

# Denying the Master who bought them

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Preacher: Dave Bott

[0:00] We're reading from 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 16 through to 2, end of chapter 2. We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming! But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory, saying, This is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. But there were also false prophets amongst the people, just as there will be false teachers amongst you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves.

Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed, these teachers will exploit you with the stories they have made up.

Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment. If he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others. If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. And if he rescued Lot, a righteous man who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men. For that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard. If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials, and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature, and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings.

[2:45] Yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts, they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done.

Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures and while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning. They seduce the unstable. They are experts in greed and a cursed brood. They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam, son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.

But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey, a beast without speech, who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness. These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm.

Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom while they themselves are slaves of depravity. For a man is a slave to whatever his has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by

knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Of them the proverbs are true. A dog returns to its vomit and a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud. Well good morning everyone.

[4:59] Will you pray with me as we come to God's word? Heavenly Father, whether we are new to the faith or been walking for many years, we all need to be reminded and be further convinced of the truth and goodness of your word.

I pray this morning that you would do just that for each one of us by your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well the Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, faith and obedience. So says the 1689 Baptist Confession along with every reformed confession that biblical churches agree to.

Now I don't think it's enough to simply tick the box that you intellectually agree with that statement. I think we need to be persuaded deep in our hearts that this is really, really good news.

Why is it a good thing that the Bible is our only authority? Now who likes talking about authority over you?

Like we are creatures of our culture, I suppose, ever since the fall. No one has wanted to think about authority over us. Why is it a good thing?

[6:50] Let's compare it to something else that could be our authority. Why can't our feelings inside be our authority? Now there's a pastor, Tim Keller, he gives two helpful thought experiments.

Here's the first one. Your 18-year-old self looked at your 14-year-old self as pretty foolish, making some poor choices.

But then your 30-year-old self looks at your 18-year-old self as pretty foolish and making some poor choices.

Like I thought it was a great idea putting a loud muffler on my car. I thought I was really cool and annoying my neighbours to no end.

I regretted that by the time I was 30. Now it might slow down a bit, but your 50-year-old self looks at your 30-year-old self. Some of those choices you thought you were pretty certain about, you deeply regret now.

[7:59] Now whatever age you are in the room right now, here's what you can know. You're making foolish choices. Our feelings, our intuitions let us down just a few years ago.

Here's the second thought experiment. There's a man in a traditional honour and shame culture and he looks at his feelings and he's got two really strong feelings.

One is when people wrong him, he feels aggression. How dare you do that? I'm a man of honour and that's a good thing.

I should protect my honour and dignity. But then there's these sexual desires that don't fit with the expectations and he suppresses that. That's not me.

Now there's another man with the exact same desires living in our culture. However, he looks at his aggression when people wrong him and he goes to see a counsellor.

[9:09] I need help with anger management. And he looks at his sexual desires and goes, that's me. I'm going to embrace that.

We all are creatures of our culture is the point of that thought experiment. The point of this is we all have authority. We're all living under authority.

No one is their own authority. If it's your feelings, they were unreliable just a few years ago. And you accept or reject some of those feelings based off the culture around us often.

But we're often blind how much we're doing that. Our social environment is controlling us. That's why it's really good news that we have the Holy Scriptures.

Verse 19 of chapter 1 says, It is a lamp shining in a dark place. There's a darkness even in our desires sometimes.

[10:17] There's a darkness in the environment, in the world we live in. And we have a light. We'd be lost without this light. Now the day when

Jesus returns, all our doubt, any doubt we have, all the uncertainty, all the wrong influences will be gone.

We are living in a time of current darkness. But Peter's saying the person who looks to the Word of God, the morning star appears in their hearts.

Like Venus coming up just before the dawn. That day, that shining day, the dawn, is already having an impact inside you. That first light is shining if you love the fact that the Bible is God speaking to you.

Nothing will more directly impact the way you and I live than what role the Bible has in your life. The reliability of the Bible, we're given two sets of sources here in these verses.

Verse 16 to 21. That we can know for sure that the Bible is God speaking. We've got the apostles, the eyewitnesses of Christ's glory and his resurrection.

[11:48] And we've got the Old Testament prophets. When they spoke, it wasn't their opinion. They were carried along by the Holy Spirit, by God himself. This isn't just Peter's view.

This is Jesus' view of the Bible. Jesus doesn't believe in red-letter Bibles. Now, if you've got a red-letter Bible, that's not my main point.

But you can't go, oh, when God spoke on Mount Sinai, that's in red. And then this part, I suppose, is Mark.

This one's Luke talking. This one's Moses. He didn't do that. Jesus quotes Genesis about marriage. We looked at this last year. He quotes a comment by Moses.

It's just an editorial comment. It says, God instituted marriage. He sees all of it as red-letter. More than that, he based his entire life on the Bible.

[12:52] When he was tempted in the wilderness, how did he fight that temptation? It is written. He based his entire life. When he's dying on the cross, the darkest moment in his life, what is he thinking about?

He's quoting some. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This is Jesus' view of the Bible. He based his entire life on it.

Now, there's some inside the church that Peter is writing to who are rejecting the apostles and prophets. Now, in particular, they're rejecting the idea that Jesus is coming back to judge.

We see that in verse 16. The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Peter, James, and John were up the mountain, the mountain of his transfiguration, they heard the voice with their own ears, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

They saw his face shine brighter than the sun. And that reminds us of Moses when he met with God. Moses' face shone, but it was reflected glory. And it faded.

[14:11] Whereas Jesus' face, it was permanently glorious. It was intrinsic to who he is. It's that divine majesty is in the person of Jesus.

And Peter said, I saw that with my very eyes. And the whole world will see that when he comes back.

And this is what the prophet said. God will come at the end. God's king will come at the end of history. God's king will come at the end of the world. These people were in the church saying, I don't think Jesus is coming back.

Now I doubt anyone in this room is going to be taken in by someone saying, Jesus isn't coming back. If you heard that, your radar will go, no, that's not right.

but how much in our daily thinking and our outlook on life can you and I just assume life is going to just go on as it is the sun will rise tomorrow I've got plans for 2027 it's as if we don't believe it we just push it out of our mind I'm saying we do believe it I'm just saying functionally how much do we think about it there are websites of churches they will have their statement of faith on their website and they'll say Jesus is coming back to judge the living and the dead but week after week their sermons aren't based in scripture you're not going to hear about sin you're not going to hear about judgment it's too negative it's too gloomy to talk about such things the sad thing is you stop talking about judgment and you lose you lose grace as well you lose the wonder of God's love for us in purchasing us well in verses one to three of chapter two Peter gives a really quick preview that the rest of the chapter fleshes out the danger is not coming from outside it is inside you can see people attacking christianity from the outside of the faith atheists and so on that's easy to spot but there's a

danger inside confessing christians just like in old testament times there were false prophets who rejected the idea of god's judgment they preach what people want to hear peace prosperity blessing we should we should expect false teachers don't be surprised but we should be distressed by it that this happens now verse one says it's secretly bringing in these destructive teachings i don't think they're hiding what they're saying i think they're hiding how much it contradicts with the bible they are motivated by greed the scriptures say a lot about leaders they cannot be in it for shameful gain [17:58] Peter says at the end of chapter five speaking to elders do not appoint someone who's in it for shameful gain leaders are not to feather their own nests but these people are motivated by greed now the impact they have many will follow them it's going to appeal to the sinful desire to just don't worry about moral constraints it's such a positive message many will follow them but the impact is destructive the reputation of jesus the reputation of christianity of the church it'll be brought into disrepute it'll be blasphemed and they themselves will be eternally destroyed by god and it's going to be swift it's certain it's going to soon take place this is a strong warning i don't particularly love preaching a strong warning but we need to hear it peter isn't addressing sincere believers who disagree on many secondary doctrinal things and we all come together to search the scriptures he's not addressing that he's not talking to people who are struggling with doubt or struggling with guilt he's not talking to you we can apply peter's warning to people who take half truths they'll use biblical true language but they deny the very heart of christianity they are leading people to destruction and they themselves are on their way to destruction so verses 4 to 10 it may appear god is letting them just thrive in the church like where's the old testament versions of judgment coming down on these people it may not look the same as what it does today god's judgment but verses 4 to 10 say here's what god is ready to do we've got three examples of what god did in the past if god did not spare first we've got angels who rebelled and we to be honest we don't really know a lot about that he didn't even spare angels who rebelled if god did not spare the world in noah's day but flooded the whole earth if god did not spare sodom and gomorrah when fire came down you'd expect him to say he's not going to spare these people but even peter wants to talk about the positive side he goes on to talk about noah and lot keep pursuing righteousness god kept those who listened to his word think of noah it took 120 years before the flood actually came from the promise of the flood 120 years you can imagine after 50 years neighbours are just watching him build that ark 50 years ago god said the flood will come like not a drop of rain in sight i could think of a better way to spend a sunday morning than what we're doing now let's go to the beach let's sleep in he preserved noah though even lot in sodom now that's surprising lot he's very compromised he didn't do a lot to speak against his culture but peter the apostle says he was deeply distressed the immorality around him still shocked him that's one of the that's a mark of true belief you're not fully compromised you may not be doing much about it now we should be doing more but he's deeply distressed now verse 9 is his conclusion god is able to both keep those who are rebelling against him under punishment until that final day of punishment while at the same time saving those who are listening to his word still pursuing righteousness god can be handing people over to their sinful nature keeping them ready for that punishment but don't follow them you keep pursuing growth keep paying attention to the only light well that's god's opinion of these people and what's going to happen who are these false believers verse second half of verse 10 through to 16 like what what characterizes them we've got a twofold description in the first part of verse 10 the lust of defiling passions and they despise authority at the end of the letter he describes them as lawless people that phrase lawless kind of summarizes them lawless in two senses they are lawless in that god's moral laws they delight in disobeying them and they are lawless in a deeper sense in that they're rejecting any authority over them they're lawless they're their own law so in terms of being their own authority they are bold

blaspheming the glorious ones now it's a bit tricky to know exactly what that means isn't it it could be the most obvious thing of angels they're somehow speaking against angels but what we do know is they're completely pushing the prophets and apostles aside they're saying the exact opposite and they're probably speaking against believers who listen to these who take the bible seriously they are so bold in speaking against truth but then the angels who have more authority than them they're even silent they just hand judgment over to god god will take care of it which just highlights how arrogant and proud these people are that they think they know better not even the angels will do that and then verse 13 nothing shameful to them reveling is usually at night time in the darkness because you want to cover your shame they're reveling in the daytime they're open about their immorality they're not convicted by it they pray on unsteady souls either new converts or those struggling in life they're looking for what they can take from people not what they can give if they can get sex if they can get money if they can win attention people can follow their doctrines they're open about this they're not ashamed of it they are like the prophet Balaam who was supposed to say and to stick with what God says don't deviate one inch but he was allured by what the world offers he wanted the money they're lawless they openly don't care about God's morals and they boldly reject God's authority over their life they're lawless now in verse 19 we seem to have their slogan freedom what a positive message you want to be free freedom they promise freedom but they themselves are slaves of corruption at the end of the letter says that they're taking

Paul's letters and twisting it and you can imagine them taking Galatians 5 for freedom Christ set us free stand firm therefore don't submit again to a yoke of slavery get rid of all these rules you're not under law but under grace who cares what we do with the body anyways they just take a half truth it sounds so right but then they use it to say the exact opposite of what the scriptures are saying freedom must be positive I was in a conversation with two men many years ago and I was shut down in well I suppose I chose to be shut down but they put a lot of pressure on me because I was saying we need to examine our motivations with our choices like is it sinful motivation or is it trying to please God and they just found that so negative they wanted to focus on the victory of Jesus let's just the delight the power think positive all this talk of sin and sinful motives that's just restrictive that's let's be free let's be positive that's the

Christian life now maybe I want to concede maybe I was too negative maybe I did need some balance but both of these men have wandered from the faith think positive the gospel is about freedom it is we are born again with a new nature that delights in God's ways now you're free to delight in his ways now we are free from condemnation and guilt and shame that keeps us in that pit of despair we're free from that pit it is about freedom we will one day be free of the presence of sin the gospel is about freedom but they take a half truth and say indulge the sinful nature when it's really be free to voluntarily love one another and serve one another now

[30:11] Peter's saying that the true state of these people is obvious that whatever overcomes a person to that he is enslaved they're claiming to be saved by Jesus they are enjoying disobeying Jesus and it shows they're persistently just enjoying going against what Jesus says it shows that they'll never really change deep down there can be an outward behaviour change for a time but deep down they haven't been changed and I think that's why he quotes the proverb in verse 22 the dog returns to its own vomit it's a lovely image and the pig I don't know how to say that word so I'm saying pig after washing herself returns to wallow in the mire those who know more about the bible and then reject it are even worse off before they even knew it their fundamental nature has never changed a dog or pig just does what's natural to them they're still enslaved to their old sinful nature remember these are people boldly disagreeing with the bible and they're unashamed of what they're doing the true picture of a christian is a christian who struggles with their sin that's what galatians five pictures the spirit wages war against the flesh the elect will never be content with their sin not over a period of time they know god's call come partake of my divine nature they rejoice of being washed in the blood of jesus and they long for the full day to dawn when the presence of sin is gone i think the phrase that shows the extent of these false believers is verse one of chapter two even denying

the master who bought them why does he say it like that peter knows they haven't been redeemed from their sinful nature why put it like that i think he's putting it like that because they're claiming salvation in jesus there are some who dare to take the name of christ as their master but they don't listen to his holy word they claim his cross but they deny the very reason he shed his holy blood professor brian cox he says there's about 200 billion stars in the milky way galaxy each with their own planets with two trillion galaxies and he says i challenge anyone to be able to picture that that's what we know so far one day the majesty of the one who created all that is going to come

for all to see and he's going to come in such power that those stars are going to melt away in his presence you don't treat someone like that as your personal assistant where i like that advice i don't like that advice you don't it's dangerous if you can utter the apostles creed with no feeling whatsoever about what you're saying you believe he ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of god the father almighty and from there he will come to judge the living and the dead you marvel at the fact that such a one would give his blood to purchase you you don't give in to any other voice even the voice of your own feelings you look to his word even if you don't understand it the only light the only light in this dark time as a church we need to help each other become tall trees that are planted by the word of

God with deep roots like I remember the storms in Newcastle there was trees that just easily blew over because their roots weren't deep we need deep roots in the Bible we need to help each other with that we need to ground new believers deeply in truth it is not enough for people just to walk in the door we need to know our Bibles we need to help new believers we need to help our children have deep roots in the word when someone seeks your advice it is not loving to say follow your heart if their heart if their desires are contrary to seeking his divine nature it is not loving it feels good but it's not when someone knows their Bible really well and contradicts the heart of who Jesus is and the cross it's not loving to be tolerant if they're making a mockery of this glorious one and his blood this master has called us to share in his divine nature he's called us upward out of the world to share in his light keep progressing keep pursuing growth keep accessing his divine power through his promises the only light shining in a dark place will you pray with me let's pray father we thank you that you love us enough to warn us so that we're not taken in by some imitation we know that satan comes dressed in light sometimes so we thank you for your love in warning us and we thank you most of all for the blood of your son cleansing us of all sin setting us free from slavery to sin lord fill us with the hope that one day we'll be free from the presence of sin father help us to expect the coming of your son in power and glory and the light that we see we get to share with him help us feel the wonder of that so that we won't compromise and we'll keep progressing lord help us to be a community that truly loves one another and pushes each other to keep growing in your word in season and out of season in  
Jesus name I pray amen