

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** How to Spot a Counterfeit

**SERMON REFERENCE:** 2 Peter 2:1-3

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1829

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) 2 Peter 2:1-3
- b) Today's message will look at the problem of counterfeit Christians and counterfeit preachers and prophets.
  - i) The world is full today of dangerous heresies, and the need in these last days is authentic, Biblical Christianity.
- c) In the Bible, there is no greater crime than being a false prophet.
  - i) A false prophet would be put to death in the Old Testament.
    - (1) Deuteronomy 18:20
- d) It is bad to tell a lie.
  - i) It is worse to teach a lie.
  - ii) It is terribly worse to tell a lie and to teach a lie about God because you can cause a soul to be eternally lost.
- e) In today's message, we will learn several ways to spot counterfeit prophets, teachers and preachers.

2) WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF THEIR PRESENCE (2 PETER 2:1)

- a) 2 Peter 2:1
  - i) The "people" referred to in this passage is Israel of old.
    - (1) The author is saying that there have been false prophets in the past, so it's not new.
    - (2) False religion is as old as Eden.
- b) We subdivide religion into Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, etc., then we subdivide Christianity into Catholicism and Protestantism, and we further subdivide Protestantism into denominations; but there are really only two kinds of religion in the world:
  - i) The true
  - ii) The false
- c) There have been false teachers since the Garden of Eden, and they still exist today.
- d) In 2 Peter 2:1, the "you" refers to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) There are false teachers in churches today.
- e) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
  - i) There are some who don't know the Lord and are going to die and go to Hell, but they stand in pulpits as false apostles and angels of light.
  - ii) When you look for the devil, never fail to look in the pulpit.
- f) We shouldn't let false teachers take us by surprise.
  - i) The Bible says clearly that they will be among us.

3) WE CAN IDENTIFY THEM BY THEIR MESSAGE (1 PETER 2:1)

- a) 1 Peter 2:1
  - i) Their message is called "damnable heresies."
  - ii) The word "heresy" comes from a word which means "to divide."

- (1) When heresy comes into the church, it always causes people to have to make a choice, and there is division.
  - (a) The leadership or someone in the church confronts the heresy, but those teaching the heresy refuse to stop teaching it; so, division ensues.
- b) When confronted, those who are teaching the heresies will act as if they're the ones being persecuted and put upon.
  - i) They will act like it's your fault, even though you're the one standing against what is wrong.
- c) Whether it's a denomination or a local church, heresy must be dealt with.
  - i) It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error.
  - ii) We don't have to get along with everybody.
  - iii) There comes a time when we must say, "That is wrong."
- d) Some people think that the Bible is not true because there are false teachers.
  - i) To the contrary, if there were no false cults, then the Bible would not be true because it says that there will be false cults.
    - (1) 2 Peter 2:1
    - (2) 1 Timothy 4:1
- e) How do you spot false prophets?
  - i) The source test
    - (1) What is the basis of their teachings?
    - (2) Do they have revelation other than the Bible?
      - (a) Some false teachers say that they accept the Bible as the Word of God but that they also accept another as a prophet.
      - (b) They want to lay down another source alongside the Word of God.
    - (3) The Bible says that we're not to add anything to the Word of God or take from it.
      - (a) We're not to amend it; we're not to adjust it.
      - (b) Deuteronomy 12:32
    - (4) Is their source the Word of God?
  - ii) The Savior test
    - (1) Do they believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the virgin-born Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father?
    - (2) Matthew 4:10
  - iii) The subject test
    - (1) Is the primary source of their teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
    - (2) 1 Corinthians 2:2
      - (a) The Apostle Paul determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
        - (i) Everything else folds into that.
        - (ii) Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the basis.
    - (3) The Old Testament says that someone is coming, the New Testament says that someone has come, the book of the Revelation says that someone is coming again, and that someone is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (4) He is the hero of the Bible.
    - (a) The Bible has one theme: salvation.
    - (b) The Bible has one hero: Jesus.
    - (c) The Bible has one villain: the devil.
  - (5) Do they teach that salvation is by grace through faith?
  - (6) Galatians 1:9
  - iv) The salvation test
    - (1) Do they teach salvation by grace, or do they try to mix works, baptism or anything else into it?
    - (2) Anytime anyone says that anything else must be done other than trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, they then take the “whosoever” out of the Bible.
      - (a) You take the “whosoever” out of the Bible anytime you add anything else as a requirement for salvation.
    - (3) Romans 10:13
      - (a) Anybody anytime, anyplace who calls upon Jesus in repentance and faith will be saved.
  - v) The sanctification test
    - (1) Do they teach and are they endeavoring to live a holy life?
      - (a) If they’re not living a holy life and don’t teach personal holiness and separation from sin, then there’s something amiss in their teaching.
- 4) WE CAN IDENTIFY THEM BY THEIR METHOD (2 PETER 2:1-3)
- a) 2 Peter 2:1-3
    - i) These verses speak of the way false teachers and prophets operate.
      - (1) “Pernicious way”
      - (2) “Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.”
      - (3) “Privily bring in damnable heresies.”
    - ii) The word “privily” means “secretly,” “clandestinely.”
      - (1) It means “in a way that’s hard to spot.”
  - b) They lay false teaching alongside good teaching in order to confuse people.
    - i) We even see this in advertising.
      - (1) Beer commercials often associate their product with having a good time and the beautiful outdoors.
        - (a) They don’t show the drunk man abusing his family.
        - (b) They don’t show the accident caused by a drunk driver.
  - c) 2 Peter 2:3
    - i) The Greek word “feigned” is the word from which we get our word “plastic.”
      - (1) It is something that’s pliable.
      - (2) It is something that molds itself simply to fit and to imitate.
        - (a) False teachers are good at feigned words.
        - (b) Liberalism will use our words and their dictionary.

- 5) WE CAN IDENTIFY THEM BY THEIR MANNER (2 PETER 2:2)
- a) 2 Peter 2:2
    - i) “Pernicious” literally means “unbridled lust.”
  - b) These counterfeiters don’t love the Lord.
    - i) They are unable to love the Lord because they don’t know the Lord.
  - c) The sum, center and substance of their message is themselves.
  - d) Apostasy and immorality are always inextricably interwoven.
    - i) Jude 4
      - (1) There are those who spout about grace; yet they live in sin, saying that Calvary covers it all.
        - (a) That is a heresy.
      - (2) Romans 6:1
    - ii) Jeremiah 23:14
      - (1) They called themselves prophets, but they were living in sin.
  - e) Many will follow their pernicious ways.
    - i) 2 Peter 2:2
    - ii) They love to have a preacher who will drink with them or use coarse language.
      - (1) It makes them feel better.
    - iii) What some people call “success” in the ministry does not necessarily mean that it’s God’s work.
      - (1) Statistics are no proof that something is of God because many will follow their pernicious ways.
      - (2) Matthew 7:21
  - f) Many people are living double lives.
- 6) WE CAN IDENTIFY THEM BY THEIR MOTIVE (2 PETER 2:3)
- a) 2 Peter 2:3
    - i) They want to make merchandise of you.
      - (1) They want to use you and manipulate you because they themselves are covetous.
    - ii) This does not mean that a preacher should not be paid.
      - (1) Deuteronomy 25:4
      - (2) 1 Corinthians 9:14
      - (3) Luke 10:7
      - (4) 1 Timothy 5:17
    - iii) He is talking about people, who for their own motivation and out of their own wicked heart, make merchandise of the Gospel.
  - b) Peter says that God will surely judge them and will not spare them.
    - i) 2 Peter 2:4-7, 9
      - (1) God spared not the angels who fell.
      - (2) He spared not the old world.
      - (3) He spared not Sodom and Gomorrah.

- (4) He will not spare a false prophet.
- ii) Romans 8:32
  - (1) God did not spare His Son.
  - (2) Jesus Christ left Heaven, came to this Earth and became our substitute on the cross.
    - (a) Our sin was put upon the Lord Jesus.
    - (b) He suffered, but He did not cry.
      - (i) Isaiah 53:7
  - (3) God the Father, who had always been with the Lord Jesus Christ from eternity, turned His back on and forsook God the Son.
    - (a) Matthew 27:46
    - (b) God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.
      - (i) The sin of the world was laid upon Jesus.
      - (ii) The Lord Jesus, who had never sinned, became sin for us.
    - (c) Jesus, who had been the object of the Father's greatest delight, became the object of the Father's loathing.
    - (d) God the Father had to look upon God the Son as He would look upon us at the final judgment without our sin atoned for.
  - (4) If God did not spare Jesus when sin was laid upon Jesus, then God will not spare those whose sin is still upon them.

## 7) CONCLUSION

- a) Romans 8:32 tells us that God did not spare His Son.
  - i) This passage also holds another blessed truth:
    - (1) If God loves us enough to give Jesus, then what would He withhold?
- b) Don't get caught up in counterfeit Christianity.
  - i) God is the unsparing God.
    - (1) He will not spare sin.
    - (2) He will not spare the sinner.
  - ii) He also did not spare His Son, the Lord Jesus, that we might be saved and have eternal life.
- c) This world is full of counterfeits; make sure you have the real thing.
- d) We don't get rid of all of our money just because there are some counterfeit bills out there.
  - i) So, don't let some counterfeit Christians keep you away from the Lord Jesus.
    - (1) The counterfeit only proves the worthwhile-ness and the validity of the real thing.
    - (2) Every counterfeit Christian is but a tribute to what we have and the value of it.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.

- i) Romans 3:23
- ii) Romans 10:9-10
- iii) Romans 10:13
- iv) Acts 16:31
- v) John 3:16