



“Being So Sure About Something So Wrong”

2 Peter 2:10b-16

Sermon Date: April 17th, 2016

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Prayer

As you begin your study this week, pray that God would strengthen your faith and increase your understanding of His truth. Ask that He would make clear to you the snares and traps of those who teach falsehoods in order that you might not be an “unsteady soul” (v. 14) that is enticed by them. As you pray, consider the following words of this puritan prayer taken from The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions.

*“O Lord God,
Thou are our Preserver, Governor, Savior, and coming Judge.
Quiet our souls to call upon thy name;
Detach us from the influence of the flesh and the senses;
Impress us with the power of faith;
Promote in us spirituality of mind that will render our services acceptable to thee,
and delightful and profitable to ourselves...
Show us our danger, that we may fly to thee for refuge.
Make us sensible of our sin’s disease, that we may value the good Physician.
Placard to us the cross, that it may slay the enmity of our hearts.
Help us to be watchful over our ways, jealous over our tempers, diligent over our hearts.
When we droop, revive us,
When we loiter, quicken us,
When we go astray, restore us...
May we be rich in faith, strong in faith, live by faith, walk by faith,
experience the joy of faith, do the work of faith, hope through faith.
Perceiving nothing in ourselves, may we find in the Savior
wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption.”*

Scripture

2 Peter 2:10b–16 – (English Standard Version)

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. 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, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! 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, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Handling the Word

1. Since this week's passage is a continuation of the passage we studied last week, take a moment to look back at those verses (2:1-10a) and summarize some of the main themes found there. How do those verses and themes relate to our text for study this week (2:10b-16)?

Understanding and Applying

1. According to Peter's descriptions throughout this passage, what are some of the distinguishing characteristics of false teachers? In direct contrast, what are some distinguishing characteristics of faithful teachers and preachers?

2. The type of false teachers Peter depicts in this passage generally take great pleasure “in their deception” of others and that their deception remains somewhat hidden (v. 13). Since that is true, and since God desires to protect His church from these deceptions, what are some of the means He uses to expose them? If they attempt to keep things hidden and operate deceitfully, how are you as a believer going to be able to see and address these deceptions when you are exposed to them?

3. We are also told in these verses that false teachers often delight in the evil of their ways (v. 13-15). This reveals much about their character because the things people delight in says a lot about where their heart is. While the focus of this passage is on false teachers, it would be good to take a minute and consider the things that you delight in. What are some of those things? What do these things reveal about the condition of your heart?

4. As Peter says in verse 14, these false teachers seek to “entice unsteady souls.” The word “entice” is a fishing term that literally means to lure away and catch with bait. The picture is that false teachers prey on, and seek to lure, those who are spiritually vulnerable. What makes someone spiritually vulnerable to being enticed by false doctrine? How do believers prevent themselves, and their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, from being lured away from the truth?

5. In order for false teachers to have an impact in luring people away from the gospel and the truth of God’s Word, they are going to have to be spending time in and around the body of Christ. That is what Peter is referring to when he warns that they will revel in their deceptions “while they feast with you” (v. 13). Why is this a good reminder and warning for all believers? How are we to respond to a false teacher that is seeking to come in and take part in the life of the body of Christ (2 John 6-11)?

6. In verses 15 and 16, Peter uses Balaam as an Old Testament example of the very kind of false prophets and teachers he was speaking against. According to this passage, as well as Numbers 31:16, Jude 11, and Revelation 2:14, why is Balaam a helpful illustration of what the false teachers were doing? What do we learn about the underlying motivations for why false teachers do what they do?

7. If God can use a donkey to silence and restrain the false prophet Balaam (v. 16, also refer to the actual story in Numbers 22:21-35), He most definitely can use ordinary human beings to stop false teachers from continuing to propagate their “madness” as well. Do you think of yourself as someone the Lord could use to rebuke those who are engaging in leading others astray? Why or why not? How could you become more prepared to be used in this way if necessary?

8. Peter does not mince words when he describes the false teachers and their character in this passage. Part of the reason is that he wants believers to see the connection between false teachers’ actions and their teachings. Using Matthew 7:15-20, describe the connection between bad, or false, doctrine and corrupt living. Is it fair to say that following bad doctrine will nearly always lead to bad practices? Why or why not?

9. Based upon what Peter says in this passage, how can we be sure that he is referring to false teachers that knowingly deceive and intentionally mislead others, rather than those who were simply ignorant on an issue or unintentionally taught something untrue? Does that distinction even matter? Why or why not?

10. What truth in this passage has stood out to you most profoundly this week? How are you going to apply this truth to your life specifically?

“Religious deceivers are the worst of vermin, and I fear they are as plentiful as rats in an old wheatstack.”
C.H. Spurgeon