



### Beware those who would delude us! (7:15-20)

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

Wolves obviously destroy, but these disguise their intent (v.15)

- The fruit of their instruction exposes their intent (v.16-19)
- So don't measure the appearance, measure the outcome (v.20)

### Beware your own self-delusion! (7:21-23)

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, ... And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Obvious insiders may be the most surprised one day

- It's possible to keep the law and not do His will (v.22-23)
- Jesus' full sermon shows us how to do His will (v.21b; 5:17-20ff.)

So whatever you do, do the will of Jesus' Father in heaven (v.21b)

**Bottomline: Life or death matters are simply solved by Jesus-centered living.**

**For those not yet living a Jesus-centered life:**

Start doing the will of the Father in heaven

**For those living a Jesus-centered life:**

1. Remove self-delusion

2. Take steps to neutralize false teaching

3. Community forms us: commit to one that walks Jesus' ways

**Take a moment to grasp the image Jesus uses: wolves.** What are wolves like? What do you know about wolves? What do you feel about them?

**Now expand your thinking:** what's devious and dangerous about wolves like this dressed as sheep?

**And now start adding the Scriptural contexts to it:** in the OT, wolf-like instructors are found among God's people & described in texts like Ezekiel 22 & Zephaniah 3:3-4. **What specifically does their way of thinking produce in God's people?**

**Start to bring this into today:** What appearances usually draw you to listen to a teacher, speaker, or other influential person?

**What do you need to give new thought to as you listen to your usual podcasts, speakers, and even influencers?** Who sells the "good life" to you often? What is the fruit of that instruction?

**Can you picture the scene Jesus paints?** Can you imagine yourself in it — what do you see, gear, and feel? What does He say to you?

**How is it possible to keep a commandment but not do God's will?** Where else do you see obedient behavior compared unfavorably to God's intention?

**How did Jesus make it clear what God's full will and intent is?** If you need, re-read Mt. 5:17-20 and review the "renovated heart" way of keeping His commands.

**Where are you obedient but not aligned with the will of God?** Where are you towing the right line but missing the full intent of God's ways?

How does a text like this drive you to more intentional action and trust in Jesus Christ?

**Does the text and discussion tonight invite any of us into a new life with God the Father?**

From the start of Jesus' sermon, self-delusion is a constant danger (5:13-16, 17-21; 5:21-48; 6:1-18). We cannot put His sermon in our catalog of Bible info, or our "too hard for me" category. **How have you treated Jesus' words up until now? What do you need to do here on out?**

What urgency does this create in you to deepen or improve? What concrete steps can we take together toward this?

**How do you tend to walk as a rootless individual?** How do you look to sources of life & wisdom outside Jesus-centered community? How will you find that life & wisdom in new ways?



## UNDERSTANDING A PASSAGE

### What details stand out?

What's repeated in the text?  
What's contrasted or compared?  
What's odd or confusing?  
Notice any extra descriptive words:  
how do they shape the meaning?

### What's the central idea?

What was the author saying here?  
How is the author building this idea?  
Who was this written for? What did they hear?  
How is that different from what we hear or do?

### What's the clear take-away?

A clear command to obey or sin to address? An example to avoid or imitate? A clear promise, or one of God's characteristics to count on and meditate on?

## REFLECTING ON A PASSAGE

### What truth about God am I seeing?

How does He reveal Himself in this passage? What can I learn about who He is or what He does? How has the Church understood this over the centuries?

### How did God intend His people to respond?

In this passage, how did people respond to Him or what He did? How *should* they have responded? What was this text supposed to produce in them?

### So how should I respond?

What should this move us to do together? What should this move me to do then?

## APPLYING A PASSAGE

### What do I need to...

#### ...step into?

How have we avoided this truth? What do we need to do now to conform to it? Where do I not evidence belief or obedience to this?

#### ...surrender?

How do I need to trust God and walk forward? What do I need to accept and trust God with? What do I need to give up? What cost do I need to embrace?

#### be accountable to change?

How will I know when I've made a change? How can others challenge me if I don't progress? How can others remind and encourage me to continue?

#### ...share?

Can I encourage anyone with this? Challenge anyone? Can I bring truth or hope to someone?

## GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED

### What stood out?

What stayed in your mind afterward? Why did that stand out? Was it unsettling? Encouraging? Challenging? What does that make you want to do?

### What was confusing?

What could we clarify together? What does Scripture say about that?

### What would change if we really believed this?

What would we do differently? How would we pray differently? Relate to God? How would we treat others? What about people who are and are not-yet following Jesus? How would we engage family, work, free time?