

## Small Group Discussion Guide (2.4.24) — Read Matthew 7:15-20

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- In vs. 15, the warning to be on guard against false teachers was just as prevalent in both Old Testament times and in Jesus' own day as it is in our day as well! Where do we see this happening today? How are false prophets deceptively among us today? In what forms does it take today?
- As Jesus is concluding his sermon, how does this image of the “two trees” tie in to what we saw last week with the “two gates?” (vs. 13-14) How does it relate to what we will see with the “two confessions” (vs. 21-23) and “two foundations” (vs. 24-27)?
- What were the different ways we could interpret what Jesus means by “wolves in sheep's clothing?” Whichever interpretation you take, what does Jesus imply with this image? Why are these false teachers so deceptive and hard to spot?
- Joshua walked us through several ‘signs’ of a false teacher. Do you remember what any of those were? Which one(s) stood out to you most and why?
- What was happening in the church at Galatia? How were they being deceived by false teaching? (see Galatians 4:9-11) What about in Colossae? (see Colossians 2:20-23) What was happening in Ephesus that was deceiving many? (see 1 Timothy 4:1-3) What is the common thread in all of these churches?
- In vs. 16-20, Jesus gives us *the* test, by using these metaphors, for discerning and spotting a false teacher, especially those “flying under the radar.” What is the test? How can they be spotted and identified?
- What does Jesus mean that they will be “known by their fruits?” What is the ‘fruit’ that Jesus is talking about here? How might the wider context of the Sermon on the Mount help us interpret this? How might this be a helpful test?
- Why can good trees only produce good fruit, and bad trees only produce bad fruit? What does this communicate about the link between our belief and our conduct?
- What are some ways we can guard ourselves individually and our church corporately from false prophets and false teaching? What could be the ways that *our* church, that *you*, could be susceptible to false teaching?
- Joshua gave a few exhortations to the elders and the church at the end. Which one(s) stood out to you most and why? How were you challenged by today's passage?