, telling them, see not unto the prophets prophesy not unto us right things. Speak unto us smooth things and prophesy deceits. Do you know how you tell a false prophet, a wolf? Smooth words, kind words.

He won't tell you the truth. He'll say, sure, you're okay. You'll never feel convicted around a false prophet.

You'll feel obliged. You'll feel like you're bound, you're trapped. But I assure you, I'll say, don't worry.

It'll be okay in the end. You'll be fine. You see the message of a wolf reveals who he is.

When the message, the preaching is wide, is broad, everyone, everything goes in there. Do you know that Joyce Marr come out, she got so angry at people like me who would point out the wrongs of getting a tattoo. You know what she said? She got so mad.

She stood up and said, I'm going to get a tattoo. That reveals the inward nature. Why would they say that? What about the hill songs worship, the leadership in Australia and America? I've listened to them for years.

They refuse point blank. They will not say publicly in their preaching or interviews that homosexuality is sin. They refuse to say it.

They say I'm too gracious for that. You've got a beautiful worship ministry, large churches that spring up like mushrooms, but they will not say homosexuality is sin. I don't sit in judgment of individuals, but I am allowed to judge the message.

I am allowed to judge the fruit. I sure am. They're making a broad way and many go there.

Listen, before I close revelation 13 and verse 11, revealing, talking about the false prophet who's going to rise up to lead the worship of antichrist. He's going to promote the worship, lead the worship. He's going to make the image of the beast and he's going to be at the head of worldwide worship of this false antichrist.

Listen to the description of him. Revelation 13 verse 11. And John said, I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, out of the nations.

Look at the description of him. He had two horns like a lamb. His outward appearance, he's disguised.

What is the false prophet? The greatest false prophet that has ever walked the earth. He's just about to rise. He's coming in this generation.

You know what he's going to look like? He's going to have two horns like a lamb. He's going to give the appearance, not of a sheep, but of a lamb. He's going to look like he's laying his life down, that he's meek, harmless, kind.

He will look Christ-like. He will look outwardly like he comes so soft, he wouldn't hurt anyone. There's coming the greatest world leader.

And you know what? He's going to call far from heaven. He's going to do signs and wonders and miracles. They're going to be lying and deceitful.

They're going to deceive this generation. It's going to be a worldwide religion that's going to catch vast multitudes up in it. But the leader, this false prophet is going to look like a lamb.

He's got the outward appearance. But notice what it next says. And this reveals who he is.

And he speak as a dragon. Do you notice that when he keeps his mouth closed, he looks like a lamb. He smiles like a lamb.

He acts like a lamb. He promotes himself like a lamb. But as soon as he speaks, in other words, his message reveals who he is.

His message when he speaks is that of the dragon. He looks like a lamb, but he speaks like a dragon. Do you realize every false prophet is the same? They actually speak like a dragon.

Saints, I'm telling you because I'm a shepherd. I'm a lamb like you. I'm a sheep like you.

Just like you, I'm a part of the full. But you know what? I'm a shepherd. I am one like King David, like many good shepherds out across our world.

I have the spirit of sacrifice. I'll suffer rather than you suffering. I'll go out and fight a wolf so that you don't need to face it.

I'll give my time so that you can walk with God. I'll have my heart broken that you can rejoice in God. Death worketh in us, but life in you.

Saints, this is true ministry. It costs dearly to have a real church. It costs dearly to protect it and to preach the true message of God.

It is very costly, with great price, but saints, oh, how precious. There is a real Jesus that's coming. He was a lamb.

He laid down his life at Calvary, and he is the great shepherd of this sheep, but he warns about wolves. He warns you, he warns us, and he wants us to be a flock dwelling together. Saints, on this Sunday morning, I exhort you concerning wolves in the church.

We're not to be blind. We're lambs. We're sheep.

We're innocent. We're harmless, but we're not naive. We're not stupid, and we're not those who say, don't judge.

You're not allowed to test fruit. That's a lie from the pit of hell. I've got to have my eyes open, and I will judge fruit.

I'll judge you, and I encourage you to judge me. 22 qualifications for an elder in the church, in Titus and Timothy, 22 qualifications. Only one of them is able to teach.

The other 21 are about my family, my relationship with my wife, whether I get angry or not. Saints, 21 of 22 qualifications are about the life. That is true ministry.

It's not how well I preach or teach. You could come on here and think, isn't that a wonderful message? Doesn't he have great knowledge or great ability? You're judging me wrongly, and that's how most judge. You know what? You better know what my relationship with my wife is like.

You better know how I conduct myself behind closed doors. You better know what I'm like as a bully or as a shepherd. You better know that in order to know whether there's any power in this message.

God bless you here this morning. Let's worship Christ as we close. Father, I pray for all of our friends.

Raise up a church in this hour that's going to be a discerning church, that's going to know the word of God, that's going to be aware of wills, that can discern the dogs, the pigs, the wolves, that can identify real shepherds, that can discern what a real sheep is, a lamb that's immature and a mature sheep that's experienced. Father, I pray, make us mature to grow up into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ in this hour. We do desire you, Jesus.

We thank you that the lamb of God, the great shepherd, is coming again shortly for us in Jesus' mighty name. Let's worship him here.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wALbduu1xik.mp4>

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