

- Welcome back. Today we are going to pick back up with our journey through 2 Peter.
 - As I often do, I would ask that you turn to 2 Peter:1-3 and follow along with me if you will as we re-read our focus verses from last week, so we can move forward in context.
 - Last week we spent most of our time talking about the differences between False Prophets and False Teachers
 - False Prophets – as we discovered were men or women who not only taught a different type of doctrine, but honestly they professed a different type of religion altogether
 - Generally speaking they were people who would try and lead God’s children astray – with different philosophies and theories of how the world and the universe works
 - In Peter’s Day there were many, many different types of False Prophets and religions and that makes sense.
 - You must remember Jesus Christ and Christianity were a relatively new religion at that time in history.
 - Having said that though, following God was nothing new.
 - It was just new as it related to Jesus Christ and His fulfillment of what the Old Testament forecasted
 - If you remember, (in the Old Testament) the only way an individual could be saved was if he or she was a Jew.
 - And simply put – if you weren’t a Jew, then you were not one of God’s children.
 - Having said that, even if you weren’t born a Jew by birth you could convert over to Judaism.
 - And Judaism (at that time) had been around for some 2000 years.
- But as I said – Jesus Christ and Christianity was relatively new, and so you can see why there were so many false prophets popping up during Peter and Paul’s era.
 - Because to be honest with you, at the core of every individual, is the desire to believe in something.
 - Even when there isn’t anything to believe in.
 - Which means it would make no difference if you knew about Jesus or not.
 - Matter a fact, it made no difference if you’ve ever even heard of Jesus or not!
 - People are always going to find something or someone to connect to or believe in!
- But Peter didn’t just highlight False Prophets in his writings. He mentioned False Teachers as well.
 - And as I stated last week, the words “false teacher” here are a combination of two Greek words that don’t show up in any other place of scripture.
 - And those words speak specifically to individuals inside the church – who have discovered some “New Revelation” of God.

- They act as if they are men and women who God has chosen to be the keepers of the secrets.
 - Which of course makes no sense, because God would never elevate an individual to that type of status.
- And why – because of pride.
 - God knows we as humans can't handle it.
- And let me say, for most people, they would equate False Prophets and False Teachers as being the same or similar.
- But that's not the case – at least as it pertains to Peter's words here in 2 Peter Chapter 2
- A False Prophet (as mentioned here) refers to the Old Testament where people tried to lead God's people completely away from the one true God
 - Whereas False Teachers are speaking more about believers, or those who called themselves believers.
 - Individuals inside the body who try and lead people astray with a perverse type of Christian Teaching.
 - A modification if you will, on the teachings of God's Word.
- Last week I highlighted two types of those teachings. Teachings that are alive and well in our present and modern-day church age.
 - The first was Mormonism.
 - And the second was a concept known as “Easy beliefism”.
 - And as I explained to you last week, “Easy beliefism” was and is the most dangerous of these two types of false teachings.
 - After last week's service – I had a conversation with someone about that concept, and they had questions about what I was saying. So, I want to clarify the topic a little bit more this morning.
 - Real quick – as I stated last week – “Easy Beliefism” is an ancestor or predecessor to the evangelical movement.
 - For the most part it began with pure intention – and it still has pure intentions as it seeks as its goal to see people saved.
 - We would all agree that is a good thing.
 - Problem is, Easy Beliefism circumvents the Salvation Process.
 - Or it circumvents the Mechanism by which someone is saved.
 - Which is what?
 - The conviction of God which comes by way of His Word
 - And that's not my opinion. That's exactly what God's Word says.

Romans 10:17 “Faith come by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”

- “Easy Beliefism” says, if you just repeat some words after a preacher you are saved.
 - And I want to clarify that a little bit further, I am not saying, that praying with the pastor or anyone else for that matter – in the matter of Salvation – is a bad thing
 - Or, that if you were saved in that manner – you are not saved.
 - That is not what I meant, and there is nothing wrong with that – Salvation can be obtained that way.
 - Praying with a Pastor or someone else, isn’t the issue.
 - It’s the step before that step – that’s the issue!
- Let me explain what I mean – and I’ll do that by describing to you, how the Salvation process works.
 - True Salvation manifests itself when God convicts an individual by and through His Word.
 - It’s that “moment” – when a man or women or child realize who God is and who they are without Him.
 - It’s in that moment that conviction sets in, and from there that individual acknowledges they are a sinner.
 - That Jesus came and died for their sins.
 - At which point they repent, ask for forgiveness, and follow that up with a public profession of faith through baptism.
 - Which lets the world know they have made a decision for Christ.
 - That process completes what is the Salvation experience in the life of an individual.
- But here’s the issue: If the Conviction part of the equation is manipulated by men or women in anyway, if we try to speed up or fast forward the work of the “Holy Spirit” or
 - Maybe better said, if we try subconsciously or consciously to counterfeit the work of the Holy Spirit – through whatever means:
 - which could be through amped up music service or through some emotional story or joke or whatever it is outside the conviction of God’s Word...
 - Then we have removed the Holy Spirit out of the equation, and instead injected ourselves into it!
 - We cannot re-create a conviction experience, or it will lead to false conversion.
 - And this was and continues to be an issue.
 - But why? Why is this such a problem?
 - Because seeing people saved (leads presumably to Church Growth), and church growth (attendance) is the church’s primary measure of success.
 - And so the pressure is always looming for the Preacher to try and help God out in the convicting process.
 - And that’s where the easy beliefism enters the equation.
 - The thought is this, let’s not make the salvation process too complicated. Let’s

dumb it down – water it down so people can get it!

- Problem is – God doesn’t need our help in the area.
- I’ll give you a real-life example of what I mean – using two churches I once was a part of. One where I was a deacon and the other where I was an Associate Pastor.
 - Pertaining to the one where I was a deacon, we had a Pastor who told a story from the pulpit one time about a little boy who was either dying or his mother was dying (I can’t remember).
 - In the story he told how the little boy wanted to buy his mother a gift of some sort – but he only had a little bit of money.
 - And so, he bought her some perfume.
 - The story was a real tearjerker – it was an emotional story and a good one.
 - Problem was that the preacher told the story as if he was a party of the story – which made it even more of a tearjerker –
 - The point of his story was to get an emotional rise out of people, and sure enough – it worked. People were emotional and crying all over the place.
 - But guess what? The preacher lied – it wasn’t a story that he was personally involved with. Because someone found that exact story on the internet, but told it as if he had personally experienced it, as if he knew the little boy.
- Now the question that should be lingering in everyone’s mind at this point is – should be, why? Why would he do such a thing?
 - The answer is – Results
 - For most preachers they feel an extreme amount of pressure to produce and when they run out of stories to tell, or things to do, or a new way to entertain, they sometimes just make it up!
- I also had this same type of experience at another church, but in a different way – when I became an Associate Pastor at another church later in my career.
 - At that church the preacher was a master at coming up with new and creative shock factor scenarios that he felt might convict people into deciding for Christ
 - Once again, let me say – his intent was pure and noble. But the results produced (what I believe) were many false conversion experiences.
 - I remember one time he had me ride a motorcycle down the aisle – and then somehow tied that into his message.
- Now once again, I want to go on record and say – there is nothing wrong with praying with the Pastor or anyone else to receive Salvation.
 - That’s not what I mean when I say “Easy Beliefism”. Easy beliefism is when the Preacher or the church tries to manipulate the message – and get an emotional reaction out of the crowd
 - And as I said, they do it all in the spirit of seeing people saved, but it’s wrong – it’s wrong anytime we try and intervene and counterfeit the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Remember Salvation is a work of the Lord!

- And all we must do to see people saved is to stay faithful in the teaching of God's Word. And God will do the rest!
- Moving on, back to, today's teaching. Let me read last week's verses one more time for context and reference.

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also appeared among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 Peter 2:2 Many will follow their indecent behavior, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

2 Peter 2:3 and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

- The crux of Peter's words here are simple – and they apply to all of us sitting here today.
 - There will be people – who will infiltrate the church and begin teaching something contrary to God's Word.
 - There will also be people who have been in church for a long time, who hear something or read something and believe they have received a New Revelation from God.
 - And when that happens, (not if it happens, but when it happens), you (as a believer) must be prepared to deal with.
 - You must have a deep enough understanding of the Bible that you can call it out and push it aside.
 - And by the way – before moving on I want you to notice something about verse 2, where Peter says many will follow their indecent behavior.
 - Then he says in verse 3 “in their greed they will exploit you with false words”.
- Let me say this: If you don't know if someone is a False Teacher or not, watch for their indecent behavior and greed, i.e. the money.
 - Inevitably – these two will become front and center of their “New Revelation”. Maybe not both at the same time, but certainly one of them will rise to the surface
- Enough on this, let's press on – and we will close with 2 Peter 2:4-10:

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.

2 Peter 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

2 Peter 2:6 and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter.

2 Peter 2:7 and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men

2 Peter 2:8 (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds),

2 Peter 2:9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

2 Peter 2:10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority.

- So guys, let me try and sum up what Peter is saying here.
 - If we back up to our previous verses for context, Peter just got through mentioning two types of individuals who historically worked diligently to drag the church off course – which would be the False Prophets of old.
 - And then he followed that up by saying there would be men who would show up as False Teachers in the future.
 - Peter wanted the church to look back and remember those False Prophets – remember what they did and then be vigilant – for those False Teachers who will be easing their way into their fellowships in the future.
 - And then – from there he enters a dissertation of examples using Fallen Angels (which became Demons), Noah and the flood, as well as Sodom and Gomorrah for his case studies.
- Peter also does something else by combining these two examples – and to understand this a little better I want you to notice what the two situations mentioned (Noah, and Sodom and Gomorrah – what they both have in common).
 - Sexual Sin and immorality
 - And what did I just say, if you don't know if the person is a False Teacher or not, watch out for the indecent behavior and the greed, i.e. the money!
 - And sure enough – the two situations' Peter cites revolve around exactly that!
 - Just read it. Why did God destroy the earth the first time?

Genesis 6:1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,

Genesis 6:2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

- Then in verse 5 he said:

Genesis 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

- Now immorality wasn't the only problem man had at that point, but it was the only one highlighted!
 - And I find it interesting how that even though no sin is worse than any other...sexual sins seem to carry a harsher punishment on earth than other sins.
 - Meaning – we never saw God destroy an entire group of people for say “Gluttony or for coveting or gossiping”.
 - But He does for Sexual Sin.
- The most glaring example of that shows up in Genesis 19 – with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - I believe most of us probably know this story, but in case you've never heard of it...
 - Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities where the sexual sin had gotten so bad – that God had to send in two Angels to rescue Lot and his family).
 - When I say the sexual sin had gotten so bad in these cities, it wasn't just bad it was really bad.
 - So bad that when the two Angels went in to rescue Lot, the people in those cities tried to have sex with the Angels.
 - Which led to the ultimate demise of these places
 - Because God as we know leveled the place!
 - Which is why I say all sin is the same as it relates to Salvation.
 - But sexual sins seem to carry a harsher punishment here on earth.
- Now having said that these corollaries are not what's most important about Peter's words. Well – that's true but it isn't.
 - It is as Peter uses these stories to highlight his point.
 - But that isn't the gold that believers should be mining out of these verses.
 - Look at it closer – I want you to notice how Peter lets us know that there is one person or one group of people who will make it through those trying times.
 - And who is it? The Righteous!
 - Which begs the question – who are the righteous?
 - You are! If you are saved – you have been declared righteous!
 - You are righteous because in the sight of God you have been completely wiped clean of sin.
 - The only ones who are completely wiped clean of sin are those who are covered by the blood of Jesus.
 - Righteousness is just a synonym for salvation. And this is good news for all believers!
 - Because – we are all faced with temptation. Especially that of an immoral sort.
 - But God can deliver you from all of it.
 - Matter a fact, He will deliver you from it – if you ask Him and allow him to do so!
 - Listen to it one more time:

2 Peter 2:9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,
2 Peter 2:10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority.

- And so, God know us better than we know ourselves. He knows sexual sin is alive and well on the earth – and for that reason, He provided a way out.
 - When I think of this statement I think of James 4:7-10:

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 4:9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

- The key to activating Gods help (as it relates to temptation), lies in the words Submit and Resist.
 - God knows what we struggle with, and He is always faithful in supporting and lifting His children in those trying times.
 - But He doesn't help us in temptation, without us doing something – we must first take one step toward Him. And He will take two towards us!
 - That's the proposition here. You do – and God does.
 - You submit and resist, and God says the devil will flee.
 - Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you.
 - Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.
 - And then here is the final key in verse 10: Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you!
- For every believer sitting here today, I want to say one thing – as it relates to all the struggles we face daily: God is with you!
 - He isn't just with you – as in some bumper sticker saying sense.
 - He is truly with you, and He is in control.
 - All we must do is humble ourselves and take one step toward Him – and He will do the rest! He is with you!
 - King David said it best when he said it this way!

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd,

I will not be in need.

Psalm 23:2 He lets me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.

Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For the sake of His name.

Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.

Psalm 23:6 Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my
life,
And my dwelling *will be* in the house of the LORD forever.

- Amen – Amen!