

As we draw our study of Sermon on the Mount to a close, Jesus is concluding His explanation of the Christ-life's foundation. In this chapter, Jesus has given us four expressions of wisdom (verses 1-12). Now Jesus is giving us four expressions of warning. On March 13 we examined Jesus' warning for us to be aware of the road we are following, because the path we follow determines the destination where we will finish our journey.

Today we will see that Jesus tells us to beware of the people we are following. Previously in this chapter the Lord has told us not to be judgmental or critical of others (Matthew 7:1-6). As we noted while studying that passage, Jesus is prohibiting a sinful practice; He is not prohibiting our exercising spiritual perception. In our passage today, the Lord instructs us to be discerning about those we allow to instruct our lives.

Jesus Warns Us about the Problem of Deception, vs. 15.

- There are prophets who lead in fatal directions, vs. 13-14, 19.
- Their presentation is revealing of their nature.
 - Their appearance is deceptive.
 - Their agenda is destructive.
- The process of someone becoming a deceiver is a warning, 2 Peter 2:18-22.
 - Demonic teachings
 - Deceived teachers
 - Diluted truths

Jesus Gives Us a Practice for Discernment, vs. 16-18.

- Expect the produce to be consistent with the Truth.
 - God's truth is forever, Psalm 117:2.
 - God's truth is freeing, John 8:32.
 - God's truth is focused on Jesus, John 14:6.
 - God's truth is forming us into the likeness of Christ, John 17:19.
- Examine the product of their teaching.
 - Does the teacher's life track with his teaching?
 - Do the lives of those who follow him portray biblical transformation?
 - Do the teachings line up perfectly with the Truth of the Word? Acts 17:11, Acts 20:27 (Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18)
 - Do the teaching line up with those who have gone before us? 1 Peter 1:19-21

Jesus Gives Us the Principle for Detecting Godliness, vs. 16a, 20, Matthew 12:33. The Christ-Life will persistently and progressively produce proof of the Holy Spirit's presence and power.