



“The Disillusionment and Punishment of False Teachers”

2 Peter 2:17-22

Sermon Date: April 24th, 2016

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Prayer

As you begin your study this week, pray that your heart and mind would be free from distractions as you spend time in His Word. Ask that He would continue to sanctify you and mature you in order that you would not be someone who is deceived by false teaching and the lies Satan seeks to spread through false teachers. As you pray, consider the following words of this prayer taken from Prone to Wander: Prayers of Confession and Celebration by Barbara Duguid and Wayne Houk.

“Sovereign Commander of the universe,

You are our fortress, our refuge and our shield. Fight for us, and our foes must flee; uphold us and we cannot fall; strengthen us and we stand unmovable; stand by us and Satan must depart. Anoint our lips with a song of salvation, and we will shout your victory and sing of your triumph...

Open our eyes to see the glory and majesty of our Great King so that we will fly into his loving arms with all our fears, all our cares, and our unbelieving hearts. There may we take refuge in the life and death of our Savior and rest in the power of our victorious King. Teach us to trust and hope in him alone, until the day we stand before him, captivated by his glory, and lost in his love. Amen.”

Scripture

2 Peter 2:17–22 – (English Standard Version)

17 These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 18 For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Handling the Word

1. In our text for study this week, Peter continues to build upon all that he has been saying regarding false teachers. Since that is true, look back over the first 16 verses of chapter 2 and write down some of the key truths Peter has already laid out regarding false teachers.
2. The book of Jude has been noted to have many parallels to 2 Peter chapter 2. In light of that, take a few minutes to read through Jude 3-25 carefully. Write down anything that is said in Jude that enhances your understanding of 2 Peter 2:1-22.

Understanding and Applying

1. In continuing to accurately expose false teachers for who they are, Peter tells us in verse 17 that they are like “waterless springs” (they promise refreshment but deliver none) and “mists driven by a storm” (they have no real lasting substance to offer – also refer to Proverbs 25:14). As John MacArthur writes about them, “False teachers operate under the pretense of being able to quench the spiritual thirsts of souls; but they have nothing to give.” Why are these descriptions of false teachers fair and accurate? How can we be certain that they cannot actually deliver on the promises they make?

2. In direct contrast to all of the empty promises of the false teachers, Jesus provides promises that He can, does, and will deliver (John 4:13-14 and 7:37-38). What makes Jesus' promises satisfying and the false teacher's promises empty? What does this reveal to us about the importance of knowing Jesus and His true promises for our lives?

3. The targets of false teachers, as we studied last week, are those who are spiritually vulnerable, having "unsteady souls" (2:14). This week we are told that false teachers seek to entice those "who are barely [or recently] escaping from those who live in error" (v. 18). In other words, they target those who have recently come to faith in Jesus Christ. Why might new believers be in particular danger of being enticed by the promises of false teaching? What are some ways that those who are more mature in the faith can come alongside those who are newer in their faith to help them avoid falling into the snares of incorrect doctrine and false teaching?

4. While the false teachers promised freedom, they were actually enslaved to their own sin and enticing others to a similar bondage (v. 19). They were teaching that true freedom was the license to do whatever they wanted, even if it violated God's moral standard. Why is freedom from God's moral law, as they were advocating, actually a form of bondage rather than freedom? What does true freedom in Jesus Christ really look like (John 8:31-36, Romans 8:1-2, Galatians 5:1-15, 1 Peter 2:16-17)?

5. Describe a situation where you felt like someone was offering you a deal or product that didn't sound completely truthful. How did you check the offer to ensure that you weren't being duped? How is that similar to the way we ought to think about and handle the teachings of those who make offers and promises in the name of Jesus Christ that don't sound right?

6. In verses 20-22, we are told that these false teachers had “knowledge” of Jesus Christ, but in the end they entangled themselves in the defilements of the world and rejected Him as Lord. Why is it seemingly so easy for people, not only false teachers, to get entangled with the things of this world in a way that chokes out the Word of God in their lives (Matthew 13:7 and 13:22)? How do we ensure that we do not become entangled in this way (2 Timothy 2:4)?

7. In closing this section regarding false teachers, Peter likens them to two animals that were considered to be dirty and disgusting in that day – dogs and pigs (v. 22). He says that false teachers are like dogs that return to the very thing that made them sick in the first place and like a pig that returns to the very thing that made them filthy. They may have had all appearances of being part of God’s people, but they ultimately demonstrated that they were not truly His (Matthew 7:15-23, 1 John 2:18-19). Why does this bring about an even harsher judgment on them (v. 21, Luke 12:47-48)? Why is this an important warning for those who profess to be a part of the body of Christ?

8. One lesson that we learn from Peter’s discourse on false teachers is that words really do matter to God. What people say, especially in regard to matters of salvation, is of critical importance to Him. Have you ever really considered just how important your words can be in the lives of other people, either for helpful or unhelpful purposes (James 3:1-12)? Provide an example of how you have seen both to be true in your life.

9. Of all that you have studied, thought about, or discussed in your home group regarding false teachers over the last three weeks, what has stood out to you the most? What difference will it make in the way you go about your life?

“If you want to be free from any ethical imperative, preachers abound to satiate your desire...The last thing we need are preachers unwilling to call men to holiness because they themselves are enslaved in chains.”

David Helm