

Is Mark Driscoll a false teacher?

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7.20). *For the tree is known by his fruit* (Matthew 12.33)

(Source: "A Dearth of Discernment" website)

Mark Driscoll presents himself as theologically conservative and culturally liberal. He says that, "The emerging church proclaims a gospel of freedom." (*Confessions*, p25). Driscoll's gospel of freedom appears to be a gospel that is free from the rules and conduct of biblical Christianity. So is Driscoll a false teacher? This is a question that confuses many people.

In practice, as we demonstrate on this website, there is a vast gulf between the doctrine that Driscoll claims to proclaim and the conduct that he promotes through his culturally liberal ministry. Driscoll has carefully cultivated an image of theological conservatism which allows his supporters to defend him as doctrinally sound. He even claims to be Calvinistic in his beliefs, and says that Spurgeon is his favourite preacher. Driscoll says he believes in the virgin birth and the resurrection. He believes in heaven and hell, and a Day of Judgement. He also declares other biblical truths, when it is convenient to do so.

So those who support Driscoll's ministry refer to sermons that are doctrinally acceptable. But what about the conduct that Driscoll not only approves of, but also promotes? What is the value of doctrinal soundness when it is combined with licentious behaviour? Is this not the dangerous heresy referred to in the book of Jude, where false teachers secretly slip into the church and turn the grace of God into sensuality (Jude 4).

The test for false teachers

So is Driscoll a false teacher? Our Lord gave us the test for false teachers to help his disciples identify them and avoid their teaching. "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 brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them*" (Matthew 7.15-20).

Puritan Thomas Watson gave this advice: “Take heed whom you listen to! It is our dear Saviour’s counsel, ‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves’ (Matthew 7:15). Let me tell you, the Devil has his ministers – as well as Christ. There are some, who by the subtlety of their wit have learned the art of mixing error with truth, and to give poison in a golden cup.”

Here we should note that a false teacher is to be *judged by his fruits, not by his words*. This is the crucial point. Our Lord explains: “Not everyone who says Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in your name?” (Matthew 7.21-22). So we see that the false prophet is one who speaks about the things of God in Christ’s name. But his fruit is corrupt.

Therefore, as a corrupt tree produces corrupt fruit, so a false teacher (one who speaks and teaches in the name of the Lord) produces corrupt conduct. So we should expect a false teacher, who is a messenger of Satan, (2 Corinthians 11.14) to disguise himself as a servant of righteousness by using sound words, for that is part of the deception. Therefore we must examine the conduct that results from the ministry of a teacher. The toxic message of a wolf in sheep’s clothing is a mixture of truth and error that produces corrupt conduct. So what are the fruits of Driscoll’s ministry?

Culturally liberal

As we show on this website, the chief characteristic of Driscoll’s ministry is that it promotes licentious behaviour in the church:

1. **Perverse language and corrupt communication**. Driscoll frequently uses perverse and crude language. He often mocks Scripture and engages in crude jesting, and he does so in direct opposition to the teaching of Scripture: ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers’ (Ephesians 4.29). ‘Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, no jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks’ (Ephesians 5.4). Also see Colossians 3.8. (See Mocks Scripture and Song of Solomon).
2. **Sexual licentiousness**. Driscoll has frequently said that his favourite book of the Bible is Song of Solomon, and this gives him an

opportunity to talk about sex in the most sensuous and irreverent way. Although he says that sex is for marriage, and homosexuality is wrong, his handling of sexual matters is salacious and impure. This is why his 'ask any question' sessions have an under-17 warning. He actually takes pleasure in declaring that the content is offensive or extremely offensive. In providing answers to questions about perverted sexual conduct, that should never even be mentioned in public, he has referred his viewers to two pornographic websites. (See the comments of Dr Judith Reisman, mentioned in the memorandum to church leaders.) The Mars Hill website actually provides hyperlinks to these depraved websites. Driscoll encourages men in his congregation to listen to salacious sex talk radio programs. He advises Christian men to listen to explicit discussions of sex that open the way to the lusts of the flesh (see worldliness). While Scripture warns young men to flee from sexual immorality, Driscoll encourages young men to place themselves in the path of sexual temptation.

3. **Punk-rock music.** Worldly punk-rock music forms a major part of Driscoll's life and ministry. The culture of Mars Hill church is grounded in punk-rock and all the wickedness, rebellion and lusts of the flesh associated with this depraved scene. The three bands that performed at a so-called time of worship at Mars Hill Downtown Campus were *Insomniac Folklore*, *Destroy Nate Allen* and *Jeff Suffering*. Examples of this weird, rebellious, depraved punk-rock can be viewed on youtube. (See Music)
4. **Tattoos.** Driscoll's church proudly supports tattoo artists in their work. The issue of tattoos is discussed on the Mars Hill Downtown Campus under the headline: *Jesus Loves Tattoos*. Driscoll has no objection to Christian people being tattooed. His advice is to get a new covenant tattoo if that's what you would like to do. Yet this advice is in direct opposition to God's word in Leviticus. Moreover, the association between tattoos and pagan and occult practices is well documented.
5. **Supernatural visions.** Driscoll claims that he receives supernatural revelations into the lives of other people, and that these revelations are from Jesus Christ. Let us be absolutely clear on this point — Driscoll's claim to have visions is another sign of his false teaching. Scripture warns that we must not listen to false prophets who speak of visions from their own heart. *Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make*

you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:16 NKJV)

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Driscoll's ministry promotes sinful behaviour in the church. He has turned the grace of God into licentiousness. His teaching perverts holy living by encouraging worldliness in the church. He is promoting a carnal, fleshly version of Christianity that revels in the lusts of the flesh. He encourages Christians to walk according to the ways of the flesh, to set their minds on the things of the flesh, which are licentiousness, immorality, impurity and sensuality (Galatians 5.19). So is Mark Driscoll a false teacher? Our Lord said, "*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*" As a corrupt tree brings forth corrupt fruit, so a false teacher produces sinful conduct in the church. Therefore Mark Driscoll must be judged by his fruits.

You can learn more about Mark Driscoll's ministry in the book, *The New Calvinists* (2014), published by The Wakeman Trust and Belmont House Publishing. The book is available from belmonthousebooks.com/