

False Prophets and the Broad Way - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

To avoid backsliding and false prophets, seek to be a lover of God and a worshiper of God through private worship and a balance of encouragement and discipline.

Duration: 9:59

Scripture: Matthew 7:15, John 4:23

Topics: "False Prophets", "True Worship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the subtle ways the devil can lead individuals astray over time, gradually lowering their standards and distancing them from a fervent love for Jesus Christ. It warns against shallow worship and the danger of becoming lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The importance of true worship, seeking God in private, and avoiding deception by false prophets is highlighted, along with the balance between encouragement and discipline found in Scripture.

Transcript

The devil is not going to suddenly tell you to see a sexy movie. No. He'll lead you there very slowly, maybe over a period of four or five years.

Little by little by little by little, well, finally, you are comfortable to see a movie with four or five seconds of sex in it. It doesn't mean much to you. Oh, twenty years ago you wouldn't have dreamt of it.

But see the work the devil has done. He's succeeded. Because you did not keep yourself in a fervent love for Jesus Christ.

You never asked yourself what we have said repeatedly in the church. Can you sit with Jesus and do that? You lowered your standards. And I want to tell you, I can only warn you, I can't stop you from going down to the bottom.

But I tell you, you're on the way down. It's just a matter of time. You think you're okay because you're coming to the meetings and praising the Lord and all that.

None of it can be pretty shallow. I'll tell you honestly, I'm not much impressed by a lot of what goes on in the world today called charismatic praise. But I see in it all there is very little of worship.

There's very little of reverence for God. The people who come out of such meetings don't come with a sense of awe of the presence of God. They come out of those meetings in a very flippant, casual type of thing.

And they come out of a meeting where they're supposed to have worshipped God for half an hour, or one hour in some cases. And talk about the most worldly things of all. Do you think there were such people who were in the presence of God? Oh no.

They just had a good time singing. They don't like rock music, so they don't go for that type of singing. Some people go for that and enjoy that.

They like Christian singing. So they come for Christian singing. And they have a good time.

You know, if you were to go into God's presence. If you were to actually go into the presence of God in heaven today. And you spent even five minutes there.

Five minutes. I'm not talking about 45 minutes of praise. Five minutes.

You cannot come out and talk about all the useless things that you talk about generally. There would be such a sense of awe, having met with God, that would affect your whole life. And I believe we need sometimes like that.

The Father seeks for those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. The lover of God is one who worships Him. And it's very easy for Christians to become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

And I want to tell you that if you don't worship God in your private life. It's very difficult to worship Him in public. I find personally, I'll tell you my honest testimony.

I think I can praise the Lord along with all the saints. Thank the Lord along with all the saints. In fact, I enjoy it.

It's very easy because when we do it together with others, it's a wonderful thing. But when it comes to worshipping God, I find personally, it's almost impossible for me to do it in a public meeting. I have to be alone with God.

I can't even do it with my wife. I've got to be all alone. That's as far as I'm concerned.

And I think that's the way it is with most of God's saints. Those who really long to be worshipers. There is a difference between praising God and thanking Him and worshipping God.

It's altogether different. The Father seeks for those who will worship Him. And the person who is worshipping God will never be a backslider in his whole life.

People who come for praise meetings can be backsliders. There are numerous cases of pastors and preachers who lead praise and worship, so-called worshipers, not actually worship, praise meetings, who later on you'll find they were living in adultery the whole time. It's very easily possible to go straight out of a praise meeting and go and commit adultery.

But it's impossible to do that if you worship God. So I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, if you don't want to be a backslider in the last days, seek to be a lover of God and a worshiper of God. It's

not something anybody can explain to you, but seek to get alone with God.

And I'll tell you for myself, very often my life is so busy that the only time I can get alone with God is in the middle of the night, when I'm lying in my bed. I wake up, or when I wake up in the morning. All of us can have times like that.

If you want, when the whole world is sleeping, everybody in your house is sleeping, you happen to wake up, spend a few moments worshiping God. Make it a habit in your life. It will change your life.

It will save you from backsliding. It will give you a correct understanding of the things, of the times in which you live. And you will not be deceived by false prophets and deceivers.

Have you noticed when you hear in the Bible there are messages of encouragement and there are messages of rebuke from the same Bible? God is a God of encouragement. That's one of his titles. The God who gives encouragement, says in Romans 15.

At the same time, Jesus says, as many as I love those I rebuke and discipline. That is also a mark of his love. We need to encourage our children.

I think many parents don't encourage their children enough. But if you only encourage your children and you never discipline them and never rebuke them, you're going to have a rebel on your hands by the time he or she is a teenager. So it's that balance you see in Scripture.

God is a God who encourages us and he's a God who rebukes us and disciplines us according to what is necessary. So a ministry that's faithful to the word of God will be a ministry that encourages us and also disciplines us and rebukes us. And why is it that so often when we listen to a message that encourages us and we feel so uplifted and we like to listen to such messages but the effect of it doesn't seem to last.

Have you noticed that? It doesn't seem to really bring a permanent change. You sort of still backslide and then you hear another message of encouragement and you sort of get a bit lifted up but it doesn't seem to be a permanent overcoming coming into your life. And that's because there are certain other passages of Scripture that we don't take so seriously.

See nowadays in the world, in India and other countries, there are many, many people coming to very large churches. Thousands and thousands of people and one would think that it's a tremendous revival going on. There are churches with 5,000 people, 15,000, 20,000 people.

Can you imagine? They have so many services. They can't all fit into one service so they come two, three, four services and everybody thinks that the Lord is doing a wonderful thing. Well, I hope so.

But I personally have my doubts about all this because I'm not easily fooled because my guideline is God's word. Let me show you something in Matthew chapter 7 where Jesus spoke. As far as I can remember, it's the first time.

I haven't really checked it out in a concordance but I think that's the first time in Matthew 7 that Jesus spoke about false prophets.

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