

False Teachers: More Warnings

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- [0 : 00] Turn your Bibles to 2 Peter, chapter 2. And this morning we are continuing our sermon series in the letter of 2 Peter.
- ! And our attention this morning will be directed to verses 10, at least the second part of verse 10, the latter part of it, through verse 22.
- I will be allowing for questions and answers after the sermon this morning, so if there's any question that comes to mind, make a note of it, or you can just ask it verbally at the end.
- Last week we considered verses 1 through 9 of chapter 2, and we saw that the Apostle Peter introduced the reality and the existence of false teachers in the church and the fact that they would be judged.
- That's what he said last week. And he continues in this section of the letter to talk about false teachers. So let's read. Please follow along as I read. I'm reading from the English Standard Version translation.
- [1 : 16] I'm going to start from verse 9, even though we're going to just focus our attention on the latter part of verse 10 through verse 22.
- Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.
- I'm reading.
- I'm reading.
- I'm reading.
- [3 : 22] These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.
- They promise them freedom. They promise them freedom. They themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person to that he is enslaved.
- For if after they have escaped from the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome.
- For it would have been better for them. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.
- For it would have been better for them. what the true proverb says has happened to them. The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.
- [4 : 46] Let's pray together. Father, we are grateful this morning, once again, that we're able to gather in this place. Lord, now as we turn our attention to hearing from you through the preaching of your word, I pray that you would pour out abundant grace upon me as I proclaim your word, and upon all of us as we hear your word.

Father, I pray in the name of Jesus that you would grant me the grace to be faithful with this text. Lord, I acknowledge my deep need and my dependence on your spirit.

And Lord, I trust you for your help. To care for these whom I love, but whom you love even more. And I pray that you would cause your word to profit our souls for the glory of your name.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Well, this passage that we've just read is without a doubt the most difficult section in the letter of 2 Peter.

And indeed, this passage is one of the most difficult passages in all of the New Testament. And there are two obvious reasons why this passage is difficult.

[6 : 13] First, this passage is difficult because the false teachers whom Peter describes were members of the church. In fact, they were leaders in the church.

They were teaching people in the church. And in light of how Scripture calls the people of God to live, it is hard to believe that what we have read is a description of these individuals who were leading God's people, who were professing to know Christ, and they were living in such graphically sinful ways as Peter describes.

And the second obvious reason that this passage is difficult is that it raises the question as to whether these false teachers were true believers or not. Whether they were true believers and lost their salvation or they were never believers at all.

And this second difficulty is a part of a larger debate among Christians concerning whether a person who has been saved can lose his or her salvation.

And those who believe that if you are truly saved, it is impossible to lose your salvation. But this passage, in addition to those difficulties, this passage is sobering.

[7 : 59] This passage is very sobering because it brings us face to face with the kind of spiritual harm that false teachers can bring to those who come under their influence and those who listen to them.

So we have before us a difficult and a very sobering passage. And when I consider this passage this morning, I would simply summarize it by saying, false teachers contradict the gospel and mislead people.

False teachers contradict the gospel and mislead people. They teach things and they live lives that contradict the gospel of Christ.

And then they mislead those who follow them. For those of you who are taking notes have organized my thoughts under two headings and they are, number one, contradicting the gospel.

And that's what we see the false teachers doing in verses 10 through 16. And number two, misleading people. And that's the effect that we see in verses 17 through 22.

[9 : 14] So first, let's consider how these false teachers contradict the gospel. Again, to establish Peter's train of thought, Peter was saying that at the beginning of chapter 2 he says, false teachers are going to arise.

He says, but God is going to protect the godly. He knows how to preserve the godly in the midst of all of that. And he also said, these false teachers are going to be judged.

But actually, more accurately, if you look at verse 9, he says, he says, God knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous.

Not just the false teachers at this point. He says, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment. The false teachers are included in that, but it's not exclusive to the false teachers.

It's inclusive of the false teachers. It's all the unrighteous. But, Peter then goes on in verse 10 and he says, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despising authority.

- [10 : 28] And it's in this verse that he's now singling out the false teachers for special judgment as it were. He's saying, God's going to judge all the ungodly, but for the false teachers, he says, God is going to judge those, but especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despising authority.

And here he's talking about those who, this term, defiling, the lust of defiling passions, it speaks, it's sexual immorality. All kinds of sexual immorality.

These false teachers were indulging in that kind of behavior. And in addition, they despised authority. All authority. Not just Peter's authority, obviously, and the authority of others, but they just despised authority altogether.

They were laws unto themselves. No one was able to subject them. And Peter says, they're going to be singled out, especially for the judgment of God.

So what Peter does, beginning at verse 10, is he begins to redirect his attention specifically now to the false teachers.

- [11 : 45] And we see in the latter part of verse 10, as he begins to address them directly, he says, they're bold and willful and they don't tremble, and he goes unto himself, they blaspheme, the glorious ones.

and they do things that even angels would not consider doing.

Now what Peter does from the latter part of verse 10 through verse 16, is he describes the character and the conduct of these false teachers.

verses he gives us these very vivid descriptions of these individuals. And brothers and sisters, this is as true as any other part of the word of God.

Peter was not fabricating this stuff. People who were using God's name and who were standing in the midst of God's people and putting themselves out as teachers of these people and leading these people were living in this particular way.

- [12 : 59] And what you will see is all that Peter describes contradicts the most basic understanding of what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

Now, the description that Peter gives is not exhaustive. It doesn't tell us every single thing we need to know about identifying a false teacher. Obviously, these were very prominent among the false teachers of Peter's day, and some of them we can recognize in our day as well, but the list is not exhaustive.

The list is representative of the character and the conduct of false teachers. Not all false teachers manifest all these behaviors.

Some manifest some, and some manifest others, and some manifest some that are not even listed here in a direct way. But when you really look at it and you think about it, they're all interconnected.

They're like what you may call first and second cousins of the same kind of character and behavior. So, I want to consider six things from these verses that Peter describes as being the character and the conduct of false teachers.

- [14 : 25] The first thing he says is they're spiritually arrogant. They're spiritually arrogant. Look at what he says starting in verse 10b.

That's the section that begins bold and willful. He says bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones. Whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

But these like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters which they are ignorant.

They will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. Peter says they're spiritually arrogant.

Now, to point their spiritual arrogance out, he says what they do, he says, here's an example of what they do. They do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones.

[15 : 33] Now, who are these glorious ones that Peter is referring to? And how do the false teachers blaspheme them? Well, when we read it in context, the false teachers were blaspheming fallen angels.

That's what these glorious ones are referred to. This word in the original language, glorious ones, these two words, glorious ones, could refer to good angels, bad angels, even people in authority.

But when we read it in context, when he says, whereas angels, obviously good angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment.

man, it's clear, he's not talking about humans, but talking about these fallen angels, these demonic powers.

And evidently, what these false teachers would do is, in terms of their blasphemy, they would just speak of them in reviling, ridiculing ways, speaking about them negatively.

[16 : 51] And if you've been around church circles long enough, you've probably observed some of this, probably observed people who spend more time talking to the devil than they talk to God.

And they're rebuking the devil and saying all kinds of other things that go beyond what scripture warrants and what scripture gives us an example of doing. And Peter says, they are bold, and they are, they're arrogant, and they don't tremble as they do this.

He said, even angels good angels wouldn't do what they do. But in their arrogance they're blind to certain realities and they believe that they are more powerful than these fallen beings, or they believe the fallen beings are really nothing and so they can be dismissed all together.

And so Peter uses this as an example to show the arrogance of these false teachers.

And part of the reason that they actually do it is to give the impression to people who watch them do this, that they have some special powers. And there are people who believe that you can go to them and if there's something going wrong in your life and anything bad happening, it's the devil, so you go to them and they can actually deal with it, they can get rid of the devil in your life and make your life what you want it to be.

[18 : 25] And this is the kind of arrogance that these false teachers engaged in. But when we look at what scripture says, when scripture calls us, when we look at the whole issue of spiritual warfare, we look at the issue of demons and Satan himself, scripture calls us to resist the devil, calls us to resist the devil steadfast in the faith, it calls us to put on the whole armor of God.

We have the example of Jesus in casting out demons, but we have no example of this practice of addressing demonic powers as if we are equals with them and as if we are in and of ourselves some match for them.

The only ability that we have to withstand the devil is as we do it steadfast in the faith, as we do it with the whole arm of God on, as we do it mindful of the greater one who lives in us than the one who is in the world.

But these false teachers were powers unto themselves. They were bold and they were willful, they were spiritually arrogant.

and Peter says, and they don't know what they're doing. They don't know what they're talking about. They're overstepping their bounds. And this is again another thing, a fraudulent practice of false teachers where they will mislead by giving the impression that they are authorized to do many of the things that they do.

[20 : 06] Peter says they don't know what they are talking about. and he compares them to like irrational animals, creatures of instinct. What he's basically saying is they're just kind of going by whim and fancy and what they sense and what they feel.

He says ingesting those animals they're on a dangerous path. They're going to be trapped, they're going to be caught, they're going to be destroyed. And he tells us in verse 13 that what they will suffer is the just wage for their wrongdoing.

So that's the first description that Peter gives us of false teachers. They are spiritually arrogant. The next thing he tells us is in verse 13 the second part of that he says they counted pleasure to revel in the daytime.

And from that we can conclude that these false teachers were spiritually undisciplined. They were not just spiritually arrogant but they were also spiritually undisciplined.

They counted pleasure to revel in the daytime, in the day when we have to be working, when we have to be productive, when we have to be applying ourselves into meaningful work.

[21 : 39] These false teachers were indulging in pleasure, giving themselves to pleasure in the daytime. And when it talks about reveling in pleasure, interwoven with that is carousing, is getting drunk, it is giving yourself to whatever pleasure you desire, that your heart desires in that moment.

So these are spiritually undisciplined individuals. The other description that Peter gives us, again still in verse 13, is he says that they are spiritually deceptive.

Notice how he says that. He says in the very next sentence, they are blots and blemishes reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you.

They are spiritually deceptive. Peter is saying that even as they are fellowshiping with you, they are enjoying a meal with you, he says they are just reveling in their deceptions, their duplicity.

They are presenting one thing as what they really are when they are something completely different. And Peter says you know what they are? They are blots and blemishes.

[22 : 59] Now obviously what he is implying here as he introduces the whole idea of deception is though they are blots and blemishes, they are not that obvious. They are not walking around with a blot sign on their head or blemish sign on their chest.

They are that in a not so obvious way. They defile whatever they are a part of is what Peter is saying. Peter is saying they are with you and they are pretending to be a part of you but they are reveling in that which is contrary to what you are to be about as the people of God and in so doing they are blots and they are blemishes.

They undermine the very thing and interestingly what you would find is as Peter closes this letter he contrasts what we are supposed to be like when you look at verse 14 in chapter 3 he says he closes by saying therefore beloved since you are waiting for these be diligent to be found by him without blot without blemish without blot without blemish but these who were holding themselves that is belonging to God and teaching the people of God they were blots and they were blemishes and then fourth he says they are sexually immoral look at verse 14 he says they have eyes full of adultery insatiable for sin Peter says these individuals they have so given themselves over to their lusts their eyes are filled with adultery and the picture is almost like every single woman they see is a candidate to take advantage of they see them in a sexual way just as as prey that is how they are governed their eyes are full of adultery insatiable for sin it's almost like a person who is a glutton for food they're gluttons for sexual immorality they're sexually immoral and then number five we see this in the latter part of verse 14 he says they entice unsteady souls they have hearts trained in greed accursed children they're spiritually enticing they're spiritually enticing but notice who they're enticing to they are enticing to unsteady souls these are these are people who are blown by the wind these are people who are blown by spiritual winds these are people who are unstable and the contrast to this is in verse 12 of chapter 1 notice what

Peter said we saw this a few weeks back in verse 12 of chapter 1 therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities though you know them and are established in the truth that you have these are not people who are established in the truth and see this should help us to see right away that when we are not established in the word of God we are vulnerable to be enticed by false teachers they will say things that will just be enticing to you why because that's your condition you're unstable you're not grounded in the word of God and so they can sell you land in the middle of the ocean spiritually speaking they're spiritually enticing a lot of times we think that it's just logic and we think well people must really believe what they're hearing and understand what they're hearing in a logical manner no there's spiritual enticement that is at work in drawing unstable people to the things that these false teachers are selling try to keep your place there and turn with me to 1st

Corinthians chapter 2 and I turn here this morning because in 1st Corinthians chapter 2 we have an example of what honorable Christian ministry looks like this honorable ministry seeks to build people into the minister seeks to entice the hearers to follow him and to be built into him and what we see is the apostle Paul while you have the false teachers who are using these crafty techniques and enticing ways to draw people you see the apostle Paul taking quite a different approach look at what he says beginning in verse 1 chapter 2 in 1st Corinthians he says and I when I came to you brothers did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom

[28 : 42] I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified and I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom but in the demonstration of the spirit and of power and he gives us the reason why he did this in verse 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God Paul is deliberate to ensure that he's not enticing people trying to hook people into following him and being built into him he says no I was careful not to do that so that their faith would be not in me in my wisdom but it would be in the power of

God Paul's teachers take quite a different approach and then finally he says in this section at the!

at the end of 14 he says they have hearts trained in greed they have hearts trained in greed this word for trained is the word they get gymnasium from it's like they the same way you go to the gym and work out it's like Peter is saying their hearts have been worked out they are athletes when it comes down to being engrossed in greed and pursuing financial gain and he tells us they're forsaking the weight they're cursed children forsaking the way forsaking the right way they have gone astray they have followed the way of

Balaam the son of Beor who loved gain from wrongdoing and Balaam is a classic example of a minister who's motivated in his ministry by money and you can read about that in Numbers chapters 22 through 24 and Peter need not say more all he needs to say is Balaam that's who they're like they're like Balaam who prophesy for money who would preach for money they're motivated purely by money and Peter says they have forsaken the right way and they have gone astray they have followed the way of Balaam that's what false teachers do false teachers have gone the way of Balaam and for them it's all about money I'm sure you've heard that saying if it looks like a duck and it walks like a duck it is a duck but what happens is often times when it comes down to false teachers many of us don't follow that same wisdom person looks like a false teacher walks like a false teacher talks like a false teacher but we smile and we listen to them and it's like the illustration

I used last week with people who own a pitbull who feel that you know it's like the inhibitions that I would have or maybe others have who don't have that pitbull they feel really really close to it but there's so much danger lying there and these false teachers we need to see them for what they are we need to call them what they are and I say that this morning because if we're just hearing this in a vacuum we're missing what God is saying to us God is saying this to us that we may apply it that we may use discernment as we listen to various ones you know the Bible says that Satan himself is transformed like an angel of light and knowing that Peter is addressing individuals who were teaching in the church and living in this way and doing these kinds of things we shouldn't automatically take every single person coming in front of us quoting a scripture and saying

[33 : 51] God told me and God sent me we need to use discernment we need to use wisdom to consider is this a true teacher and in this chapter the apostle Peter gives us some very helpful measurements to determine whether an individual is a false teacher or not so if you see spiritual arrogance if you see spiritual indiscipline if you see spiritual deception if you see sexual immorality if you see a person being spiritually enticing if you see financial greed if you see one or more of them stay far away from that person don't give air to that person pass them by and it should be obvious to you this morning that I'm not exempting myself from this the same measurements that you use for any other minister according to God's word is what you're supposed to use for me and if you see evidences of any of these things in my life you have every right to confront me concerning it and if I do not repent and resign or I'm removed and I continue leave this church and find a church that is a faithful church with godly leaders who represent what Peter shows us in chapter one that those who truly come to

Christ what they do they make every effort to add to their faith not just holding on to a confession of faith and do whatever they want to do but they make every effort to add to their faith the evidence that they belong to Christ and so let us not hear these words this morning and not apply them let us apply them let us be discerning to their and their faith and their false teachings and he points out that they mislead people and this brings me to my second and final point this morning misleading people so how do these false teachers mislead people well Peter helps us to see first of all in verse 17 that people who follow them will be left spiritually thirsty people who follow them there's this picture in scripture that salvation is water to a thirsty soul we have passages in scripture that says to us like all you who are thirsty come to the waters and drink drink without price and so in a sense ministers of the gospel are holding out the waters of life to people but what

Peter helps us to see here he's making an assessment now of these false teachers and he says here's what they are he says in verse 17 they are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm and we don't appreciate this so much in our context because you know we have water all around and readily available but in that particular context where you had to depend on springs for water and any sight of water when you really needed it brought a lot of hope but when you went to a spring that had no water that was a big disappointment and so Peter's hearer has understood exactly what he was saying he's saying that these false teachers they promise they hold out the hope that they have water he says but they're waterless springs they are mists little pockets of water that are blown by a storm and it makes it seem like they have something to show when you go up it's still a mist and there's really nothing that you can benefit from one of the effects of following false teachers is you will be left spiritually thirsty your soul will be parched your soul will not be satisfied because you cannot be satisfied on what they teach and the example that they set and the truth is we become like those we follow we become like those we follow look at what Peter says further he says in verses 18 and 19 he says for speaking loud boasts of folly just foolishness but you know it's interesting how people some people believe that if you say something louder it makes it right if you just scream if you just shout now if it's wrong and it's foolishness loud foolishness or soft foolishness it's still foolishness so there's no need to raise the volume if it is foolishness so he says for speaking loud boasts of folly they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error again talking about immature unstable people this picture here is of someone who is like freshly converted out of a life of sin maybe trying to separate from relationships and others who may be able to pull them right back into that lifestyle and he says that the false teachers they're appealing to these individuals in verse 19 he says they promise freedom but they themselves are slaves of corruption for whatever overcomes a person to that he is enslaved

Peter says they promise things they don't possess they promise freedom that they themselves do not possess and all we can give to others is what we have you know if I say I don't know I'm trying to think about particular illness but if I say that I have the cold you're around me I have the cold don't don't worry I just have the cold if I have the flu I'm going to give you the flu not the cold I give you what I have false teachers could only give what they had they themselves were entrapped and overcome by sin and that's all that they were able to give to those who followed them they were slaves to sin and those who followed them would become slaves to sin but they were misleading people no one in his or her right mind sets out to say you know

I'm going to go so I can be enslaved and so I can be misled no they go because the person holds out a light and say I know the way holds on water and say I can give you something that will quench the thirst of your soul but they do not and they thereby mislead people now we come to the difficult section of this letter and also of this passage beginning in verse 20 Peter writes for if after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they are again entangled in them and overcome the last state has become worse for them than the first for it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them what the true proverb says has happened to them the dog returns to its own vomit and the sow after washing itself returns to wallow in the mire one of the first difficulties with this passage from starting in verse 20 is it is pretty difficult to know and I'm saying this certainly reading from my

[43 : 02] English Bible but even commentators who have far better access to the original language than I do and reading commentaries I get the benefit from their knowledge they've said that in the original language it is hard to tell who the pronoun they refers to does it refer to the false teachers or does it refer to these persons who Peter talks about where he says they in verse 18 for speaking loud boasts they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are dearly escaping from those who live in error and then he goes on to say they promised them freedom for they themselves are slaves of corruption for whatever overcomes the person that is enslaved now is he talking about the false teachers or is he talking about those who are barely escaping those who live in sinful erroneous ways things and like a lot of these passages they'll say well you can argue it from either side you can argue that he's talking about the false teachers or you can also argue that he's talking about these individuals who fell prey to the false teachers and basically as they were barely escaping from this life of sin that they were coming out of they are again entangled in it through these false teachers and it would have been better for them to not have had the light to know what they knew than to go back to it and he uses the proverb about the dog turning to its vomit or the sow returning to the mire so how do we make sense of what

Peter is saying here there are times when we read God's word when a particular passage on its face may seem to contradict something else in scripture or maybe all of scripture on that particular topic but there are rules of interpretation there are rules of how we approach God's word to interpret God's word and when it comes to God's word and the rules that we use to interpret God's word it is really no different from other disciplines that we know of in life like for example to use one example that I think some of you perhaps many of you would be aware of in accounting there's something called generally accepted accounting principles or international accounting principles or standards and basically what that means is wherever you go in the world those are the standards and the principles that people follow in the accounting practice in the word of

God one of the rules of interpretation one of the rules of interpretation that is true everywhere you go where people take God's word seriously it's true in China on the back of Africa or in the Caribbean wherever you go this is a rule that is accepted by all people who take scripture seriously who hold a high view of scripture and it is this scripture is one unified story and therefore it does not contradict itself that's before you even open the book when you are approaching the book you go with that rule you're basically saying before I see anything in the book before I read anything I know this to be true this is a unified book breathed out and we saw this when we looked at what Peter said in chapter 1 that God has breathed out his word he's not skitsy he's not duplicitous and conflicted in himself he gives us a unified word that doesn't contradict that's the first rule that we approach scripture with okay so that's universal that is a tried and proven approach to interpreting

God's word when you take that rule to interpret God's word you will not come away saying things like well Paul said that but Jesus said this Jesus and Paul are not contradicting one another and worse well Paul said that to this church but he said something else to this church no it's one unified word it does not contradict so what happens is when we come to scripture we find what on its face seems to be a contradiction seems to be saying one thing here and another thing there we have to then say okay how do I reconcile these two apparent contradictions to be a unified message and that brings us to a second rule of interpretation the second rule of interpretation would be that clear passages are to shed light on unclear passages passages so you don't go and take an obscure unclear passage and make a doctrine about it no you don't do that you look for a clear passage and you establish what the

Bible says so for example going to the book of Revelation is not the best place to go to understand the doctrine of last things in terms of the end of the world the return of Christ and all that pertains to that because the book of Revelation is a highly figurative book it's a very symbolic book there are signs in it when you see things in the book of Revelation like John has this vision he sees this woman she is sitting on the moon clothed with the sun and seven stars on her head twelve stars on her head that's an impossibility first she'd be burnt up if it was a woman clothed with the sun and I don't think she's big enough to sit on the moon the moon is pretty big so you don't go there but you can go to the passages in the gospels where Jesus talks about the end of the world and his return and we can use that to shed light on some of those darker more obscure symbolic passages that you find in the book of Revelation so individuals who believe that a person who is saved can lose his salvation salvation this is one of the prominent passages that they run to to say see right here it says that people who were saved could lose their salvation and they would quote verses 20 through 22 of chapter 2 and so what we have to do is we have to try to say when you come to a place to say this is what the

[50 : 52] Bible teaches the only way you can do that is if you take the summation of all that scripture says about that topic and you synthesize it down to say okay this is what the Bible teaches but if you just grab one verse here and one verse there and you ignore the witness of scripture concerning that topic you cannot say this is what the Bible teaches!

able to understand and interpret what Peter is saying here is by allowing the light of other passages to shine on this as well and sometimes what you would find is in scripture as you're doing your work to interpret what the Bible says you can immediately know what the Bible doesn't say what it doesn't mean before you come to know what it does mean some things you can rule it right away and say well I know it doesn't mean that it doesn't mean that and let me now see what it actually means one of the clearest passages in scripture that teaches us that we that those who come to Christ who are truly saved are secure in Christ forever is a teaching that Jesus did in John chapter 6 so if you would turn with me to John the gospel of

John chapter 6 and we're going to go back to 2nd Peter but I want us to benefit from this before we do that this and then John chapter 10 and then we'll go back to 2nd Peter starting in verse 35 John chapter 6 starting in verse 35 Jesus writes sorry John writes Jesus said to them I am the bread of life whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst but I said to you that you have seen me and yet you do not believe he says this all that the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me

I will never cast out notice what he says all that the father gives to me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out clearly Jesus is saying that the father has particular ones whom he gives to the son and all whom he gives to the son will come to the son everyone without exception and he says listen I will never cast them out I will never cast them out notice what he says I'll just read the!

verse I was going to skip it verse 38 for I come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me and this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me but raise it up on the last day Jesus says all the father has given to me will come to me and those who come to me I never cast them out and he says I will lose none of them I'm not going to lose any of them and I will raise them up on the last day now even before we look at the passage in John chapter 10 it is very clear from these words of Jesus that he's saying some undeniable things the father some particular ones to give to the son all that he gives to the son will come to the son without exception and the son will not turn them out and the son will raise them up at the last day none!

[55 : 30] We can use deduction here we can deduce some things and we can say this anyone who is in hell was never given to Jesus otherwise Jesus lied and he is no liar he says we won't lose any of them so if we are ever given to Jesus we can trust him he will hold on to us forever to the very end!

let's start over to John chapter 10 and let's begin in verse 25 Jesus answered that I told you you do not believe I told you you do not believe the works that I do in my father's name they are witness about me but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand notice earlier in the passage in

John 6 he said I'm not going to cast them out and now he says no one is able to snatch them out of my hand we sang it this morning so beautiful to sing it no power of hell no scheme of man can ever snatch me from his hand this is the claim that Jesus makes he says I give them eternal life think about it how can you get eternal life and lose it if you get eternal life and lose it you didn't get eternal life you got something else it wasn't eternal but if Jesus gives you eternal life that is eternal life you will never perish verse 29 he says my father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my father's hand I and the father are one let me just pause just for a brief moment to just squeeze in a little bit of my own testimony

I grew up in a church that taught you could lose your salvation I grew up in a church where I say to people I got saved many many times and I was 40 or so 40 there about when I came to the realization that what I had been taught was wrong I came to the realization that my salvation was more about God than it was about me but all my life I was taught it was about me and I better stay saved and I better do these things to stay saved and if I didn't I will be lost and as my youth pastors say back then you will burst hell wide open he would say to us if you commit a sin and you die before you ask for forgiveness you burst hell wide open and that's a works mentality and that kind of teaching contradicts the very words of

Jesus that the father in eternity past determined to give particular ones to the son and every last one of them that he determined to give to the son will in time come to the son and every one of them who comes to the son the son will lose none of them but he will raise them up at the last day and Jesus gives us assurance that he doesn't just give us light he gives us eternal life and he says you will never perish to believe otherwise you have to disbelieve the words of Jesus so let's go back to 2nd Peter once again acknowledging all the difficulties surrounding the passage I believe in light of the broader witness of scripture what scripture teaches about salvation what scripture teaches about how

[60 : 29] God will preserve us to the end and how no one who was ever his child would cease to be his child the best way to understand what Peter is saying is that people who come under the influence of the gospel and make professions of faith that turn out not to be genuine that turn out not to be genuine and he uses this imagery of the dog and the pig and essentially what he is really saying is in time they prove that they are dogs or they are pigs because they go back to that which should be repulsive to them brothers and sisters there's this picture of the children of Israel coming out of the land of Egypt they come out of the land of Egypt the red sea opens They cross over and it closes back how do you go back?

Egypt was the picture of a life of sin how do you go back? How do you go through those waters to go back to where you! came from for someone to go back for a dog spiritually speaking to go back to his vomit that should be repulsive to him to a sow spiritually speaking to go back and wallow in mire that they supposedly were washed from it defies what scripture teaches I don't have time this wanting to turn there we could look at the letter of first John and John talks about how when we come to Christ that the seed of God is in us he said and it is impossible to continue in sin because God see it is in you.

And so our best understanding of what Peter is saying here is that those who come under the influence of the gospel, those who make professions of faith that turn out not to be genuine, it's harder for them after they have been so exposed to be interested again in that way.

It's kind of like, been there, done that, no interest in that. And I think the picture is that their exposure has been through these false teachers. These false teachers who held out to them that which was not genuine, that which was not true.

And so they check out on it. You know, my own experience has been that some of the hardest people to come to Christ, humanly speaking, because God is able to save many, and I know of examples where he has done that, are people who fall prey to false teachers.

[63 : 26] They so spiritually damage them. You know, for example, statistically speaking, the overwhelming, I shouldn't say the overwhelming majority, but an overwhelming number of people who have come under the influence of Jehovah's Witnesses teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses teaching tend to be so damaged, they will not go into a Gospel-preaching church to hear the Gospel.

And it is the mercy of God, and I would say a small miracle, when you find a person who has come under the influence of Jehovah's Witnesses teaching who come to saving faith in Jesus Christ, because they have the courage to walk into a Gospel-preaching church, or they have the courage to listen to someone present the Gospel in some way for them.

And so, I conclude by saying that we understand what Peter is saying here, in light of all of Scripture, and Peter is not saying that these individuals were truly saved, and then they lost their salvation.

They were not. I am grateful to God this morning that the last song that Troy selected for us to sing is the song, Now Why the Spirit and Unbelief.

Because I think it's very fitting as we conclude this sermon to really think about that. Many who belong to Christ, who will always belong to Christ, have a fear that they're not going to make heaven.

[65 : 12] They have a fear that they will somehow be lost. And that song, but more than that song, God's Word reminds us that that's not true. It matters not how you feel. What matters is what Christ has done in your life.

And if you belong to Him, you will always belong to Him. That's not a license to live however we want to live. That is a license to give us assurance. That is a license to give us confidence that I will make it to the end because of Jesus Christ.

And the effect of this false teaching of, oh, you can lose your salvation, has caused some when they fall into sin to think, well, I'm now a sinner, I'll go to hell anyway, so I may as well just go and see where this road leads and live for the devil and just cast off restraint.

Or because of a false teaching. I'll say one last thing and then we're going to pray.

What we see in this passage is how false teaching affects, and maybe I shouldn't say false teaching, how what we believe affects how we behave and how we live.

[66 : 38] Why were these false teachers living this way? Indulging in sexual immorality, greedy for money, manipulating people, being deceptive.

Why were they living like that? Why were they doing that? Why were they so bold and so confident that they could do this without consequence? Well, the reason is they bought the lie and they taught that Christ wasn't going to return.

There was no return of Christ. There was no future judgment. And that's what Peter begins to address in a very direct way in the final chapter of this book. And what it helps us to see is that when we take on these false beliefs, if you truly believe there is no return of the Lord, there is no future judgment, why would you live in a way to please the Lord?

Why would you live in a way to deny yourself pleasures of the flesh and to seek to live for the Lord and serve the Lord looking for His return?

Why would you do that if there is no consequence, if it doesn't matter how you live? And further, if it doesn't matter, you may say, well, yeah, I believe the Lord is going to return, but I don't think hell is eternal.

[67 : 52] That's what Jehovah's witnesses teach. And there would be some who profess to know Christ, indeed, even some that I would respect who would say, hell is not eternal.

You're going to be obliterated at some point. You'll be annihilated at some point. You won't burn as long as Hitler, but, you know, you'll, eventually you'll die and you'll go to nothingness.

Even if you believe that, why would you bother yourself to even live for the Lord? Because you could say, you know what? It may be painful for a time, but eventually I will know nothing.

All that is designed to cause us to live in a way that would dishonor the Lord and that we will find in eternity that we bought a lie.

And again, as we looked at last week, the very last verse of Matthew 25, the very last verse, the same Greek word that describes eternal life is the same Greek word that describes eternal punishment.

[69 : 04] You cannot have one without the other. You cannot say the punishment is not eternal. That don't really mean eternal, but the life is eternal. That's really eternal. No. They're both not eternal or they're both eternal.

eternal. And so we must remember that what we believe affects how we live. And we cannot disregard the two, not thinking that there's a disconnect between what I believe and how I behave.

We will behave in accordance with what we believe. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word this morning.

And Lord, I pray that you would use it to the profit of all of our souls. And Father, where there are lingering questions in the hearts of people, I pray that they will receive answers that will bring encouragement and strength.

we thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen. Have any questions from the sermon?

[70 : 11] And I maybe shouldn't ask that. I should probably say, are there any questions that you want to ask? Because I know you have questions, but not everybody may want to ask questions. I'll do my best to answer any questions on anything that I covered this morning.

As I say, Clara, Brother Kelly at the back. Could we grab a mic? Oh, okay. Is that mic there? Is that mic on there?

Where'd it go? Oh, right here. Sorry about that. Could you just pass this to something? Thanks. In Hebrews chapter 6, there's a similar passage as 2 Peter.

And that's also often used by the person in Hebrews 6 and verse 1.

It's also a challenging passage. It is. It is. Yeah, it is another passage that many would go to just in this passage in 2 Peter.

[71 : 34] And perhaps it may even be higher on the list than the 2 Peter passage. But what I would say, Brother Kelly, is I'd approach it the very same way. Starting from the point that Scripture doesn't contradict.

Starting from the point that, or continuing from the point that clearer passages are to shed light on not-so-clear passages. And in the end, that Scripture is unified.

And so, I would land the same place with the same understanding that with a slight difference. what I would say is, in the Hebrews passage, and this is true from the beginning of the letter, the writer to the Hebrews is writing to a mixed congregation.

He's not making assumptions that every single person in the church is a true believer. And so, even at the beginning of the letter, he uses language that indicates that this is a mixed congregation.

And so, he speaks to them not assuming that everyone is a believer. But, for those who are believers, later on in the passage that you referred to, he says, but I'm persuaded of better things concerning you.

[72 : 48] So, I would end the same place. That those who truly know Christ, they cannot and will not be lost.

However, the witness of scripture and our own experience is that there are people who come into the church under the influence of the church and their lives are bettered, their lives are changed, they perhaps cease doing some sinful practices and other things and they have all the appearance of genuine conversion but in time they're revealed to not have been genuinely converted.

Going back to the words of Jesus, if anyone given to Jesus is lost in hell, Jesus lied. No one given to Jesus will ever be lost.

So, that's it. I would respond to the Hebrews passage as well. We're time for one more. Troy? Thank you, Pastor, for this series.

It's very timely. We were discussing or we touched on this in our small groups here. There was somebody who brought up something to me.

[74 : 21] And I think it went on assurance. So, how can one be assured when it seems as if one could be so deceived that when they come before the Lord, they would say, you know, can we do this in your name, can we do that?

And, it appears as if they were certain that they knew the Lord. and so how does one not fall into that trap of, you know, boy, do I really, truly, truly know the Lord?

What assurance is? That's an excellent question, Troy. I would say several things. God has given us what we can consider to be means of grace to grow in assurance.

And some of them would be staying in God's word. Jesus says, if you're my disciple, then you are to abide in my word. Being in God's word, communing with the Lord in prayer, being in fellowship with believers, being in fellowship with brothers and sisters, we have a better opportunity of having deception seen in our lives and pointed out to us if we are walking in relationship with brothers and sisters who can have input into our lives.

And so I would say just those right there are significant. You know, in the Cybership class, we're going through the book, The Habits of Grace. And the three-legged stools that the author promotes to us are God's word, prayer, and God's body.

[76 : 09] And he talks about hearing God's word in terms of spending time in God's word, having God's air in terms of prayer, and then belonging to God's body.

And I would say practically speaking, if we would employ those means of grace, we can reasonably guard against being falsely assured, if we're not genuine believers.

But on the other side of it too, growing in assurance, there are people who employ these means of grace, they are reading God's word, they are praying, they're fellowshiping with other brothers and sisters, but there are some people who for whatever reason just have a constitution that is doubtful.

And so there are many people who are true believers who doubt their salvation, who doubt they will make heaven. And so the same way you have those who are shocked that they're going to hell, who thought they'd be going to heaven, there would no doubt be those who think they're going to hell, but they make heaven because of Christ.

That's a very good question, truly.