Grace COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
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WOW – Word on Wednesday
The Blueprint for Powerful Practical Living!
Matthew 7:15-20

Intro: The danger of counterfeits – we live in a world filled with slick packaging, cleaver marketing, and convincing imitations. Int the spiritual realm, a counterfeit isn't just disappointing – it's dangerous. Jesus has just laid out the narrow gate and the hard way that leads to life (vs 13-14). Now, He warns about the predators who try to pull us off that path.

1. The Deception of the Deceivers (Wolves) – vs 15

A. The Outer Appearance: "Beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing.

- False teachers rarely look dangerous.
- They wear the uniform of the flock.
- They use the right vocabulary, act pious, and appear gentle, charming, or highly successful. — 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

B. The Inner Reality: "but inwardly they are ravenous wolves"

- Their underlying motivation is self-serving rather than God-serving.
- They seek appetite fulfilment – power, money, control or praise at the expense of the sheep. — Acts 20:29-30
- Do not judge a spiritual teacher or cultural influencer purely by their charisma, popularity, or outward kindness.
- Intention and identity can be masked.

2. The Test of the Trees (vs 16-18)

A. Nature dictates the production: "you will recognize them by their fruits"

- Jesus appeals to basic biology to make a spiritual point.
- A plant cannot override it's fundamental nature. — Luke 6:45
- A teacher's true character and spiritual state will eventually override their public persona.
- Hypocrisy has an expiration date; eventually the mask slips off. — 1 John 4:1

B. Understanding the Fruit: What should the church look for?

- *The Fruit of Doctrine*: Does their message match the whole counsel of scripture, or does it twist the truth to please culture of self? — Isaiah 8:20
- *The Fruit of Character*: Does private life reflect the fruit of the Spirit, humility and Christlikeness? — Galatians 5:22-23
- *The Fruit of Influence*: What happens to the people that follow them? Do they become more holy or more worldly? — 2 Timothy 3:5-6

3. The Judgment of the Unfruitful (v 19)

A. The Certainty of Ruin: "Every tree that does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"

- God is the ultimate vinedresser. He is not mocked by sheep's clothing or external performance. Matthew 3:10
- The Finality: Fire represents final judgement. Those who lead God's people astray face severe accountability.
- Leadership is a heavy burden, and teachers will be judged with greater punishment. James 3:1 2 Peter 2:1