

- Alright folks, good to see everybody. I hope everyone had a good and enjoyable 4th of July.
 - The last time we were together I kind of went off script and addressed (what I believe) is a systemic issue that is plaguing this country. An issue I call – “The Spirit of Tolerance”.
 - Meaning in the “Spirit of Tolerance” we have decided as a country that taking a stand for something, or anything really, may in some way reflect negatively on us individually.
 - Therefore we just decide to keep our opinion to ourselves!
 - As I said last week that type of thinking is concerning (especially in the Church). Primarily because it leaves us in a paralyzed state, robbing us of the ability to take a stand.
 - I am not going to re-hash all that this morning, only to say – if you weren’t here last week and you would like to hear it, you can login and listen to the message on our website.
- Having said that, I would like to say one final thing as it relates to this topic of Tolerance – there is indeed a fine line between being or becoming judgmental and simply re-stating and affirming what God put in writing through the authors of His Manuscript.
 - Just in case you're confused about when it is that you are becoming judgmental and or simply standing behind what God said and outlined in scripture, just remember this – when you have an opinion about an issue, if you can’t speak from a place of love and concern on the topic then you are probably speaking from a place of “Pride”.
 - Which means, you are probably being judgmental!
 - And believe it or not, recognizing the difference in the two isn’t that hard to do.
 - All you must do is remember this when faced with a tough topic or issue. Just ask yourself a question.
 - Does what you are about to say excite your flesh – because if it does then your opinion will probably sound more like gossip and less like an opinion of concern.
 - If that’s the case then yes – you probably should keep your opinion to yourself.
 - But on the other hand, if your words come from a place of genuine concern then by all means – speak up.
 - That is a pretty simple litmus test when trying to determine your motivation for voicing your opinion.
 - And that’s where I will leave it as we pick back up with our teaching in 2 Peter.
- Now when we last left off, Peter was writing to a group of believers and sending them a clear warning. A warning about a group of people (could be men or women) who would slowly over time make their way into church.
 - He called these people – “False Teachers”.
 - He also took it a step further and told this group that these False Teachers of their day would act much like the False Prophets of the Old Testament.

- At least in the way they worked diligently to lead God's children astray.
- But then he went on to say that even though the False Teachers and False Prophets had the same goal, they had very different approaches and or techniques and methods in trying to achieve their goals.
 - Where the false prophets (in many cases) worshipped other Gods and tried to distort and twist God's Word.
- These false teachers would emerge from inside the fellowship – and not necessarily directly try to lead the people down another path or religion all together, but in contrast this group would work from within trying to slightly change God's Word – ever so slightly twisting things over time.
 - Obviously the result of which would be the same – leading people away from God!
- Essentially you could say, where the False Prophets worked from the outside in, the False Teachers would work from the inside out.
 - Then from there, to further explain what Peter was trying to convey, he then (in 2 Peter 2:9-16), went into a long dissertation of a strange set of verses where he gave his readers a description of what these False Teachers looked like.
 - As I said, he does this by using a strange set of verses and so, to keep us in context for today's teaching, I am going to back up and re-read our focus verses from 2 weeks ago.

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 the last time we were together I broke these down for you, so I am not going to re-

do them again. Mainly because this week, as we get into our next set of verses, we are going to see more of the same. So bear with me here as we go deeper.

2 Peter 2:17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

2 Peter 2:18 For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

2 Peter 2:19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

2 Peter 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

2 Peter 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

2 Peter 2:22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” and, “A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire.”

- So as I said, here we have yet another set of strange verses.
 - We will handle these verses the same way we handled the last set of verses. We will exegete and expound on them in context! So, let's get going.
 - First before we begin, I want to do something I don't normally do – and that is I would like to jump to the end of these verses and highlight verses 21&22.
 - Because these verses are verses that have been consistently taken out of context. Taken out of context by certain church denominations all in an effort to support a certain view of Salvation.
 - And let me speak a disclaimer before I speak specifically on this view.
- My disclaimer is I have my view on most topics in scripture. Some of those topics, you may have heard before and some you may have not.
 - I want to speak this disclaimer because I do not want you leaving here today mad or irritated about what I am about to say.
 - I also want you to know that you do not have to believe what I say – once again I want to encourage you to go deeper in your study and follow the Berean Way.
 - Which says you won't just take what I say as the gospel, but rather you will study for yourself and find that these things might be true!
- Now I am jumping to the end of our focus verses and highlighting them first because as I teach you the preceding verses (in context), I want you to see why verses 21&22 don't apply to the view I am about to highlight.
 - And so, with all that said – what is this view? Does anyone know?

- Let me read it to you again – 2 Peter 2:21-22:

2 Peter 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

2 Peter 2:22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” and, “A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire.”

- So here’s my question: What view of Salvation do you think these verses are used to support?
 - It’s the view that says your salvation is not assured! That you can lose your salvation.
 - The proponents of this view use verse 21&22 as proof texts that a person could be saved (i.e. be righteous) and lose their way – which could ultimately lead to them losing their Salvation.
 - Now, I am not going to expound on this too much. Instead I want you to follow today's teaching all the way through and see if you think these verses support that view!
 - By the way, if you believe you can lose your Salvation – it’s okay.
 - I personally don’t believe that, but that doesn’t mean we can’t attend church together. We will simply agree to disagree!
- I will say however that I don’t believe in Salvation the way a lot of people believe in it. Instead of saying – once saved always saved (for example), I say "if saved always saved!"
 - I bring this up because this has been one of the most highly debated topics throughout church history. So, just keep what I said in mind as we exegete these verses.
- Now because I “side barred” us last week, let me go back and re-read these verses one more time so we can stay on track.
 - It begins with "These". Who are these who Peter is speaking about? They are the false teachers who will rise up from within side the church.

2 Peter 2:17 These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

2 Peter 2:18 For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

2 Peter 2:19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

2 Peter 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the

first.

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- So, Peter continues his dissertation on identifying False Teachers who will rise up – from within the fellowship.
 - Those who will slowly try and distort and twist God's Word.
 - And then effectually begin to have influence over believers in Church!
 - As I stated last week, this issue wasn't just an issue of that day and age.
 - On the contrary, it is very much an issue (maybe even more of an issue) in our day and age. It simply takes on a different form.
 - So Peter says, these (speaking of False Teachers) – these are springs without water and mists driven by storm, for who the black darkness has been reserved.
- Now there are a few things I would like to point out about this verse. First, I want to deal with Peter's words as it relates to the False Teachers being like Springs without water and mists driven by storm. What in the world is Peter saying?
 - Well to answer the question we must first ask ourselves, what do springs without water and mists driven by storm have to do with False Teachers?
 - Well before I tell you, let me say in this exercise I am going to teach you how to critically think – and then use that process to study your Bible for yourself, specifically as it relates to expounding on scriptures.
 - So how do we do that? Well let's begin this process by asking or dealing with springs without water
 - What do you call a spring without water? A dry spring – right?
 - And a dry spring (at first glance) appears to be a good thing, and therefore it brings hope (i.e. the water).
 - But in reality – it's the opposite of hope. It's False Hope.
- So how would that relate to these False Teachers? Well just apply what I said – False Teachers will appear to bring deep teaching with New Revelation, a fresh new word. But in the end, it's just a dry hole – and rendered useless.
 - Next, we have the mist driven by storm. How does that relate to False Teachers?
 - Well upon further investigation, what I said about dry springs holds true for a mist driven by storm.
 - Here's the concept – just imagine you are a farmer and there has been no rain for months. But suddenly you see storm clouds forming.
 - In that moment as you feel a little mist in the air it once again brings about False

Hope.

- And so what Peter is saying is, just like a storm that appears and brings with it hope of a downpour, in the end it only produces a mist.
 - And so too are these False Teachers! Once again they appear to have strength in their words. But simply put – their words are empty.
 - Or as they say in Texas: they are “All Hat and No Cattle”.
 - Bloviators – is another way to put it.
- Which leads me to the second point I would like to make about these verses. And that point is found in the last part of verse 17 where Peter says, “for whom the black darkness has been reserved.”
 - This concept is a simple one. God knows there are those who will rise up inside the church as False Teachers.
 - He also knows who those False Teachers are. And as such, He has reserved for them a place that Peter calls – “The black darkness”.
 - Let me also say, God didn’t just set up this place (just in case these people did emerge inside the church).
 - He in fact knew they would be coming, therefore He reserved this special place for them.
 - But what is this place? Well if your first guess was hell – I believe you would be correct.
 - This is not some separate place reserved only for those who taught heresy.
 - Rather it’s just another description of the place that Revelation 20:14-15 calls “The Lake of Fire”
 - And just in case this bothers you (for some reason), because it didn’t say it was Hell! I want you to know that Hell is often described in various and vivid forms in the Bible.
 - From Darkness to Fire to the Grave to the Pit etc.
 - But regardless of how it’s described, we know it’s a place of eternal separation from God.
 - And so, essentially, Peter is telling us that God has reserved a place for those who would lead His children astray.
 - But as I also said it’s not a separate place, but rather the same place where all those who die in unbelief will find their final destination.
- Moving on. Next we pick up with verses 18 & 19 where Peter once again gives us a description of how these people will act and what they will be promising.
 - Listen to it one more time:

2 Peter 2:18 For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,
2 Peter 2:19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of

corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

- Now the sense of what Peter is trying to relay here is that of an individual/false teacher who will arrive on the scene, and they will talk a real good game.
 - Meaning they will be convincing and if you listen really close to their words they will use a lot of pronouns – in their world it's all about us, so they use words like:
 - I – me – we
 - They will speak arrogantly and proud – and they will lure you in by speaking of things that excite the flesh (fleshly desires), by sensuality.
 - Dr. Thomas Constable said -

"Grandiose sophistry is the hook, filthy lust is the bait, with which these men catch those whom the Lord had delivered or was delivering."

- He went on to say -

"It is unlikely that the false teachers told their listeners to indulge in carnal passions."

- More than likely the teachers were working hard to confuse their listeners about what moral conduct was appropriate to Christian believers.
 - What Peter is doing here is casting their teaching in the most negative terms to distinguish clearly between the moral conduct of the believing community and the behavior of the outside world.
 - But the fact that he was attempting to do so shows how unclear this distinction had actually been.
 - So here we are (once again), we are back to sexual things.
 - And if you are a young believer or a believer who doesn't know God's Word, these False Teachers will grab ahold of you. And do so in a way that you barely escape the same fate they face.
- Now let's pause here for a moment because in this scene Peter describes two types of people. The first is that of "False Teachers" which we know to be unbelievers.
 - And then the second is who? Their prey – which are who? Believers – right? They will be teaching heresy to believers.
 - But here's where it gets interesting, and this serves (in my opinion) as proof refuting the concept of a person losing their Salvation.
 - Listen closely – the false teachers speak with arrogant words enticing those whom they are teaching (the believers).
 - And they entice them with fleshly desires and sensuality.
 - And so clearly we have believers being taught by false teachers.

- And then Peter says they barely escape the fate that lies for those who live their lives in error.
- Just in case you're curious about what Peter just said, or maybe questioning whether Peter's words represent a minority of verses in the scripture, his writings here echo a consistent language found all throughout God's Holy Manuscript – especially in the New Testament.
 - Places like John 6:35-39:

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

John 6:36 “But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

John 6:37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

John 6:38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:39 “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

- Or in Philippians 1:6

Phil 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

- You see the overarching theme in scripture tells us that God is the one who saves us – and He is the one who keeps us.
 - And these three sets of verses aren’t just some isolated verses that speak to this being the case.
 - I can show you many other scriptures that say this same thing, but for the sake of time I am not going to do that – but I do want to encourage you to go study it for yourself
- Next in verse 19, Peter says these false teachers will promise freedom while they themselves are slaves to corruption.
 - Now the question looming in my head is, What kind of freedom are they promising?
 - I mean after all, these believers are saved – so what other type of freedom could these False Teachers be peddling?
 - Well, upon further research, and by keeping with the context of Peter's writings here in 2 Peter 2, clearly the Freedom they are speaking about is that of Moral Freedom.
 - Essentially what these false teachers are doing is redefining God's Standard of Morality. Which is truly appealing and or enticing by the way.
- So now – we kind of get a better picture of what’s going on. These people, these false teachers are appealing to the believers’ carnal desires.

- And they are using that as a method to pull God's people away from their faith.
- And they do a pretty good job of it, because Peter says they get close – but it doesn't happen. Basically, “No cigar” as it relates to them losing their Salvation.
 - And that is clearly articulated when Peter says “They barely escape the fate of those who live in error”
 - And what is their fate? Hell – i.e. Black Darkness.
- Now before we move on, let me point out one more thing. Look at what Peter writes at the end of verse 19 – “for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.” What does this tell us?
 - It tells us that anything in your life that consumes you; Sports, Work, Social, or in this case sensual desires.
 - You become a slave to it. You become trapped by your own mind.
- For us as believers there is only one thing we should be enslaved to, and that is God! Matter a fact, that is what Paul and many of the other Apostles call themselves.
 - They say they are “Dullios” in the Greek – slaves; bond servants of the God most high.
 - I want to encourage you to remember this, anything that consumes your time and interest, and replaces God, has enslaved you!
- Moving on, and this is where we will close. We started out our today's teaching at the end of today's focus verses and I told you why this was the case. I now want to move into those verses and see if you arrive at a conclusion that says that this verse relates to losing your Salvation!
 - We read Verses 21&22 one more time:

2 Peter 2:21 For it would be better for them...

- Now, let me pause here for just a moment and ask you the question – who is the “them” in view here?
 - It's the same people it has been from the beginning – it's the False Teachers. And so let me ask you a question, does Peter say the False Teachers are saved or no?
 - The answer is no – he does not!
 - So, Peter says, once again in verse 21:

2 Peter 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

- The thought process is this – “Ignorance is a very bad thing, but disobedience is always worse”.
 - But then when we didn't think Peter's words could be any more strange, he writes

the following in verse 22:

2 Peter 2:22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” and, “A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire.”

- Peter is comparing these False Teachers with that of dogs and pigs.
 - And what he is saying is, and I find this next statement somewhat fascinating: “Conduct betrays nature, generally speaking”.
 - Dogs return to the corruption that comes from within them: “Vomit”
 - And pigs return to the filth that they find outside themselves: “Mire”
 - Another way to say it is this: Once a person is saved he or she has been given a new life and a new spirit and a new nature.
 - Yes – the old nature is still there, but God's Spirit becomes preeminent!
 - These False Teachers were able to fake it for a while, but ultimately – they returned to the people they truly were.
- Now I would tell you, this holds true for false conversions of salvation as well.
 - If an individual is moved into salvation by any other means than the conviction of the Holy Spirit, then they will experience what's known as “A False Conversion Experience”.
 - And as such, they will eventually end up right back where they started.

In that case – it would appear they lost their salvation, but in fact – they never were saved to begin with!

Hence – my belief that says, “If saved always saved”.

This morning – I want to ask each person in Gods House this morning –

- Are you saved?
- Have you made a profession of faith?
- Have you (at some point in your life) – been convicted about the sin in your life?
- Have you repented of that sin, and have you asked Jesus to forgive you – to save you?
- And then have you followed that up with Baptism?
- If you haven't – I want to ask you to do something this morning – please take out that connection card – and check the box – that says you would like to talk about salvation, and I will call you – before the day is out.
- I would love to walk you through the whole concept and reality of what Salvation is all about.

Also, if you have made a profession of faith – but have not yet been baptized, please allow me to do that for you as well.

We as a fellowship – would love to celebrate that special occasion with you

And then finally, if you are saved – and you have been baptized, and you would like to be re-baptized as a sign of a rededication of your life, I would love to do that with you as well!

Being re-baptized doesn't save you again.

- It's simply a way to make an outward symbol of a re-commitment of your life.

And once again – please write that on the card as well! Amen – Amen!