

Jesus says, **Beware of false prophets.** How fitting that lectionary reading to fall on this day, 16 years as Risen Savior, 116 as Lutherans here. And this August, marks 50 years ago the congregation was misled by our own District President, that call a false prophet from the seminex crowd, and the true Lutherans here would soon, get locked out and robbed of our own church. And struggle to survive the next few decades. But, **Blessed are you who are persecuted for my Name's sake.**

When Jesus issues a warning, it's serious. **Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing.** There's an interesting connection here. Old Testament prophets would often wear a sheepskin over their shoulders, like a stoll, a sign of their office, as those who spoke the word of the Lord.

Jeremiah, St. Paul, Jesus, all warning us about false prophets. The warning, a bit like telling us not take candy from strangers. We need to do more than just know false prophets, doctrine exist. We need to be alert to the risk, the dangers to our loved ones, to us. We must remain alert. For we are constantly being lied to by **false prophets** who claim to be experts: in politics, sports, entertainment, in science, medicine, in schools, in media –in the church, espousing lies, repudiating the Word of God.

Beware. They can be very nice, mean well, very winsome, what they say can make sense. But are wolves. Don't be naive or fooled. Think of the many things people say about God, Christianity, faith? Some will say “differences of teaching really don't matter”, or “just find a church that feels right.” Things like, “*as long as you're Christian, that's what's most important, the doctrinal stuff, let theologians debate that; as long as you're sincere, love God, love people, live right, be good, go to church sometimes, make good choices, God is pleased.*” That's tempting, because it fits so nicely with the spirit of our age. The problem is, it's not biblical.

Beware, Jesus says. He doesn't say, “be tolerant.” **Beware.** Jesus is serious! Consider all the people that speak of Jesus, call themselves Christian? Our Lord says **whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.** Yes, that's a promise. And yet what did you hear Jesus say today? So terrifying, **not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” shall enter the Kingdom of heaven.**

Most churches tell you infant baptism and Lord's Supper are not God's work and thus no real value. Most churches will tell you, you need to give and work and improve yourself in finding a purpose and relationship to awaken God to act and bless you. Most churches accept women pastors. Most churches reject the sanctity of life God creates, the sanctity of marriage as God creates it. Most churches preach self-improvement, self-fulfillment, self-love, because God wants me to be happy. God's word says otherwise. False teachers do not preach repentance and Christ crucified.

People turn Church from a House of prayer to House of spiritual entertainment, and man's centered piety. Now don't misunderstand me. I make no judgment

about whether or not these people are Christians and saved. I don't know that. But I do know what they teach. And it's harmful, tainted, it's wrong.

False teaching -not just misleading but poison to the soul. It undermines Jesus, creates doubts, leads to destruction. We all tend to view it as relatively harmless, "just someone else's interpretation, opinions, just a different point of view." Not that big a deal. And it's not polite to question, challenge anyone's belief.

Consider if I give you water to drink. I put in an eye drop of poison -not enough to kill or make you immediately sick- would you drink it? You can't even tell, looks the same, you won't die and go to hell. No! How much poison and you still drink it. None. That's how doctrine, God's word should be viewed. If it's tainted the slightest by teachings of man, tainted the slightest by how people feel or shaped by the culture, if it doesn't follow what you've learned in the Catechism. You shouldn't drink it at all. Jesus cares about pure treating of His Word because He loves you; wants to prevent poison from entering your ears and heart.

The warning **only those who do the will of the Father enter the Kingdom of heaven**. Here's something shocking! The will of the Father, is not something you do. The will of the Father: for you to receive the fruits of His Son. **By their fruits you shall know them**. Jesus is talking about doctrine. The only fruits that we bear, is what Christ bore. And the only fruits of Christ -a reconciliation of creation to the Father and the forgiveness of sins. The fruits of Christ crucified, His gifts unto you. What else is there?

Beware. A stern warning. A matter of life and death. But do not be afraid. Be repentant, your heartfelt sorrow, desire to do better. Immerse yourself in His Word. Confess this truth. Carry out your Christian duty. And that duty means judging doctrine. Believing **the whole council of God** as St. Paul puts it today, as we learn from the Catechism, as we stand on the foundation of Christ alone that we build our church, our congregation, our homes, our lives.

Christ fruits are yours. God's will for you. His paid your debt. There is no more. You are forgiven all your sins. You are blessed and loved by Him. He purifies you and creates good works in you. You don't answer for past sins. He has answered for you. You are a good fruit according to His Word. He blesses the works of your hands, uses it for the good of all creation. He makes no demands of you. He simply loves and forgives and blesses you. His works belong to you. Everything is His, and He gives everything to you. To the false prophets, who use His name, Jesus says, **I never knew you**. But to you dear child of God. He knew you in your mother's womb; calling you by name. You are true sheep. He seals you in waters of His death and resurrection. He feeds you the good fruit of His tree from His Altar. When you call **Lord, Lord**, He will answer. He will always answer you. And you will hear Him say to you. As Pat Oyer heard yesterday morning, as your _____, your loved one in Christ has heard, as one day you will certainly hear, **well done good and faithful servant. Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**