

**BIBLE STORY: BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS**

Matthew 7:15-23

**Central Thoughts**

- Prophets are called to preach God's Word in its truth and purity.
- False prophets pretend to be faithful prophets.
- Satan uses the lies, trickery, and deceit of false prophets to destroy faith in Christ.
- Faithful prophets preach according to the Holy Scriptures and the Small Catechism.
- God's Word will never teach us to trust in ourselves or any human work or idea for salvation.
- God's Word will always teach us to rely upon Jesus Christ for our salvation.

**Discussion Questions**

What does a true prophet of God do?

*He preaches and teaches God's Word.*

What would a false prophet do?

*He would preach and teach things which are not God's Word.*

Why does a person wear a disguise or a costume?

*To pretend to be someone he is not.*

What does a false prophet want you to believe?

*That he is a true prophet*

How does a false prophet pretend to be a true prophet?

*He pretends to be one of Jesus' sheep. He may even look like one of Jesus' sheep.*

What do the sheep's clothing disguise?

*That the false prophet is really a "ravenous" or hungry wolf.*

Why does Jesus describe a false prophet as a ravenous wolf?

*Because the false prophet wants to devour the true faith of Christians.*

What do we learn by heart that helps us to know what a true prophet is?

*God's Word and the Small Catechism*

What fruit is produced by a true prophet?

*Christians who believe in Christ and confess all the teachings of God's Word.*

How will we recognize a false prophet?

*They will not preach God's Word faithfully.*

What is the fruit of a false prophet?

*People who do not believe in Christ or confess what the Word of God teaches.*

To what is a faithful prophet compared?

*A good tree that produces good fruit*

To what is a false prophet compared?

*A bad tree that produces bad fruit*

What will God do to the "bad trees" who do not preach God's Word faithfully and who destroy faith in Christ by their preaching?

*They will be cut down and thrown into the fire*

What does the image of cutting down a tree and burning it describe?

*The punishment of hell for false prophets who destroy the faith of Christians*

Is someone a faithful prophet just because he says he is, or does things that seem to be Christian, or is even able to perform amazing things?

*No, a faithful prophet is a preacher who only preaches and teaches God's Word.*

What does it mean to practice lawlessness?

*To preach and teach false doctrine.*

### **Meditation on the Bible Story**

Ever since the Serpent tempted Adam and Eve with crafty lies in the Garden of Eden, false prophets have risen up to do the same. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and false prophets pretend to be sheep of the Good Shepherd. Satan is a liar and murderer. False prophets are wolves in sheep's clothing. The goal of both Satan and his false prophets is to deceive people and by false doctrine to destroy faith in Christ and everything God's Word teaches. We learn by heart God's Word and the Catechism so that we are able to know what is true and what is false. God's Word will always call us to confess our sins and to believe in Christ, the Son of God, who is our Savior from sin through His death and resurrection. God's Word will not only teach us what is true and good, but it will always lead us to trust in Christ alone for our salvation. God's Word will never teach us to rely upon ourselves, our good works, or anyone else but Jesus Christ alone.

### **Prayer on the Bible Story**

Heavenly Father, by Your Holy Word which we have heard and believed, protect us from the lies, trickery, and deceit of the devil and his false prophets. Send us true and faithful pastors to preach Your Word in its truth and purity. Help us to learn by heart the Catechism and the promises of Your Word so that we remain faithful to Jesus all days of our life. Grant that we never trust anyone or anything but Christ alone for our salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



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