

The Real or the Plastic

by Reuben Walter

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discerning genuine faith from counterfeit beliefs through vigilance and scriptural examination.

Duration: 41:47

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:9, Matthew 6:33, Mark 13:22, Acts 20:31, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 5:14

Topics: "Counterfeit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being watchful and prayerful, as we do not know when the time of the Lord's return will be. He encourages the congregation to examine teachings and beliefs closely, using the light of God's word as a guide. The sermon also highlights the need to discern between truth and lies, and between what is genuine and what is fake. The preacher emphasizes the importance of constantly being alert and on guard against deception and false teaching.

Transcript

You know what struck me here is in verse 38, in the midst of all his anguish and suffering that was going through there, he had something to tell us, to say to us. In the midst of it all, he said, Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The stirrer truly is right, but the flesh is weak.

Here he was in the midst of all his anguish and praying about, asking the Lord to take away the cup, and he was still concerned over his disciples, still concerned over those in spite of what he was going through. He was worried about them. That's a very good word for us, but I was thinking this week about speaking on Christ's death and resurrection as well.

I don't know, the word the Lord gave me seems to be completely out of context here. It's not totally associated with his death and resurrection, but I believe he gave me the word, and I believe it will minister to our hearts, at least to some here. For all parts, as it says, all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction, for correction, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, it says in Timothy.

And the word I was going to speak here today is, the title is, The Real and the Plastic. We live in a world where we constantly have to make choices. We have to make decisions between good and bad, ongoing, not just once, twice.

We have to make decisions between what is a truth and what is a lie, and we have to also decide between what's genuine, what's a fake, what's quality and what's cheap. We're doing it all the time. All the time we're making decisions.

When we buy tools, we usually look at the brand name. We know what's cheap, power fist or whatever you want to call it, and we know what's quality. It goes with nearly all merchandise that we buy.

There's quality stuff and there's cheap stuff. Spiritually, there's quality stuff and there's cheap stuff. And spiritually, there's genuine, there's complete fake.

And I think it would be good today to just remind ourselves that no human being is immune to it. We're not on an escalator going into heaven. We don't have a free ride.

The truths that we have already attained, we don't have to worry too much about that. The things we know to be sin and our sin, we can't be misled there. We only are misled, we can only be deceived and duped, so to speak, as we tread new territory.

As we move ahead, as we go on, we're going into territory we've never been, and that's why we need to be careful. That's why we need to have His presence and His Spirit there to lead us and guide us. There is a big difference between a quality product and a cheap one.

And we need to be very alert at all times that we do not substitute one for the other. As God's people, we should settle for nothing but the best. Settle for nothing but His utmost and His highest.

We should never be satisfied with something that'll do the trick, but it's enough to get by. We want everything that Christ has said we could have. I call that the real.

The plastic and the counterfeits, they cannot take the heat of the day. They cannot take the storms of life. They cannot endure when our faith is put to the test.

They cannot keep us in the hour of temptation. They cannot keep us from false teachings. They cannot protect us.

There's only one aim, and that's the one we want to talk about. Turn with me this morning to Matthew, Matthew chapter 7. I just like to read this part of this chapter here. Jesus spoke a lot about being alert and being watchful.

Just as I mentioned, as Grandpa read it, watch and pray. He spoke a lot about deception and false teaching. He spoke a lot about being alert, being on guard.

And I think because He spoke so much about it, we shouldn't just take for granted that everything's good, everything's fine. We need to be alert constantly. I believe there's a lot of safety in fellowship.

I believe there's a lot of where we can balance each other out and help each other through difficult times. But that doesn't mean that we're immune. That doesn't mean that we're not, that we can't be led off the real track or led to believe something cheap when the genuine is within our reach.

It can happen. If it can happen to an individual, it can happen to a group. And we know through history it's happened many, many times.

It happened to the disciples. It happened to Peter. It's happened to God's people throughout history.

And therefore, it's our duty that we seek constantly, watch and pray, lest we be taken for a ride. Let's start at verse 13. Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.

Do men gather 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. Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many, he said, will say to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And I will profess unto them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, all ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

Every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell. Great was the fall of it.

It is evident here, in these words, that Jesus was not speaking to the godless, unconverted world. It is very clear that he is speaking to those who profess his name. We can't be too high-minded and arrogant and think we've got it.

We can never think that we are the elite. We are the ones who understand it and have it clear. Let's not be that way.

Let's watch and pray. Yes, we need to have that assurance that we are his children. We need to have that assurance, but assurance and self-satisfaction and complacency are worlds apart.

We are assured, we are guaranteed in Christ to have victory. We are guaranteed to win if we abide in him and continue steadfast. But it is clear here that many thought they were there too.

Many believed, they said, we prophesied in your name. We did mighty works in your name. We have cast out demons.

We did it all in your name. Brothers and sisters, if Jesus said it, we need to be aware of it. Jesus said, watch, and I think we need to watch.

When we look, we can distinguish between something quality and something cheap. We find it by reason of use. We can take a tool or a machine of some kind, a power pack, an electric drill, one that's a piece of junk and one that's quality.

They look the same when you buy them. They look quite new, they look quality. But only by reason of use do we ourselves determine which kind is more quality by using it.

When it's sitting on the shelf, it looks exactly like the other one. Exactly. It looks good, it looks quality, but the insides are probably made of plastic.

And under severe use, it proves which kind is the plastic, the junk, and which kind isn't. And we find that out in our Christian life, what is acceptable, what is not, simply by reason of use. And if we're satisfied with something cheap, we'll never reach the fullness of Christ.

We'll never enter into what He has promised us to give us. We need to not be satisfied unless we have the best. Unless we have the fullness of what He can give us.

But I'd also like to speak of something that's genuine and a complete counterfeit. Now, it's important to realize that a counterfeit is not something cheap. A counterfeit is a complete fake.

And it's not like a quality tool and a cheaper tool. A counterfeit is an outright lie. Now, if someone wants to make counterfeit money, or else it could be applied to... Well, people have forged checks with signatures, and there's currency that can be forged and counterfeited.

Sensitive documents or stuff has been counterfeited in this world and all around us often. But what must a person do who wants to forge or make some counterfeit money? He has to make it look as close to the real thing as possible. He has to make it sound as beautiful and as scriptural as possible.

That's why I'm speaking of something in the faith. The same with money. That money has to look so close to the real stuff that it's almost impossible to detect.

And today I think we have currency detectors that shine a light on them. And then you can tell if it's been forged or if it's the real thing. Right from that we can take a very important lesson.

If people are trying to forge a currency, how much are people going to try and forge a genuine faith in Jesus Christ? How much more? We can be certain it's going to happen. We can be certain we're going to run across it. We can be certain that we will be faced with it.

But it's important to know that the counterfeit money, the counterfeit currency, let's say if somebody is trying to counterfeit a \$100 bill, it's important to note that counterfeit \$100 bill is not worth \$50 or \$60 or \$40. That counterfeit \$100 bill is worth absolutely zero. It's a lie.

It's a fake. And that's why we as God's people need to be on the alert all the time. To be able to discern between the genuine, the plastic, the genuine and the counterfeit.

We are not immune. We are not simply... We don't simply have a free ride. We simply have to have our eyes open.

In Matthew 13, 33, Jesus said... No, Mark. Mark 13. 33, yes.

13, 33. Take heed, watch and pray, for you know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taken a far journey, who left his house, gave authority to his servants, and to every one made his work, and commanded the parted to watch.

Watch you therefore, for you know not when the master of the house cometh. At even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all.

Watch. He said that in the last hours of his life, in the gardens, we just heard. Watch and pray.

We can be seemingly assured that something is a genuine truth, but the only way it's going to come out is if we examine closely, under the light of God's Word. If we examine a teaching, a belief, an idea, or whatever it is, we must examine it under the microscope, under the light of God's Word. And be ready.

If something, and be ready to decide, and be open in our minds to decide if this is, yeah, well, this is not a counterfeit, it's just a little last value. Or we have to decide if something is genuine or a complete fake. And in what areas do we need to do that? Where do we need that kind of discernment? I mean, in 1 Corinthians 10, there's a verse that says, He that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall.

In Deuteronomy, let me read this one here for you. Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 9. Deuteronomy 4, verse 9. God said to the people, or Moses said it to them, I think, Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life. But teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons.

Especially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in horror, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, and they will learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. The teaching of God's word and the speaking of it, we can never do enough of it. Only by reason of use, by using it, by handling it, can we actually determine if something is real or if something isn't.

There's a story that goes like this. A new employee, working in a bank, asked the manager to give him some counterfeit money so he can learn what it looks like and feels like and handles like so he can be able to detect it. And the manager said, No, you just handle the real stuff.

The more you handle the real stuff, the easier it will be to detect the counterfeit. There's a very good spiritual lesson here. A very relevant spiritual lesson for us.

The more we handle the real stuff, His word that comes out of the mouth of God, the more we'll be able to see through the counterfeits. And you know what? Even listening to sermons, listening to preaching, there is no preacher on this planet who is like Jesus. Who is fully balanced in all areas.

There is none. I am convinced. And therefore, if we tend to just get our food and our nourishment simply from the preached word, I think we will become imbalanced.

We need to take His word. The Bereans took the word themselves and searched it out. If you hear a good message, even here or wherever, sounds like a good message, sounds like it's God's word, take the word of God, study it.

Take the word of God and search it out. Is it really so? No human being has ever been like Jesus. Fully balanced, fully seeing all sides, all dimensions.

I am not and I know it. I have strong points and I have weak points and I know it. And praise God that we're not fully.

Because that way we would stop seeing the need for each other. If we would think we have it all. We would stop thinking we have it all.

I know everything and I fail to see the value and the need of my brothers. So which areas do we need to watch and be alert? Well, in the area of counterfeits, this world is full of them, brothers and sisters. There is counterfeit professions of faith, just as we heard.

Not all that say to me, Lord, Lord. In Timothy it says, they profess that they know God. But their works deny them.

They're abominable. If you hear something that sounds really good, check it out. Don't be gullible and swallow everything that comes our way.

Don't take it and run. A child of God can save himself a lot of misery. A lot of blind alleys.

A lot of humiliation. And a huge waste of time. By sitting and taking the real thing and studying up when you hear something.

There are counterfeit gifts of the Spirit. Many of them. And it's important to understand, the gifts of the Spirit are real.

The Lord said He would give gifts of the Spirit. All the gifts, whether it's tongues, whether it's healing, whether it's prophecy, working of miracles, I believe in all of them. Because the Bible teaches that they are real.

But one thing we can be sure of, if it's something precious, if it's something valuable, we can be sure that Satan is going to make a counterfeit. We can be assured that he will make something that will seem almost like the real thing. But it's a complete fake.

And for these things we need to be alert and watchful at all times. There are counterfeit revelations and prophecies. And the Scripture is full of them.

I couldn't possibly mention them all today as I was studying up this week. There were many. Especially in Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, you'll find many references there about this very theme.

Counterfeit signs and wonders, as we just read, I think. Go back again to Mark 13, verse 22. For false Christs and false prophets shall arise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the very elect.

I'm not saying we are there. And I'm not saying that we are deceived or anything like that. I believe we just need to admonish each other, speak of it often, so that we know and are always on the alert for the possibility that something can happen to us.

I couldn't say that anybody is. I just felt that in spirit that this is something that we need to always remind ourselves. As Paul said, I will bring to your remembrance continually.

In Acts he said, for three years I ceased not to warn, night and day, to be watchful and to be sober. We could go through many others here. What is genuine, what is counterfeit.

But what's most important is to speak of how we can be safeguarded. There's a passage in Scripture that's blessed my heart many times when I've read it. And I've read it many times and I'm sure most of you have as well.

Go to Colossians chapter 2, verse 6. Here's a beautiful passage that can minister to our hearts, to all of us. So we don't need to be constantly fearful and wondering, well is this a deception, is that a deception, am I being deceived here, am I being misled here. No, we won't need to be fearful.

We will have confidence, we will have assurance that Jesus Christ is leading us and guiding us. And we will simply detect. When we detect something that's false or that's wrong or cheap, we don't make a big hullabaloo about it.

We just simply discard it, toss it aside, move on. And the more we become aware of Christ working in our lives, Christ leading us, the easier it will be to detect and less we'll make of it. We will simply, here's a road, here's one, this is the one we're going to walk, this one is a counterfeit.

I love Him. I believe that. Verse 6, As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith.

As you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power, in whom you also are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. And putting off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with Him in baptism, wherein you also are raised with Him, through faith of the operation of God, in whom hath raised Him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come. But the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, in a worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and veins, hath a nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. See, brothers and sisters, handling the real stuff was with such assurance against anything that could come our way. And I mean anything, even if sometimes we are uncertain of a certain something.

Being uncertain about something, being a little bit confused a little bit once in a while, I think it's good, it makes us, it draws us back to the Savior. It makes us search and seek what is the real thing. One thing I've learned, and we all have, many of us have to learn that the hard way, is you will never make a mistake by waiting.

God's people will never make a mistake by waiting on God. And if the Lord, if you think the Lord has given you a revelation, has given you something, and you take it and run off, we'll find out soon enough that that wasn't the heart of God. He doesn't give us revelations and visions and enlightenments in His Word for us to go and make it happen.

He has to make it happen too. A child of God that waits on Him will be spared many a blind alleyways, many a foolish thing by simply letting the Lord work out His perfect will in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones and the lives of those around us. In Proverbs it says, Proverbs 28, 26 it says, He that trusts in his own heart is a fool.

Let's remember that. We have God's Word and not our hearts. We have God's Word and we have brothers and sisters that can keep us on the straight and narrow pathway.

And in Hebrews chapter 5, I think it's verse 14, it speaks, strong meat, I'm not sure if that's the verse, but it's in Hebrews 5. Strong meat is for them, verse 14. Strong meat belongs to them who are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. See, it's not our duty, brothers and sisters, to try to protect people from it.

If you are protected from the elements and never get in contact with it, our senses never become exercised. Young people, the things you listen to may sound good, but it can be a complete conophy, complete fake. Even music, it can be a complete fake.

It doesn't mean if God's name is mentioned in there and Christ's name, that it is of God. And by reason of use, by listening to it, the Holy Spirit should be able to tell you, this is not of God. And you're not going to simply put it in a file somewhere, you're going to delete it.

Because it doesn't bring God glory. Our duty is not to fully protect you, but to make you aware that this world is full of conophetes. And you will be exposed to them.

Never swallow everything at face value. Take everything at face value, but always check it out. Search the scriptures, and if you are illiterate in God's word, if you are simply letting others stone feed you everything, you will not be ready.

None of us will be ready to face those trying days that are sure to come upon each and every one of us. We won't be able to stand it. We won't be able to face it.

Because our senses have not been exercised to discern. Like I said at the beginning here, how do we know a good quality power tool from a cheap one? We've used them. We haven't.

We'll never buy them again. It's the same way with the things that we're going to be faced in life. Don't think that God's word or the way to the cross is something that's, like I said, an escalator, something easy to attain.

No, it is not. It takes the use of God's word, seeking God's word, accepting God's word. In Thessalonians it says, because they received not the love of the truth, they were allowed to believe a lie.

Now we think, no, we'll never believe a lie. We won't believe a lie. Well, if we don't receive the love of the truth, we won't believe a lie.

If we look at the temptation of Adam and Eve, the deception of Adam and Eve in the garden, the first sin. If we look at that sin from a naturalistic human standpoint, the devil did not tell a lie. He said, you shall not surely die.

If we look at it naturally. Exactly what happened, they didn't surely die. But you shall be as God, you shall know good from evil.

Was that a lie? He was actually telling them the truth. They were as God? No, they weren't, but they knew good from evil. And they didn't die instantly.

He made God a liar. But if we look at it from God's viewpoint, the instant they took of that fruit, they died. That spiritual death was instantaneous, because they lost connection with God.

When a telephone line is snipped off, you can die with a little in your face. You cannot get through. Or for example, a cell phone.

When it's off, you can't make a call. And he can't call you. You have to be connected.

And that connection was broken the second they took that bite. So don't let the devil dupe us. He can make that counterfeit look almost like the truth.

And whatever it is, all we want to warn you is, it is possible. Let's not be too self-satisfied, thinking we have it all. God has promised never to forsake us, never to leave us.

He promised to be with us till the end of the age. Let's trust that promise. Let's lay hold of it.

And believe that He will. But our part is to handle the real stuff. Keep ourselves in the love of God.

The counterfeits will come, but they will be no problem for us. And as a young person especially, I know, I've been there. And I speak that to you as well.

Some things will look genuine. Some things will appear to be right and good. And they are absolute fake.

It's important for you to realize, and not just to rely on us. Not just to rely on teaching and preaching for our nourishment. To seek out His will individually.

Because God is a person of God. And that relationship with Him will be our safeguard. God bless you.

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