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The church was NOT designed to be an entertainment venue.....

- ❖ The church, from its inception has been a place where the broken and the poor gathered to hear the word of God.
  - The church has been a refuge for those who have been mistreated by religious systems as a place to find the comfort of the truth.
  - It has been for centuries, the place to be for those who desired to know the Living God.
  - The Church in many countries around the world has been and still is a very dangerous place to be, yet millions choose to meet in basements, meet in the fields, meet in prisons, and other places, risking all that they have including their very own lives because of the great value of being amongst fellow believers and hearing the word of God.
  
- ❖ The forces that are opposed to God know the value of the gathering of Christians.
  - This is why you see Christianity restricted or outlawed in countries that are Communist, or Muslim majority, or Buddhist or any atheist countries.
    - The enemy understands the power of God and if allowed to flourish Christianity will challenge and ultimately consume competing ideologies.
  
  - What the Devil cannot destroy from the outside through persecution, he will attempt to destroy from within through subversion.
    - What that means is he will attempt to undermine, cause dissension or create doubt to make it ineffective.
    - Dilute the message, change the message, appeal to personal pride.
      - All designed to have us doubt God and focus on ourselves.
      - “Did God really say?”
      - “You will be like God”
      - “You will not surely die”
  
- ❖ As you read through your bible, you will see an extreme amount of time devoted to the dangers of false teachers and false prophets.
  - And with good reason.
    - The church without the truth is no different than a bingo club or a sporting event.

- It only exists for entertainment purposes.
- The American church (For the most part) seems to have fallen into this trap. There are so called Mega-churches all over the country that you can watch the service and think - “Why do they sit through that?”
- These churches have forsaken sound doctrine to make sure the masses are fat and happy.
- We’ve allowed the world to dictate the needs of the church verse the church dictating the needs of the world.
- We’ve decided that the world needs to come to us verse us going into the world.
- Proverbs 1:21 says that Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open square.

❖ Christians, we cannot lock ourselves inside a building.

- We must be out in the world standing and fighting for the truth.
  - Our enemy is extremely active, tirelessly advancing what it wants, while we sit indoors saying we don’t want to get involved because it might be dangerous or we wonder what the use is.
    - But understand this: you are guaranteed to lose the fight if you never show up.
- Apathy in the church leads the church to be a place where:
  - “I can feel good about who I am”
  - “A place where the kids can have fun and be entertained and maybe they can even teach them how to act nice”
  - “No one judges me by my lifestyle”
- What you will not hear in these churches is:
  - Need for repentance
  - That there is a real place called hell
  - Judgement is coming
  - Or that there is any kind of accountability

❖ One of the really sad things is the church can become a place where we can go to the building, enjoy the fellowship with other people, sing along with the music, partake of a sermon..... we can even serve in a ministry .....and when we are done, not be any closer to God than when we started.

- ❖ Any individual going to church should be maturing as a Christian. If you have been going to a church for any period of time and you are not growing in your maturity, then there is a real problem, and something needs to change.
  - A lack of growth could come from one of two places
    - YOU
      - Failure to commit – I’ll do that someday, I know I need it but I just cant right now
      - Bad logic – not time, family pressures, other priorities
      - Poor expectations – self focus --- worship, etc. You are building a wall that will not allow you to grow
    - THE CHURCH
      - Poor teaching – bad doctrine
      - Lack of love – (In Revelation, Ephesus lost their love)
      - Lack of proper Discipleship – never grow, catch the fish and leave them on the shore.
  
- ❖ If it turns out, you are the problem, and I can tell you from real experience, that is very common, then you have the ability through your relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to change that. Find mature Christians to hang around ... God will lead you to where you belong
  
- ❖ Next, The church, specifically the leaders of a church, can be a big problem and in our lesson today from 2 Peter, we are going to address false teachers and just how much damage they can cause.
  - We know from God’s word that the role or purpose of Pastors, teachers, ministers and leaders is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry according to Ephesians 4: 11-12
    - And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.
      - He goes on in verse 14 to tell the body of believers why they need good leadership. “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”
    - The job of a Pastor/teacher is to equip you!

- To check the engine to make sure everything is operating correctly
  - That you have good fuel – which is sound doctrine
  - To give you the tools necessary to serve the body of Christ
  - The primary way of doing that is through the teaching of God’s word.
    - To know what it says, why it is saying it, and how to use it in your life to glorify God.
- ❖ God has used man since the fall of Adam to communicate His purposes to His people.
- To give the tools necessary to serve, to help, to give comfort when someone is in need. Which is the definition of the word “minister”.
    - I think all of us realize that any attempt man makes to do good or to do the will of God there is going to be evil somewhere near trying to convince us that we are wasting our time.
- ❖ 2 Peter 2:1-3
- But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.
- ❖ You will recall at the end of Jesus physical ministry here on earth that He had a powerful encounter with the Apostle Peter on the shoreline
- Three times Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love Me?”
  - Each time Peter responded with increasing conviction “Yes Lord, You know that I love You”
  - After each answer that Peter gave, Jesus answered back with a calling on Peter’s life.
    - The first time it was “Feed My lambs”
    - Second was to “Tend My sheep”
    - Last Jesus said to “Feed My sheep”
  - We know that Jesus wasn’t referring to a bunch of sheep He had hidden in a field somewhere.
    - Jesus was entrusting something that was very important to Him.
    - Jesus referred to His people with His own personal ownership of them
    - He said these are My lambs and My sheep.

- ❖ I relay that story because it shows the magnitude of expectations that Jesus had on taking care of those, He calls His.
  - Jesus called Peter to show his love for Him, by loving His flock.
    - By feeding them and tending to their needs.
  
- ❖ Peter was a faithful leader, and his two letters are to the church that Jesus asked Him to care for.
  - The first letter, or what we call 1 Peter, deals with the challenges that come from outside the church.
    - Persecution, suffering and hardships
  
  - This second letter deals with challenges that were going to come from within the church.
    - To put chapter 2 into context we need to see what was happening at the end of chapter 1
    - We have Peter telling the church to rely upon the word of God because it is a trustworthy source for our beliefs.
      - The Prophetic word
  
- ❖ 2 Peter 1:19-21
  - And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
    - Peter reminds us that we can trust what God said He is going to do by what He has already done.
    - Fulfilled prophecy stands as evidence of God's faithfulness and truth.
    - Peter could point to any of the 332 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled perfectly in His ministry as evidence for who He is and why we should believe him.
  
- ❖ Peter then makes a statement that is a warning for us as we go into the next chapter.
  - "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation."
    - Peter is teaching that Scripture is not meant to be hidden or accessible only to a select few.
      - God never intended His Word to be controlled by an elite few who alone could interpret and explain it.

- Peter is telling the church that prophecy can be understood by everyday ordinary believers.
  - God's Word is a light shining in a dark world.
    - Our confidence does not rest in human authority, but in the inerrant Word of God.
    - Human beings are fallible and prone to corruption. Therefore, our trust must rest in Scripture itself, inspired by men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ After establishing confidence that we can trust the scriptures, Peter gives us a warning.
- CH 2 V1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.
- ❖ Notice that in Peter's message, he says there will be false teachers amongst us.
- It is a foregone conclusion that this will happen.
  - He says that and uses the comparison that there were false prophets among the real prophets of the Old Testament.
  - God uses terms in the Old Testament to describe these false prophets as:
    - "I did not send them"
    - "They speak visions of their own heart"
    - "They make My people trust in a lie"
    - "They strengthen the hands of evildoers"
- ❖ You do not have to spend much time reading the Old Testament to see that there were plenty of false prophets.
- It is also interesting that Peter uses false prophets when speaking of the Old Testament but uses false teachers when speaking of the church.
    - Do we think that is intentional?
- ❖ I have been asked if there are still Prophets today?
- It is a good question because it gets to the heart of something very important for Christians to understand.
  - The purpose of a Prophet was to reveal an unknown "truth" from God.
  - The "office" of the Prophet was used to be able to spread truth to a land and people that were unaware or didn't have access to biblical truths.

- ❖ If we are to say that the “office” of Prophet exists today, then we are saying that there is still truth out there that we do not know.
  - Here is how to test that, anyone that claims to be speaking for God they must be in complete agreement with what God’s word (the bible) already says. God is never going to counteract Himself.
    - We have everything we need to live a righteous and holy life
    - We have everything we need to prepare ourselves to meet our Maker.
    - We have everything we need to go into the world and share the Gospel message.
    - We have everything we need to understand God’s plan for the future and be ready.
  
- ❖ There is nothing that needs to be added to our bible.
  - If we say there is then the implication is that God is withholding essential information from us.
  - When the Apostle John closed the Book of Revelation with the warning that anyone who adds to its words will face judgment, he meant it as a serious and final caution.
  
- ❖ Today, we are going to focus on four key words that Peter uses in this passage.
  
- ❖ The first one will be in what Peter says these false teachers will do, in verse 1?
  - They will **secretly** bring in destructive heresies. **Deception**
    - False teachers never start a sermon by saying “Just so you know, I am a false teacher”
    - Their influence will be subtle and deceptive. The danger lies in how quietly and gradually their teaching is introduced.
    - Jesus talks about these types of people when He says they come to you in sheep’s clothing, but they are ravenous wolves.
      - The threat is not always obvious at first. False teaching often enters quietly, sounding harmless, appealing, and even spiritual—until the damage has already begun.
  
- ❖ A destructive heresy is not just a small disagreement.
  - It is a teaching that undermines the core of the gospel while still claiming to be Christian.
  - Allow me to give you some examples of things that itchy ears want to hear:
  
- ❖ **The Prosperity Gospel** – and there are many who fall into this category
  - States that God guarantees health, wealth, and success

- That financial giving “activates” blessing
- Sickness or poverty are a result of a weak faith
- **Why would it be destructive**
  - Shifts the focus from Christ’s glory to personal gain
  - Redefines faith as a tool for prosperity
  - It turns the gospel from “Christ died to save sinners” into “God exists to fund your best life.”

#### ❖ **The Progressive Gospel that teaches**

- Scripture is culturally outdated
- Biblical moral standards should be reinterpreted
- Sin is defined more as personal choices
- **Why would it be destructive**
  - Places human culture over biblical authority
  - Alters core doctrines of repentance and holiness
  - Gradually reshapes Christianity into moral relativism

#### ❖ **Universalism**

- No eternal punishment
- Everyone will ultimately be saved (universalism)
- God would never judge eternally
- **Why it would be destructive**
  - Removes the urgency of repentance
  - Contradicts Jesus’ warnings about judgment
  - Empties the cross of its saving necessity

#### ❖ In that same verse Peter makes an incredible statement that these false teachers will even **deny** the Lord who bought them.

- Our first word was **deception** now the second word is **denial**
  - There are several opinions on this and I don’t want to stay on this too long.
- Here is what we need to know - Jesus has paid the price for everyone.
- In ch3 verse 9 of this same book, Peter says that The Lord was not willing that any should perish but that all would come to repentance.

- The offer is open to all, but not all accept the offer, and I believe these false teachers only use their ministry as a means of gain.
  - These false teachers stand as real examples of those who are exposed to the truth and even operate within the sphere of a ministry, but they ultimately deny the very Lord they profess.
  - Their teaching and influence are not driven by a desire to serve Christ, but by a desire for personal gain.
  
- ❖ The verse concludes with the sobering warning that they will bring upon themselves swift destruction.
  - At times, we may be tempted to think that this judgment is not coming quickly enough.
    - We look around and wonder why such teaching seems to continue unchecked.
  
- ❖ But the emphasis of the text is not that judgment will occur immediately—it is that when it comes, it will come suddenly and decisively.
  - God’s judgment is never late, never uncertain, and never ineffective.
    - What may appear to us as delay is, in reality, the patience of God.
    - Yet when the appointed time arrives, the end will come swiftly and without escape.
  
- ❖ V2 Continues the warning “And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”
  - The tragic fact about many false teachers is that they are successful—
    - People listen to them and follow them and their shameful ways.
  
  - The Apostle Paul acknowledges this danger in his letter to the churches of Galatia. The Galatians had begun to add works to their faith.
    - They were being taught that Gentile believers must live under Jewish ceremonial law—rules such as do not eat, do not touch, be circumcised, and other external requirements.
  
  - Paul addresses them in Galatians Chapter 3 by saying:
    - O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

- ❖ Paul wanted to know who “Bewitched” them
    - The interpretation of that is “Who performed a magic trick on you”
      - You had the gospel .... That is all you need yet you are saying it wasn’t enough.
      - Church - the cross lacks nothing
        - Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone
        - Anything or anyone who adds human works to salvation blasphemes the sufficiency of Christ.
        - We are fond of saying “Jesus plus anything” is wrong
          - ◆ This is why false teachers can be so dangerous: they are often successful. People listen to them. People follow them. And as Peter warns, the result is that the way of truth is blasphemed.
- ❖ Verse 4 of the book of Jude gives us another peak into the tactics of the enemy.
  - For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into **lewdness** and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Lewdness will be the third key word here.
    - Here we encounter another recurring mark of false teachers: lewdness.
    - Again and again, when false teaching spreads, moral compromise follows.
    - Sexual immorality frequently becomes intertwined with their message and lifestyle. Pride refuses correction, and sin is excused or even normalized. This too becomes one of their destructive ways.
- ❖ Peter continues in Verse 3 “By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”
  - Covetousness will be our fourth word to describe these false teachers
  - **Covetousness** is the desire to possess wealth, material goods, or objects that belong to someone else. Which is often driven by discontentment with one’s own blessings.
  - This explains the motive behind their madness, if you will.
  - These teachers are driven by greed or personal gain.
  - We joke around here about taking the Calvary jet or the Calvary helicopter to different places.
    - Nobody knows where they are at.
    - There are many examples of ministries abusing their finances.
    - From having their own theme park to multi-million-dollar mansions.

- When you see that, it is time to start questioning things.
- ❖ Peter says they will exploit you
  - Meaning they will abuse you for personal gain.
- ❖ And yet Peter ends this verse with a powerful reassurance:
  - “For a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”
    - From a human perspective, it may seem that false teachers prosper without consequence.
    - It can appear that justice is delayed. But Peter reminds us that God’s judgment is neither asleep nor inactive.
  - Here is what I know: God sees. God knows. And in His perfect timing, justice will come.
- ❖ What can we take away from today’s teaching?
  - False teachers desire followers for themselves; true teachers desire followers of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ This truth also leads us to a reality that all of us need to face: we can handle truth carelessly.
  - We live in a culture that often treats truth as flexible or negotiable. We might call them “harmless traditions.”
  - We tell our children stories we know are not true and dismiss them as innocent fun.
  - But we have to ask: what habits are we forming about truth?
  - Our willingness to compromise the truth—even when it seems small and inconsequential—comes at a cost.
  - Are we willing to skirt the truth with our kids but always expect them to tell us the truth?
    - When telling the truth becomes casual, we begin to develop a mindset that truth does not always need to be taken seriously.
- ❖ Scripture calls us to a higher standard.
  - Men, in particular, are called to be the spiritual leaders of their families—watchful, discerning, and protective. It means guiding our families toward Christ, guarding them from deception, and modeling obedience to the Lord.
  - The greatest way to love your family is to lead them to love Jesus—and to demonstrate that love through your own faithful obedience.

- ❖ This scripture is not meant to leave us fearful—it is meant to make us watchful and faithful.
  - The answer to false teaching is not panic.
  - The answer is an unwavering devotion to the truth of God’s word.