

2 Peter 2
The Dangers of Hypocrisy and Duplicity
J.D. Farag

KAPONO: Would you join me in a word of prayer? Heavenly Father, thank You so much, Lord. We love You so much. We thank You that you can – that You are who You are, Lord. That You provide for us, Lord. You comfort us. You strengthen us, Lord.

As we get into the study, Lord, will You just allow us to be still and just sit in Your word, Lord. That we may take what it is that You have for us, Lord, and apply it to our life, that we may not be the same Christian today that we will be tomorrow, Lord. So thank You. Would You speak to us? In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good morning and welcome. So glad you're here today. You can be seated if you want, but I'm going to have you stand in a moment. But that's fine. I want to welcome those of you that are joining us online. We're so very glad that you are.

On Sunday mornings we have two services, the first of which is the Bible Prophecy Update, and now Second Service, which is the sermon, a verse-by-verse study through the word of God.

We're making our way through this amazing book of 2 Peter. I know I say that about every book in the Bible, but particularly the second epistle of the Apostle Peter. So our text today is going to be Chapter 2 verses 10-13. We left off in verse 9 last week, so we'll take these four verses today.

And so now if you're able, you don't have to, by the way, if you're more comfortable, you're certainly welcome to remain seated. But either way, you can follow along as I read the text.

Beginning in *verse 10*, Peter is continuing from the previous verses talking about these unrighteous, wicked, false teachers, and he says, *verse 10*, **“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. 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 [Verse 12] 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

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idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.”

Let's pray. If you would please join with me.

Father in Heaven, we're posturing ourselves before You this morning, readily admitting and acknowledging before You that unless the Holy Spirit is our teacher, we're not going to understand this passage of Scripture that we have before us today.

So we need for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes and minister to us and teach to us so that we can understand and not just understand it but apply it to our lives where it applies to our lives, no matter how uncomfortable or convicting it might be.

Lord, truth be made known, that's why we're here. We want to hear You speak into our lives. And we know Your word is a double-edged sword. It's able to cut surgically between bone and marrow, soul, and spirit. And we need for Your word to be that sword today to cut into our lives and remove from our lives that which has taken up residence in our lives that is hindering or harming us, Lord.

So search our hearts, Lord, and see if there be anything at all that is keeping us from hearing You, knowing You and especially loving You. Any hindrance, Lord, remove it. Cut it out. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

You can be seated for real this time.

So I want to talk with you today about the dangers of hypocrisy and duplicity in condemning others for what we ourselves may be guilty of, even though we may rightly discern false teachings and false teachers. In our text today, Peter focuses on the specific characteristics of these false teachers, and he does so to warn believers, specifically to be discerning spiritually, the discernment of spirits.

But while discerning the false teachers is the point of the passage, I think we would err greatly were we not to first examine our own lives in this regard. And I'll explain why I'm saying that.

So I'm preparing for this teaching today, and it is, by any definition, low hanging fruit in the sense that I can get up here and I can preach a sermon. These are the characteristics of false

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teachers. This is what you should be aware of and on guard against. This is what they look like. This is what they are like. This is what they talk like, and this is what they'll be like.

And I can put together a pretty, you know, pretty tight three-point sermon. Thank you very much. And then you'll leave here today going, Yeah, those false teachers, man! You'll become sin sniffers.

[Laughter]

All of a sudden now, you're looking at everybody going, (Growling) I'm on to you, man! We're not going to do that, not today anyway.

And the reason is, is that I sense that the Lord would have me take it further, a step further. And by that, I mean talk about, wait a minute, this is how we can spot the false teacher. This is how we can spot the false teaching. This is how we can have discernment.

But wouldn't we be better to first discern if this is true in our own lives first? And so I tried, I have to confess. I'm like, Lord, no, I don't think that's the – the point of the passage is, you know... He said, no, I want you to talk about the propensity in all of us.

Can I ask you to join me in *Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 7*? You'll see why here in a moment. Verses 1-5. You're, I'm sure, familiar with this passage. Jesus is preaching and it's actually been taken horribly out of context. But He says, *verse 7, "Do not judge."*

How many times have you heard somebody say, "You're not the judge of me"? "Don't judge me."

Oh, wait, wait, not so fast. Because if you look at that word in the original language of the Greek New Testament, it carries with it the idea of don't condemn. "Judge," unfortunately, packages unnecessarily, and I believe wrongly, this notion that we should not have judgment.

Don't judge me!

Well, wait a minute. I'm making a judgment. I'm not condemning you. But I have sound judgment and discernment. But I'm not going to condemn you. I'm not the judge. That's not for me to do. So don't condemn.

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Is it okay if we insert that word in concert with judge? We just did.

So **“Do not judge [Condemn], or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”**

Are we convicted yet? Not condemnation, conviction.

He goes on and He says, **“How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite...”**

Jesus, this is Jesus?

Yeah.

Well, it's pretty strong.

You better believe it is.

“You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Now, it's important to understand that the Greek word ‘hypokrites,’ is where we get our English word for hypocrites. And it means, literally, actor. It's actually a combination of two words, a compounding of two words to mean “to judge under,” as an actor in Greek drama judging under the mask, covering up their true identity.

This is why you'll often see associated with theater, the theater masks. That's where it came from, first century Greek drama. And it refers to impersonation deception, as these actors would cover up their true identity with these masks over their faces, portraying a character which was not representative of the reality.

So by way of application, the emphasis is on hypocritically judging and condemning instead of having good judgment and discerning.

In other words, the person is condemning another from behind the mask of their self-righteousness and worse, self-deception. This is going to be germane to our understanding as we get into the text.

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Now what ensues is what always ensues, which is that of falsely slandering and assassinating one's character in their hypocrisy.

One more thing on this. And it has to do with the difference between hypocrisy and duplicity, both of which, though similar, are not synonymous. And I'm delineating between the two and have even titled my sermon as such.

And the reason is because the difference is duplicity is to knowingly and deliberately deceive. So you'll say one thing to this person, you'll say the opposite to this person. That's duplicitous. That's duplicity. Hypocrisy is not deliberately deceiving. It's to be self-deceived, acting, or feigning honesty and piety, which is not, again, the reality.

The reason I wanted to start out this way is because, again, we're all too quick in our own hypocrisy and duplicity, and we are hypocritical and duplicitous if we're honest with ourselves. I'm fond of that saying.

Often, it's a response to someone when you invite them to church and they say something to the effect of, well, no, man, the church is full of hypocrites. They're right. So I usually say, and perhaps you've heard it said, hey, we can always use one more, so why don't you –

[Laughter]

Okay, we needed the inserted levity at this juncture.

But I think, again, truth be made known, we're all hypocrites in one sense or the other, and God forbid, even duplicitous in that it's a deliberate dishonesty and deception. So I want to focus on hypocrisy and duplicity, because herein lies the danger of both.

The danger is we're blinded by hypocrisy and duplicity. We're blinded to our own faults, vis-à-vis pointing out others faults.

Now listen to what I'm going to say, because I know it's going to sound like a play on words. It is not.

So duplicity, hypocrisy points out other faults under the banner of rightly discerning who is false. Did you catch that? I sure hope so, because I really tried to make sure in my notes that would come off right.

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So false, F-A-L-S-E, false teachers and faults, F-A-U-L... I've got to check my spelling here. Spell check. F-A-U-L-T-S.

Right? Are we good? Okay. Good.

So you see what I'm saying here? See, again, if I would have got up here today and preached a sermon on how to spot a false teacher, how to s-sniff them out. Oh, they're false.

Oh, wait a minute. What about your faults?

It was Oswald Chambers who said, and I remember early on in my walk with the Lord reading Chambers, and it has always stuck with me over the years and served me well, by the way, especially in the context of marriage.

Chambers said it like this, "It's not: "have you been wronged?" It's: 'Have you wronged?'"

And see, this is the problem, the danger with hypocrisy because you're blinded to that. So this is why, after seeking the Lord, I made the decision to approach today's text this way.

And what I want to do is pose four questions that I think we would all do well to ask ourselves, and I'll include myself in that. Because if I didn't, I wouldn't get away with that from the Lord.

First question, *verse 10*. Am I arrogant?

Now here, Peter points out that punishment of these unrighteous is especially true for those despising authority in their pride and arrogance.

Now, why would Peter say that, that way? Because pride blinds you to the pride that you have in your own life. The first thing that pride does is it disables the anti-pride software on the hard drive of your life. You know, they have sophisticated, you know, computer viruses. I don't want to use this, but for lack of a better illustration.

I'm kind of sensitive about viruses these days.

There's sophisticated computer viruses that are designed. Once they get onto your computer or in through some backdoor or whatever, they actually disable your anti-virus software so it can't detect it.

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Well, that's what pride does. So pride comes in and the first thing it does is it disables our anti-pride software. So we don't know that we're proud. We don't know that we have pride on the hard drive of our lives.

And here's how that shows up. Someone is full of themselves, full of pride. And they have the audacity to say to you, You're full of pride, brother.

Oh, you don't say. How do you know? How do you know what pride looks like except that you've got the telephone pole of pride from where the sawdust or the speck of pride came from in my life?

You've heard it said this way. "It takes one to know one." Oh, you're the expert on pride. I see why. You know a thing or two about pride because you're proud.

Oh, I'm not proud. I'm humble about my pride and I'm proud of my humility.

That's pride! You are fully giving over to your pride. And arrogance, there's actually – here's another delineation and we see it in the Proverbs. We commonly quote, maybe misquote the Proverb, you know, that "Pride comes before the fall."

It's actually arrogance and pride and it's a fall and destruction. In other words, it doesn't just lead to a fall. Arrogance leads to destruction. Pride, fall, destruction. That's how dangerous it is.

So what pride does is it disables our ability to recognize our own pride and arrogance. So we're so full of ourselves that we no longer see ourselves as being arrogant, which is why we only see it in others. Isn't it true that yours and my sin always look so much worse on someone else? I'll give you a moment.

[Laughter]

You know exactly what I'm talking about. I mean, here you've got the telephone pole, the beam in your eye, and you're like, you point – you're pointing out the speck of pride in someone else's life? You're so full of yourself that you fancied yourself as being the pride investigator, sin sniffer, whatever you want to call this guy.

And it's like God has called you to point out the pride in other people's life. Just like that too.

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No, He hasn't. In fact, a pretty good indicator that actually God is pointing out the pride in your life, brother. Why don't you first go deal with that telephone pole of pride in your life and then we'll talk about the speck in mine.

True story. This is so good. Stanley Volt. He's with the Lord now, but just a wonderful pastor, an amazing Bible teacher. I had the privilege, my wife and I, when we were on the mainland many years ago, back in the late '80s, early '90s, and we had the privilege of going to conferences where he was one of the speakers and he shared one time at one of these conferences that after one of his sermons, he had a guy come up to him and said, "Brother, you are full of pride."

To which he responded, "Oh, you don't know the half of it."

[Laughter]

Right? If that's me, I totally would not have responded that way.

You're so full of pride.

Me! What about you? You're calling me proud!

Wow, sorry about that. Maybe I need to go to the Lord with this.

Here's the thing with arrogance and haughtiness and pride. They disable us. They disable instead of enable us. They deactivate this sensitivity to the conviction, the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit.

Hey, this is pride. And you're gonna, like we talked about a couple of weeks ago, you're going to either learn the hard way or the easy way.

Oh, how I wish I could learn the easy way. I learn the hard way; I have the scars to prove it. I would much rather – I know this is very unloving and selfish, but I would much rather learn from your mistakes and your sin and your pride, yeah, by proxy.

Yeah, I would rather just watch you suffer the crushing consequences of your sin and go, wow, I don't want anything to do with that. You know, I'm sorry for you, basically, but, hey, I'm good. Thank you for taking one for the team. Except it doesn't work that way. I'm the one who ends up, you know, I'm going to humble you.

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You know the Proverb that says, **“Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.”**

You know how that reads in my JDV? It's not blasphemy. It's called humor. Here's how it reads in the JDV. Humble yourself in My presence before I do it for you.

No, interesting, the specificity. Notice it doesn't say, let God humble you. No. This is a do-it-yourself job. Humble yourself. The onus is on us to humble ourselves before the Lord.

The Proverbs are replete, and this is another topic for another time. But for the sake of time, I'll just simply say that humility is the catalyst for wisdom. You ask God for wisdom; it will never come absent humility. And so too, conversely, is pride the catalyst for folly.

So I'm asking God for His wisdom. I want to know God's will. If there's no humility, there's no chance.

Because that's not how it works. If wisdom comes vis-à-vis humility, then so too does folly come vis-à-vis pride.

I always know that I'm foolish in anything I do or any decision I make If there's pride in my heart. And conversely, I always know it's the wisdom from above that's first pure and peaceable and gentle, like James says, and easy to be entreated and full of mercy and good fruits, without hypocrisy or partiality, bearing fruits of righteousness. That's the wisdom from above that James defines.

There's two kinds of wisdom. There's the worldly wisdom, and there's wisdom from above, godly wisdom. And it's really kind of a template if you really think about it.

You should never make a decision unless you first put that template of God's wisdom versus worldly wisdom over it. Because see, worldly wisdom is lustful, proud. It's quite a list. I'm trying to forget that list because it represents too many of my foolish decisions made in pride with worldly wisdom. So am I arrogant?

Now again, we would do well to ask ourselves this before we point out the speck of arrogance in someone else's life. Am I arrogant? Let the Holy Spirit search your heart. Let Him take the cutting, sharp it's sharp – God's word is sharp and active, sharper than [Sharper] than any two-edged sword. That means it cuts going in and cuts coming back out.

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And that's what God's word needs to do. When my firstborn son was a – he was a year of age, and we noticed a lump in his stomach. Of course, you know, being this great man of faith that I am, I'm freaking out.

Oh, God! You know, take him in. Oh, he's got a hernia.

A hernia? He's a year old.

Well, he was pretty active. So we're going to have to go in. It's very, you know, common.

And it's a very routine surgery. We're going to have to go in and stitch up that hernia.

So do you know what we did, my wife and I? We let that physician take a knife and cut into our firstborn son.

Why are you looking at me like that? Why? Because something needed to get taken care of.

Well, why don't we let God do that with His sharper than any two-edged surgical instrument and knife? Hey, this needs to go. This needs to come out. If we leave it in there, it's going to get worse. We need to cut it out.

So Lord, search my heart. Has arrogance, pride, haughtiness taken up residence in my heart? And if so, Lord, I need spiritual heart surgery to remove it.

Question number two, it gets worse. So we're just – this is only the beginning. Just warning you. Am I slanderous? Verse 11.

Now, when one is given over to pride and arrogance, they by default fancy themselves and think more highly of themselves and by extension exalt themselves as being the final authority.

And that's what Peter's saying here, so much so that they see themselves as being above even angels. Now, right now, we are not above angels. In glory we will be above angels, and we will judge angels, by the way, Paul writing to the Corinthians.

But right now, these celestial beings, these angels, are higher than us. Oh, by the way, parenthetically, let me say, they also study us. They scratch their heads. No, they study us. They marvel at us. Because see, angels are not created in the image of God. They don't have a plan of redemption like man has a plan of redemption.

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And so I think in some of our cases, and I'll use myself as an example, again, take one for the team. I think they don't just scratch their heads when they look at my life. I think they file official complaints with God.

[Laughter]

What? What is up with this guy? He's created in Your image. He's going to be judging me. Can you just – God, please, I don't want him assigned to me in heaven.

Okay. Anyway, back to our sermon already in progress here.

So you see what's happening here? You're so full of yourself that you have the audacity to bring forth slanderous accusations before the Lord than angels who are higher than you and more powerful than you would never dared to do.

That's called arrogant. And arrogance is roommates with slander. They go together.

Where you find arrogance, you find slander. And where you find slander, you find arrogance. They're roommates. They go together. And that's how. When you're that full of yourself, well, you're the final judge. I'm the final authority. You have to answer to me. Don't you know who I am?

Okay, let's move on. The third question.

[Laughter]

Just want to make sure you're still awake. Verse 12.

Now this one, you're going to have to bear with me on. It's going to require some expounding. But here's the question. Am I unreasonable?

What do you mean?

Well, this is interesting. I mean, Peter pulls no punches in his description of these men who blaspheme like brute beasts born only to be caught and killed. Wow, that's harsh. Yeah, but they're animals.

And lest one think that this is disproportionate and undeserved, it's important to understand what Peter is likening these false teachers to. They're animals who cannot reason or be reasoned with. They're animalistic. They act only on their instinct.

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Now, I was pondering this, I guess, for lack of a better word, and thinking about our dog. We have a dog; it's the coolest dog. It's half-Chihuahua and half-Terrier. I have the coolest dog you've ever seen. Just ask me. I'll tell you. I'm pretty proud of this dog, actually, if you haven't noticed.

But anyway, I love this dog. I really do. I really love this dog. My whole family loves this dog. But I can't reason with him.

[Laughter]

Now you see where I'm going. Just, can you just indulge me?

Okay, example: Okay, so we live in a private lane, so it's manual rubbish. So I go out to, you know, haul the rubbish, you know – thank God for wheels on rubbish cans, you know, just drag them down the lane. (Making rumble noises) And we're at the end of the lane. So it's quiet, but enough of my problems.

So anyway, I'm doing the rubbish and I've been gone for maybe 9 minutes. And I come back and my dog, his name is Buddy, and Buddy's like, "Where did you go? Oh man!" It had been like he hadn't seen me in a year.

So I tried to reason with him. I'm like, "Buddy, I was just gone for, like, 9 minutes." He doesn't understand.

So I'm thinking, wait a minute. He's a Chihuahua. Let's try Spanish. I don't know Spanish. What am I going to do?

[Laughter]

Those of you that have German shepherds, I don't know, does German work? French poodles, try French. I don't know. But you know, you're talking and the dog's looking at you like... (Tilting his head left and right)

[Laughter]

Purely instinct. That's how they behave. That's how they are.

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And you've never seen a pet fold its paws and pray before it eats its food, right? No, it's instinct. It's instinct. They're instinctive, and that's what being an animal is. And that's what he's likening them to?

Listen, this is big in the sense that I think the enemy has been met with a measure of success in getting us to think that we can somehow reason with people like this. If they're fully given over and they are bona fide false teachers, they are like brute beasts.

Don't waste your time. How do you deal with a wolf? Do you sit down with the wolf and try to reason with it? Okay. Listen, Mr. Wolf, we need to talk because you've been just – you haven't spared the flock. You've got – I mean, this is not going to work. This cannot continue. Can we come to terms here?

The wolf's response? (Evil laugh)

Sure! (Making sheep sounds) I mean, as absurd and ludicrous and ridiculous as that is, that's what Peter's saying here.

So before we go out now and indict, sniff out these kinds of animals that you can't reason with, how about let's first get the telephone pole of being unreasonable out of our own eye? Am I unreasonable?

You know the qualifications for an elder, someone who serves as an overseer in the church. And we have what we affectionately referred to as the pastoral epistles, Timothy, and Titus, where the Apostle Paul is basically writing, and sort of grocery lists these qualifications for an elder and certainly a pastor.

And first of all, they cannot be a womanizer. You have to be a one-woman man. That gets misunderstood, sadly, regrettably.

But there's another one in there which also I think is greatly misunderstood. They must be teachable. I mean, able to teach. That doesn't mean that if you're going to be an elder, you've got to get up here and teach. No, it's not able to teach. It's teach able.

I'm trying here. Work with me, okay?

They have to be teachable. They have to be reasonable. They have to be humble. You've got to be able to — we had an acronym. It's so politically incorrect, which is why I love it, by

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the way, that we had on the mainland, used over the years. I've sort of incorporated it in the ministry here.

But in my church on the mainland, we used to look for fat people. Now wait. I qualify. Fat: Faithful. Available. Teachable.

Listen, if they're not teachable, it's game-over. You can start the – oh, that's an old – I have to update that one. There's an app for that, right? So you can start the – (Pretending to push a button) you can just start the clock, the timer. It's just a matter of time.

If someone is not teachable, get them out. Don't let them in, in the first place. Certainly don't lay hands on them. I've heard it said that – and this is again something that in my own life, the conviction, not condemnation of the Holy Spirit is, the best teacher is the most teachable. The best teacher's the most teachable. You're not going to be a teacher of God's word unless you're teachable.

And I tell you what that looks like and sounds like from the pulpits of many a church today is if someone is behind that pulpit, as is their privilege to be, and they are talking down to people, pontificating, and sort of condescending.

And it's kind of couched in terms of, you know, “You need to.” Oh, those three words. I hope you never hear me say them. You need to pray more! I know, I know. You know what the implication is? This is a man of prayer. Because notice he didn't say, “We all are guilty of not praying as we should.” Now, that's a teachable teacher.

But if it's couched in terms of your need to be a man or woman of prayer like me! Did that work? I hope so because that's all I got. That's not being teachable. That's not being humble. That's not being reasonable. And you can smell it. Because we're all sin sniffers now after today, I guess.

Last one, thank God. But we're not getting off easy here. This is like the zenith of it all.

Verse 13. Am I self-deceived?

Now we have to define this because to be self-deceived, I know this is profound. It means that you deceived yourself. Self-deceived.

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In other words, you're so deceptive that you have the potential to deceive even yourself. You're so good at lying that you believe your own lies.

There's actually a neurological explanation, physiologically for that, by the way. There's certain pathways within the brain, Neuroscience has discovered that you – in fact, there's a saying, if I'm remembering correctly, if you tell a lie long enough, people will believe it. In fact, it might have been from Adolf Hitler. Oh, well, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it was.

You just keep telling the lie over and over and over again, and at some point, the lie will be believed. And Satan knows this, by the way. And this is what is so dangerous about hypocrisy. It's the self-deception.

And that's what Peter is saying here. He says that they are, in effect, marred and blemished, carousing in their self-deception while eating with you, breaking bread with you. So they had already gotten their tentacles into the church at this time, the early church, and they were already in the midst of exactly, as Paul said and Peter echoed, that these wolves will arise from within your midst among you, and they will not spare the flock.

So they're breaking bread with you now. And they got their mask on. And they're self-deceived.

Now, I don't want to get too technical here, but this will make sense with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is actually what's known as Gnostic dualism.

What's Gnostic dualism?

It's deceptively and falsely permitting people to seek sinful pleasures while avoiding the moral accountability. And this was the biggest threat at that time to the church, which is why Peter is inspired by the Holy Spirit in his final letter.

I would believe and like to think that Peter would have loved to have written his final words, his parting words on something other than warning the believers about this.

But it rose to the level of needing this warning. And it needs to be this strong. This is a sanctified strength with which this is written as Peter is inspired to write it. I mean, it gets

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pretty graphic. It's pretty gnarly. It's pretty intense, isn't it? Animalistic? These are brute beasts that are just good for only one thing. You catch them in a trap, and you kill them.

How about that? Have a nice afternoon.

You deal mercilessly with them because they will not hesitate to deal mercilessly with you.

And when it comes to self-deception, this proclivity within the human and sin nature, within all of us to deceive ourselves, and the danger is that deceived people, deceive people. Let me say the same thing again in a different way. This is the danger: The most dangerous thing about self-deception is that deceived people, deceive people. They themselves are deceived.

And here they are. We're having a potluck together?

And you have to understand in that culture, the cultural dynamic – and we talk about it every time – well, not every time, but when we have communion, which, by the way, we're going to celebrate this Thursday, the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup, the body, and the blood of Christ as a symbol of what Jesus did for us. This communion was a common union.

In that culture to this day, certainly in Old Testament times and even New Testament. But in the Middle Eastern culture, in my culture, you don't break bread with somebody and eat unless you're loyal for life unto death.

By the way, that's why back in 1993, with then, President Bill Clinton on the White House lawn signing the, I guess, infamous Oslo Accords with one Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, who was subsequently assassinated for that, the peace deal. They shook hands. It was a very uncomfortable shaking of the hands. You've seen it, right? It meant nothing. That's not how you make an agreement.

In the Middle East, you want to make it an agreement or a covenant, better said, you break bread, you cut covenant. See, you're making an agreement, a covenant with somebody that you are now one. See, that bread that's in you is in me; we're one.

That cup – and they drink from the same cup. That cup that you drink from is the cup that I drink from. It's a common union. We're one. And then you're loyal for life, unto death.

2 Peter 2
The Dangers of Hypocrisy and Duplicity
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That's why it is today in the Middle East culture, the Arab people in particular, are the most hospitable people you'll ever meet in the world. And this, by the way, has its roots in Scripture, of course.

But, you know, Lot; we talked about last week. Again, not to get graphic, but when those angels came to Lot, he had to be responsible for them because they had entered into his home and now, he had to go to his death for them if it required it. That's the culture.

When – there's so many, and I don't want to take the time. It's such a fascinating study. I really encourage you to take the time in your own study of God's word. But just the powerful, profound meaning of breaking bread with someone. You're basically making a covenant with them.

And they were doing that? These self-deceived blots and blemishes, animals, good for nothing except to be caught and killed? That should give every single one of us pause.

But it should be that we first examine our own hearts and ask ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to search our own hearts. Am I, too, deceived?

Because see, the thing about being deceived is that you're deceived, and you don't know that you're deceived.

I need the Holy Spirit. I need that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. And God is so gentle and gracious and patient and long suffering, and oh, He's never harsh or rude or blunt or mean. He will put His finger on it ever so lovingly, ever so gently.

See. It's right here. And it needs to go. I need to remove this. I need to remove this before it kills you. Because if I don't kill it, it will kill you.

So God is so gracious and merciful. I love grace and mercy because both are – talk about going together. You know grace has been often referred to as God giving you what you don't deserve. And mercy is God not giving you what you do deserve.

I'll take both. I'll take an order of both, please. Double size. (Chuckle) I'll take a double order of that. I need both grace and mercy on both sides of that. And God is gracious, and God is merciful.

One last thing, and we're done. I appreciate your patience.

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Over the years, in my experience as a pastor in the ministry, I've seen this in all of its ugliness. I've seen this just devastate marriages, families, pastors, churches. It's just heartbreaking. And it was all because of this naivete. It's a naive innocence if I can say it like that.

But, you know, because sheep are naive, right? And we're gullible. And so we want to embrace people under the banner of being loving and accepting and welcoming.

But we forget about when Jesus said, **“We are to be as harmless as doves, but as shrewd as serpents.”** There's even a couple of parables to that effect. And I guess the takeaway is discernment and judgment.

Notice, conspicuously absent from the passage in Matthew, Jesus said, don't do it at all. He said, no, first things first. Before you do that, you need to take care of yourself first.

In other words, there is no prohibition. In fact, if anything, it is an exhortation to be discerning, to be shrewd. Harmless as a dove; shrewd as a serpent. **“I'm sending you out as sheep among wolves.”** Have judgment, sound judgment.

And we're going to see this next week, Lord willing. It's a very – this is why I love 2 Peter so much. Peter talks about how they prey on the vulnerable, the naive. And really what it is, is an exhortation to, you'll forgive me, grow up!

These guys, they – talk about sniffing out. They smell you a mile away. You're easy prey. They look for the unstable, the immature, the weak, those who are not strong in the word, those who don't know the word.

By the way, this is the offensive. **“Your word [Psalm 119] is a light unto my path, a lamp unto my feet.”** It exposes darkness. It's the light switch. You turn the light on, there goes the cockroaches. That was a horrible illustration.

[Laughter]

You can always tell it's not in my notes. It would never make it there. It would not make the first cut or edit. But I think you get the point.

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See, they prey on the naive. And Peter saying, Come on, you guys! Paul said the same thing. Peter is sort of echoing Paul again. Don't be ignorant! Don't be so gullible. Don't be so naive.

You need to mature spiritually because these kinds of people that are so destructive, these animalistic people, they're going to – it works both ways. They're going to see you go, “Don't mess with that guy.” In fact, they take your address off the list.

You know, kind of like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons. You know they have a list, right? I was taken off the list early on when we first moved here.

Yeah, I'm actually not proud of that, but I just – well, I just said, hey, you're false. Jesus is God. You've been deceived. So have a nice afternoon. And they never came back. But they still came down the lane. But they went to all the other houses but didn't stop at ours. It was kind of like they would walking by like this. Don't go to that guy's house.

Don't be naive. Don't be deceived. This is the danger, and we have to be on guard. But let's first seek the Lord and allow Him to search our hearts for these things.

Kapono, come on up. Why don't you stand up? We'll close in prayer and song.

Father, thank You. Thank You so much, Lord. Again, this is kind of tough stuff, but, oh, it's so needed. Yeah, sure. Just like Peter would have probably rather written about something else. And we would rather be studying about something else. But this is the thing that You want us to know and discern and judge in ourselves first.

So Lord, again, unless the Holy Spirit does it, we have no hope of this being realized in our lives. Those things that are taking up residence in our lives that don't belong there, that You want to remove. Unless the Holy Spirit, indwelling us does that for us, instead of us, it will not be done.

So Lord, please. Please do this in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus for Your glory, Father. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.