

5:00 - April 4, 11 P.M. - WXA1 -

## THE TWO TREES

Matthew 7:16-23

### INTRODUCTION

We considered last Sunday night the matter of the false prophet. False prophets that come in sheep's clothing and how to detect them and identify them. As I mentioned in the closing part of this chapter, you have very interesting pictures given by Jesus. Remember the entire chapter deals with the matter of judgment, and He is coming to the final judgment. Verse 13 he tells ~~xxx~~ us about the two ways. One is the straight gate, the other is the broad way that leads to destruction. Now, this evening the second picture is that of two fruit trees, two trees growing, and the kind of fruit, and the judgment involved in connection with these false prophets.

Next Sunday evening we take up ~~xxxx~~ Verse 24 following which deals with the two builders, one who built upon the sand and one who built upon the rock.

*Now Remember The By word in your*  
Now all through the Bible it is very interesting - you could take a

*Zechariah 4*  
study of the trees and consume much valuable time in going into the forbidden tree, for example, in the Garden of Eden, or dealing with the tree that was prescribed at Marah to make the bitter water sweet. Or we could deal with the tree that is set forth in the 1st ~~xxxx~~ Psalm that the Godly man is like a tree



that planted by the rivers of waters that flourisheth. There is other symbolism through prophecy, and then coming to the final book in the Bible which tells us much about the tree of life in the Book of Revelation.

Now, these harmless prophets, as though they seem to be, are dressed in sheep's clothing, and they come in devouring and tearing at the sheep. They, our Lord says, are going to be dealt with.

Verse 16 - a xxx picture. "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Here is a very heart-searching question "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Do you think that you could answer this question?

Have you ever found any figs growing on a thorny bush, or grapes?

V.17 He turns around in Verse 17, "Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

Now, let me pause here to say give you something of the meaning of this which deals with a man's heart. The xx corrupt tree brings forth evil xxx fruit. Now, this word corrupt does not mean rotten or decayed in the sense that we think of corrupt fruit. Nor does it mean that a tree does not bring forth any fruit at all. Now, this is very important. If we fail to see this, we may fail to see the whole meaning of what Jesus is talking about.



The attention is that here are trees that resemble each other.

They look perfectly all right. Now, it does not mean that they are going to produce the same kind of fruit. One ~~xxx~~ tree may produce good fruit. The ~~xxxx~~ other tree may produce poor fruit. But what is this corrupt or evil fruit? Does it mean that it is entirely rotten, or that it is or a poor quality? It is not good fruit. There are two types of trees. They are very identical. But you are going to judge them by what? By their fruit. And you will find that they are entirely different. One you can use, ~~the~~ the ~~xx~~ other you cannot.

Now, Jesus put emphasis on a man's heart. It is not the matter of appearance here, but it is the picture of character and nature, which is the real essence of the tree and of the fruit that is produced. This is the danger which we are often in, we are (misled) by appearances. Now, this is what I spent last Sunday night talking about. False prophets in sheep's clothing. The danger of ~~a~~ appearing to be Christian without really being so. A man may appear to preach the gospel, but when you judge by the test which God has set down here in his word, it may be a different story. A man may try to make himself out to be a Christian by adding certain things to his ~~life~~ life, something new, instead of the very nature which needs to be changed. The ~~a~~ emphasis is on the man.



And what is the matter in the last analysis? He may speak right, he may look right, but the source of the trouble here is the ~~xxx~~ source which we've had in the Christian church down through the ages. To be a Christian means that a man has his very life and nature changed. This is what we call doctrine of the (rebirth.) No man's ~~xx~~ service is of very much value unless his nature has been changed, and we will come in a moment to these verses where many will say, "Lord,

Lord"

So the picture here is primarily the state of a man's heart, the seed of his life. Either you make the tree good and the fruit will be good, or else you make the tree corrupt and his fruit will be corrupt. For the tree is known by his fruit.

The emphasis is on the character and the nature of the tree. Remember Jesus said that which cometh out of the heart defileth a man. Not that which is on the surface, it is not washing the outside of the cups and platters, but it is what comes out of a man. This is the picture of a man's heart. He proclaims a certain life and a certain way. But you will be able to recognize it, Jesus says, if you only watch. You just wait a while, and certain things you watch for you will discover.

First of all, you are going to (discover there is a link) between a

man's belief and a man's life. As a man thinks, so eventually he is. As a man thinks, so he does. Now this is ~~x~~ inevitable. What we are and what we believe, nature will express itself. You do not get the grapes from thorns. You do not get figs from thistles. You do not get good fruit from a corrupt tree.

Hence, the matter of appearance can be very deceptive.

I remember reading about the Puritans who had for a time the idea there that ~~they~~ were temporary believers. In ~~x~~ other words they dealt with people who seemed to come under the influence of the gospel, and gave the appearance that they were soundly regenerated and converted. But there was a change in their lives. However, the Puritans called them temporary believers because they gave a clear unmistakable evidence, they did not trust in that, they waited a while. And then they discovered what those (people gave ~~xxxxx~~ as evidence.) Some of them had never truly become Christians at all. And this is the kind of thing that happens so often in the lives of people. They may be (swept in the church) because their father is in the church or their mother, or people may come along because of the religious revival. And during a religious ~~xx~~ awakening, you will find some people carried along by the flood. Now, you do not know what is ~~happ~~ happening to them, but under the ~~xx~~ general influence of the Holy Spirit. However,



they never truly become Christians. And this is what worried the Puritans about these people, because so many fell by the wayside, like the man ~~sxxx~~ sowing the seeds and some fell along the pathway and some among thorns and were choked out.

Now, discussion of this is found in 2 Peter 2. He talks about certain people who have come into the church, have been accepted as Christians, but who have gone out. He describes them in these terms. "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

You discover just what happened, that's an illustration. Even the sow can be washed, and can appear to be clean on the surface. But there was no change in nature. And she will go back to that mud hole to wallow again.

In the first chapter of Peter and the 4th verse in that same epistle, he says that the Christian had been delivered from the corruption that is in the world through lust. And this often kind of superficial ~~is~~ cleansing which does not change the nature may be misleading to us. We may have to wait before we can see true evidence beginning to take root in a person's heart. The question is do men gather grapes from thorns and figs from ~~thistles~~ thistles? Now, these things can never be separated. A man's belief is bound sooner or later to manifest itself in his life. Now, make no mistake about it. If it's not the

real thing, you look for the fruit.

The details of the nature of character of good fruit. We are to look for this, and there are people who are misleading about the straight gate. The greatest ~~waxx~~ enemy of the Christian faith are those who are right out in the world as false, and this has been the history of the church. There have been some counterfeits and they have been the greatest enemy of spirituality, and the movement of the church herself. What would happen if all the people on the inside the church would begin bearing fruit as Jesus talks about here?

Now, of course, there are some general tests, and one of them is the sort of life that a man lives. This is how you can test a man who appears to be living the Christian life, or he appears to be a Christian. He may even come to church occasionally. There are many reasons why people do this. They sometimes come to church just to be nice once in a while, or for various other reasons. But the kind of life that a man lives will tell something about the kind of belief he subscribes to. There are some mighty (good pagans) who have some high standards, but this is ~~px~~ apart from Christianity. It is often said that there are better Christians outside the Christian church than inside. Now what people mean when they say that ~~x~~ is that there are some good people who are morally good and upright who are not in the church. Now the Greek pagan philosophers



taught that, but we try to discover the motives and the actions, and from the Christian standpoint there is one (vital test) Does this man give the impression that he lives this sort of life because he is a Christian and because of his Christian faith? If he does not live this kind of life because he is a Christian, there is no value in it. The Bible tells us about this corrupt fruit that a man's righteousness is as (filthy rags) in the sight of God. There may be a lot of goodness in a lot of people. Some inside and some outside the church. But their righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight.

Now, ~~x~~ inevitably, in the next place, (you will discover the poor quality of fruit) in this corrupt tree. Somewhere there is going to be a slackness in his life. Now, you may test your own life by this. You may not be convicted of drunkenness, you may not be convicted of murder. There are sins in this world you may not be guilty of. But if a man is not conscious of his exceeding sinfulness, you are going to see a slackness somewhere. He is not going to bear fruit. Whereas on the other side, you are going to see something positive in the Christian. You are going to see the evidence of the beatitudes, & The test of fruit. Now, the test of apples, an apple may look all right, but ~~x~~ when you begin to eat it, you discover whether it is sour, or whether it is really a good apple. And so with the Christian. You are going to discover if these beatitudes are in him. He is



poor in spirit, mourns over his sins, he is meek, hungers after righteousness, is a peacemaker. These are some of the tests. They are tests which always excludes even a good ~~pg~~ pagan, and they exclude the false prophets, and they exclude those who are temporary in their belief. And they tell us whether or not a man has the humility in his life.

V. 19  
Now, Jesus continues to say that in Verse 19 that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is going to be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Now this section which follows deals with the (self-deception) which people have and which we discover in these truths. Here indeed is a great warning from Verse 19 all the way to verse 23.

Now this warning is still explicit.

21  
Verse 21 - "Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now these are not isolated verses, these verses are all together, and they are (important verses). And it is quoted so often and used by people to argue about whether a man is saved by works or by faith. But the emphasis we must maintain here is the message which our Lord emphasizes. Open your eyes again and see the terrible danger of self-deception, of being deluded. Here is a false prophet in sheep's clothing. Now one day Jesus said, he is going to stand before the judge and the judge is going

to pull the sheepskin off of him, and is going to reveal the ~~wolf~~ wolf.

He warns us that whatever we may say or do, we cannot stand in the presence of God (if we are not truly righteous and holy). It is what the scripture teaches from the beginning to the end of the Bible, and it tells us what true faith is. And the false things that men rely upon.

Men rely on (false evidence). Some people tend to say, "Well, I've got a correct belief" - but not everyone that sayeth, "Lord, Lord." There are certain people who say this and are yet not in the center of the Lord's will.

No man is a Christian who has not said, "Lord, ~~xxx~~ Lord" to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But unless you believe that Jesus ~~xxxxx~~ of Nazareth is the Son of God, and recognize him this way, and live in this way, then you are bearing corrupt fruit.

This is very (terrifying) that some are going to say "Lord, Lord." The devil believes this. You may say that (I was brought up in a Christian home), I was brought up in a Christian atmosphere. I've always heard about these things, and I've tried somehow just to kind of associate with good people.

That is ~~xxx~~ self-deception.

We deceive ourselves when (we are fervent). There are people who are actually fervent, and we do a few things with enthusiasm and with zeal,



carried away with our own emotions. But Jesus says, they are going to say, Lord, Lord, and that is not going to help.

Robert McChesney was a great man of God. One day he wrote in his diary, "Today I missed some fine opportunities of speaking a word for Jesus." The Lord saw that I would have spoken as much for my own honor as for him, and therefore, he shut my mouth. I see that a man cannot be a faithful, fervent minister until he preaches just for Christ's sake, until he gives up trying to attract people to himself and seek to attract them to Christ the Lord." He ends by saying, "Give me this." Now, this great man of God recognized the terrible danger of doing things in the flesh, and this is exactly what we today so often put the emphasis on, you and I. Quite often we hear people talk, "Well, did you see the preacher's wing-tip shoes? Did you see that bright shirt he was wearing?" or something else was the thing that made the impression. And this was the thing that this man of God wanted to avoid. He wanted people to see Jesus Christ as Lord when he preached. By their fruits ye shall know them.

We can be (deceived by our works) in the verse which follow here.

22 ✓ Verse 22, many will say to me in that Lord, Lord, have we not

prophesied in thy name and cast out devils and done many wonderful works?



So the self-deception here is going to be on the matter of prophecy and that is, that means delivering a spiritual message, speaking in the name of the Lord the message of God, and he is going to say, "I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity." Now it is possible for a man to preach correct doctrine and yet himself remain outside the kingdom of God.

I remember hearing E. F. Hallock tell of his conversion experience.

He had gone through college and through the seminary in Rochester, and ~~he~~ had been preaching in a church for 14 years, and they had a meeting at his church, and during the revival meeting, he himself was converted. And yet he had been preaching for 14 years and ministering the things of the Lord in the church.

Frequently in the scripture we find illustrations of ~~this~~ this.

Balam delivered the right message. Yet he was a prophet that ~~was~~ hired, and he was reprobate, he was outside.

Saul is a man of this kind who prophesied from time to time, but he was not God's man.

Paul often talked about keeping himself under, bearing the fruit lest he himself be cast away. He did not wish to be deceived personally.

You remember Paul in 1 Cor. 13:1-3, "<sup>Though</sup> I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass ~~or~~ or



a tinkling cymbal. Though I have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

All is useless, if I lack the real quality that makes a man a Christian. A man can prophecy and still be outside. This is a terrifying thought as I understand it, and it means that in the day of judgment there are going to be some great surprises. It is very clear that even Judas had power as our Lord sent out his disciples to preach, to cast out devils. They came back to him elated, but even devils had been subject unto them, that God had given them great power. And yet Judas was lost. You remember that some people charged our Lord of doing ~~miracles~~ miracles by the power of Beelzebub, but Jesus said, If I work by Beelzebub and the devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? You get the picture? There are people who do certain works and certain things today in the name of God, but they are sons of Satan. Acts.19.

There is the matter of wonderful works, amazing things, ~~am~~ almost incredible ~~incredible~~ things that have been done in the wonderful name of Jesus, and some of these people are on the outside. How do we prove that this is possible? For example, the case in Egypt. The magicians were able to reproduce some of the miracles through magic that Moses, the deliverer, worked. They were able to counterfeit, they were able to repeat them up to a certain

point and do many marvelous works. Matt. 24:24, For there shall arise false  
~~Christs~~ and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders insomuch  
 that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Paul speaks of this in 2 Thess. 2:8, And then shall that wicked  
 be revealed. Because he had been working through the power of Satan. Many  
 men have great results in healing and in other things. And seem to have a  
 natural gift for some of this power. Curious gifts. Some in reading a man's  
 mind, or in transferring a thought, or stimulating certain situations.

We must remember that the power of the devil Paul speaks of in  
 2 Cor. 11:14, transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, Jesus said that  
 we are to remember that some of them have prophesied, and even been able to cast  
 out devils and do wonderful works.

23 Verse 23, Then will I profess unto them, (I never knew you.) Depart  
 from me ye that work iniquity. Now this is certainly a great terrifying state-  
 ment about the judgment of God. This is a most astonishing thing of self-  
deception. To prophesy, cast out devils, work miracles, but in that day, and  
 that's the great day of judgment, they have assumed they were safe because they  
 come and say, "Lord, Lord" - surely, Lord, you know our record. Don't you  
 remember all we said and tried to do ~~you~~ in your name? And He is going to say,



"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." There can be no doubt about it that in the day of judgment there are going to be many surprises.

That false prophet who tried to teach or guide people. So often as I have stated before, people may be more concerned about the man's physical appearance, about his personality, rather than about his message. Those are the things that detract. But they are deceiving. How are we going to discover these

causes of self-deception?

First, by the false assurance that people have. He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but receives everlasting life. But there are people who work out their own statement and their own formula, and they base their fact on the assurance that they perhaps are members of a church. Others base their assurance on the fact that they have been christened when they were infants. Or others base their assurance that they belong to a certain country, and so they listen to this.

Second, the refusal to examine oneself. This is very deceiving, and this is not popular today. The argument is that the Christian should look only to the Lord Jesus Christ. But Jesus ~~is~~ is interested in good fruit, and a good tree. We are to look to Christ, but we are to also examine our own hearts. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and the truth

is not in us. There were people who were doing just that in John's day. They were saying, I am a Christian, I am in fellowship, I am a believer, but they were living in sin. That is a lie.

In the third place, we may deceive ourselves by living on activities. That is, we have figured out a plan of living, and so we follow a certain activity, and in doing so, we empty our life of spiritual power, and life becomes empty. And I think this is the thing that happens to people sometimes when they retire. They have lived on activities all their days, and when they sit down, they soon die. And so many Christians keep going after the entertainments and the pleasures of this world, and life is one circle of going. What am I living for? What if the meetings you attend ~~we~~ so frequently and so regularly were cut off, and you were prohibited from attending them? What if your health broke down, and ~~you~~ you could not read, or you could not enjoy the company and the parties you go to? And you were left just alone? What would you do? If all of your life has been based on assurance of activities, then that's being deceived.

In the fourth place, men are deceived by trying to get an easy conscience. Conscience condemns them, and so they go and do some good work.

They make a list of the good deeds which they do. I think Saul tried this when he came to Samuel. And Samuel condemned him. He says, I hear the sheep and the



oxen which were supposed to be destroyed. Oh, Saul said, "I have kept these that I might make a sacrifice unto the Lord. Now this is a perfect example of trying to balance things up with his conscience. The sort of thing that men do in life. They think they are ~~is~~ a little bit spiritually bankrupt, and they try to perform a few good works. But Jesus is interested in obedience.

In the fifth place, our failure to heed the plain scripture. We very often fail to take the scriptures as ~~our~~ our own guide. We employ human tests instead of scriptural ones. Instead of taking the plain teaching of the Bible, we argue with it. Yes, we say, since the scriptures were written many years ago, times have changed. Did you ever hear anybody use that? And so we revise our way of life, but Adam was not deceived. It was the woman that was deceived in the transgression, and the scripture is plain and true in its teachings.

And sometimes the scriptures are put aside. ~~And sometimes the error~~ The error of Saul was he said Well, I can do so and so. Now don't argue with the scriptures manipulate it, twist it. But the thing that you are to do is what? Submit to it at all costs.

In the sixth place, you deceive yourself when you fail to realize that there is one thing that matters, and that one thing is what God wants and our Blessed Lord wants above all ~~else~~ else is ourselves, our heart. He wants the inner



man. The heart he wants, our submission. Not merely our profession, our ~~xxx~~ zeal, our fervor. He wants us. And that is what the prophet told Saul. Hath the Lord ~~his~~ his great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience and obeying the voice of the Lord? We keep the best sheep and the best offerings, and the Lord does not want our offerings, and that way he wants our obedience. He wants us as individuals.

Now, there are some (signs of self-deception) and I think we discover these signs when we study about these two trees.

→ First of all, there are people who are (interested more in meetings) than anything else, and they are barren in soul.

7 Second, our main interests may be in (organization and denomination). There are so many people today who are in danger of saying that this is all that their religion consists of, cast out devils, do many wonderful works, and spend all their time harping on a denomination or an organization. Now people whose real and ultimate interest is only in a particular church, not in the Christian salvation, not in the Lord at all. And so they merely are involved because they like the church or they like the ~~xxx~~ people.

But they are silent when you talk to them about spiritual things. In the third place, their main interest is social. There are people who are interested



in the social rather than the soul. Many people today know about ~~the~~ problems of this country and society, and their attitude is mainly in that category. In other words, there are some politicians who place a great deal of interest and emphasis on the social conditions of this nature, but they never worship God on Sunday, or never seek to increase the word of God through missions in their lives. They are not active and practicing Christians. The major dangers confronting the Christian church tonight is that we shall get side-tracked talking about anti-Communism and advertising our slogans and such like, and a man may persuade himself to believe that because he is anti-communist, he must be a Christian. But it is by no means means the thing that follows. ~~xThe~~ We must not be deceived. The substitution of these social things puts us in real danger.

In the fourth place, our main interest may be apologetics. We may spend all of our time trying to defend the faith, arguing about the Christian faith and denouncing evolution, and neglect our own souls, and feel quite happy about doing this. We could spend all our time attacking the church at Rome, or modernism, and we may have some reasons for debate. But do I find that I spend most of my time arguing with people about the different ideas or positions that may be held? Or do I find that I practically never talk to people about their souls and about Christ? How much time do I spend on the center of things?

Fifth, our main interest may be intellectual. Now, this too is a danger. There is nothing more exciting or more interesting than to be intellectual and study some of the deeper things. There are people who follow this, and it becomes barren. I have watched people become somehow proud of their intellect and their knowledge. Then they have a tendency to compromise on the ethical and the moral issues. And they disappear from prayer meetings and worship services, and they lose their balance.

In the sixth place, our main interest may be the times and the seasons. That is to say that we may be so interested in prophesy and overemphasize this. We think and talk and preach nothing but prophecy. Now we can easily spend our time talking about Russia, Egypt, Israel, and Ezekial 37: and 38, Daniel 7 and Daniel 12 and other prophesies. All of this to the neglect of our spiritual lives. Now we have an interest in the seasons and the times, but we should not forget that the main thing is our soul. Future events and some of these things we are going to have to wait before we stand before God in judgment.

I think sometimes we are lead astray on the matter of law and grace. A lot of people believe that we can forget all about the ten commandments.

Now, Jesus is talking about the final judgment here, and he says Depart from me ye that work iniquity.



