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Be Alert To Your Adversary's Schemes

2 PETER 2:10B-22

Introduction

1. We as parents and grandparents can be very protective of those who are our children and grandchildren.
2. We keep a watchful eye out for anyone who might want to do them harm or coax them away from us.
3. The apostle Peter was no different.
4. You may remember that Jesus charged Peter three times with feeding His sheep.
5. In other words our Lord gave to Peter the responsibility of nurturing and protecting those who became a part of His Church.
6. As we can see here in chapter two of Peter's second letter to those Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, he took this responsibility seriously.
7. Time and again he speaks in this letter of stirring up their minds to remember the things he has shared with them.
8. His main concern is that they are not led astray by those who will distort the truth.
9. Though almost 2,000 years have passed since Peter wrote these words, they are no less important to us today, because as we learned last week, Satan is still at work to destroy the church for which our Lord shed his blood.
10. As with our study from last week, these words are at times very blunt, but they come from a man who doesn't want to see anyone lost.
11. Let's listen to what he has to say.

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I. The Nature Of These False Teachers

A. THEY HAVE NO RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

“Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” (2 Peter 2:10b–11, NASB95)

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Peter said of these false teachers that they “secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who brought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves” (2 Peter 2:1b, NASB95).
2. In the middle of verse 10 he tells us they “despise authority” (v. 10a).
3. They are so “bold” and “arrogant” that they “do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties.”
4. Literally, the Greek says, “They do not tremble when they blaspheme the glories.”
 - a. Some translations render this word as “celestial beings” (NIV84) or “glorious ones” (ESV, HCSB).
 - b. The translators of the NKJV utilized the word “dignitaries.”
5. It is likely that Peter is saying these false teachers blasphemed the authority of the apostles and other leaders of the church.
6. These false teachers have little to no respect for others, be they human or divine.
7. In spite of this, the angels “who are greater in might and power” than these false teachers do not revile these false teachers, even though they deserve it.
8. Instead, the angels yield to God’s authority to pass judgment.

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B. THEY LIVE ACCORDING TO THEIR PASSIONS

“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, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong.” (2 Peter 2:12–13a, NASB95)

1. Peter says these false teachers are like “unreasoning animals,” “creatures of instinct,” which live according to the dictates of their passions.
2. The goal of the person who gives himself to such passion is pleasure, the very thing he or she ultimately loses.
3. For a while we may enjoy what we call pleasure, but in the end it ruins our health, saps our strength and destroys our mind to the point that we begin to experience hell while still living here on earth.
4. Christianity is inescapably ethical — neither you nor I can have a relationship with a good God without becoming better men and women.
5. Sadly, the false teachers revile “where they have no knowledge” — they abuse the very life we are called to live in Christ, a life they do not understand.
6. Peter’s point is that immorality is not worth while. In the end it will rob you, not pay you.

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C. THEY REVEL IN THEIR SIN

“They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 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.” (2 Peter 2:13–16, NASB95)

1. Most people who choose to engage in deeds which they know are wrong or

at least frowned upon, will do so at night or in private.

“For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.” (1 Thessalonians 5:7, NASB95)

2. Not these false teachers. They have no shame. They were carrying on their activities in broad daylight.
3. As Christians, we are to be like our Master who bought us, “having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she [the church] would be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:27, NASB95).
4. We are to present a Christlike way of life to the world as an alternative to the sexual immorality and greed that is often set forth.
5. The false teachers of which Peter warned had eyes full of adultery” — they were lusting after every woman they saw.
6. Such a person is never satisfied. He is always longing for more. He reaches a point where he “can never cease from sin.”
7. Because they have this insatiable greed, they are looking to entice away someone who isn't yet established in their faith.
8. Though they started their Christian journey with the right motives in mind, at some point they forsook “the right way” and have now “gone astray.”
9. Like the prophet Balaam who was called upon by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the Israelites, they will find a way to work around God's will because they love “the wages of unrighteousness” (v. 15).

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II. The Destruction They Bring

A. THEY PROMISE BUT DO NOT DELIVER

“These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.” (2 Peter 2:17, NASB95)

1. Ultimately the message of the false teachers is empty.

2. They are “springs without water.”
 - a. Many of us have perhaps seen movie where a person is in a desert land without water.
 - b. In the distance he sees what looks like an oasis.
 - c. Using the last ounce of energy he pushes on to this spring, expecting to drink deep from its fresh water.
 - d. However, when he arrives, he finds it dry.
3. This is the nature of the false teacher’s message — it does not satisfy.
4. Only Jesus can truly satisfy, as He said to the woman at the well outside Sychar (John 4:13-14).

“Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” (John 4:13–14, NASB95)

5. They are “mists driven by a storm” — they seem to promise refreshing rain, but instead, they are carried away by the wind without shedding a drop.
6. In much the same way, false teachers promise much but deliver nothing.
7. Ultimately, God will deliver them over to “the black darkness” which He has “reserved” for them.

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B. THEY PROMISE FREEDOM BUT ULTIMATELY ENSLAVE US TO A DESTRUCTIVE WAY OF LIFE

“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, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.” (2 Peter 2:18–19, NASB95)

1. Through boastful, exaggerated words which are actually empty, they appeal to the fleshly desires of young, inexperienced converts.

2. They entice them to enjoy their new freedom in Christ, by giving free reign to their passions and desires.
3. Peter countered such teaching in his first letter when he wrote, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God" (1 Peter 2:16, NASB95).
4. These false teachers were promising "freedom while they themselves [were] slaves of corruption" (v. 19).
5. He added, "by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved" (v. 19).
6. Our own sin can ultimately enslave us.
7. Whether that sin is sexual immorality, greed, alcohol or drug addiction or something else, it can rob us of the secure homes we cherish and the privilege of seeing our children grow into godly adults.
8. We find ourselves becoming hopelessly enslaved to a destructive way of life.
9. Only Christ can set us free (cf. John 8:36).

"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36, NASB95)

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C. THEY LEAVE US WORSE THAN WE WERE BEFORE OUR OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

"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 2:20, NASB95)

1. Through our obedience to the gospel and our growth in "the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," we escape the moral defilement and the shameful deeds which can destroy us.
2. At the beginning of this letter, Peter said that it is through God's "precious

and magnificent promises” that you and I became “partakers of the divine nature,” and “escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:4).

Conclusion

1. What is Peter saying to us through all of this?
2. It is that you and I must make every effort to be sure we are following those who are faithfully and humbly teaching God’s Word.
3. To know Christ is to put our faith in Him, to come to Him, to obey Him and to find our life in Him.
4. However, Peter warns us that if we follow false teachers, “it would be better for [us] not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to [us].”
5. He paints a graphic picture of what happens to us if we allow ourselves to be led astray: “A dog returns to its own vomit,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”” (2 Peter 2:22, NASB95)
6. I would like to leave you with another passage from Peter’s pen. It is found at the end of this letter and I think it sums up what Peter would have us do.

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“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:17–18, NASB95)