

2 PETER

E V E R Y E F F O R T

2 PETER / MAKE EVERY EFFORT

The Apostle Peter, knowing the end of his life is near as he faces his execution, writes with fervor to encourage the church to persevere in the midst of persecution and to walk as faithful followers of Jesus in the midst of exile. He wants them to know that, even as he and the other original apostles leave this world, God has given the church all that they need to live Godly lives in the midst of a world that is pushing them to the margins. We face the same kind of exile today, even if it doesn't look exactly the same. Peter's words hit home for us as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus in the midst of a hostile and opposing culture.

Part 4: Every Effort to Know the Truth

Read the text: 2 Peter 2:1-22 (vs. 4-9 included below)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from

trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment

As Peter writes his final letter to the church, he is deeply concerned that they do not fall prey to the false teachers among them who are calling them away from the truth of the Gospel. Peter goes on to clarify how to identify a false teacher...it may be you! First, a false teacher is one who spreads misinformation about core Christian doctrines. Second, it's someone who spreads "destructive opinions." Third, it's someone who lives in such a way that is incompatible with the Gospel. They spread lies about Jesus through how they live. Peter goes on to say that God will indeed judge these false teachers if they don't turn towards Him and choose the way of escape He has provided (vs. 4-9). As Peter goes on to describe the false teachers, we might begin to realize this is describing you and me. We have all lived lives that tell lies about the Gospel. The warning is that God will keep His promise to judge. But the good news is that God has provided a way of escape through the forgiving work of Jesus Christ. So, we are certainly called to see and reject false teachers. But we are also invited to see how we are also false teachers at times and to repent and put our hope in Jesus alone to forgive and save us.

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use them in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. What are some of the loudest "false gospels" you hear today among Christians? Try to be specific and focus on ones that you are most tempted to believe. Don't use this time to slam others, but instead to explore the false gospels you have been drawn towards at times. Why do you think you're drawn towards these particular false gospels?

2. None of us are far from becoming “false teachers” ourselves apart from God’s grace. Are there times you have developed “destructive opinions”? Are there ways you have taken preferences or opinions and made them into absolutes that divide and dismiss others? What does that look like?
3. We can say we believe the Gospel, but live lives that actually tell lies about the Gospel. How does your life “tell lies” about the Gospel? If you were to ask a non-Christian friend or coworker what they know about Jesus from watching your life, what would they say? Be honest and ask the Spirit to bring conviction where you need it.
4. Peter writes, “the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.” We can be confident both in God’s ability to rescue us and His sure judgment of the unrighteous. What hope do you have that you will receive rescue instead of judgment? What makes you confident?
5. How can you help each other see where your lives might look like the false teachers Peter writes about?