



Part 13: Beware of the Counterfeits

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July 27 & 28, 2013

Jesus concludes the greatest Kingdom sermon ever told with a few warnings.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." -Matthew 7:15, ESV

Why are the warnings needed? Because the Kingdom of God has counterfeits.

How are we vulnerable?

- A strong enemy (1 Peter 5:8-9)
- Convincing counterfeits (Matthew 24:4-5, 23-24)
- A broken world will make us weak
- We have deceitful and sinful hearts (Jeremiah 17:9)

First Warning: Beware of the Counterfeit Gate

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Matthew 7:13-14

The true gate is narrow; only through Jesus can you enter the kingdom.

Second Warning: Beware of Counterfeit Prophets

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." Matthew 7:15-19, ESV

True prophets bear good fruit in their lives.

We are commanded in scripture to test prophets and teachers (don't be "un-minded"). Please take time to study these passages at home!

- Jeremiah 23: 1-40
- Galatians 1:6-10
- Jude 3-4
- Colossians 2:1-8
- Galatians 3:1
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4
- 1 John 4:1-6
- John 7:24
- Matthew 24:3-4

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Third Warning: Beware of Counterfeit Disciples

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness." Matthew 7:20-23, ESV

True disciples don't just sound godly; they obey the will of God.

Fourth Warning: Beware of Counterfeit Foundations

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:24-27, ESV

A true kingdom foundation requires hearing and doing the words of the King.

Next Steps

- Join a small group Bible study to learn how to anchor yourself to scripture. Find a group near you: ctkbellingham.com/findagroup
- Read these excellent books on how to interpret the Bible: *Grasping God's Word*, by Hays and Duvall or *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Stuart and Fee.
- Do you have a friend or family member who has experienced spiritual abuse or was in a cult? Consider the counseling resources of WellSpring Retreat and Resource Center: wellspringretreat.org
- Join CTK's next Alpha class starting September 30th.
- Place a piece of monopoly money in your wallet. Use it as a reminder that everything outside of God's kingdom will instantly lose all value one day. All of this world's counterfeit kingdom power, possessions and glory will vanish in your last heartbeat. Only God's kingdom currency has eternal value.

Small Group Questions

- 1) Have you had encounters with cults or a false prophet? How did you recognize there was something wrong?
- 2) What are the areas in your life that make you vulnerable to the counterfeit kingdom?
- 3) What steps do you need to take in order to be a better student of God's Word?
- 4) Taking an honest inventory of your life, are you confident that you've built your life on a solid foundation? What changes are screaming to be made?
- 5) How can we pray for you this week?