**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Beware the Wolves |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 7:15-23 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1710 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Matthew 7:15-23
      1. This passage of Scripture begins with a warning.
   2. What do you do when you walk up to a house and see a sign that says, “Beware of the dog”?
      1. You beware of the dog.
      2. You stop right away.
      3. You look around and wonder if you should go in there.
      4. It sensitizes you.
      5. Imagine walking up to a house and seeing a sign that says, “Beware the wolf”.
         1. You would probably do a double-take.
   3. Jesus said to beware of the wolves.
      1. Matthew 7:15
      2. Wolves are known for the following:
         1. Their boldness.
         2. The fierceness of their attack.
         3. Wolves are the most dreaded and hated enemy of the shepherd.
            1. Not the lion, not the bear, but the wolf.
         4. It has been said that a wolf will kill for food; but once a wolf gets a taste for blood, he goes into a frenzy.
            1. He will kill far more than he can possibly eat.
      3. False prophets are like wolves.
         1. Not only are these wolves dangerous, but they are also deceptive.
      4. We cannot be wise and not beware.
      5. Many times, warnings have gone unheeded.
         1. If there were ever a generation that needs to be warned about false prophets, then it is this one.
   4. Satan is not opposed to religion.
      1. Satan is opposed to Biblical Christianity.
      2. Religion is one of Satan’s chief aims.
   5. Satan comes against the church in two basic ways:
      1. Persecution
         1. But many times for Satan, persecution will not work.
            1. Sometimes God’s people, rather than folding up, will stand up against persecution.
            2. Many times, God cuts Goliath’s head off with the sword that Goliath sharpened.
      2. Infiltration
         1. The great danger to today’s church is the infiltration of false prophets wearing sheep’s clothing.
         2. Acts 20:28-29
            1. “Flock” here is God’s sheep.
         3. 2 Corinthians 11:13-14
         4. Satan is the captain of camouflage.
            1. He is the master of deceit.
         5. Matthew 24:24
   6. Every now and then, someone will say that the Bible is not true.
      1. They say this because of false religions and false prophets.
         1. These do not prove the Bible not to be true, instead they authenticate the Bible.
            1. If there were no false prophets, then the Bible would not be true.

Because the Bible says that they are coming.

* + - * 1. These things confirm and authenticate our faith.
  1. Today’s message will give us three basic things we need to know as we beware the wolves.

1. the fleece they wear (matthew 7:15, Jude 11)
   1. Matthew 7:15
      1. They come wearing sheep’s clothing.
         1. They appear like part of the flock.
         2. This is the disguise that they wear.
   2. There are three kinds of false prophets.
      1. If you just look for one kind, then you’re apt to miss the other two.
      2. God has given us a description of all three in one verse.
         1. Jude 11
            1. The book of Jude is a warning about false prophets.
   3. Cain represents those who pervert the Gospel.
      1. Jude 11
      2. God gave Adam and Eve two sons:
         1. Cain
         2. Abel
      3. Genesis 4:1-8
         1. Abel was a keeper of flocks.
         2. Cain was a farmer or tiller of the ground.
         3. The two brothers made two offerings.
            1. Abel offered to the Lord the firstlings of the flock.

A perfect lamb was killed.

The blood of that lamb was offered to the Lord as an atonement for sin.

* + - * 1. Cain offered to God the fruit of his hands, his work, and the sweat of his face.
      1. We have here two brothers, two offerings, two religions, and two destinies.
    1. Abel offered the very best – the firstling of the flock to the Lord.
       1. God was teaching the lesson that we see affirmed in Hebrews 9:22.
          1. “Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.”
       2. Hebrews 11:4
          1. By faith, Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice.
          2. Abel had faith in the blood.

The blood is not incidental, and it is not accidental.

The blood is fundamental; it is eternal.

1 John 1:7

* + 1. Cain offered the fruit of the ground.
       1. His offering was not based on blood.
          1. It was based on the fruits and the flowers of his own effort.

It may have been impressive.

It may have been beautiful.

It may have been costly.

* + - 1. God was not impressed.
         1. You can’t get blood out of a turnip.
         2. Hebrews 9:22
      2. Cain’s offering represented culture, not Calvary.
         1. It represented works, not grace.
    1. There are only two kinds of religion:
       1. The true
       2. The false
    2. We like to divide the world into Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc.
       1. We even subdivide Christianity into Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Catholic, and others.
    3. But there are only two kinds of religion:
       1. The way of Cain
          1. This way leads to Hell.
       2. The way of the cross
          1. This way leads to Heaven.
    4. Many people today are going to churches and worshipping, but they will not hear salvation by the blood preached.
       1. They will not say that the man preaching is a false prophet.
          1. But he has gone the way of Cain.
          2. If they are offering to God the works of their hands rather than the blood of the Lamb, then that man is a false prophet.
  1. Balaam represents those who prostitute the Gospel.
     1. Jude 11
     2. Balaam was orthodox, but he was an apostate prophet.
     3. Numbers 22
        1. Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid of the Israelites.
           1. He couldn’t figure out a way to overcome them.
           2. He came up with a diabolical scheme.

He wanted the prophet Balaam to put a curse on Israel.

* + - 1. Balaam wouldn’t curse those about whom God had said, “I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee.”
         1. Genesis 12:3
      2. But Balaam thought of a way that he could serve God and make a profit on the side.
         1. He wouldn’t curse the Israelites, but he told Balak how he could get them to curse themselves.

If Balak, the king of Moab, could get the Israelites to sin, then he wouldn’t have to curse them.

God would curse them.

* + - 1. The daughters of Moab went in and began to flirt with the men of Israel.
         1. There was adultery, fornication, and wickedness.

These same things will cause God to curse America.

* + - 1. The man of God would not stand up for purity and righteousness.
      2. God slew 24,000 Israelites.
    1. Balaam’s problem was that he was orthodox but greedy.
       1. Jude 11
    2. We curse the church if we don’t live right.
       1. There are many false prophets today who will not preach and teach what the Bible says about righteousness.
    3. Many preachers and teachers are trimming the messages for personal gain.
       1. That gain doesn’t have to be financial.
          1. It can be for prestige, popularity, or power.
    4. 2 Peter 2:1-3
       1. Covetousness is what happened to Balaam.
    5. There are many false prophets who spell “prophet” as “profit”.
       1. They are in it for what they can get.
       2. They don’t pervert the Gospel, but they prostitute the Gospel.
          1. They sell and peddle the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 2:17

* 1. Korah represents those who protest the Gospel.
     1. Numbers 16
     2. Korah was a gifted man and a man of privilege.
        1. He was a Levite.
        2. He was a prince of Israel.
     3. Somehow, he got the idea that he didn’t like the leadership of Moses and Aaron.
        1. Moses and Aaron were a prophet and a priest.
        2. The Bible prophesies the coming of Jesus and says that Jesus will be a prophet like Moses.
           1. Moses is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.
           2. Aaron is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ because Christ is our High Priest.

Christ is a prophet and priest to the church.

* + 1. Korah organized a rebellion against Moses and Aaron.
       1. The Bible says that Moses fell on his face before God and told God about it.
       2. There came a judgment where the earth opened up and swallowed Korah.
          1. Korah and all who followed him went down into Hell.
    2. Korah’s problem was that he fought the Gospel and hated the Gospel.
       1. He rose up in rebellion against those who represented God’s prophet and priest, who pictured the Lord Jesus Christ.
    3. There are those who hate the message that we preach.
       1. They despise the blood-bought way and the Word of God.
       2. We are dangerous to another kingdom and to another way.
  1. Those who pervert the Gospel, prostitute the Gospel, and protest the Gospel are false prophets.
     1. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

1. the fruit they bear (matthew 7:16-19)
   1. Matthew 7:16-19
      1. He no longer speaks of them as animals but as trees.
   2. The devil cannot continue to cover by deception because the fruit is there.
   3. It is the root that determines the fruit.
      1. We don’t get figs from thistles.
      2. If we had a fruit tree that wasn’t bearing the right kind of fruit, then what could we do to get the right kind of fruit on it?
         1. We could prune it.
            1. This would strengthen the root.
            2. People think that if they just get rid of this thing or that, then they would be a better tree.
         2. We could transplant it.
            1. We could take a bad fruit tree and put it in another place.
            2. That is what some people do when they move their church membership.

They are just transplanting a bad tree.

* + - 1. We could cultivate it.
         1. A lot of people are going to church growth conferences today.

But they are just being told how to fertilize weeds.

Growth is not everything.

* + - 1. We could rename it.
         1. To rename it will not change the fruit.
      2. We could decorate it.
         1. You could pull off the bad fruit and tie on some figs or pomegranates.
    1. No matter what we do, whether we transplant it, fertilize it, prune it, rename it, or decorate it, it is the root that determines the fruit.
  1. It is the fruit that reveals the root.
     1. Sometimes, we can’t tell what type of fruit tree it is by looking at the root.
        1. A lot of roots look the same.
     2. How do we judge a preacher?
        1. Not merely by what he preaches but by what he produces.
           1. Matthew 7:16
        2. We may not be able to tell at first; he may be a good-looking tree.
           1. We have to wait until the fruit comes out.

John 15:16

* + - 1. What is the mark of a man of God?
         1. There will be plenty of people who will know Jesus and love Jesus because of him.
         2. There will be fruit, and that fruit will remain.
    1. 2 Peter 1:8
       1. We are not to be unfruitful.
    2. Galatians 5:22
       1. This verse contains the fruit of the Spirit.
          1. We cannot produce this fruit.
          2. If we will abide in Jesus, then we will bear this fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit is not our fruit.

* 1. It is the seed that determines the root and the fruit.
     1. We will not have the right kind of root or fruit if we don’t have the right kind of seed.
     2. Matthew 13:3-9
        1. The seed is the Word of God.

1. the fate they share (matthew 7:21-23)
   1. Matthew 7:21-23
      1. He is now talking about the judgment day.
      2. Spiritual activity without Scriptural authority is satanic iniquity.
      3. Jesus will say to these, “Depart from Me,” in spite of the following:
         1. Their false profession
            1. They say, “Lord, Lord.”
         2. Their false preaching
            1. “We prophesied in Your name.”
         3. Their false power
            1. “In Thy name, we cast out devils.”
         4. Their false performance
            1. “In Thy name, we’ve done many wonderful works.”
   2. In spite of their profession, their preaching, their power, and their performance, they never knew the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. And He never knew them.
   3. This is not a picture of someone who lost their salvation.
      1. They never had it.
         1. They may have sung in the choir, but they were not saved.
         2. They may have preached, but they were not saved.
         3. They may have had healing campaigns in which they cast out devils, but they were not saved.
            1. What they did, they did through the power of the great deceiver, Satan himself.
2. CONCLUSION
   1. How do you know whether or not you are saved?
      1. Get in God’s Word, and stand on it.
   2. If what someone preaches doesn’t match up with the Word of God, then he is a false prophet.
   3. Get the Word of God, and don’t put your faith in anyone else.
      1. Let the Holy Spirit of God speak to you.
   4. There are five things for you to do:
      1. Study the faith.
         1. If you don’t study the faith, then you can be drawn away into a false cult.
      2. Show the faith.
         1. The best argument for Christianity and against Christianity is the life of a Christian.
      3. Stand for the faith.
         1. Get a grip on the Word of God.
      4. Support the faith.
         1. The tragedy of today is that many good people are in bad churches.
         2. Get in a Bible-preaching church.
      5. Share the faith.
         1. People are waiting to know.
            1. And we know the truth.
         2. We hear people say to keep the faith.
            1. But don’t keep it; give it away.
   5. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   6. 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.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16