



Jason Smith - Ready, Set, God

Part 2 Sermon - Guard the Truth

Peter warns of false teachers who distort the gospel and exploit the church. In a world full of deception, believers must cling to God's Word and be alert. Truth matters—not just for doctrine, but for how we live and how we witness to the world.

Scripture - 2 Peter 2:1–22

Introduction

Good morning, church family! We are in Week 2 of our series called Ready, Set, God. A teaching that is a challenge to remain “Faithful to the Finish”—a journey through the book of 2 Peter.

This letter, written near the end of Peter's life, is filled with urgency and passion.

Peter knows he doesn't have much time left, and he wants to make sure the church is equipped to stand firm, not just for a season, but all the way to the finish.

Last week, we talked about building a life that lasts—a faith that grows stronger over time through intentional character development.

We learned that God has already given us everything we need to grow in godliness, and now it's our turn to cooperate with Him and build.

But today, Peter takes a sharp turn.

If last week was about growth, this week is about guarding.

The title of today's message is **“Guard the Truth.”**

Because here's the reality: **whenever God builds something, the enemy tries to break it.**

Wherever truth is being taught, **lies will try to creep in.** And Peter says false teachers *will come*. Not *if*—*when*.

In a world full of deception, believers must cling to God's Word and be alert.

This is not just about theological debates or doctrinal disagreements—this is about **protecting the church, the witness of Christ, and the integrity of your own faith.**

Let's pray before we open God's Word.

2 Peter 2:1-22

Recognize False Teaching

Text: 2 Peter 2:1–3

Let's begin in 2 Peter 2:1:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign

Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.” (2 Peter 2:1, NIV)

Peter doesn't pull any punches. He's saying—*this isn't a possibility; it's a certainty.*

False teaching isn't just a problem *out there* in the world. It's a threat *within* the church.

And it's not a new problem either.

Peter draws a straight line from the false prophets in Israel's history to the false teachers in the early church—and to our time as well.

Wherever God sows truth, the enemy sows lies. From the serpent in Eden to the prophets of Baal to the smooth-talking preachers in Peter's day—**deception always follows truth like a shadow.**

And look at how Peter describes these teachers:

- They **introduce heresies secretly**—in other words, they don't come with warning labels.
- Their message is **destructive**—not just wrong, but *soul-damaging*.
- They **deny the Master who bought them**—rejecting the lordship of Jesus while using His name.
- And they **exploit others with deceptive words**—often for personal gain.

Here's the danger: **False teachers use spiritual language, but not for spiritual purposes.**

They know how to speak “Christian.”

They quote Scripture—*but twist it*.

They talk about grace—but use it as a license to sin.

They promise freedom—but bring people into bondage (see 2 Peter 2:19).

That’s why **discernment matters**. Peter is sounding the alarm. He’s saying: ***Don’t assume every voice claiming to speak for God is actually sent by God.***

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...” (1 John 4:1)

We must learn to **recognize the signs of false teaching**. Here are a few red flags Peter helps us see:

- **Does it diminish Jesus?**

Is Christ central, or is He sidelined? Sound doctrine always exalts Jesus—His divinity, His authority, His finished work on the cross.

- **Does it promote greed or personal gain?**

False teachers often use religion for profit (see 2 Peter 2:3). If the message is more about prosperity than repentance, more about comfort than the cross—**be cautious**.

- **Does it encourage license to sin instead of holiness?**

Peter says their way is “sensual” and full of “shameful ways” (v. 2). True grace leads to godliness—not moral compromise (see Titus 2:11–12).

- **Does it twist Scripture to justify sin?**

False teaching often distorts God's Word to suit human desires. But

the Bible calls us to *submit* to the Word, not manipulate it (2 Timothy 4:3).

So let me ask: Are you able to spot the difference between what sounds good and what is true?

Are you growing in **discernment**—rooted in the Word, led by the Spirit, anchored in Christ? Because we live in a world full of spiritual noise. And not all of it leads to life.

This is why Peter starts here in chapter 2: **Before you can guard the truth, you have to recognize what's false.**

Remember God's Justice

Text: 2 Peter 2:4–10, 17–19

Peter moves from warning about false teachers to reminding us what's at stake.

He wants the church to understand: **God sees. God knows. And God will act.**

In verses 4–10, Peter walks us through some sobering examples of divine justice:

- He didn't spare the angels who rebelled.
- He judged the ancient world through the flood.
- He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

These stories are not just history—they are **warnings**. Peter isn't being dramatic.

He's being *pastoral*. He's saying: *Don't be fooled by appearances*. Just because someone seems successful, spiritual, or persuasive doesn't mean they're walking in truth.

“Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.” (2 Peter 2:3b)

But in the middle of all this judgment, there's a *beam of hope*. Look at verse 9:

“The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.” (2 Peter 2:9)

That's the heart of it right there. God is not only just—He is **perfectly just**. He knows **how to rescue** the godly *and* how to hold the wicked accountable.

We don't need to panic.

We don't need to take justice into our own hands.

We just need to stay faithful and let God do what only He can do.

But that doesn't mean we stay silent. Peter wants the church to be clear-eyed and courageous. Because false teaching doesn't just lead to bad theology—it leads to *moral collapse*.

Look at how he describes these teachers:

- Bold in arrogance (v. 10)
- Slaves to corruption (v. 19)
- Eyes full of adultery (v. 14)

- Greedy for gain (v. 15)
- Experts in greed, cursed brood (v. 14)
- Springs without water, mist driven by a storm (v. 17)

In other words, **they're empty on the inside—yet still managing to lead others astray.**

“They mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.” (2 Peter 2:18)

And sadly, **many follow them.**

Church, hear this: **Truth matters.** It matters not just for doctrine, but for discipleship. Not just for what we believe, but for **how we live.** Because when truth is distorted, lives are damaged.

When God's Word is twisted, people don't just get confused—they get hurt.

That's why Peter is so urgent. This isn't about winning theological arguments. It's about protecting souls.

So how do we respond?

- With **clarity**, not compromise.
- With **humility**, not harshness.

- And with **confidence**—that God sees, God knows, and God will not be mocked.

God's justice is not asleep. And His mercy is not out of reach. He knows how to rescue His people.

And part of that plan is to stay anchored in the unfathomable riches of God's word.

Stay Anchored in the Word

Text: 2 Peter 2:1–3, 2:19–22

So how do we guard the truth in a world full of lies? Peter doesn't give us a step-by-step plan. But his message is unmistakably clear: Stay anchored in what is true.

In verse 1, he warns us that false teachers will come—***and they will come from within.***

They will “secretly introduce destructive heresies,” not waving red flags, but *whispering half-truths* that sound right and feel good.

That's why anchoring our lives in God's Word isn't optional—it's essential.

“If you don't know the truth, you won't recognize the lie.”

You'll be tossed around by every new trend, every emotional high, every voice that claims to speak for God but leads you away from Him. And Peter says, *that's exactly what false teachers do:*

“They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for 'people are slaves to whatever has

mastered them.”

(2 Peter 2:19)

Did you catch that? They promise freedom—but they themselves are in chains. And their message doesn’t lead to life. It leads to *captivity*—to spiritual drift, confusion, and compromise. But God has given us something far better.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

(Psalm 119:105)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” (2

Timothy 3:16)

Scripture is our anchor.

It holds fast when the world shifts.

It corrects us when we go off course.

It nourishes us when nothing else satisfies.

It roots us in what is eternal, unchanging, and true.

So how do we stay anchored?

- By opening the Word daily—not out of duty, but to hear God’s voice.
- By testing what we hear, read, and believe against Scripture.
- By growing in discernment—not just knowing *what* we believe, but *why*.
- By teaching our kids and discipling one another in the truth.

This is why we gather. This is why we open the Bible every week. This is why we memorize it, study it, and speak it to each other. Because only the truth sets us free.

And only the truth keeps us faithful. So when the lies come—and they will—you'll *recognize them for what they are*. And instead of drifting, you'll stand firm.

Stay anchored. Stay alert. Stay faithful.

Conclusion

So let me leave you with this question: **How are you guarding the truth in your life?**

Are you soaking in Scripture—letting it shape your heart and sharpen your mind?

Or are you settling for spiritual soundbites and calling it discipleship?

Are you surrounding yourself with faithful voices—those who speak truth in love?

Or just the ones who affirm what you already want to hear?

Are you standing firm in God's truth—even when it's uncomfortable or unpopular?

Or are you quietly drifting with the current of culture?

Peter's warning is just as urgent today as it was then: **Guard the truth.**

Because the truth guards you. It protects your witness. It anchors your soul. And it keeps you faithful to the finish.

The church doesn't just need passion—we need discernment.

We don't just need influence—we need integrity.

We don't just need knowledge—we need truth that transforms how we live.

So here's your challenge for this week:

Spend 10–15 minutes each day in Scripture. Not to check a box, but to feed your soul.

Start by slowly rereading 2 Peter 1–2.

Underline what stands out. Ask honest questions.

Invite the Holy Spirit to speak, to convict, to clarify.

And when you hear a teaching, podcast, or post that sounds “off,” don't ignore that check in your spirit.

Pause. Test it. Measure it against the Word.

Because faithful people are discerning people. And faithful people finish well.

Let's pray together.