



“The One Who Has Authority” (Matthew 7:15-29)(10.8.23)

Matthew 7:15-29 Amplified Bible

¹⁵ “Beware of the false prophets, [teachers] who come to you dressed as sheep [appearing gentle and innocent], but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them [that is, by their contrived doctrine and self-focus]. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the unhealthy tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore, by their fruit you will recognize them [as false prophets].

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me on that day [when I judge them], ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and driven out demons in Your name, and done many miracles in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them publicly, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me [you are banished from My presence], you who act wickedly [disregarding My commands].’

²⁴ “So everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, will be like a wise man [a far-sighted, practical, and sensible man] who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods *and* torrents came, and the

winds blew and slammed against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish (stupid) man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods *and* torrents came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great *and* complete was its fall.”

²⁸ When Jesus had finished [speaking] these words [on the mountain], the crowds were astonished *and* overwhelmed at His teaching; ²⁹ for He was teaching them as one who had authority [to teach entirely of His own volition], and not as their scribes [who relied on others to confirm their authority].

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.



Title: **“The One Who Has Authority”**

INTRODUCTION:

Last week, our two verses were Matthew 7:13-14. As a believer in the Lord’s omnipotence and omniscience, I am not into coincidence. Here is one of my devotions from last Monday:

Monday, October 02

True or False

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

2 Timothy 3:13

In the early 1800s, speculation boiled over as to the exact day and year when Christ would return, and among the speculators was William Miller of New York. He announced that according to his careful calculations Christ would return to earth on October 22, 1844. When that morning dawned, a sense of foreboding fell over New England. People gathered on mountaintops and in churches. Normal activities ceased as everyone awaited the sudden rending of the skies and the end of the world.

When the day passed uneventfully, many Christians grew disillusioned. The unsaved became cynical, and the following years saw a decline in conversions. The event became known as "The Great Disappointment."

It was forgotten that Christ warned against setting dates for His return (Matthew 24:36). The Bible is filled with rich, true, accurate prophecies, but we must be discerning as we study—and especially as we listen to the theories and teachings of others. There are many false and mistaken Bible teachers in the world today. Ask God for a wise heart and be like the saints in Berea who studied the Scriptures daily "to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The chief means for attaining wisdom...are the holy Scriptures, and prayer.

John Newton

BODY:



My friends, human nature has never changed. The issue of false teachers was a problem in the Church very early on. AND, it still is today. We shouldn't be surprised though. The Old Testament often warned against

false prophets. Jeremiah 6:14 (NIV84)

They dress the wound of my people
as though it were not serious.

'Peace, peace,' they say,
when there is no peace.

This is only one among many scriptures in the Old Testament. We see it over and over again in the New Testament too! Jesus warns His followers in today's scripture and other places.

Matthew 24:4–13 (NIV84)

⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

The Apostle Peter 2 Peter 2:1 (NIV84)

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

The Apostle Paul Acts 20:27–31 (NIV84)

²⁷ For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. ²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

There are all kinds of false prophets. There are those that preach the prosperity gospel, not to enrich the saints but to fill their own pockets. There are those that desire to satisfy itching ears. There are those that preach legalism.

There are those that preach cheap grace. There are those that preach half-truths.

The letter of Jude makes this a central issue: Jude 3–5 (NIV84) *The Sin and Doom of Godless Men*

³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. ⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

⁵ Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

Just this week, “Christianity Today” published an article about a false prophet, a false teacher. I struggled mightily with whether or not I should share this. First of all, it is a highly controversial subject in the public realm. It is also explicitly relevant to the schism that has happened in the United Methodist Church. I have no desire to offend anyone but as I wrestled with this decision, I decided that I would be a false prophet or teacher if I didn’t address this very pertinent and contemporary issue.

I was also hesitant because this article came from Christianity.com, which of late seems to have become more and more liberal; or progressive, depending on your preference of language. The article is titled “Andy

Stanley's "'Unconditional' Contradiction.'" Let me preface this that I have a great respect for Andy's father, Charles Stanley. You have often heard me quote him. On top of that, I have been enamored of Andy's success in growing a megachurch and I have read a couple of his books.

This article was just published on October 4th, a few days ago. The subtitle reads: "The Atlanta-area pastor has said he affirms a New Testament sexual ethic, but his words and deeds have muddled that message."

Late last month, North Point Community Church hosted the [Unconditional Conference](#), billing the gathering as an event "for parents of LGBTQ+ children and for ministry leaders looking to discover ways to support parents and LGBTQ+ children in their churches." It would stake out a "quieter middle space" on a contentious topic, the organizers said.

As critics were [quick to note](#), the Atlanta-area conference featured speakers who are either in same-sex relationships or supportive of those who are, and on Sunday, North Point pastor Andy Stanley preached a sermon responding to criticisms of the event.

Stanley spent much of the sermon providing the backstory to the conference, which was developed to meet pastoral needs both of young people in the church wrestling with same-sex attraction and parents in the church whose children (who themselves were often—but not necessarily—adults) were coming out to them. He argued that this pastoral purpose warranted involving these particular speakers, outlined what he teaches about

sexual ethics, and spoke to how churches can move forward on this issue. Unfortunately, though Stanley articulated a commitment to a New Testament sexual ethic, he also seriously undermined that very teaching.

Stanley outlined his understanding of Christian sexual ethics with three directives:

1. Honor God with your body.
2. Do not be mastered by anything.
3. Do not sexualize any relationship outside of marriage.

Biblical marriage is between a man and a woman, he said, noting that every New Testament text addressing homosexuality teaches that it is a sin. "It was a sin then," Stanley said, "and it is a sin now."

This is what has always been taught at North Point and will continue to be taught there, he added. But both before and after this portion of the sermon, Stanley contradicted that ethic.

The most controversial conference speakers were Justin Lee and Brian Nietzel, whom Stanley described as "two married gay men" who are also "Christ-followers today." They were invited to speak—and had spoken at previous North Point gatherings—he said, because their stories of growing up in church environments while experiencing same-sex attraction would be "instructive and inspiring."

But to be in a same-sex relationship (whether recognized by the state as a marriage or not) is to disobey Jesus,

not to follow him. Jesus defined marriage as being between a man and a woman (Matt. 19:3–6) and the sole permissible context for sexual behavior (Matt. 15:19–20 and parallel references, where “sexual immorality” in our English editions is a translation of the Greek word *porneia*, an umbrella term for all sexual activity outside of marriage).

This teaching is consistent throughout Scripture, and a same-sex union clearly contradicts it. By being in a such unions, Lee and Nietzel are living in ongoing, unrepentant disobedience to Christ. And, “If we claim to have fellowship with [God] and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth” (1 John 1:6).

The decision to invite these speakers fares no better when examined through a pastoral lens.

Lee and Nietzel were invited because of their stories, Stanley said, because they’d been where many church kids now are. That may well be true—but is that a good reason to invite them? Why not invite speakers who grew up in church, recognized their attraction to the same sex, and then went on to live in obedience to Jesus, whether through faithful singleness or faithful biblical marriage? Speakers with that story could offer the same personal insight about their childhood experiences without implicitly validating a trajectory toward same-sex relationships.

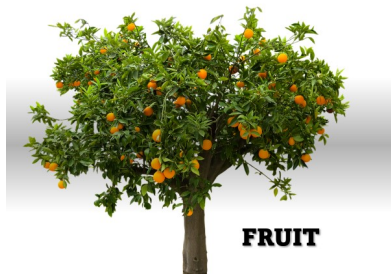
And the invitation of Lee and Nietzel isn’t the only way Stanley and the Unconditional Conference imply an acceptance of same-sex relationships. Some people

attracted to the same sex may live “a chaste life,” Stanley said, but “for many, that is not sustainable, so they choose same-sex marriage—not because they’re convinced it’s biblical. They read the same Bible we do. They chose to marry for the same reason many of us do: love, companionship, and family.”

Parents and churches can’t control that decision, Stanley said, but can only “decide how we respond.” North Point’s response, he continued, is that “if someone desires to follow Jesus—regardless of their starting point, regardless of their past, regardless of their current circumstances—our message is come and see and come sit with me.”

Stanley argues that this response is not “condoning sin” but “restoring relationships.” But that comes after he apparently accepts the premise that chastity is “not sustainable”—which is to say that the teaching of *God himself* is not sustainable (Rom. 1:24-27).”

Well, there are several more paragraphs to that article and many more to Andy Stanley’s message. I don’t want this to be the primary focus of this message, but if I dare to say merely, to merely be a contemporary example of the danger of false teachers.



When I was five years old, I went to central Florida, Nocatee to be specific, to live with my maternal grandparents. The reason was because my parents were divorcing. They had married very young. My mother was rebellious and wanted out from under the

control of her dominant parents. My young father enlisted in the Air Force. While on an extended Temporary Duty in Canada, my father fell into the vice of alcoholism. My mother, in the heat of her youth and loneliness, was an unfaithful wife. The Lord Jesus addresses that in the Sermon on the Mount.

My grandparents had a small orange grove on their small central Florida property. They had about ten orange trees behind their house. It was a normal part of our routine for me to help my grandfather with the little orange orchard. Those orange trees only produced oranges. We never picked off the tree or found on the ground any other fruit but oranges. You can tell a tree by its fruit. They were orange trees; of this, I am certain.

The fruit you and I produce is proof of who we are. Good trees produce good fruit and bad trees produce bad fruit. This is so obvious that it seems strange that the Lord Jesus needs to proclaim it. What happens to the trees that produce bad fruit? They are thrown into the fire. They suffer the hell fire of the lake of sulfur with the devil and his demons. Not a pretty picture at all. But, these are Jesus' declarations, not mine.

JESUS
> Lord
> Judge

Most people want a Savior, but they do not want to serve a Lord over their lives. It is interesting that people are crying out in this text, Lord, Lord. They are desperate and appealing to the only authority that can help them. The Lord Jesus yes

indeed Lord of ALL.

Many people use Jesus. Many people use the Church of Jesus. They use it to hide. They use it for selfish purposes. They use Jesus as a catchphrase and a backstop. They are religious people, but they do not have a relationship with Jesus BECAUSE they have not submitted to Jesus. The only TRUE relationship with Jesus is one of submission to Him as Lord and to His Word as the commands of God.

Too often, people want Jesus to be the cuddly teddy bear that they can squeeze tightly and be reassured in their own delusion. Not only is Jesus Lord, Jesus is the Judge. This is foreign to the teachings in many modern-day churches. Jesus, who many have created in their own imaginations, is love and only love. My friends, the love of God is within His character as perfectly holy and righteous. It is a love that knows that righteousness is not an option.

What happens to the bad tree? What happens to the false teachers? What happens to those that had a form of religion without transformed lives? They are thrown into the fire. They are banished from God's presence forever. There are no second chances beyond the grave; but praise be to God, true repentance today leads to lasting and true salvation.



On what are you building your life? This teaching is pretty straight-forward. We must build our lives on Jesus and obedience to His teachings. In Jesus'

Sermon on the Mount there are profound teachings. They turn traditional wisdom on its head. This teaching is about building our lives on Jesus, the Rock. Everything of man, in the realm of eternal issues, is sinking sand.

For a literal and a profound deeper understanding of this teaching requires us to look at the parallel passage in

Luke 6:47–49 (NIV84)

⁴⁷ “I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, **who dug down deep** and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Let us be honest. Most people are lazy. They have never lifted a shovel. They have never dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. It requires work. It requires blood, sweat and tears. It is easier to just accept the dominate philosophy of the day – live and let live. They think, there is no absolute truth. Morality is determined by the individual. Let me live my truth and I will let you live your truth. NO, this is the way of sloth and fear. It is the broad way of destruction; not the narrow way of salvation and eternal life.



Jesus spoke as no one else ever spoke. There was a power, a life-force, when he spoke. The Pharisees had sent guard to arrest Jesus who was preaching to a crowd in the Temple Courts in Jerusalem. When the guards

returned to give their report and they gave this reason for not arresting them. John 7:46 (NIV84) ⁴⁶ "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared.

Matthew 5:17–20 (NIV84) *The Fulfillment of the Law*

¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

God came in the flesh to do what could not be done. Jesus, fully human and fully divine, lived a perfect and sinless life. He fulfilled the law in his righteousness; but more than that. He fulfilled the law as the Perfect Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus,

contrary to our natural affections, is a Law Giver. The standards of the Sermon on the Mount are higher than those of The Ten Commandments. Before this perfect law of God, we are undone. But take heart, Jesus has overcome the world. Jesus has made a way where there was no way. He has paid the sin-debt for all humanity.

The righteousness of God has been satisfied.

You Have Heard It Said...

If there had been time, I would have read through the Sermon on the Mount with you. Jesus' teachings were on a different plane. No one had ever been able to attain the righteousness of the law. And yet, Jesus raises the bar higher. Fortunately for faithful followers, Jesus clears the bar on our behalf.

CONCLUSION:

We think of authority as coming from above and that is true here too. BUT, Jesus is always turning our world upside down when he teaches – commands – we build our foundation (which is under) on the One who is over!!

When a house is being constructed, after the foundation, the house is then "framed." That means that the skeleton of the house is assembled. Floor joists, walls, and roofing beams are needed to hold everything together. What is the quality of your wood? Are your nails and other hardware rusty?

My friends, make sure your foundation is Jesus Christ. Make sure you are covered by God's grace through faith

in the finished work of Jesus. Judgement day will come.
Upon what do you place your faith?

I pray that it is upon the One Who Has Authority; the
Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.