

- Good morning, guys it's good to be back – glad to see everyone. Now when we last left off we were in 2 Peter where we specifically focused in on verses 4-10.
 - Just to set the context for you – I want you to remember, that Peter is the one who wrote 2 Peter. He did so at the end of his life.
 - It was the last letter pinned in the New Testament. Peter wrote this letter to a group of Gentile believers, mixed in with some Jewish believers.
 - This group – was residing somewhere in Northern Asia Minor or what is known today as Modern Day Turkey.
- Now, the overall context or message of this letter revolves around maturity (sanctification).
 - Christian and or Spiritual Maturity, which as we know is key in our overall development as believers.
 - Spiritual Maturity is something we are all commanded to strive for.
 - That's if we desire to become a more fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.
 - Spiritual Maturity is also the next step of our Christian Walk after we are saved.
 - It's also the step that the modern-day church has lost its way on.
 - I won't get into all that this morning, because you guys know where I stand on the issue, and so for the sake of time, let me just simplify it for you.
 - The church, to reach people for Christ – Which by the way let me just say is the easier part of the two-step process of the Christian life.
- And so the Church, in its desire and or effort to see people come to know Christ slowly begins to abandon, what is the second part of the Christian life or Christian Walk – that spiritual growth or maturity part (sanctification).
 - And why has that happened? Well – first because God said it would happen in the end times.
 - Second, as I previously stated, because telling people about Jesus – or creating programs that will reach people for Christ – is the easier part of the Christian equation.
 - Another way to say it is – it's the fun part. I mean after all – who doesn't want to see people saved – right?
- Anyways, Peter wrote this letter to a group of Gentile Believers in Northern Asia minor – and his emphasis was Spiritual growth and maturity in the life of the believer. But that wasn't the only point of his letter!
 - Last time we were together – we began by studying the second chapter of 2 Peter. And in that section of the chapter we read (what were – in my opinion) some somewhat strange set of verses.
 - But before we get into those verses this morning let me back up and re-read our focus verses from our last teaching, so we can move forward in context.

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, in Chapter 1 Peter encourages these believers to grab a hold of what's theirs, and to embrace who they are – so they can ward off the wiles of the enemy.
 - Then as we move deeper into the Chapter Peter warns his readers about False Teachers who have and will be infiltrating the Church.
 - Just for a point of reference, so that they could recognize those false teachers when they arrive on the scene, he tells his readers that these false teachers will look much like the False Prophets of the Old Testament
 - Men who worked diligently to lead God's people off track.
 - The difference between these two: being where the false prophets of the Old Testament showed up from outside the church and took God's children off into all kinds of other false religions.
 - These false teachers would emerge from within the Church – slowly leading God's people astray but doing so (as I said) from within the confines of the Church.
 - From inside Christianity itself!
 - And don't get me wrong, both have the same goal – which was to lead God's people astray.
 - But they use very different methods.
- From there Peter then escalates the warning, using examples of Noah and the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - Which also highlighted a side of God that no one wants to see or talk about. The side of His character we call wrath.
 - He doesn't do that without first giving them a word of encouragement – where he says this in verse 9:

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,

- I'll paraphrase this for you quickly. Peter says God will protect you – but we must do our part.
 - We must invest and work hard and be diligent to seek him in all things – especially in temptation.
 - We must remember that no matter how hard it gets, we should Hold on – Hold on!
 - When things get tough hold on.
 - When temptation leans in on you – hold on.
 - And if you honor God, He will rescue you.
 - Another way to say it is, put in a little effort – and God will take care of the rest.
 - And by the way that statement is 100% true.
 - God is not blind, nor is He an absent sidelined observer in your life!
 - On the contrary, He is very much an active participant in the lives of all His Children and His Creation.
 - You may not see it in the moment, but if you honor Him in all you do, He will honor you!
 - And let me also say that this rescuing process if you will, is not always immediate because our timing is not His timing.
 - Sometimes God moves slower than we would like.
 - But having said that – I can personally testify that if you do the God honor thing, God will rescue you.
 - And that's not just something I'm saying to make you feel better.
 - That is a promise from Him – to you!
 - So, remember that – hold on, because God is with you!
- Pressing on, next, we move into what I believe are some (somewhat) odd sets of verses. At least when you just read them on the surface.
 - And the last time we were last together, I asked you to read those verses and study them for yourself and see if you couldn't make heads or tails out of what Peter is saying.
 - If you didn't that's okay, because we are going to break them down together this morning.
 - So, let's jump into it. Here is what Peter wrote.

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.

Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,
2 Peter 2:11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.
2 Peter 2:12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,
2 Peter 2:13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,
2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;
2 Peter 2:15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;
2 Peter 2:16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

- Now, as you read these verses, I think you can see why I say these verses are strange – I think it's fairly obvious
 - I mean – one minute we are talking about the Christian refraining from sin and temptation and how God promises to rescue them, then we move into a long dissertation about angels and some other group of people who are like unreasoning animals.
 - Coupled with how they will be destroyed, and then Peter moves into a comparison of those people – to someone who received rebuke for his own transgression.
 - Which then parlays into something about a mute donkey – who speaks with a voice of a man – restrained the madness of the prophet.
 - And so now you see why I say it's a strange set of verses.
 - But guess what, as strange as these verses may seem, we know that God didn't just place those verses in there to throw us off.
 - Matter a fact these verses are no different than the rest of God's Word – these words are God's Words – and they too have purpose and meaning.
 - It's simply up to us to mine the gold that lies beneath the pages of God's Holy Manuscript!!
- First, before digging too deep, let me say that there are two groups of people in view here.
 - The first are believers – also known as the righteousness.
 - The others are non-believers – the unrighteous, and they are referenced by their behavior.
 - Then of course mixed in with all of this is a reference to Angels – and how these unbelievers (which are the false teachers Peter is warning about) do not tremble when they revile against Angels.

- Revile simply means “to criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner”
- "The main idea in these verses comes across clearly: God judges those who obstinately disregard His commands, while He protects those who stay faithful to Him."
- Now before delving too far into this I want you to remember that Peter’s warning is in reference to false teachers and his mentioning of this is very important.
 - He devotes roughly 33 percent of his letter toward them.
 - Once again, Peter is warning this group of believers to be vigilant and to be on the lookout for these people and he is using examples from the past and future to reinforce what he is trying to say.
- Now there is something I want you to recognize about both these groups.
 - First – when Peter mentions Lot in the previous verses he is using him as an example of a man who is living his life in a way that is way too close to the fray of sin.
 - Meaning how it is that Lot is a righteous man – but he has taken up residency in Sodom and Gomorrah, which tells us something.
 - And what does it tell us –
 - It tells us that many times we cannot tell the difference between the saved and the unsaved.
 - The bible references this type of Christian as the “Carnal Believer”.
 - Which means (it is simply a waste of time) when we try to figure out if someone is truly saved or not.
 - Because the Carnal Believer is still a believer but his or her life so closely mirrors the life of an unbeliever – you really cannot tell the difference.
 - So, as I said don’t waste your time passing judgement on someone!
 - The next group is the non-believers/the unrighteous – and they are obviously not saved.
 - Based on Peter's examples where he uses Noah and Lot – we know they will never be saved.
 - They are in fact reprobate, meaning permanently separated from God – just listen to verse 9-10 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.

Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

- The word Godly here in the Greek – is the word devout.
 - And the words “Angelic Majesties” is actually the word “Glories” in the Greek

- But it is a reference back to Angels which is why the translators added Angelic to the translations.
 - To sum it all up these false teachers/unbelievers revile back against the Angels.
- They are bold about it – that’s what it means when it says “they do not tremble”. They are arrogant and self-centered, and they are only concerned about doing it their way.
- They do that with zero regard to what the Apostles are saying and teaching – they could care less.
- Now from here I am going to slow it down just for a minute and try to clarify what he is saying, because it is somewhat confusing.
 - To do that – I will use commentary from Dr. Thomas Constable of Dallas Theological Seminary. Who (in my opinion) is one of the great teachers and theologians of our modern era.
 - In verse 11 Peter says,

2 Peter 2:11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

- Peter is saying, even though "angels" are "greater in might and power" than human beings, they "do not bring a demanding judgment against them before the Lord."
 - Now the question here is, who is the "them" he is talking about?
 - Some commentators believed that they are angels, or, more particularly, evil angels (demons).
 - But the antecedent of "them" is "the unrighteous".
 - Verse 9 specifically is a reference to the false teachers and how their behavior was totally inappropriate.
 - From there Peter then moves into what is an even more confusing set of verses, when he says:

2 Peter 2:12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

2 Peter 2:13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;

2 Peter 2:15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

2 Peter 2:16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey,

speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

- Once again – who is Peter referencing here? It's these false teachers and their behavior.
 - But what in the world does he mean when he says – “but these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,”
 - What he means is these false teachers are men and women who will seek to destroy the church from inside out.
 - They, rather than behaving like angels do, will act like "unreasoning animals."
 - They (like animals) will follow their lower instincts, and their natural desires, instead of their reasons.
 - Just like animals who live mainly by "instinct."
 - Peter says these “false teachers” deserve treatment like animals ("to be captured and killed").
- The last clause in verse 12, which says ("will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed") involves a play on words in Greek.
 - The idea is that they will perish like beasts since they behaved like beasts (cf. Jude 10).
 - Peter did not mean that they would escape eternal condemnation, as animals will.
 - According to ancient thought, wild animals were placed in this world in order to be 'captured and killed.'
 - And these teachers have a similar predetermined destiny."
 - Meaning - "As the animals they are – they will be trapped through their eagerness to satisfy their own appetite, so self-indulgence betrays these men to their ruin."
- Moving on to verse 13 & 14 – he then says:

2 Peter 2:13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;

- What Peter is saying in verse 13 is that God will give them punishment in keeping with their crimes (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:7).
 - Rather than concealing their carousing under the cover of darkness, they shamelessly practice immorality in broad daylight.
 - The pagans did this in their worship of false gods, and Pagan worship often involved sexual prostitution.
 - These ungodly practices were like "stains" on the clean fabric of the church and "blemishes" on its countenance (reputation) since the practitioners evidently

professed to be Christians ("they feast with you"; cf. Eph. 5:27).

- The faithful Christians did not carouse. The false teachers did the carousing, but they did it as members of the Christian community.
- Peter could say that they reveled "in their deceptions" since they extravagantly practiced immoral carousing while claiming to be followers of Christ.
- Much like the blemishes on an animal – they were not fit for sacrifice (Lev 1:3) or on a man not fit for priestly service (Lev 21:21), these immoral people were frustrating the church's aim of holiness and could make the church unfit to be presented as a sacrifice to God.
- Next let's move on to verse 14 -16 – and let me re-read it one more time and this is where we will close.

2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;

2 Peter 2:15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

2 Peter 2:16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

- Once again I am going to use commentary from Dr. Constable in explaining these verses.
 - In 2:14 Constable says: The person who has "eyes full of adultery" is one who thinks only of sexual immorality when he or she sees members of the opposite (or the same) sex (cf. Matt. 5:28).
 - These false teachers sinned without restraint.
 - Furthermore, they lured people not firmly committed to Jesus Christ to join them, much like a fisherman lures his prey.
 - Many scholars believe that Peter's use of the Greek word translated "enticing", here and in verse 18, is a reference back to Peter's fishing days.
 - These false teachers had considerable experience lusting and practicing greed, always angling for more wealth, power, and illicit pleasures.
 - They were in fact experts in feeding their "greed."
 - And they behaved like undisciplined and self-centered "children" and were under God's judgment – they were ("accursed").
- From verse 14 to verse 15, we get more of the same – Meaning Peter gives us further description and examples of who these false teachers were, and how they acted.
 - And in verse 15 he references a person named Balaam.
 - Balaam was a false prophet in the Old Testament – a man who counseled Balak, King of the Moabites
 - The Moabites were Pagans.
 - Balaam the false Prophet counseled King Balak on inviting God's Children into

their Pagan worship practices.

- I'm not going to expound on this too much, I'll just say – go study the Moabites and their Pagan worship practices. They were very evil and immoral.
 - And once again, Peter compares these false teachers to this King and the Moabite people
 - In particular what they did in their Pagan worship – go study it for yourself. It will turn your stomach.
- And then finally, we get a reference to a mute donkey and a restrained Prophet in verse 16.
 - Whenever a person rejects God's Word and His will – inevitably he or she begins to act irrationally, because God's Word reveals true reality.
 - Eventually right becomes wrong, and wrong becomes right for him or her.
 - That is what happened to Balaam. He became so insensitive that God had to use "a mute donkey" to rebuke him.
 - The ancients regarded animals as mute because they did not speak human language.
 - Peter was saying that donkey (a proverbially obstinate animal) "restrained" the prophet's madness ("insanity") and was wiser than Balaam was (cf. Jude 11).
- Now at this point, you may be thinking – what in the world does all of this have to do with us?
 - Or what in the world does it have to do with our Modern Church era? I mean afterall I don't know of any "False Teachers" who act this way.
 - Well – that's not true, you do. You just aren't thinking about it in today's terms!
 - And let me tell you what I mean –
 - This past week we had yet another Preacher exposed in an immoral act. We had two preachers exposed – we just don't know yet what one of them was exposed for because it hasn't been revealed.
 - These men were very high-profile men. And the one who was exposed was exposed for inappropriate acts against a 12-year-old girl.
 - But don't worry, it's okay because it was 35 years ago. And he received counseling for it – and after sitting out of ministry for 2 years he was restored by the elders and approved to return to ministry.
 - This man pastors a church with multiple campuses – and according to the Christian Post – the average attendance for his church is around 100,000 per week.
 - The man also wrote a book on the topic of what he did.
 - According to a few articles I read – his net worth is somewhere around 117 million.
 - And this isn't just an isolated instance of one lone Pastor doing something like this.
 - Over the past couple of years this has been the case with several Pastors
- So, let's think about this for just a minute. Peter is warning believers about false

teachers who will rise from within the church, lead God's people astray with false teaching (a distortion and twisting of the truth). And some of their characteristics include:

- Preying on weaker immature Christians.
- Immoral acts.
- And last, but not least – money.
 - Sound familiar! And by the way just in case you think this only happens in faraway places. It happened in this town – in the last 24-36 months. (Minus the 117-million-dollar net worth part).
- But what's most disturbing about all of this is how the church leadership handled these situations.
 - This man molested a 12-year old girl – and the elders decided that he should sit out of ministry for 2 years. Then after 24 months the elders deemed him restored!
 - Seriously – Are you kidding me?!
 - And that's the same thing that happened here in our own hometown as well.
 - Folks, I am sorry – but has the church lost its mind?
 - These men should have been put in prison.
- And so the question looming for me this morning is – and I'll leave you with this – How in the world could a group of so called “Elders” do such a thing?
 - How in the good Lord's name could they possibly think that was what God would want?
 - And furthermore how could they think that any Pastor who committed such a crime would be okay to enter back into the ministry?
 - It is mind blowing.
 - And inevitably every time this happens – I will be asked by someone what I think about it.
 - Or do I think it's okay for that person to return to ministry?
 - Or someone will make the statement, wouldn't it be okay for them to return to ministry if they repent. I mean doesn't God forgive.
 - Once again people – are we that clueless about God and His Word?
 - I mean – even the world knows better than that.
 - Because when someone does something like that outside the church, they are prosecuted and then added to the sex offenders list – which means they can't live within so many miles of a school.
 - They even must report themselves to the authorities when they move into a new town.
 - So the world isn't confused, and they do a better job at protecting our children than the church does.
 - And they certainly don't question whether it would be okay for that person to

be back around children.

- So why – why is this happening?
 - Because the church is clueless.
 - They DO NOT KNOW GOD or HIS WORD!
- I mean think about it – if I worked at a bank and I embezzled money from them, do you think after 24 months of counseling I would be allowed to re-enter the banking world? NO
 - So why in the world would people think that a Pastor could re-enter ministry after doing such a thing? This is insane!
- And you can believe me or not, but this happens because – we do not know the God of the Bible anymore.
- And we don't know God – because we don't know His Word.
- The God of the Bible detests this type of stuff – so much so that he destroys entire cities over it.
 - Matter a fact – he destroyed everyone on the earth because of it, except for 8 people.
 - This is a fact, but for some reason we seem to forget that!
- I want to read something to you quickly– from the Pastoral Epistle. We have the qualifications of an Elder. And here is what it says:

1 Timothy 3:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Timothy 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

1 Timothy 3:4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

1 Timothy 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

1 Timothy 3:6 *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

1 Timothy 3:7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.