



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	How Can We Discern Truth from Error?	SPEAKER	DSP Edric Sng
THEME	Common Questions We Need Handles To	DATE	16 & 17 October 2021

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

It is crucial for us to learn how to discern truth from falsehood because our souls are at stake, the church is at stake and our witness as a church is at stake. There have been many instances in recent news that use the name of Jesus to peddle falsehoods and as believers, we must know how to separate fact from fiction and be accurate witnesses of our faith.

HOW TO IDENTIFY FALSE TEACHERS AND TEACHINGS

1. BY WHAT THEY PROFESS

- A. What they say about Jesus: This refers to the beliefs of the person/source. When we receive information, we need to review what the content or person says about Jesus. Do they acknowledge the key truths about Jesus Christ – He is the Son of God who came down in the flesh as the Son of Man, died on the cross and rose again to redeem us from our sins? Do they believe that Jesus Christ is coming again? Be wary of half-truths and fudged truths.
- B. Their unwillingness/inability to listen to God and His people: There will be a tendency to reject what other believers say, even when it comes from the Word of God. These people such as those from the Sincheonji cult may even force their members to be isolated from other sources of information that could help educate or shed light on the truth.
- C. How they despise (spiritual) authority: They heed their own “truths” and have an arrogance about what they think they know, even to the point of blasphemy (2 Peter 2:9-12). This is because they do not belong to the authority of the Church and do not want to.

2. BY WHAT THEY PURSUE

- A. They seek followers more than they seek to follow God: False teachers are after power and influence for their own gain. They are looking to benefit from the prestige of having a large following.

- B. They seek to satisfy with human wisdom instead of Godly wisdom: These people speak to justify their own beliefs and actions that align with the world more than with God (e.g. Leaders who support abortion or same-sex marriage).
- C. They seek gain - their ministry is transactional, for-profit: Ezekiel 13:18-19 and Micah 3:5,11 show examples of how false prophets lie and twist their words in accordance with how much they are "paid". God does not care about the size of your wallet but the posture of your heart.

3. BY WHAT THEY PRODUCE

- A. They cause division and dissension: These teachers produce controversy and cause divisions in the church. To evaluate this, look at their followers - do they demonstrate unity despite differences in opinions?
- B. They discourage people from righteousness and repentance: Do these teachers validate the continuation of living in sin? Repentance is fundamental to our faith.
- C. They produce unholy fruit: Sometimes bad fruit is very obvious when certain actions clearly go against God's teachings (e.g. sexual sin, embezzlement etc.). We need to be careful with bad fruit that is not obvious (e.g. misquoting scripture, spiritual apathy, pride instead of brokenness before God, criticism that makes you hate your church).

CONCLUSION

We can guard ourselves in five ways. Firstly, build your relationship with God through your walk with Him. Secondly, arm yourself with truth by reading the Bible. Thirdly, plug yourself into a healthy and wise community which is the church body-life. They will keep you accountable as well as cover and correct you. Fourthly, know when you can be most vulnerable that may lead you to fall prey to some false teaching you want to hear. Lastly, do not fall in the same errors of pride or division.

We need to be alert as lies become increasingly believable and easily spread through all kinds of platforms. Remember that discerning the Spirit of Truth from the spirit of falsehood/error is a matter of eternal life or death.

QUESTIONS

1. Share an experience you have had whereby you had to discern truth from falsehood. How did you realise that something was not right?

2. Which of the three ways to identify false teachers / teachings is the most challenging for you? How can you beef up your discernment in this area?

3. Share about an area that you would like to strengthen yourself in so that you may be more discerning and guard yourself better. You may refer to the 5 ways in the conclusion as a guide.