

Descriptors of False Teachers – Part One

2 Peter 2:11 – 16

Introduction: Faithful Shepherds protect their sheep

2 Timothy 3:16 – 17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work

- Pastors are tasked with preaching the whole counsel of God for three reasons;
 1. To feed the flock and teach the sheep in the flock how to feed themselves spiritually and share the energy from that food in the form serving using their spiritual gifts.
 2. To protect the flock from false teaching
 3. To share the Gospel of Christ to win the lost
- Your Pastor should not necessarily be someone you want, but someone you need. I am not called to be liked or appreciated by everyone in the church family. I am called to use the Word of God to reprove, correct, to guide and train you into righteousness in order to equip and train all of you in the church family to be equipped for every good work
- A Pastor should be respected as he faithfully shares the Word of God
 - On any given Sunday, as the Word of God goes out from this pulpit, I always pray that it will have its intended purpose as God sees fit (Isaiah 55:10), to challenge, to convict, to comfort, to encourage, to build up, to bring joy, etc. to each and everyone of us.
 - God has called me to preach as if He were in the room and so that keeps me focused on preaching the whole counsel of God, in the context of the whole Bible and not shy away from difficult teaching.
- Peter gives this charge in 1 Peter 5:1 – 4. Take time to read that this week and pray for me and the elders to faithfully stay true to our responsibilities and to have the courage of our convictions to carry them out no matter how unpopular and politically incorrect they can be at the time.
- I hope when you look back on the time I was Pastor here that I was the Pastor that was needed at this time in history for this church family.

Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:11 – 14

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves

and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Purpose: Every Christ follower must be aware and discerning of false teachers preying on them.

Transition: Let's review quickly the main points of last week's message and finish verses 9 - 10 where we left off at the end of the message last week.

Review

The Raging Wrath of God on Display – 2 Peter 2:4-5a;6

The Redeeming Mercy of God on Display – 2 Peter 2:5b;7-10

- The rescue of Noah
- The reluctant rescue of Lot
- The response of God in balance of wrath and mercy

2 Peter 2:9-10

9 Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority

- If the Lord rescued Noah and Lot out of the depth of sin in their culture, we can live in our culture and look to God for wisdom and guidance knowing with confidence He will protect us and ultimately deliver us.
- Trials means here an intent to attack

1 Peter 5:8

8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour

- At the beginning of verse 9, Peter is referring back now to verse 4. If or since, now he is saying then
- If he rescues the saved, he will also reserve the unrighteous for eternal torment in hell forever. If God did these things in the past, he will do it again in the present and certainly the future.
- And especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority – verse 10a
 - False teachers indulge the flesh to feed their fleshly desires in an unrighteous manner
 - They despise those who are in authority over them

- They reject the Lordship of Christ over them
- Instead of surrendering in humility daily to be a living sacrifice for God, they desire to live out their lives however they want to.

2 Peter 2:1

Even denying the Master who bought them. – who paid for their opportunity to be saved from hell and enjoy an abundant life here on planet earth.

Transition / Application: Our God is full of grace and mercy to those who come to Him and follow Him on His terms

Today's Message

Background

- Peter's second letter is filled with some of the strongest words of rebuke concerning false teachers in the NT.
- False teachers are substituting spiritual poison for the pure milk of the Word of God – 1 Peter 2:2
 - Notice Peter doesn't single out a particular false teacher. He is not into naming names as Paul did.
 - Peter is giving us descriptive phrases, word pictures so down through the ages of church history, this book can help churches, lay people, anyone spot a false teacher.
 - One caveat here is that at times, I have made mistakes, I may have misled people with things I have taught and when they are pointed out to me, I try as quickly as possible to check those teachings out and make corrections as necessary. That should be the attitude of anyone who teaches the Word of God. They should be approachable, accountable, willing to listen to those who may point out an error in their teaching.
 - As we look at this passage and remember last week's passage, those who promote / teach false teaching on a consistent basis and don't want to be challenged by what they say, face the highest levels of condemnation because they are leading people straight to hell. Let's look at our first main point in today's message.

False teachers are filled with pride – 2 Peter 2:11 – 13a

2 Peter 2:10b - 11

10b Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones 11 Whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

- Disrespectful of spiritual authority

- In the second part of verse 10 here, we see that these false teachers have a deep disdain for any authority, even spiritual authority.
- Bold – Daring, reckless ones
- Self – willed – Self pleasing, conceit, typical of an attitude of an unsaved person, lost in their sin
- It is interesting that Peter says here that they “do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones”.
 - The Bible teaches that even the angels that are worshipping and serving God never renounce or rebuke the fallen angels they continually go up against.
 - Even the bad angels are created by God and the other angels show respect for them even in battle.
 - Michael, the archangel, did not denounce the evil authorities

Jude 1:8 – 9

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

- Michael leaves it up to God to do the rebuking!
- **False teachers do what Michael and the other good angels would not do, blaspheme the angels.**
- For us as humans, we should respect the spiritual beings that we cannot see around us. We are more special than even the angels in God’s eyes but we need to respect them because they were created in the image of God. We should treat each human being with respect and dignity because just because they do not know God, they are made by Him in His image
- These false teachers blaspheme the “glorious ones”. This means that they slander, speak lightly of or profane things that are sacred They have no reverence or fear of God.
- We see many charlatans preaching out there in the name of Jesus
 - The prosperity Gospel – Health and Wealth for all if they have enough faith
 - Binding Satan and damn demons to come and go to hell
 - Be careful what you do with demons. We must have a healthy respect for our enemy.

Acts 19:13 – 16

13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus

whom Paul proclaims.” 14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. 15 But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” 16 And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded

- A verse that is challenging me even now is this

Isaiah 66:2

All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word

- As believers, we need to live in confidence and in true humility and utter dependence upon God each day.
- Desire to live by their fleshly instincts

2 Peter 2:12

12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction

- These false teachers are irrational animals. Another translation calls them “brute beasts” As animals are programmed by God with instincts that make them live and do certain things, these false teachers live off of their feelings, their fleshly desires and passions.

Jude 1:10

But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively

- Just like true animals, some of them were made by God to be caught and killed to be consumed by humans for food. Others, to be food for other wildlife.
- They blaspheme / revile, renounce things they are ignorant of They use the word through the lens of what will control those under their listening and what will benefit them through their teaching for the false teachers gain.
- So, with these apostates: they make a lot of noise about things they know nothing about! **The Phillips translation of 2 Peter 2:12 says they “scoff at things outside their own experience.”** The New International Version reads, “But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand.” Whenever her pupils were noisy in class, one of my teachers used to say, “Empty barrels make the most noise!” And so, they do! - Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2, p. 453). Victor Books.

- They will be completely and utterly destroyed by God.

Revelation 20: 9 - 15

9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven[b] and consumed them 10 And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- **Disregard the consequences of their sin**

2 Peter 2:13a

13 Suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing

- They know there are consequences for their actions but they don't care
- Maybe they think they will beat the system and get away with their destructive teaching. But they are horribly wrong.

Hosea 10:12 – 13

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you. 13 You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors,

Illustration: THE HUMILITY TO LISTEN - Several years ago, a Greensboro, North Carolina, newspaper carried a story about a tractor-trailer rolling along on a side street in a southern city. The driver came to a low bridge and misjudged the height of his rig. When the truck came to a stop, it was wedged tightly between the bridge and the street. Wreckers were called to remove the truck, but with all of their skills and equipment they could not budge it. Among the bystanders was a young student. The lad walked over to the men and suggested that the tires on the truck be deflated. As the air screamed from the tires, the great truck began to settle slowly away from the bridge. A wrecker was chained to the truck, and it was

gently pulled backward. When the truck was free of the bridge, the tires were reinflated and the trucker was again on his way. - SOURCE: Enest A. Fitzgerald. Keeping Pace: Inspirations In The Air. Greensboro: Pace Communications, Inc., 1988, p. 57

Application: We need to learn from these false teachers to seek humility and dependence on God for our understanding of God and His Word

Transition: False teachers are filled with pride. Another description that Peter uses to talk about false teachers is;

False teachers are bold in their practice of sin – 2 Peter 2:13b – 14

2 Peter 2:13b

They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you

- They are going against the cultural and natural norms
- During this time of Roman occupation of Israel, Roman citizens tolerated wild living after dark but they wanted some societal decorum during the daylight hours. Wild living during the day was frowned upon and disapproved of by the community, even those who were pagan.
- False teachers are consumed by lust, greed and different vices even in public for all to see at times and justify it.
- Peter says they are blots and blemishes. Like a stain on shirt or a scratch on an expensive ring, they tarnish the message of Christ as they distort it. Other word pictures of blots and blemishes include, a malignant sore, scabs, things with defect.
- Notice the contrast here. Paul said that God wanted Pastors, Elders and Teachers to teach with the goal of presenting the church, the bride of Christ to Him without spot or blemish, the opposite of what false teachers do.

Ephesians 5:27

So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish

- Reveling in their deceptions – enjoying their sin and all the pleasure and fruits of it. The writer of Hebrews, using the example of Moses warned against this. Moses was forsaking all the benefits of being Pharaoh's adopted son to identify and ultimately be the deliverer of Israel from Egypt. Notice what is said of sin.

Hebrews 11:25

Choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

- Notice now that Peter adds at the end of verse 13, **while they feast with you. This is a reference to the Love Feast associated with the Lord's Supper. Explain the Love Feast from 1 Corinthians 11**

I Corinthians 11:20 – 22

20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

- Because of the sin of those who gorged themselves to the neglect of the poor and others, some got sick as discipline from the Lord and others died because their motives in coming to the Love Feast / Lord's table were inappropriate. This shows that these false teachers had infiltrated the church as they feast among you.

Jude 1:12

12 These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves;

- **Boldly sin**

Peter 2:14a

14b They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin

- The lusts, the unrighteous desires and behavior are never satisfied!
- Eyes full of adultery – spiritual frauds who look on women lustfully, wishing to be involved with them sexually, filled with impure thoughts.

Proverbs 26:11

Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly

Proverbs 23:35b (23 – 35 describing the repeated patterns of a drunkard) "When shall I awake? I must have another drink."

Quote: "A person can become so accustomed to his vices that he sees them as virtues". - Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2, p. 453). Victor Books.

- Jesus shared with the woman at the well in John 4 that only the living water given to us by Jesus Christ will satisfy the soul.

Quote: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person, and it can never be filled by any created thing. It can only be filled by God, made known through Jesus Christ." - Blaise Pascal

- **Bait the weak believers into false teaching**

2 Peter 2:14b

14 They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

- Entice – preying on new believers, weak believers in Christ, undiscerning believers and even non-believers. The picture here in this word is that of a fisherman putting bait on his hook or traps to catch fish, to lure them to the hook and their destruction.

Illustration of a Monkey Trap in Africa

- The word “trained” in this verse is from the Greek word where we get our word gymnasium. This means that their greed is something planned ahead of time, practiced, exercised and disciplined as an athlete train in a gym for a competition. Not by accident or it happens along the way that these false teachers get wealth but premeditated.
- Peter says “Accursed Children” showing his total disgust for false teachers. This is a Hebraic phrase concerning people who are children of whatever influences their lives. He is calling them children of Satan or children of hell with this phrase. Jesus called the false religious leaders of his day – children of the devil – John 8:44.

Quote: “There can be no freedom or fulfillment apart from submission to Jesus Christ. “The purpose of life,” said P.T. Forsyth, “is not to find your freedom, but to find your master.” Just as a gifted musician finds freedom and fulfillment putting himself or herself under the discipline of a great artist, or an athlete under the discipline of a great coach, so the believer finds true freedom and fulfillment under the authority of Jesus Christ.” - Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2, p. 454). Victor Books.

Application: We need to take notice of our sin when we see it forming a habit in our lives

Transition: Who are you a servant of, of sin or Christ?

False teachers are focused on their personal gain – 2 Peter 2:15 – 16

2 Peter 2:15 - 16

15 Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

- **Forsake the right way** - choosing the way of Balaam
 - Balaam wanted money over being a true prophet of God. He was known as a prophet for hire.

- Balaam did two things as a false teacher in trying to gain wealth and encourage immorality among the Israelites
 - One, he was paid to curse Israel so the Moabite army would be able to destroy them free of God's intervention
 - Two, when that failed, Balaam encouraged the Moabites and the Israelites to intermarry which was against God's command, and would bring idolatry into the ranks of the Jewish people.
 - If God had not intervened with the donkey talking to Balaam, the false prophet would have willfully sinned for His own material profit and brought destruction on God's people.
- **Follow the way of Balaam for filthy gain**
 - Balaam was rebuked by God through the voice of the donkey for his sin.
 - God restrained the prophet's madness – out of his mind for money, acting irrationally
 - Peter is making the correlation that false prophets in his day and today have the same descriptions and character qualities
 - They are proud
 - They want money
 - They are involved, permitting, and / or encouraging sexual immorality

Numbers 31:8

8 They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of their slain, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. And they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword

Proverbs 13:15

Good sense wins favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin

Application: No one can thwart God's will!

Transition: Our Key Thought for today!

Key Thought: The key to avoid false teaching is consistently studying God's Word, obeying God's Word, and examining all teaching through the filter of God's Word

Questions to Ponder this Week

1. How has pride in your past brought damage to your life, big or small?
2. How can we avoid allowing sin to become a habit in our life?
3. How can we avoid being an obstacle to God's working in our life and in His kingdom work?