

**Text: Dt 13.1-5**

I am taking a sort of scattering shot on our afternoon services these days. I was looking back over our messages for the last couple of months and realize I haven't followed a set plan for these messages for a while.

Today is another random message, something where I am responding to things that are going on now and trying to develop a Christian way of looking at them.

More than anything else, I want our people to develop a Christian worldview, a Christian way of life. We could call that **Christian discipleship**.

What are the biggest challenges to Christian discipleship?

1. First, our weak devotional life (and our many distractions)
2. Our loudly clamoring environment — voices on every side filling our minds with all kinds of untruth.

A verse that comes to mind when I think of this is Mt 24.24

Mt 24.24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

The context of the passage is the tribulation, and the deceivers who will be widely in charge in those days, distracting even the believing from the truth.

The prophecy is for a future day, but that is not to say that there are deceivers abroad in our day.

And that is not to say that believers in our day are immune from deception — the modern church can give us plenty of examples of that.

However, we can push the concern away by referring to "the modern church" — because "the modern church" is *the other guys — Not Us!!*

So, today's message is:

***Responding to False Teachers***

I want to impress on you something from the OT about how God told the Israelites to respond to false teachers. The measures they were to take are different from ours, but the attitude needs to be the same.

We need to take false teachers very seriously.

**Read Dt 13.1-5**

**Proposition:** The believer needs to vigorously shun the teaching of false teachers.

## I. The incredible credibility of false teachers (1-2)

- A. The sign or wonder: something is impressive about the false prophet (1-2a)
- B. Yet contradiction of Biblical faithfulness (2b)

What is incredible here is that someone with such a blatantly false message could gain a hearing.

And... that God's people need this warning.

## II. The biblical response to false teachers (3-5)

- A. You shall not listen to the false prophet (3)
  - 1. The Lord allows false prophets to test the faithfulness of His people
  - 2. Nevertheless, though the false prophet has impressive signs, "*You shall not listen!*"
  - 3. The issue is your heart
- B. You shall follow the Lord (4)
  - 1. Follow the Lord
  - 2. Fear Him
  - 3. Keep His commandments
  - 4. Listen to His voice
  - 5. Serve Him
  - 6. *Cling* to Him

Our desperate need is the words of our God, not the internet mavens.

- C. You shall execute the false prophet (OT economy) (5)
  - 1. Emphatic caution: this is the OT economy; the Law is civil as well as ceremonial
    - a. False prophecy was a capital crime in Israel

- b. False prophecy advises rebellion against the Lord (it puts someone or something else on God's throne)
  - c. False prophecy attempts to seduce you from God's way
  - d. On these grounds, then, "you shall purge the evil"
2. And to intensify: consider the rest of the chapter
- a. Even if the false prophet is someone close to you (6-11)
 

your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul
  - b. Even if you find a whole town given over to false prophecy (12-16)
  - c. God's blessing depends on your faithfulness (17-18)
    - 1) The false prophet and all he brings are under the ban
    - 2) The Lord and his ways are to be the attention of the believers heart

### III. The critical key: discerning false teachers

#### A. The Deuteronomic tests

- 1. The false words of the prophet (idolatry) (2)
- 2. The false prophecies of the prophet (Dt 18.20-22)

#### B. The key themes repeated

- 1. Idolatry = the attempt to place something in the place of God
  - a. False prophets are subtle – there is something about them that seems credible
  - b. False prophets are often not quite as blatant as described in v. 2
 

saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,'
  - c. We need to discern when the thing taught takes us away from dependence on God to dependence on self (idolatry)

2. Faithfulness = the attempt to place false words in the mouth of God
  - a. This is the long test
  - b. There are false prophets who make claims that will take some time to become obviously false
  - c. The cure for this is deep knowledge of the Word of God

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The believer needs to vigorously shun the teaching of false teachers.

There are so many false teachers out there, confusing the minds of God's people. They cause them to be willing to follow the false teaching instead of the Lord's servants.

### An example:

The politics of the Christian right — there are many ways in which I agree with these politics. Yet there are topics here where preachers must be careful because Christians might stop listening if you publicly disagree.

I'll give you a name, how do you react? President Trump.

Some like him (intensely) others dislike him (intensely). Others, like me, are somewhere in the middle.

- If I were to say something critical about him, how would you react?
- If I were to praise him, how would you react?

Now, I have to say, there are things I like and dislike about Trump, but that isn't my point.

If you react to me saying something about Trump that you disagree with, why are you doing that?

By your reaction, to you show that you have "not-Trump" or "pro-Trump" as an idol in your life, one you can't bear to hear anything to the contrary?

Again, that is not my point, it's an illustration.

There are all kinds of voices on all sorts of topics in our world. I am afraid we listen to those voices more than we listen to God.

**Proposition:** The believer needs to vigorously shun the teaching of false teachers.