

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing
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“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.” (St. Matthew 7:15-16)

How many times do you use the word, “Beware?” If you're like me, probably not much. When someone says “Beware!” that should catch your attention. In this part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns the crowds to “Beware of false prophets.” Jesus gives you the same warning today. What makes false prophets so dangerous? They seem to say all the right stuff, they use that churchy language we like, and their behavior seems pretty pious. How can you tell if someone is a false prophet? By his message. Who does he say Jesus is? Does he say Jesus is the Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried? Does he confess that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one can come to the Father except through Him?

In order to be on alert for false prophets, we need to know what the Scriptures say ourselves. Consider this. How many measures do you take to make sure that your identity isn't stolen? You guard your social security number and you may even spend money on credit monitoring. You go to great lengths to make sure that no one steals your identity. What about false prophets? Do you go to similar lengths to guard yourself against being led astray from eternal life? On the last day, will your excuse of, “Well, pastor so and so told me this” hold any weight? The false prophet always seeks to separate you from Christ.

Therefore, brothers and sisters in Christ, beware of false prophets, who offer you a different Jesus and a different way to Heaven than what is confessed in the Scriptures and in our historic creeds. Trust in the mercies of your Heavenly Father alone. Daily return to your baptisms, seeking repentance and holding fast to the faith that Christ, in His death and resurrection, has died the death meant for you. Trust not in false prophets. Trust instead in Christ's Words to you. He loves you beyond measure, and in His love He has come to free you from your sins and give you everlasting life. There is no work you need to do. There is no fine print. It is finished. Rejoice! You, in Christ, are free.