

Discerning by Fruit

by Mose Stoltzfus

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discerning truth through the fruits of individuals and teachings, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:02:31

Scripture: Matthew 7:15

Topics: "Discernment", "Spiritual Balance"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny discusses the importance of discernment in our modern world. He cautions against falling into extremism and emphasizes the need for balance between judgment and mercy. He highlights the challenge of discerning truth in an age of multimedia, where people rely on appearances rather than examining the fruit of someone's life. Brother Denny encourages the practice of inspecting and examining the fruit of a person's character and teachings, rather than solely relying on external factors. He also mentions the importance of scriptural harmony, where teachings should align with the overall message of the Bible.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, if you're not learning anything else, you're learning how to sing.

But I hope it's more than that. Well, just a couple of thoughts here before I forget it. The matter of discernment, there is an extremism that can be fallen into that I would just like to give a caution of here lest I forget it.

I'm getting of the age where I have many thoughts and I forget some of them if I don't do something about them. And that's just come to me here a little bit ago. But there is the discerning as to trying to find out very

critically whether a man is born again or not that is counterproductive to him becoming born again.

Young Christians stand together and sometimes go into this argument, you know, that I think he's born again. I don't think so. You know, and you have this real black and white discussion concerning another individual in your family or congregation or someone you know.

This study is more geared to discerning what, as far as I'm concerned, whether I can relate to a situation or something or not. In other words, the effect it has on my life, whether I can fellowship with it or whether I can read that book or listen to that speaker or so on, rather than to judge his eternal soul. Notice the difference there.

We must discern many things as to how they affect us and whether we can expose our children to it or be part of that fellowship or sit under the feet of those men. But to judge ultimately whether they are going to heaven or hell, I like to let with God. And so, when we go down this road of discernment, I wanted to make that clear line somehow this week that we understand there is an extremism that we go in to try to discern too critically as to whether a man is right with God or not.

Even though there are methods and the Scripture does talk about discerning between the righteous and the wicked, and there's some of that in the Bible. Shall we bow our heads for prayer? Gracious God in heaven, we come to you. We're needy men.

We see through a glass darkly many times here on earth, but then face to face. And we thank you for that hope that is within that purifies ourselves even as He, Jesus, is pure. I pray, break the bread of life again today and bring truth to us together as men, as we are assembled here and all those that should ever listen to this tape that we recognize, Father, and believe in our hearts and desire that truth be spoken and truth be learned and not some fairytale.

So we pray for that through the power of the Holy Spirit to give us unction and put a door upon our lips to speak on those things which are true and right and helpful and not those things which are not. We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.

After yesterday's sermon, or teaching here, someone came to me and said, Did you know that a poll was taken recently of what the most popular verse is in the Bible? Through the years, it was, For God so loved the world that He gave not His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. But a recent poll was taken. What is your most favorite verse in the Bible? And guess what it was? Don't judge.

Judge not that ye be not judged. Boy, I just thought that was amazing. How this whole ecumenical spirit and attitude is permeating our society.

All right, let us turn to Matthew chapter 7 for our opening meditation, which we have alluded to here beforehand. And just want to go in and read the Word of God in verse 15 through 23 for our opening text this morning. Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather thorns, grapes of thorns, or figs of 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 hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. Now, sometimes I like to quote John 15, the first verses there concerning the vine and the branches in light of this, which basically says the same thing.

Every branch in me that doesn't bear good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire, or men gather them, cast them into the fire, and they are burned. I've ever often wondered whether we have the reality, and has ever gripped us of these two passages of Scripture and others just like it that speak like this. But what it's simply saying is that good fruit is not an option, because it says that if there is no fruit, that it is hewn down and cast into the fire.

Now, in the great mercy of God, in comparing Scripture with Scripture, we also recognize that sometimes a tree doesn't have any fruit, and a man is allowed to dig around it and dung it and see if it'll bear fruit, and if it does, in three years, the vine gardener was waiting on fruit for three years, and it wasn't any, and I think that was Jesus with Israel there, and perhaps many other applications in some of our situations likewise, that he was allowed to dig around the tree and dung it and see if it'd bear fruit one more year. And if it doesn't, then good, hew it down. If it does, of course, then fine, it can continue in the vineyard.

And I think that balance of judgment and mercy we find in this allegory through the Scripture on this matter of the tree and its fruit. Now, I would like to speak just a little bit about it. That is such a good test of discernment for our day.

We are living in a day where we learn, or the world is learning, and the people are learning by multimedia, where they see a man on a video screen or a television screen, and they are trying to discern whether this man is speaking the truth or not, and they don't have a clue as to what the actual fruit is in his life. And that makes it almost impossible to try to discern the fruit. So, the way the whole thing has been arranged in this last fifty years has introduced us to receive information without being able to discern fruit.

And that puts us at a great disadvantage. In some ways, that even affects the cassette tape ministry. But what we enjoy and are blessed with, which is happening here this week and happens to us all the time, is that people come and visit, and visit in our homes, and stay in our homes, and eat with us, and sleep with us, and sit and talk and ask questions.

And that is very valuable in light of a ministry like this, where you do not just hear it. But we do believe there is the witness of the Spirit, which I will talk about maybe a little later, the illumination of the Holy Ghost, is able to help us to discern good from evil. But so many people have been deceived by not having any way to inspect or to examine the fruit.

Now, my title of my message, the tape ministry likes a title at the beginning rather than the end, so they can get ready back there, is Discerning by Fruit, this morning. Discerning by Fruit. And we would like to go down through a list of ways in which we can discern spiritual discernment and judgment by the fruit of the speaker or minister or teacher's lives.

Here in this Scripture, I like it so well because what is so nice about the tree and its fruit is that you remember how Jesus came up to the tree and it had beautiful leaves on it, and He pulled the leaves apart and went in there looking for figs, I think it was, or went in there looking for fruit, and there wasn't any, and He stood back and cursed the tree. And when He came back the next day, the thing was dried up from the roots. And that was also a very prophetic and a very metaphorically spoken of Israel, the nation of Israel, I think, because He came looking for fruit.

They had all the outward leaves of it of religion, but when He put the leaves apart and looked inside there for fruit, there wasn't any. And then He cursed it, and that's exactly what happened to Israel. But the reason fruit is so important is that fruit does not depend so much on the outward environment.

It's one of the blessings of our day that we can still have fruit with all the bugs and all the things that are out there that want to get to the fruit, that we can actually put poison on the tree on the outside actually of the developing fruit and because the sap and the strength and the development of the fruit comes from deep within, down from the root system and up through the trunk and out through the branches and develop that fruit, you can have fruit even though there's all kinds of things attacking it from the outside. And you can actually put poison on that peach or on that apple or on that pear that is developing and the fruit still develops. Not saying scientifically or chemically there isn't a little bit of transfer there.

Probably there is more than we might realize in all the heavy spraying that has to be done. But the secret is that fruit comes from the depth of a man's soul, from the real you and from where everything is down, where the motives of the heart and the outworkings of the heart and the soul come out. And Jesus said this many times in different ways by the mouth, how the mouth just speaks out of the abundance of the heart.

Down in the center of man we have this reservoir of the soul and the spirit of man which there is where we commune with God or we don't commune with God. There is where realities exist and then of course the fruit comes out of that. And if that is rotten then it is impossible for a man to camouflage it and cover it in all areas of life for time.

Somewhere there springs a leak. Somewhere it springs a leak and comes out. If you just pray and watch long enough, and as I said yesterday, sometimes you have to put them on the shelf and just wait a while, you know, because of that.

So that is why this analogy is so good here that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. And it was also such a consolation to me when we started as a fellowship.

A few of you remember those days and how the condemnation was incredible, extraordinary against us. They thought we had went off a deep end. We were out of our minds to begin to try to start a church on the basis of the Scripture that we could not find in this community.

And yet it is so heavily church'd as many of you recognize driving around here. And the consolation was to us after some years of going was that there were changed lives. People actually did become born again and overcame their sins and made a major dramatic change in their life.

And this was fruit out of the teaching and preaching and does not always reflect directly on the private lives of the individual doing it because God does honor His Word so we have to be a little careful with that. But finally, there was some fruit from the effort that we actually consoled ourselves a little bit and said, well, how come, or others would do it to us. They would say, well, how come that the fruit is good when the tree is rotten? It kept coming up, you know, how come we see good fruit and yet this tree is supposed to be so... Well, actually they used to say, it's not a church.

It can't be a church. You can't start a church like those fellows started a church and have a church. And so they would continue echoing over and over and over again that it's not a church.

But I remember one single lady came into the area. She had a former marriage and she came into the area, moved to the area and she says, I don't understand that. It looks like a church and it feels like a church and those things.

Well, that's exactly what we have concerning discernment in this matter of beware of false prophets. Inwardly, they are ravaging wolves. And I usually say the same thing.

I say, well, if it smells like a wolf and it growls and shows its teeth like a wolf and it howls at the moon at night like a wolf and it tears little lambs like a wolf, then I believe it's a wolf. And that's what I think we have to do. A tree is known by its fruit.

And I do not believe that if a man is a true prophet of God, a preacher of God, a child of God, that he goes around tearing little ones. And the Bible says it would be better that a stone, a millstone would be hung around their neck and they'd be drowned in the depths of the sea than to offend one of these little ones that have believed on me. And that does not mean two and three year old babies.

It's talking about young Christians and how they are manipulated and used for whatever and deceived and not brought to a right and beautiful and prosperous relationship with God. Now, also we want to notice that we notice here that works matter because it says here, by their fruits ye shall know them. And then in the next verse it says, wherefore, and Denny had quoted this too, wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. And I keep bumping into this statement over and over again. What's on the inside that matters? You know, if a person is a Christian on the inside, and that goes together with the message on separation here that you just had to close the other message.

It is impossible, it is impossible to be a born again Christian on the inside and have it not affect the outside. All that clothes and goings and attendances to either the sports programs or the movie house or the drinking house or all that, all of our goings and all of our doings and all of our dressing actually are only a demonstration of what's on the inside. And you can't separate those two and to say it's only what's on the inside as if on the outside nothing matters.

That's absurd. That can't be. Even though we come from extremes in some of those areas and have to say, no, wait a minute, you know, you're getting on the other extreme and putting too much emphasis on the outside and forgetting the heart.

And we've had to preach strong messages on heart Christianity and the matter of the heart in order to correct that. So that is very true. And I'll have maybe a few more scriptures on that.

All right, I think I would like to finish up a little bit on the Word of God before I go into some of these others. I was not finished with that. There's just a few things here that I would like to say.

I'm afraid it'll take too much time, but we're just going to go through the week here as we can without letting too much on done. In some of the rules that we have for Bible study and Bible interpretation, I'd like to give you six very quickly here that answer to the word light. If you put L-I-G-H-T-S, I'm going to save time.

I'm not going to put it on the board. The first one, L, is a literal interpretation of the Bible. That has been the greatest help for me in life.

When I became a Christian and I began reading the Bible, and I've had lots of discussions with people on that, I learned a phrase somewhere along the way that if literal sense makes sense, all other sense is nonsense. And then when you get to Scriptures where it doesn't, that you have to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lord Jesus, you automatically know that something is not literal here. Something is spoken here in types and is spoken metaphorically.

And we're not going, even though the Catholic Church has tried to bring in the doctrine of transubstantiation where the bread and the wine actually turn into the body and blood of the Lord. And you know the ramifications of all that through history and what that means. But this matter of literal interpretation, and of course, to you prophecy students, you know, that had that effect on me when I went into Revelation and found out that the Bible says that the devil is going to be bound with a great chain, then I believed that there would be a day coming when the devil would be bound by a great chain.

And I got pushed in a corner in my young married life, you know, about that thing. Well, you mean that an angel is going to come down and bind the devil with an iron chain? Whoop! No, it doesn't say an iron chain. See how they tried to make it say something it didn't say.

It says a great chain, and I said, if it says a great chain, I believe it's a great chain. And there we can stop. We don't have to decide whether it's brass or iron or stainless steel or whatever.

And that has been a great help to me in my Christian life, and I recommend the same to you because it is in that, without all the theological ramifications of the seminaries and some of the Bible institutions and college and teaching institutions of America and what they have done to the minds of the people concerning literal interpretation is an incredible thing. They have made them unbelievers when they're done with them, that they don't believe the record that God has given of His Son. And so, I make a real plea for literal interpretation when it comes to some of these things that set us apart from the other evangelical world in practical things.

You will have to agree that it's because that we come across those Scriptures and take them literally and do not agree that, well, Paul, he had it in for the women. You know, he just didn't like women. He wasn't married, he wasn't close to one, so I kind of think he had it in for them and didn't want them to speak in church, you know.

And then another one comes up with the idea, you know, that Paul, he was only speaking in the traditional and local and cultural context of where he lived. Well, you do that with the rest of the things that Paul said and we're in trouble. We might as well do like Zedekiah or what his name was, the king, and get the penknife out and cut the pages out and put them in the fire.

Till you're done with it, you don't have any left. And I forget, some of you probably know, but there was an actual king who did that. You know, he didn't like a page and he'd cut it out and he'd cut it out and they say when the man was done, he only had a few pages left.

But that is what men are doing in their hearts, theologically, and that is dangerous business. So stay with a literal interpretation. When you come upon a scripture you don't understand, you pray for God to illuminate your heart that you can understand it.

And you set your heart to bring it into reality and practice in your life. And that will bring some changes out of this easy believism that we have today. The next one is the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

I, the illumination of the Holy Spirit. I wanted to mention yet on literal, you know, when you come upon that Jesus is a door, you automatically know He's not talking about a wooden door with hinges. You know that He's speaking about an entrance into something different.

And of course, then you go for that. All right, illumination. We must interpret scripture with the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

I'm not going to elaborate this because Denny had mentioned about the necessity of a new birth. But the natural minded man cannot understand the things of the Spirit. They are spiritually understood and discerned.

And so, therefore, unconverted people, and that's what I believe the problem is, without judging them too severely with the seminary professors, they simply do not understand the things of the Spirit. And so, they bring everything with human logic and reasoning and try to explain these things and get into trouble. The scriptures must be understood with the illumination of the Spirit of God.

And that means it must be done after conversion in order to even halfway begin to understand these words. The Holy Spirit resides in each child. And the Bible even says He has no need that any man teach Him, because that anointing abides with Him and shall teach Him and guide Him into all truth.

And that does not mean and take away that there are not to be any teachers. It simply says that if a man is born again, and this is a joy to my heart in Russia and Africa and India or wherever, to meet people who never had a teacher, but somehow they got born again and God taught them the principles of the oracles of God by the Holy Spirit. You meet those occasionally.

They don't have to sit there for 20 years and wait on a teacher to come. Now, it's good if one goes. And I think it's very important that we see that need to teach all things of God around the world.

But there is at times the Holy Spirit ministering and the same thing happens to here. The brother who testified last night, that was a crystal clear. He didn't have to wait until somebody who had developed all those convictions came and taught him all those things.

But the Spirit of God showed him at his conversion that this has to go. Illumination. And, of course, the acid test of Scripture along with that illumination for any doctrine is the test of Scripture, whether the Scripture substantiates what we are trying to say or believe.

Now, the next one is grammatical principle. That's the G. Grammatical principle. This G, or the grammatical principle, will remind you that in the Scripture, the Scripture has to be interpreted in accordance with the typical rules of grammar, syntax, and style.

And for this reason, it is important that the students of Scripture have a basic understanding of grammatical principle. Let me illustrate. The seventh-day Adventists believe in soul sleep.

Okay? So, you have Jesus hanging on the cross, turning to the thief beside Him, and saying, today thou shalt be with me in paradise. Well, that doesn't fit their presuppositional apologetics and their understanding of interpretation of the Scripture. And so, they move the comma and say, today, comma.

I tell you today, thou shalt be with me in paradise sometime in the future. That kind of manipulation with the grammar and the interpretation of Scripture to make it say what they want to say because they believe in soul sleep until the resurrection morning, that is just an illustration of what I'm talking about. If you do not know the Greek and Hebrew, don't despair.

There are so many helps out there with the Vines Expository Dictionary, Strong's Concordance gives the Greek word or various Greek lexicons give you the word-for-word interpretation of Scripture that you can on your own study what was spoken in the original language of what it was written. I believe in the inerrant word of God, but I do believe it is possible that there are slight grammatical errors in a translation. I don't believe any of them is 100% foolproof in that.

I don't know how many of you believe it or ever heard it, but I've heard already that in the translation of he that is angry with his brother without a cause, that King James made sure they put in there without a cause because he had a brother he hated. And so, he stuck that in there because whosoever is angry without a cause, you know, is in danger of hellfire or is in danger of the judgment. Because he thought he had a just cause.

And I don't know whether all that is true or not, but I'm saying little things like that can be done. But it does not change the inerrant word of God that was given from God. There are not enough grammatical errors to say it contradicts itself and there's anything wrong with it.

All right, I'll give you another illustration of that and how some of those things are changed. Let me see here. The H is the historical context.

No, I'm sorry, I still have something to give there. Getting a little mixed up here on my notes. On the Greek and Hebrew text, I had mentioned that.

Another thing I just simply believe many times, like I said, if literal sense makes sense, all the sense is nonsense. We simply have to use some common sense with the interpretation of Scripture. As I mentioned yesterday, try to get the message that was intended by the word instead of reading so many things into it.

Now, I wanted to give the illustration yet about John Avazzini, one of the, I think, word of faith preachers. I'm not real familiar with him. In Mark 12, 44, where Jesus is speaking to the poor widow, states, they all gave out of their wealth, but she out of her poverty.

Or in Luke, it says penury, the word penury. But Avazzini talks about the word poverty and changed it. Well, actually, I think maybe in the King James Version, it says, she out of her want.

So here comes a word of faith man, and he says, well, she wasn't poor. She was giving so she could receive. Because she was giving because she had some want.

She had some want there, you know, so she was giving out of her want, out of her desire for more. Imagine the resting and twisting of Scripture when that word want in the Greek simply means extreme poverty or penury as given over in Luke. All you would have had to do is go to the same passage in Luke and found the word penury, and then he'd understood that that's serious poverty.

Not only that, Jesus interpreted it himself when he said she put in all she had. But those are the kind of manipulations that people do to the written word of God. Now, the H is the historical principle.

It is highly valuable, not an absolute must, but highly valuable to understand the historical setting of which it was written. If you study a bit of the Jewish customs and the practices there of which it was written, like I mentioned yesterday in testing the spirits or trying the spirits, if they don't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh to see the influence of Gnosticism in that day and what an effect that had for John to say that has a different light and a different meaning of that statement. That historical content or historical principle is very valuable.

In the King James Version of 3 John verse 2, the verse says, Beloved, I wish all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. Oral Roberts gets a hold of that. When he read it, he went to his wife Evelyn and he excitedly said, Hey, look at this verse.

God wants us to prosper. Well, after discovering that verse, God gave him a brand new Buick. And so he started telling the people that God gave him a brand new Buick after he discovered this verse in the Bible.

And he would say that everything that has happened to them since that day started with that verse in Scripture. Well, there again, that is a sad manipulation of the Scripture because that simply could have, may possibly have simply meant a spiritual prosperity, a growing in the Lord. You see how these men think? They think courageously.

They think materialistically. They think money. And they're simply, it's not right.

But they read a verse like that, the same thing with the prayer of Jabez. Look at that thing. What has happened now called the cult of Jabez.

Because, I just wanted more land, you know. And they just grabbed that thing and it became a best seller and people made millions off of the writing of the book. And all it was is the Scripture taken out of context and run with.

Oh, it's so greasy when just their pernicious ways and doctrines of demons, doctrines of devils. They are coming up with these things one after the other. And before one is off the pages of popularity, a next one comes.

And like I said, we can't even keep up. All right. The next one is the T, is the teaching principle.

And this T reminds us that there is an illumination of Scripture that comes through the ministry, the gifted Holy Spirit illuminated ministry of teaching. And even though the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, there is a ministry of teaching the Word of God that illuminates and opens up Scripture to us. And so, we want to recognize that gift for what it is, that God has uniquely gifted human teachers as Ephesians 4.11 lists there in the gifts of the Spirit.

And the last one, the S there is scriptural harmony. Scriptural harmony. What is spoken or interpreted in the Word of God must harmonize with the rest of the book.

You cannot take something and run with it like these men are running with it. Did Jesus teach prosperity? I know they had a fundraiser here in the area years ago, and a girl I was working with at the time was invited by a friend to go. And that fellow, that fellow, he got up there at that fundraiser and made a whole deal that Jesus rode a donkey, and that was like a Mercedes or a Cadillac today versus walking.

He rode a donkey. God didn't want him to be poor and just walk. And that was the best transportation of the day, you know, and he built a principle on that whole thing and run with it on the prosperity gospel.

Scriptural harmony. All right, let us go on. Now, let us look at Galatians chapter 5 on the fruit of the Spirit.

And I think I'll just have to read from verse 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Now, it's very, very interesting that those two verses are next to each other. Then he says, if we walk, not if we experience, but if we walk in the Spirit, if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another and envying one another. The fruit of the Spirit is listed here. And I do not have time to go into all of these things, but I'm simply saying that this has got to be the outflow of the individual's life.

There must be fruit of these things in a man's life if he is a man of God. If he is a Christian, if he's born again, there's no such thing, I believe, of a man being born again with some time behind him and have none of these fruits in his life. There is versus all in the other verses there on the 17, I think it is, sins that are mentioned there.

Not 17, but a list of them here. I think Romans 1 has 17. But in verse 19 through 21, we have all of these works of the flesh that are manifest.

They manifest themselves. And hatred, emulations and revelings seem to be the big ones with those word-of-faith men and those money-hungry and greedy men as they continue with their pernicious doctrines across America to rake it in for themselves and for their high living. And many of them are not even known for the fruit of their lies.

And when occasionally they do get exposed, they have outright lied many times in their messages and given many, many false statements that are not true. So, we need the fruit of the Spirit. In Titus, Titus chapter 1, verse 15 and 16, Under the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.

But even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. There must be a correlation there between what they say and what they do.

They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. All right, the next one is test their prophecy. This is a good one.

I hope that you have been exercised in perhaps somewhere along the way. As a young man, I remember of a man coming to our house, a salesman who felt like Jesus. They had figured out that Jesus would come again in 1972.

My, I didn't forget that. I was only about, oh, maybe 12 or 13 or 14, somewhere around that. And I heard those words and I knew it wasn't many years.

And I wondered how they know and all that. It intrigued me. But 1972 and 1988 and all the others have long come and gone.

And Jesus has not come. And the interesting thing about it is, you know that if they set dates, they're wrong. Because the Lord Jesus says, He even doesn't know.

Only the Father in heaven. But in Deuteronomy chapter 18, we have that wonderful scripture in verse 22 that says, When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him. It is not of God.

I don't know about you, but you know, I grieve that anybody goes down this road. But when they go down this road, then I rejoice when they set dates. I think, good, now we know.

And I have run into situations where they have set dates and then I said, okay. And we as a church had to do that already years ago. We just, alright, that's fine.

Now we know. It's going to be in April. Then we're going to sit down and wait and pray and see what will happen.

April come around and nothing happened. May came around and nothing happened. June came around and nothing happened yet.

And we concluded and met and said false prophecy. When we were in Manitoba two and a half years ago, and God so graciously gave the revival of which there are over 20 men or so here as maybe somewhat of a result of God's working in Manitoba over these last years. Shortly thereafter, when we came home from that tent meeting in Oakville, Manitoba, a prophet showed up from Minnesota and visited, was a friend of some of the men who had attended the tent meetings that week.

And he immediately prophesied, this is not of God. Don't go with them. It will be all over in a year's time.

Interesting. Interesting. All over in a year's time.

It won't last. And he put a date on it. Or an approximate date.

Well, two and a half years have gone by, and I say false prophet. False prophet to the glory of God. The church is still there.

Doesn't say it's going to stay there. Doesn't say not some trouble will come. That it will have to shut its doors like happens sometimes.

But it is still there and the prophecy is false. And that is also, I just give you a warning. I mean, I know some of these men personally.

I know some of these men personally. They have great ministries here in the United States. Some of you are very familiar with them.

Very familiar with them. I could mention names and every one of you in this room practically know. That prophesied the collapse, the financial collapse on Wall Street.

In the early 90's. And men would go down there and see that terrible chaos. And the city would, the looters would come out and burn the buildings and loot the stores.

And the whole thing would practically go up in flames. 2004. No fulfillment.

Brother, I tremble by false prophecy. False prophecy. I believe that men get excited.

And they get into the flesh in these things. I don't believe in every case a demon has told them. But they get into the flesh.

And they begin to see the power. And how their books sell. And how their tapes sell.

On words like that. Have you heard? He has prophesied. That this is going to happen to New York City.

Or to Chicago. Or to Miami. And things like that.

And the books sell. And the money comes in. People make money on books.

I don't know. Temptation. They get into the flesh.

And they begin to say those words. And put time on it. And then you have the next one that says, Well, we don't do too bad.

We make about 60% of our prophecies. You hear that one just recently? That's what they're saying. Well, I know.

But, you know. We make about, I think it's about 60% of them. There's only about 40 that don't come to pass.

Well, let me read it again. When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, in the thing followed, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken. Yet, the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously.

Thou shalt not be afraid of him. And I remember different situations like that where I heard those kind of words come up to us. And dreams and visions of angels and words given and prophecies made concerning the church here maybe or something like that.

Or one of the other churches where I was helping out, prophecies would come up. And I said, Don't you lose... I'd tell the elder, Don't you lose any sleep over this one. Go home and sleep soundly.

You don't have to worry about it. You don't have to worry about that one. Next one.

Test their family. Very unpopular today. The multimedia prevents it for the most part.

Are they divorced and remarried? Are they divorced and remarried? Recently again, here comes a teaching. Here comes a major revelation. Here comes a new paradigm, a new way, a new understanding.

He's married twice and his wife married a third time. He doesn't have the right to stand in the pulpit of God. You don't go any further.

I don't care what he says. Don't sit at the man's feet. All those types of things.

Because he's living in adultery, the Bible says. And there again, believe it literally, take it, and to try to suck truth out of that maze and if you examine it, you will find many, many more error. You know, that will come out of a life like that.

It's just, it will happen. Because he has violated some of the major principles, he will be violating 50 more if you get into the middle of it. His home, his family, the atmosphere in his home, his wife, dressed like a harlot, dressed like, looked like a Jezebel, spends tremendous amount of money on make-up and hairdos and all those things, fancy, fashionable clothing.

He dresses in \$500, \$1000 suits and that's the way he gets the revelation of God in the midst of that. Jesus said concerning John the Baptist, what did you go out to see? A man clothed in good arraignment? A man clothed in all that stuff? No, you didn't go see that when you went to see John the Baptist. Do you suppose he's telling us something? I think we need to take heed there to our personal lifestyles.

Whether we live so high above the average, we live high above the average in our ministries, I believe there is a good possibility that there is covetousness involved. And especially so, may I add this to help discern that, especially so if they're living off offerings. When they are collecting money, it's like they said, you know, the Holy Ghost manifests in a lot of these services these days, you know, they get a manifestation, it will mean God moved.

And so we didn't have time for the message because, well, there was just such a move of God, people started crying and this and that started to happen, but they have time for the offering. No time for the message, but they have time for the offering yet at the end. They calm everything down quickly, take an offering before the people go home.

It's a giveaway. Test their doctrine. And I'll maybe speak some more concerning some of those other things tomorrow or Friday.

Test their doctrines. Giving you an overview there. Christ and Satan are brothers.

Did you ever hear that? How many ever heard that? My! Christ was taken to hell by the devil on the cross. And you know what else? He got born again down there. Because He became the firstborn of the dead.

So He got born again down there, you see. And the devil and the demons tormented Him for three days. Put Him through a mill down there.

Really? I see. A twist of Colossians 1.18, being the firstborn from among the dead. Now He's born again.

And He's the Son of God who gave Himself. And I love that Scripture to clear all that mess up. In Isaiah 53, God saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied.

When He saw Him suffer and shed His blood for the atonement of man's sin, God said, That's it! But they build a doctrine, a teaching, pernicious doctrine, on the fact that God separated Himself from Him. Because He said, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And therefore considered that in hell He had to get born again to get back in a relationship with the Father. Nonsense! This is blasphemous stuff! God help us.

Okay, the next one I'd like to give yet is historical Christianity. This one is precious to me, Brown. And I know we have to be careful with that.

We have heresy and error coming in to the early church pretty early. And we have individual groups coming out of the Catholic Church through the dark ages that did not come all the way out of the Catholic Church. It's amazing how you still find, I do, I still find smankerings of that Catholic Church in groups that

have left 500 years ago.

Isn't that something? 500 years ago they left the Catholic Church and they're still having to confess their sins to the preacher. It's the only way to get forgiven. Amazing, isn't it? But those things happen.

Okay, the historical Christianity. That has been a big one for me. Somehow, of course, I'm a student of church history.

And I love to have studied church history through the years, so maybe I'm probably a bit prejudiced there. Some of you who haven't studied it, I'm sure you cannot share my burden there like I have. But when I'm all done, when I'm all done and I put it down there somewhere, and I've examined the Scripture, and I've examined the words, and I've examined the interpretation to try to figure out, is that what He's saying? Is that what really happened? Then just before I close the subject, I go to historical Christianity.

And I say this. And I say it with strength. Now you have to remember my conviction from that.

It may be a bit personal. But if it is truth, surely in the last 2,000 years somebody else had it. We do not come up with a new paradigm that is brand new thinking that nobody has ever thought of before.

And I said when we started 22 years ago, the people accused us of that. Why are you starting something new? I said we're just trying to go back to the foundation of the apostles and prophets that was laid back there. And to raise up and build on it.

We're not trying to start something new. It looks new as far as Lancaster County is concerned. But oh no, I don't believe in a new way, in a new doctrine.

And if something comes up new, like I gave 2 years ago on theophastic counseling, and this Ed Smith, you know, comes up with a new revelation because everybody is just coming around and around for counseling too often, and he finds a way that does it once and for all in the theophastic way. False doctrine. It cannot be that in the last 20 years that someone has come up with a brand new way of getting victory over sin.

That's impossible. Historical Christianity. The pilgrim church down through the ages that suffered and died and triumphantly while singing took the burning at a stake and blessed the persecutors and all of that.

They had a Christianity we better look into. Instead of thinking, we got it all, and those poor souls just didn't have the word of faith to get out of their situations. Didn't know how to pray against the devil to get him delivered.

And all those things, and yet that's exactly the blasphemous and hurtful things that they say concerning historical Christianity. But I'll tell you, brethren, and here again, I'm a literalist. I take it practical.

When I go to the covering, there's where I close my book on. Historical Christianity. One of the fellows sitting here comes out of Texas, out of an evangelical background.

He knew nothing of our background, but he says, Oh yeah, I had an old grandma, 97 years of age, read her Bible every day, faithfully. But when she went to church, she covered her head. Where did that come from? Study it out.

It's been through the ages. And only in the last 80 years we have gotten so modern to think that the hairs are covering, or that it's a traditional thing, or it's a cultural thing, and we have wiggled and squiggled and carried on to try to get away from it. Serving in the government.

Protesting in Rome. Did Paul get his people together to come up there and carry flags in front of Nero's office to try to influence him to change some of the laws so he wouldn't have to have that ball on his leg? No, he didn't do that. Nobody else did in those days.

There was a clear separation between government office and the church of Jesus Christ and the disciples of God. For a couple of hundred years nobody had a public office like that. What happened? And the Anabaptists didn't either.

And the Valdensians didn't either. And the Donatists probably didn't either. And you go through the pilgrim church and you see this persecuted band that suffered for the Christ's sake and was faithful and believed in the literal interpretation of the Scripture and believed that Jesus was indeed come in the flesh, the only begotten Son of God, and they believed in holiness, and they believed in godliness, and they covered their bodies and all of these other things, I think they have a little something to say to us.

Historical Christianity. I do that over and over again. I hear a new doctrine, a new teaching, something new comes down the pike.

You know, I examine it by Scripture. I pray about it for illumination of the Spirit or for discernment on the thing. I examine the literature, examine their fruit, the fruit of the speakers, the teachers, and try to find out who is this man, where does he come from, how does he live life, you know, those kind of things.

But before I'm done, I go to historical Christianity and see whether it's compatible with the church of Jesus Christ through the ages. And that does volumes for our modern day stuff. Oh, I tell you it does.

I know you have to be, you have to get a book like the Pilgrim Church and Pox's Book of Martyrs and maybe A Martyr's Mirror and some of the compilation of the early church writings. There's an excellent book out by Brother Berceau who is here who has compiled by InSubjects the early church writings. And that is very, very helpful to just get an overview.

And like I say, there's some era in the early church and some mixtures of different practices and doctrines of things that maybe like baptismal regeneration or different things like that, but there is volumes of truth by the early men who actually sat with the Apostle John and learned from them and also others likewise. And so I recommend it that we read the church through the ages and see what the basic thrust of their life and doctrine was before we buy into this new stuff. All right.

Well, God bless you with that. I think I will quit with that for today. I still have a lot to go, but we'll just continue day by day here.

May God's blessing be upon you. And we will turn it back over to the moderator.

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