

Let No Man Beguile You

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According to God's Word and what we are seeing today in the world, everything is intensifying and everything is beginning to have a spiritual focus, but most of it is not the focus of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. What we are discerning is exactly what the Scriptures warn us would take place as things move toward their culmination. There is not merely an increase in activity, but an intensifying spiritual atmosphere that is becoming more pronounced, more visible, and yet more deceptive. The key issue is not whether something is "spiritual," but what is the object and source of that spirituality.

God's Word teaches us that we will "know them by their fruit", but who are they and what fruit will we know them by?

Matthew 7:17-20

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

This context of Scripture (Matthew 7:17-20) continues with those who will show up at the Great White Throne Judgment to be judged and cast into hell because everything they thought they had been doing for The Lord, they had been doing obviously with the wrong object of Faith and only for themselves, meaning it was without the working of The Holy Spirit.

Thus, one being able to discern what is good fruit and what is evil fruit is always going to be based on the object of one's Faith which will always be the source of their fruit.

Anchoring our study at this point in the context of Matthew 7, where Jesus is not speaking generally about behavior alone, but about discernment concerning false prophets and false professions of which all must be understood in the light of Him and His sacrifice, for that is the only place the Holy Spirit works. Let's walk carefully through these Scriptures in their order and context.

Who are "they"?

Matthew 7:15

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

The “they” in “you shall know them by their fruits” are:

- False prophets
- Those who appear outwardly as sheep (professing Christ)
- Yet inwardly are not submitted to the truth of Christ and His Cross

These are not merely immoral people. They are religious, often active and very talented, often influential, but their Faith is not anchored in Christ and His sacrificial work on the Cross.

What fruit is being spoken of?

Matthew 7:17-18

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Here is the critical distinction:

- Tree = the source (the heart, the nature, the object of Faith)

- Fruit = the result (what is produced through that source)

So, the main issue is not merely what is done, but what it comes from:

The Cross Defines the Tree

In the full counsel of God's Reconciling Words of Redemptive Righteousness, we know:

- The only good tree is one planted in union with Christ in His death (Romans 6:3-6)

Romans 6:3-6

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

- The only avenue of The Spirit's work is Faith in the Cross (Galatians 5:16-18)

Galatians 5:16-18

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Anything outside of that framework, even if it appears spiritual, is corrupt at the root

The shocking continuation which we see in Matthew 7:21-23 is Jesus immediately explaining what “bad fruit” can look like:

Matthew 7:22-23

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Notice:

- They prophesied
- They cast out devils

- They did many wonderful works

Yet Jesus calls it “iniquity.” Why? Because it was not born from Faith in Christ and His finished work at Calvary.

What then is “Good Fruit”? Good fruit is not defined by activity, but by origin.

Philippians 1:11

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

These fruits:

- Are “of the Spirit”
- Flow only from Faith in Christ crucified
- Are the result of being delivered unto the death of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:11-12)

Evil fruit is not always viewed as sin, but is always:

- Religious works without the Cross
- Ministry without submission to Calvary
- Activity rooted in self, not in Christ

Romans 10:3

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

This is the root of corrupt fruit: A wrong object of Faith

The Holy Spirit's discerning guidance will be to always discern what is good fruit and what is evil fruit based on the object of one's Faith.

That is exactly the issue.

Because:

- The object of Faith determines the source
- The source determines the fruit
- The fruit reveals the truth

"They" are false prophets and false believers who appear righteous but are not rooted in Christ

crucified.

- Good fruit is what the Holy Spirit produces through Faith in the Cross
- Evil fruit is anything produced outside that framework, even if religious and impressive
- Final judgment reveals that activity without the Cross is iniquity

This is why everything returns to Jesus Christ and Him crucified because only there:

- humility is found
- grace is given
- the Spirit works
- and true fruit is produced

Let's move a little deeper into this eye-opening revelation for those who are holding fast to that Form of Doctrine which makes all doctrine sound. What makes all doctrine sound doctrine is that it must be touching and flowing from the doctrine that made us sound in Christ as Believers.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

1. Scripture shows an increase in spiritual activity, which will be true and false in these last days.

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Notice, this is not a departure from religion, but from the Faith. And the Faith is not abstract, but it is Faith in Jesus Christ and what He did at the Cross.

So, what replaces it?

- Seducing spirits
- Doctrines of devils

That means an increase in spirituality that is real but not rooted in Calvary.

2. There will be a form of godliness without the Cross

2 Timothy 3:1, 5

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

The “power” being denied is not emotional expression or outward activity but it is the power of the Cross, which is the only avenue through which:

- Sin is dealt with
- The flesh is subdued
- The Holy Spirit works
- Godliness is experienced

Anything that removes the Cross removes the only framework in which God’s power operates.

3. Deception will look spiritual, convincing, and even miraculous

Matthew 24:24

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

The deception is not weak or obvious. It is:

- supernatural
- impressive
- persuasive

But it is not anchored in the sacrifice of Christ. This is not a move of God, and these, without proper Faith, will never be found as determined to know nothing other than Christ and His Cross.

4. The enemy's strategy is to shift our focus away from the Cross

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

The simplicity in Christ is this:

Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

1 Corinthians 2:2

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Anything more complex, more appealing to the flesh, or more “experiential” that departs from the Cross is a corruption, even if it uses the name of Jesus.

5. Why everything feels like it’s intensifying

Because two things are happening simultaneously:

A. Darkness is increasing

Isaiah 60:2a

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people...

B. Light is becoming more defined

Isaiah 60:2b

...but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

That glory is only known:

- in the face of Jesus Christ
- through what He did at Calvary

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That light shines where?

In the context of the Cross, because the very next verses reveal where God delivers His people always so they can continue to behold the True Light, and to walk in that Light with Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:10-12

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

6. The dividing line in these last days

Everything is being brought to one dividing line, which is, is it anchored in Christ and His sacrifice, or is it not? There is no middle ground.

Many things today:

- sound spiritual
- feel spiritual
- appear powerful

But if they are not rooted in Faith in the death of Jesus, they cannot be the work of the Holy Spirit because He only works within that framework.

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 2:20-21

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if Righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

7. What the Lord is doing in contrast

God is not responding to the increase of deception by creating something new, but He is bringing His people back to the Cross.

Hebrews 12:24-25

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

God speaks from heaven through the Blood

Everything is intensifying, but the issue is not the increase of spirituality. The issue is the object of Faith.

Only the one and proper focus allows:

- true discernment
- true grace
- true operation of the Holy Spirit

John 3:3-5

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And that true vision and focus comes through Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Anything outside of that, no matter how spiritual it appears, is outside the only place where God can be found and where He works.

There is a great spiritual movement among what is labeled as Catholicism and even other titles among religions, but they are all about works even though they mention Jesus and His Cross. What we are seeing must be discerned properly and handled carefully, because the issue is not what a group is called, but what the object of Faith actually is in practice. There can be a real sense of spiritual movement, sincerity, devotion, and even the mention of Jesus and His Cross, but the determining factor remains, is Faith anchored exclusively in what Christ accomplished at Calvary, or is it placed in something we do? There is not a third option, nor has there ever been or will there ever be.

1. The core issue is not the mention of the Cross, but reliance upon it

Many systems, including what is commonly identified as Catholicism, do speak of:

- Jesus
- His death
- His resurrection

But the question is: What is presented as the means of receiving and experiencing grace?

If grace is said to come through:

- rituals
- sacraments
- personal merit
- ongoing works

... then the Cross is no longer the exclusive object of Faith, but rather just one part of a larger system of man's way.

Scripture is very direct here:

Galatians 2:21

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if Righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Anything added as a requirement for Righteousness, even if religious, places the focus back on man's doing and is evil in God's eyes.

2. A mixture is more dangerous than outright denial

What we are seeing today is not a denial of Christ, it is a mixture, and mixture is exactly what the enemy uses, because it:

- sounds right
- feels reverent
- includes bits of Truth
- but shifts the foundation

Galatians 1:6-7

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

A “perverted” gospel is not one that removes Jesus’ name, but one that redefines how His work is applied.

3. Works cannot coexist as a co-source of Righteousness

Romans 11:6

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

This is absolute and leaves no room for blending:

- not grace + works
- not Cross + ritual

It is either:

- entirely what Christ did, or
- something we contribute

The Holy Spirit only works within the framework of Faith in the Cross. If the object of Faith shifts, even subtly, the experience of grace is affected.

Imagine not knowing that we are telling God that the Cross of Christ was not enough and that I must do something to finalize it. How heartbreaking, and millions upon millions are doing just that today, and I speak from experience when I was found in a state of ignorance in the past.

Galatians 5:1-4

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

4. Why it still feels like a “move”

There are a few reasons why something can feel spiritually active:

A. Sincerity

People can be deeply sincere and devoted.

Romans 10:2-3

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God.

B. Emotional and religious intensity

Atmosphere, tradition, and reverence can create a strong sense of spirituality.

C. Partial Truth

Any time Jesus is mentioned, there is some measure of Truth, but Truth must be complete in its focus on His finished work.

5. The Cross leaves no place for works as a means

At Calvary:

- the work was finished
- the price was fully paid
- Righteousness was provided

John 19:30

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

So, the only proper response is not doing to obtain, but believing to receive.

6. The Real Dividing Line

This is where clarity must remain firm but with humility:

It is not about labeling people, but is about identifying the object of Faith.

There are individuals within every system who may:

- truly trust Christ
- genuinely look to His sacrifice

But any doctrine that teaches:

- grace through works
- Righteousness through ritual
- sanctification through human effort

... has moved the focus away from the Cross as the sole object of Faith.

7. The Call in This Hour

In a time where spiritual activity is increasing everywhere, even in systems centered on works, The Lord is still calling His people to one place:

1 Corinthians 2:2

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Not:

- Jesus plus something
- the Cross plus effort

But Christ and Him crucified alone.

Colossians 2:4

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Colossians 2:18

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

May our Lord be found restoring the needed discernment in these last days as many have already fallen away from the Faith.



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