## TOPIC: THE PROPHET'S TEST

Our Lord Jesus gave us a crucial prophetic safeguard: follow those who bear good fruit.

### KEY POINTS

- A lesson in mangoes: when you get a big, beautiful, juicy-looking mango in your hand, don't just bite into it. First, cut it open and check what's inside. Not every mango looks as good on the inside as on the outside!
- Prophets are those who speak on God's behalf. They communicate the mind, will and purpose of God concerning present realities and future eventualities. Prophets are privileged and honoured to utilize the gift of the Spirit the apostle Paul said we should desire most.
- As you listen to the prophets who speak to you, here is a tip to help you evaluate their messages: Do the prophet's test – check out their fruit.
- Some prophets are skilled in dealing with 'logos' – the written word of God and the spoken word of Jesus Christ recorded for us in Scripture.
- Even without observing their fruit, it is somewhat straightforward to evaluate the ministry of these prophets: we search the Word for ourselves.
- Other prophets tend to deliver 'rhema' (literally, "utterance") – a spontaneous word from God to the church, an individual, or even a nation.
- This word often begins with, "the Lord told me to tell you," "I was praying, and the Lord gave me a word for you," or "I have a word from God for someone watching this program right now."
- God has chosen to speak to us through human vessels, flawed and imperfect as we are. His indwelling Spirit gives us supernatural giftings and abilities intended to benefit the body of Christ.
- But in the midst of all the good things God has given us, He sounds a note of caution to protect us from harm: Get to know the prophets in your life. True prophets are known by the good fruit they bear. Do the prophet's test.
- So, someone comes to you and says, "The Lord gave me a word for you." What do you do?
- First, you listen. Take note of it in some fashion so you won't forget. Does their prophetic word confirm something the Lord has already been speaking to you about, or is it something completely new and unexpected?
- Then, it is wise and appropriate to look at the prophet's fruit. Are they living a life that gives you confidence that God is speaking through them to bring you a divine word? This is the prophet's test Jesus gave us in our text.

### KEY SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 7:15-23; Galatians 5:22-26;
1 Corinthians 14:29; 2 Corinthians 13:1

- You will know whether a prophet is true or false by their fruit – by the lives they live and by the way they behave.
- "[22]But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith-fulness, [23]gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).
- If a prophet tells you to buy a particular house, enroll in a particular school, marry a particular person, or engage in a particular ministry, don't jump to follow their word (even if it's something you want to do).
- It is wise to apply the scriptural principles we have at our disposal that relate to prophecy:
  1 Corinthians 14:29: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge."
  2 Corinthians 13:1: "This will be the third time I am coming to you. 'By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.'"
- It is highly unwise to make decisions based on the word of one prophet; especially one you don't truly know!
- Of course, if a prophet tells you it's ok to violate any of God's scriptural principles or laws, he or she is a false prophet!
- Jesus told us how to evaluate prophets – *observe their fruit* (Matthew 7:15-16).
- A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree, bad fruit. Eat only from good trees.

### DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Have you ever been given a "message from the Lord" from someone? If so, how did you react, and why that reaction (was it based on scriptural principles or personal partialities)? Explain.
2. How does one go about examining the fruit in the life of another? (Is this akin to being "judgmental"? Explain.)
3. Share as many scriptural principles as the group can for identifying a true prophet.

**Prayer Time**

Help me to be diligent and patient, Lord, to make sure those I allow to speak into my life are bearers of 'good fruit' and true words.

**Start Up: Do you prefer to eat fruit or vegetables? Which specific fruit or vegetables are your favourites and why do you like them?**

## WEEK OF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

### NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

### PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS