

- This morning we are going to pick back up with our study of 2 Peter as we enter (what will be) the final Chapter of 2 Peter – 2 Peter Chapter 3.
 - Last week, our focus verses were 2 Peter 2:17-22.
 - We did something with those verses we don't normally do, which is we began our teaching at the end of our focus verses, specifically highlighting 2 Peter 2:21-22
- And I did this for a reason. My reason being I wanted to highlight how those verses were some of the favorite verses for those who ascribe to the concept of a person having the ability to lose their salvation.
 - If you weren't here this past week, I want to reiterate what I said before last week's teaching, and that is in no way was I, or am I, trying to convince you to believe or not believe in the concept of someone losing or maintaining their salvation.
 - I simply wanted to start with those focus verses in mind, and from there back up and teach you the preceding verses in context. And as we moved forward in context I wanted you to decide what you believe.
 - Specially if you agree or disagree that those verses (and for that matter the entire Chapter) are even dealing with matters of salvation.
 - By doing that it affords you the opportunity to form your own opinion on whether or not it's possible for someone to keep or lose their salvation.
- And because we are very careful to teach in context it gives you the ability to judge and know for yourself which way you should lean. Hence how and why context matters.
 - My other hope was that you learned how to exegete scripture and then expound on it.
 - Along with why it is critical not to play "Bible Bingo". Which is just a silly way of saying why it is critical not to eisegete the scripture.
 - And what is the difference between the two?
 - Exegeting is allowing the scripture to speak to you.
 - Eisegesis is where we approach the scriptures with a presupposition or belief system (which is generally derived by what we have been taught or told) – and from there we then find verses that seemingly support our belief system.
 - Basically we cram our beliefs into the verses much like that of cramming a square peg in a round hole.
 - Now if you weren't here last week and you would like to hear more about this topic, please go to the church's website and listen to it!
- Anyways, this week (as I said) we will venture into Chapter 3 of 2 Peter where we will see a slight shift of sorts in Peter's narrative.
 - Having said that, the context will remain same.
 - And what was the context? A warning!
 - A warning from Peter to believers about the "false teachers" who would begin emerging from within the church.
 - Peter then goes out of his way, not only to warn this group of believers about this issue, but by extension he also sends a clear warning to all believers – for the

present, as well as the future.

- A warning about a systemic problem that the church will be facing from then until Jesus returns.
- He also goes in depth describing in vivid detail how these men/these false teachers will act, as well as what they look like.
- Now as we move into Chapter 3, we are going to experience more of the same – simply a continuation of the warning, just in a different way.
 - So, pick back up with me if you will in 2 Peter 3, beginning with verse 1-2
 - Where my NASB entitles this section “Purpose of this letter”.

2 Peter 3:1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,
2 Peter 3:2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

- I would like to pause here for just a minute and point out a few things. First, Peter says the purpose of this letter is to remind the readers of the dangers that are lurking from within the fellowship by the emerging of the False Teachers.
 - Before moving on this morning I would like to address something dealing with this topic and that is, how do “False Teachers” arise from within the fellowship?
 - Or maybe better said, what is it that these False Teachers will be teaching?
 - And then, how does that even begin to permeate the Church? In other words, how does this happen? How does it gain a foothold?
- Well first, let me say based on Peter's writings, the False Teachers who will emerge from within will be much like the False Prophets of old.
 - Difference being (as I said last week), The False Prophets move in on believers from outside the church.
 - And the False Teachers emerge from within the church.
 - Now even though we know they are similar in their goals, there is one notable difference between the two.
 - Where the False Prophets teach outright heresy and promote false religions.
 - These False Teachers will teach a slight and subtle variation to God's Word.
 - In other words, they aren't teaching or preaching about some other religion. On the contrary, they are simply twisting God's Word!
 - And so with that in mind, how do they emerge from within the fellowship? And what exactly will they be teaching?
 - I am not prepared this morning to tell you what specifically they taught in Peter's Day.

- Only to say they twisted the Word of God for their own personal agenda.
- However I will tell you whatever it was they taught, it was divisive – these men were dividers.
 - And that wasn't just something special for their day, these people are still alive and well today. Those who cause division and splits in churches and they are the worst kind! Meaning – they sow dissension among the ranks.
 - And I have personally experienced this.
- Men who have strong doctrinal beliefs and theories, many times they will find a church and move in ever so slowly. They begin to lay down roots around their theory or belief among other fellow believers or for that matter, anyone who will listen.
 - Eventually slowly overtime they do grab some people's attention, creating a divide inside the church.
 - And let me say this about the church. The church may have waived on a lot of issues throughout church history, but it has been consistent on one thing.
 - And that is, Christian people focusing in on doctrinal topic or issues, and then sowing dissension inside the fellowship.
 - Which then of course (many times), as it gains traction causes division inside God's house. And unfortunately sometimes that dissension leads to a church split.
 - And what I find interesting is how God anticipated this – which led Jesus to address this very thing in Matthew when He said:

Matt. 12:25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

- No truer verse has ever been spoken as it relates to church splits.
 - As I said, many church splits occur because of doctrinal issues.
 - Matter a fact, that is why we have over 4000 denominations in America today.
 - This is all a result of someone hearing something (that seems to make sense – at least in their head), and from there they take what they have heard and begin crafting a narrative around it.
 - Which then then of course leads to the old saying that “Misery loves company”.
- They key to what I just said is derived from my earlier statement, which is Christians many times will hear what someone says, and it seems to make sense to them, and so they then begin to run with it.
- Having said that, what they don't do is study it for themselves in context and find that these things might be true! You can see the issue with that?
 - By the way just in case you are wondering, this isn't just an issue that arises from within non-bible teaching churches.

- It can happen in all churches (maybe even more sometimes) with Bible teaching churches, and let me give you a quick example of what I mean.
- Many years ago, when we first started this church, I had a man who began attending – He was a devoted lover and devoted follower of Bible teaching.
 - One Sunday I noticed he stormed out after the service. I was concerned so I followed him out into the parking lot.
 - I asked him if he was okay and he said, Preacher have you ever read the 10 commandments. I said – yes.
 - He said – you may want to re-read the 2nd Commandment which says:

Exodus 20:4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

- I said OKAY – What’s this all about? He then said the 2nd commandment clearly states you shall not worship any graven images, and you have allowed someone to put up a cross in the church.
 - I was blown away, because I Had no clue where he was headed, but evidently he had a thing about crosses being worshipped by people. And therefore – he said we were displaying graven images inside the church and for that reason he never returned.
 - A few months later I was talking to someone who knew this man and he said, Yes I know him – and he has attended every church within a 50-mile radius at least once and some two and three times.
 - This person went on to say – he is never happy and always finds something to complain about.
 - I said OKAY – and let it go.
 - My point is, believe it or not this man (even though he Loved God and Loved God's Word) – he was a false teacher and he arose from within the fellowship.
 - And (it’s my understanding) that he has been part of church splits in the past.
 - Now I am not saying this is specifically what Peter is referencing, I am just saying this is one form of False Teachers who rise from inside the church.
- Let’s move on. Next Peter says he is writing this letter to stir them up, which he hopes will cause them to remember what he is warning them about.
 - And so, there is the purpose of the letter. And that same purpose still holds true today. We should study – and one of the main reasons for this is to help us to remember.
 - Which means, it’s simply not good enough to study one time and set your Bible on the shelf.
 - On the contrary we must never cease studying (lest we forget – as Peter says)
- Next, Peter makes a shift. "Where in Chapter 2 the writer delivered a fervid denunciation of the false teachers and their immorality, in this section he renews his pastoral concern to fortify his readers in regard to another aspect of the danger facing them, namely, the

heretical denial of Christ's return."

- Listen to what he wrote. 2 Peter 3:3-9 – this section is entitled “The Coming Day of the Lord”

2 Peter 3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,

2 Peter 3:4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

2 Peter 3:5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water,

2 Peter 3:6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

2 Peter 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

- Alright, so we have a whole lot to unpack here, and I will begin with the why – as in why Peter shifts his writings so abruptly.
 - Well obviously there were other issues facing believers at that time. Namely issues with mockers, those who were mocking believers about Christ return.
 - And this mocking, just like that of these false teachers, was and is a false narrative in and of itself.
 - It wasn't just some issue; it was a huge issue – and it's highlighted by Peter's words “First of all” in verse 3.
 - First of all, in the Greek means “Of the upmost importance”.
 - The reason for this being – If you take the death, burial, resurrection, and return of Christ out of the equation, do you know what you have?
 - A God that looks exactly like every other God.
 - A man who died.
 - “A being or God” who exists in the clouds somewhere.
- If you study any of the other religions in the world, you will see they are all very similar in the way their leader lived and died – but that is not the case with Jesus!
 - Jesus was born a virgin birth.
 - He lived some 32 years on this earth.
 - He was crucified. Raised again on the 3rd day.

- And one day He will return for His Bride – “The Church”.
 - And oh by the way, all of this was prophesied 2000 years before it ever happened.
 - No other religion has a story that even comes close to the story of Jesus.
- And I’ll mention one more thing about this topic – Other ancient writings such as Islam and its book, the Quran, mentions Jesus 25 times in its writings.
 - And Buddhism mentions Him as well.
 - But the Bible never mentions them. I found that interesting.
 - The mockers are saying – Jesus isn’t returning.
 - Then they say in verse 4, since the “father’s fell asleep”. He hasn’t returned, matter a fact, everything has stayed the same.
 - The fathers here is a reference to the patriarchs of old. Men such as Abraham, Issac and Jacob!
 - And the mockers accusations are hard to defend, especially when they say – If He is coming, then where is He?
 - Their mocking words then lead Peter to say this in verses 5-8:

2 Peter 3:5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water,

2 Peter 3:6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

2 Peter 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

- Another way to say what Peter is trying to convey is, hey guys look around, where do you think all this came from?
 - I believe the Hebrew Bible/The Old Testament said, God breathed it into existence
 - Peter says this one fact has escaped their notice
 - That by the Word of God He breathed all this into existence, and not only that, in verse 7 he says God's Word is holding it altogether.
 - Both heaven and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men.
 - And then he caps all of this off by saying, and oh yea one more thing (in verse 8).
 - Don’t let this one fact escape your notice either: “Beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.
- So, what does that tell us? It tells us that God is outside of space and time.

- What might seem like forever to us is nothing to God. Matter a fact – one thousand years is like one day.
- And so, what's Peter trying to convey to the believers then and believers now?
 - He's saying – Hold on folks. Keep your eye on the prize.
 - Don't look to the left or the right. Focus is the key here.
 - Regardless of what the mockers may say, remember what is true.
- God is coming back, which means it makes no difference what the mockers or any other people say – God is not lacking when it comes to His promises!
- But here's a question for you. What's taking Him so long (as we consider it long)? Anyone know?
 - Well lucky for you we teach verse by verse. So, I can tell you what's taking so long – it's in verse 9:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

- So what's this all about? Now, this opens a can of worms for some of us.
 - Not really, but kind of sort of. Now why would I say this opens a can of worms?
 - Because contained in the language of these verses is the age-old argument of Calvinism versus Arminianism or Freewill.
 - The Calvinist says, God is Sovereign (which He is). And the people who are being saved are the elect – which is what saved people are called
 - But then here and in other places in the scriptures as well, the Bible clearly says that God is patient towards you.
 - Which means, He is waiting. And that His desire is that none would perish but for all to come to repentance.
- Now before we wade off into the water this morning, I want to focus on the main point of the context. And then deal with the Calvinism versus Freewill argument next week (so we can go more in depth on the topic)
 - And so with that thought in mind, the question is what is the reason God has not returned?
 - It's because all those who will be saved have not yet been saved.
 - Meaning there is a certain number of people who will be saved throughout the history of mankind.
 - Until all of those are saved – Jesus will not return.
 - Paul references this same thing in Romans 11:25 when he says:

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—

so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

- The KJV says it this way:

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

- What is the “Fullness of the Gentiles”? That’s what’s key here.
 - The “Fullness of the Gentiles” refers to God's Sovereign Design and or Decree, which says, when every Gentile (which is you and I by the way, because if you’re not a Jew you are a Gentile).
 - Until every Gentile that will be, is saved – God will not return!
 - Another way to say it is – when the last man or woman or child is saved, that is the trigger for Jesus’ return.
 - So, wonder how many will be saved? No clue. Not even Jesus knows.
 - That’s what He said in Matthew 24:36 in the parable of the Fig:

Matt 24:36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

- So – what’s with all the delay? Well evidently God isn’t done yet.
 - And there is still time left for anyone who has not yet asked Jesus into their heart.
 - So if you haven’t asked Jesus for forgiveness. If you haven’t been saved, then mark that on your card – and let me know and let’s talk about it!
 - Because the Bible says God's desire is that everyone be saved.
 - But we know that’s not what happens, right? Not everyone gets saved.
 - Yet God desired that none will perish.
 - So how’s that work?
- Well here is where the water gets muddy for the Calvinist people versus the Arminianist or freewill people.
 - The Calvinist says His desire is that none will perish, and that God is speaking about the “Elect”; those whom God has elected or chosen unto Salvation.
 - If you’re a Calvinist, when you hear that you can simply say, “Works for Me” – I’ll just go with that!
 - But the question you should be asking is, is that what it means?
 - Once again we are back to exegeting versus eisegiting the scripture.

- If I am going to handle the text properly, I can't just make a statement like that and then walk away from it.
 - I must study it for myself and find that this might be true.
- On the other side of the equation, as it relates to the Arminianist or Freewill folks – they say, see Calvinist you are wrong.
 - It's God's desire for everyone to be saved.
 - But its man's choice or decision. He or she must make the decision and to be honest with you, that theory lines more closely with our Bible translation.
 - But the problem is, there are many other places in scripture that say the opposite of that! So – what gives?
 - Regardless of if we like it or not it's an issue – and it's an issue that has never been resolved.
 - Biblical scholars and brilliant minds all throughout history have debated this topic, and it's never truly been resolved.
 - And guess what – I'm not going to be able to resolve it either.
 - And if you try and cram things together to make them work you do a great injustice to the texts of scripture.
 - And so – I am not a go with the flow guy, which means I will present both points of view and let you decide.
- Scripture is crystal clear that we serve a Sovereign God who is in control. But it also says, Man has responsibility.
 - Scripture also makes it clear that God's Will is what will be done. Even despite man's choice, meaning God's Will does not hinge on man's decision! At the same time God says to His people, if you do this – then I will do that!
 - If you repent – I will withhold my punishment.
 - See the problem?
- Now if you are sitting here this morning and you are saying to yourself, I didn't know this was even a thing. Do me a favor and just stay in the dark on this issue. It will make you sleep better at night
 - But if you're like me and you can't leave well enough alone – and you find this topic fascinating and you are interested in studying the topic in depth – then just be prepared for it to be an unresolved scriptural issue in your life. Essentially just chalk it up as an unknown mystery of God.
 - But also, be rest assured that what I am not going to do is set up shop on one side of the other and disregard the verses that don't line up with my bend or leanings.
 - I will teach it to you in context – correctly, and you can do with it what you may!
 - Next week we are going to deal with this issue. I can assure you of one thing – when I am finished, you will be completely clear on what is the correct view. Which is, we cannot explain it!
 - I hate to leave you on a cliff hanger like this, but unfortunately that's how the verses are laid out, and I don't want to do this topic injustice by rushing through it.

- Amen – Amen!