***The Sermon on the Mount***

**Beware of False Prophets: Enter by the Narrow Gate; Matthew 7:13-14**

Four of the current false doctrines which are prominent in the religious world today

1. Legalism: The pride of legalism claims that we are able to keep a set of rules well enough to earn a standing as righteous before God.

Wherever there is superficial view of sin there will be a low view of grace.

1. Antinomianism: The pride of antinomianism claims that we can claim the grace of Christ while ignoring His right to our lives.

Wherever there is a superficial view of God’s holiness there will be a low view of righteousness.

1. Syncretism: The pride of syncretism claims that we have the ability to discern the truth about God from our own study of social and cultural norms and use our own wisdom to speak for God.

Wherever there is a superficial view of God’s Word there will be a low view of the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ.

1. The Prosperity Gospel: The pride of the prosperity gospel claims that God is primarily concerned with our wealth, health, and prosperity in this life because success in these areas means that God is well pleased with a person while their poverty means that God is not pleased with their faith, life, ministry, work

Whenever there is a superficial view of God’s glory there will be a low view of living for eternal purposes.

**Scripture Reading**

**Four reasons why I love Nagaland**

**1. I’m Tall. (Slide 1)**

**2. The story of the Gospel in Nagaland. (Slide 2)**

**3. Because of the Gospel, the people and the culture are like a mythological place. (Video)**

**4. The strategic location of Nagaland among unreached people groups in the world. (Slide 3)**

**I am grateful for your grace in allowing us to go and serve in this manner**

**Do not think of this as some suffering ministry, for we were so blessed by the people and by this time with the Chishi family**

**Read Matthew 7:13-23 (Slides)**

Matthew 7:15-23

 **15**"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16**"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? **17**"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. **18**"A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **19**"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20**"So then, you will know them by their fruits. **21**"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **22**"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' **23**"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

**I. Exposition of Matthew 7:13-23 (Title Slide – Slide 1)**

* First, minor correction to the notes in the bulletin
* Missing the first point and then there are four points total
* The first point, 1. Legalism: The pride of legalism claims that we are able to keep a set of rules well enough to earn a standing before God as righteous
* Internet was down Tuesday through Friday, so I was unable to email my notes
* Khetoshe most of been able to get on Friday evening and email it, but he was guessing as to what I was going to email to Ms. Jeannie
* I was up this morning at 1:30 am so I came into church and was able to listen to Phil’s sermon
* Last week Phil preached on this text and did exactly what he and I had discussed
* **Read Matthew 7:13-14 (Slide 2)**
* I believe he is absolutely correct by connecting verses 13 and 14 with verse 15, that both roads, the narrow and the broad, have prophets claiming that the way they are presenting truth leads to life
* There are no false prophets claiming, “follow this way because it leads to death.”
* All false prophets and all true prophets claim, “follow this way because it leads to life.”
* As Phil said last week, both roads have a sign post over the road reading “Life”
* The reason Jesus turns so quickly from the narrow road to false teachers is that a primary challenge to entering by the narrow way is the many false messages in the world today

II. Beware of false prophets – But how is that they are false?

* **Read Matthew 7:15-16 (Slide )**
1. They fail to teach what Christ teaches
* False – deceptive, lying, a different message, a different way of salvation, a divergent emphasis on the Gospel and the life of righteousness
* **Read Matthew 7:21-22 (Slide 3)**
1. They fail to live out what Christ teaches-practice lawlessness
* This is not a call to perfection, for all followers of Christ are imperfect
* It is a call to have a life that is consistent with the life of Christ in humility, service, grace, and a love for God and His Word
* The fruit here is not outward, religious works
* Not based outward signs
* This is not to look at the size of their church or the power of their words or the miraculous signs because the last few verses of this text say that the following does not mean a person is a true prophet.
* So if you see these outward signs, this does not guarantee the prophet is really speaking for God
* Here we see four claims to truth by these false prophets
* First, they call Jesus “Lord”
* Second, they preach in His name
* Third, they battle the devil and his minions
* Fourth, they claim miracles in His name
* **Read Matthew 7:23 (Slide 4)**
* Those who practice lawlessness
* The fundamental issues of following Christ is not external signs or works
* So here we see two aspects of the false prophet
* First, their words are inconsistent with Christ and the Apostles and
* Second, their actions are inconsistent with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles
* In saying this, I am simply affirming what Phil said last week in his excellent exposition of this text

III. Current Issues in this as I see them unfolding in the evangelical world today

* Four of the false doctrines which are prominent in the religious world today

1. Legalism: The pride of legalism claims that we are able to keep a set of rules well enough to earn a standing as righteous before God.

* Legalism implicitly denies the seriousness of sin.
* Matthew 5:3-4 “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”
* Matthew 6:12, “Forgive us our debts…”
* And Matthew 7 which encourages all disciples of Christ to first remove the log from their own eye before observing the speak in their brother’s eye
* Wherever there is superficial view of sin there will be a low view of grace.

2. Antinomianism: The pride of antinomianism claims that we can claim the grace of Christ while ignoring His right to our lives.

* The primary problem with this false doctrine is that it implicitly denies the holiness of God
* Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”
* And Matthew 5:20 “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
* Matthew 5:48 “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”
* And Matthew 7:23, the verse we just read
* Wherever there is a superficial view of God’s holiness there will be a low view of personal righteousness.

3. Syncretism: The pride of syncretism claims that we have the ability to discern the truth about God from our own study of social and cultural norms and use our own wisdom to speak for God.

* The primary problem with this false doctrine is that it implicitly elevates our wisdom to the level of God while reducing the wisdom of His word to something secondary to our own intellectual, social, cultural, and anthropological abilities.
* We, in our claim to being inclusive, exclude the only objective and authoritative truth, which is God Himself
* Jesus is the One who said, “Enter by the narrow gate…”
* Jesus is the One who said, “Many will come to me on that day saying…”
* Jesus is the One who said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”
* We may not like these claims by Jesus, but we can at least acknowledge that Jesus is making a very meaningful and purposeful statement
* To claim that there are many ways to God and that all religious expression points to God in the same way as Jesus, denies the statements made by Jesus Himself
* I understand the cultural appeal, having had discussions about these various issues with Hindus and others from various religious backgrounds here in America and in other countries
* There is a beauty to the various cultures and there is no truth claim in Christ that reduces the beauty of these various cultures
* However, as ascetically and culturally pleasing of the various worldviews, to follow Christ is the follow His exclusive claim on saving truth
* It is one thing to reject Jesus, at least that has the integrity to deal with Him at His word, but we cannot simply add Jesus to the pantheon of ideas and believe this is consistent with His teachings concerning Himself
* Wherever there is a superficial view of God’s Word there will be a low view of the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ.

4. The Prosperity Gospel: The pride of the prosperity gospel claims that God is primarily concerned with our wealth, health, and prosperity in this life because success in these areas means that God is well pleased with a person while their poverty means that God is not pleased with their faith, life, ministry, work

* Matthew 5:10-12, “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
* Matthew 10:16, “Behold I send you out as sheep amidst wolves.”
* The primary problems with this doctrine are as follows:
* This doctrine puts tremendous emphasis on earthly rewards and temporary joys to the detriment of eternal rewards and eternal joys.
This doctrine elevates the role of humans in God’s work, some claiming that God needs our permission to do anything in this world.
* This doctrine elevates the position of humans, some even claiming that as God spoke the universe into existence, by making us in His own image, He has given to us the same power to speak things into reality in our lives – the Word of faith movement that says if you speak it and you believe it you will make whatever reality you wish for yourselves, primarily wealth and health
* Whenever there is a superficial view of heaven there will be a low view of living for eternal purposes.
* Three texts that I spent 6 hours teaching: II Corinthians 4:1-2, 7, II Timothy 2:1-3, II Timothy 4:1-5, in addition to bringing in several other texts like Matthew 10
* Then on the last night of worship, guest speaker, in addition to his very poor use of various verses to prove his point he said (he said, “I was sitting in the back row thinking what I would say and the Spirit of God told me to preach on this topic of prayer.”) “if you pray and have enough faith, you will not have to worry about money. People with throw money, land, and cars at you.”
* Throughout the message he preached in the name of Jesus, calling Jesus his Lord.
* Throughout the message he claimed to battle demons in specific events.
* Throughout the message he claimed to have performed many miracles including claiming that he had dominion over the weather and was able through his prayer to make it rain and to make the sun shine.
* **Read II Peter 2:1-3(Slide 5)**
* Why this matters here and in Asia? If you say, the mark of a man or woman of God is that they experience no trials, no difficulties, no illness, no loss of financial security, then no one will go to Bhutan, Nepal, Burma, Bangladesh, Tibet, Thailand, Anarchal Pradish, Assam, Mexico, and Haiti.

IV. Practically, we must protect ourselves against these false doctrines everyday

* Any one of these four false doctrines can fail any one of us at any time.
* First, we may think, after some work or church attendance or financial gift, “I am so good.”
* Second, we may think, just prior to committing sin, “God will forgive me.”
* Third, we may think, just prior to speaking up about the salvation that is our in Christ Jesus, “Who am I to be telling them what to believe.”
* Fourth, we may think, just as we are going through some trial, “God must be unhappy with me.”
* It matters what we believe, it matters what we teach for our own lives and the souls of the nations
* We bring this Gospel, that Christ has saved sinners by His death, burial and resurrection; He then calls us to follow Him and to proclaim His unique salvation to the world; He calls us to do this even at great personal sacrifice and rejection by the world for His greater glory and our greater, everlasting joy