

If you would now, please turn in your copy of God's Word to 2 Peter. 2 Peter 2, we'll be looking this morning at verses 1-10a. 2 Peter 2, verses 1-10a. Are you here this morning ever surprised when you see faults teachers in the church. Perhaps you are surprised, but there's a real sense in which you ought not to be surprised. Doesn't mean you shouldn't be sad and heartbroken, but you should not be surprised to see false teachers in the church because the Bible tells you that there will be false teachers in the church and that there are false teachers in the church.

Maybe you've thought to yourself, I just want to go back to the primitive church, the early church, the good old days. Well, Peter was writing to those who were in the early church, the primitive church, the good old days, and there were false teachers that he needed to address. Last week, we saw the firm foundations of Christianity. We saw that Christianity is planted on the firm foundations of eyewitness accounts, eyewitness testimony, as well as scripture testimony, that the things of the Bible are verified and true, that you can trust what you learn about in the scriptures.

And this flies in the face of the false teachers that Peter begins to address this morning. Peter turns from the truth and the firm foundations of what he has been teaching at the end of chapter one and contrasts that with the false teachers in chapter two. The false teachers don't have this firm foundation.

They're not anchored on the objective authoritative word of God. Their teaching rather is filled with greed and sensuality. They use God's Word insofar as they use it at all to try to make a popular message for their own glory. They try to twist God's Word for sensuality and greed, the text teaches. They're not caring about faithfulness to God's Word. What they're worried about is their own popularity.

Well, that's what we begin to see Peter addressing in this second chapter this morning, and he'll address it again more next week as well as we work our way through the second chapter further next week. Before reading this portion of God's word, let me simply pray and ask God to bless it. Oh great God, the reading of your word will do no good to the souls of men if the spirit of God does not work effectually through it, and so this morning, We pray that you yourself would work in our hearts through the reading and preaching of the word, such that your name would be magnified among us. It is in the name of Jesus that we pray, amen. Hear now the word of God, 2 Peter 2, beginning in verse one.

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment, if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. If by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. And if he rescued righteous lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked, for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard. 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. Thus ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless the reading and now the proclamation of it to our lives.

What has been said that false teachers do more harm to the church than persecution. And I suspect that's probably true. And here's why. Persecution, those who persecute the body, can murder the body and send people to heaven after they've murdered them. False teachers murder the soul. And after they destroy your soul, unless you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved, they murder your soul to hell, where one day your body will join them. Here's the point.

While God is sovereign and he can work through persecutors and he can work through false teachers, we can see that in church history and we don't want to underplay that reality. The fact is false teachers are no joke. False teachers are dangerous and they're destructive.

And we need deliverance, God's people need deliverance from false teachers wherever they may find themselves encountering false teachers. And so this morning from our text we have three points. The danger of false teachers, the destruction of false teachers, in the deliverance of God's people. The danger of false teachers, the destruction of false teachers, and the deliverance of God's people. So first this morning, the danger of false teachers. Back at verse one.

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. As Peter begins to write this by divine inspiration, chapter 2, he starts with this word, but he is contrasting these false prophets and false teachers with the true prophetic word, the very word of God, which he had been highlighting at the end of chapter 1. This is in contrast to all the truth which I have just been stating to you.

And he's saying, in essence, at the start of this first verse, that in the Old Testament, there were people who called themselves prophets, but not everyone who called himself a prophet was a true prophet. And in the same manner, There are those in the church then and there are those in the church now who call themselves teachers, pastors, preachers. But in the same manner as it was in the Old Testament, not everyone who calls himself a preacher or a teacher is a true teacher, a teacher of God. How can you tell if someone is a false teacher? In large measure, you can tell by their fruit. It's not the only way, but in large measure, that's what the scriptures give us as a helpful indicator as to whether or not someone is a true or false teacher.

So you can look, for example, in Deuteronomy chapter 13. Deuteronomy chapter 13. In Deuteronomy 13, there's instruction for How do you know a false prophet or a false teacher? I made this passing comment a few weeks ago, it wasn't planned by me, I just did it, that, and it comes from Deuteronomy 13, that a prophet in the Old Testament who's a false prophet could say something's gonna happen tomorrow and it could happen. Does that mean he's a true prophet? Not necessarily. If he is teaching anything against the prescribed word of God, the law of God, then he's a false prophet. That's what Deuteronomy 13 says.

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, let us go after other gods, which you have not known and let us serve

them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And Jesus says a very similar sort of thing in the New Testament. about how do you discern a false teacher? Matthew chapter seven. Matthew chapter seven, beginning in verse 15. Matthew 7, 15, we read these words.

Beware of false prophets. who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire, thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

So ask yourself this question. Is the teaching under which you are sitting encouraging evil fruit in your life? Is there a promotion of wickedness underneath the teaching which you sit? Whether it's here in this place whether it's the things that you listen to on the radio perhaps or the things you listen to on your phone or videos you look up, if the sort of teaching which you are sitting under is encouraging in your life wickedness and evil fruit, that is a sign that the type of teaching under which you are sitting is false teaching. It's ear tickling, it's telling you what you want to hear perhaps, but is it true?

Are they crying, peace, peace, when there is no peace, as Jeremiah 6.14 says? And what kind of fruit do you see in the life of the people that you consider to be your teachers? Is the life of the people that you consider to be your teachers, does their life Generally speaking, not perfectly, but really and truly, does it reflect good fruit? Because it's supposed to if they're a true teacher of God.

Peter says that in contrast to this, the teachers, these false teachers, are promoting greed and sensuality. They use their position not to serve others, but to serve themselves. And that's not what a teacher of God should do. They do this with false words, verse three says, in contrast to the true prophetic word of God at the end of chapter one.

What makes these false teachers so dangerous is the place from where they come. From where do these false teachers arise? Verse one. False prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. It is among the very people of God that the false teachers arise. In other words, they come from within the church, which makes them especially dangerous.

They're among you. In Acts chapter 20, verse 29 and 30, the Apostle Paul, when speaking to the elders of Ephesus says to them, I know, he's speaking to elders, I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them. How would you like to be one of those elders in that meeting? Among yourselves, one of these, some of these people will arise, he says. Judas, he didn't come from without, he came from within.

You see, the devil likes to raise up enemies from without the church to persecute us, but he loves to raise up false teachers within the church to destroy us from the inside. It's much more effective, and he knows that. So this makes them very dangerous, but they're also dangerous because they are stealthy. Look at the way they're described in verse one. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, secretly.

You see, the false teachers do not come in saying, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I'm here today to offer you a doctrine that if you embrace, we'll send you to hell. They come in secretly, crafty, not unlike that serpent who was very crafty back in Genesis chapter three, They look like their father, the devil.

In Galatians 2, verse 4, we read this same sort of thing about false teachers. Galatians 2, verse 4, we read this. Yet because of false brothers, secretly, Galatians 2, verse 4, secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom, that we have in Christ Jesus so that they might bring us into slavery. And in Jude 4, we read this same sort of pattern about these false teachers. Jude 4, for certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God and his sensuality and deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ. And you can contrast this with the way the Apostle Paul, writing by divine inspiration, talks about his ministry.

He talks in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 17 about how they were not peddlers of the Word. That means they weren't trying to water down the Word to manipulate people and twist it so that they could get a big following. They were not peddlers of the Word. But in chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians, he says, by the open statement of the truth.

You see, when the Apostle Paul preached, He preached the open statement of the truth. He may not have always been the most eloquent, but he said it like it was. Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Do not repent and believe in the only Redeemer of God's elect, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will perish. Paul preached a gospel that was not watered down. He didn't tell people what they wanted to hear if what they wanted to hear wasn't anything less than the very word of God. But that's not the way of the false teachers here. They're secretly bringing in their false doctrines.

1 John 4, 1 tells you to test the spirits, to see if they are from God. And what are they secretly bringing in according to verse 1? Rather, I think it's two perhaps. No, I think it is one. Yeah, it is verse one. They secretly bring in destructive heresies, verse one says. This is not just error. This is soul-destroying doctrine that they're bringing in. This is eternally significant departures from truth that they are trying to inject into the church.

Sometimes there are, over which a church might split that is truly hair-splitting. But other times, things that are called hair-splitting, I like to say, well, that's an eternal hair that you're splitting. In other words, it's a hair that you better split because that split might be the difference between eternity with God or eternity in hell.

Not to say that you can't have differences. There are errors that are not heresies. But there are heresies, there are doctrines that if embraced and understood damn people because they're not the truth. That's what he's talking about here. He's talking about that level, that weight of heresy calls him destructive, which literally could be translated damnable.

And along with their bad doctrine comes bad living. They say, even denying the master who bought them, they hate the lordship of Christ. They hate the authority of God's word. They don't like God's authoritative word in their life. He brings this issue of authority up again in verse 10. They despise authority, verse 10.

So you see they're dangerous because they come from within. You see they're dangerous because they are stealthy. And then you see they're dangerous because they're popular. They're appealing. Look at verse two. And many will follow their sensuality. Because of them, the way of truth will be blasphemed. You see that there are many people who will follow these false teachers. And why? It's because they allow them and even encourage them to continue to live in their sensuality.

You're telling me that if I follow your ministry, I can continue to live a life of lawlessness and you're not gonna call me to repentance? You're telling me that I can continue to follow your ministry and I won't be told that I'm a sinner and I need to repent and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? Sign me up. Sounds like my kind of ministry. That's what these people are saying. I don't have to do, this is great. I don't actually need to live for Jesus. I just can live however I want. And so they're popular.

So you see this danger of the false teachers, but then you see the destruction of false teachers. You see the destruction sort of throughout these verses, but in the first three verses, for example, of chapter two, you see the word destruction three times. So that kind of helps to tip you off to this important fact of the false teachers. They're ultimately destructive. They bring in not just heresies, but destructive. And again, this word could be translated damnable. They not only bring in destructive ideas, they will ultimately be destroyed themselves, according to verse one.

You know, somebody might be tempted at this point to object and say, well, the heresies, the false teaching they bring in is destructive. But the false teachers themselves are really nice people. They're really nice, they're winsome, they're creative. So while their teaching will be damned, they'll be safe. But look what happens according to verse one. They secretly bring in destructive heresies, and what happens? Bringing upon themselves swift destruction. Same word, they perish with their heresies. They and their heresies perish together.

And one of the things that makes them so destructive is not only do they destroy themselves and of course, those who embrace their doctrines and don't know Christ, they also, wreak havoc upon the church, they are a stench, as verse two goes on to say, and many will follow their sensuality and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

So people will speak ill or evil of the church because of these false teachers. The way of truth, it could be this is the gospel, it's those things that are characterized by the truth of God's word, the way of salvation, the way of God, it is being blasphemed or spoken ill of because of these false teachers and their followers." Essentially, what you see happening here is that many who are associated with the church in name only bring an ill attitude upon the church. Those outsiders look on and they say, well, if that's what the church teaches, And if that's the way God's people conduct themselves, then I want nothing to do with it. The problem is, oftentimes, not always, but oftentimes,

when people are saying that about the church, they're looking at people who profess the truth but do not possess the truth, and as a result, those people bring a blasphemous report onto the church.

And so that can happen. While people who hate Christianity will always find reasons to despise you, they will, it will always happen, it doesn't matter how well you live, it could even be the very fact that you are living well that makes them despise you, the desire of every Christian's heart ought to be, insofar as it depends on you, to do nothing that would bring a legitimate shame upon the church. So what hope is there for false teachers? Or even for those who, might have followed false teachers and even embrace the teaching of false teachers, what hope is there for the false teacher? What hope is there for you if you followed such teaching? Well, you repent of your sins and you stop denying your master, which is what verse two says, they're denying their master.

You know, it's very fascinating. In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus says, This, Matthew 10, verse 32. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

He says he's going to deny you. You think, well, I sure hope I don't deny him because he just said he'll deny me if I deny him. Then in Matthew chapter 27, we read a story, it's actually in 26, of Peter who denies Jesus. So Jesus said in Matthew 10, if you deny me, I'm gonna deny you. In Matthew 27, we read this. Same exact word.

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant girl came up to him and said, you also were with Jesus the Galilean, but he denied it before them all, saying, I do not know what you mean. And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.

And again, he denied it with an oath, I do not know the man. After a little while, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you. Then he began to invoke a curse upon himself and to swear, I do not know the man. And immediately the rooster crowed and Peter remembered the saying of Jesus before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

And he went out and wept bitterly. In our passage, we read that these people are denying the master. Peter denied the master. How could Peter, who denied the master, write this book? He did the very thing that he says these false teachers are encouraging, denial of the master. And he had done that. He had denied the master three times.

Because God intervened. and saved Peter in his loving mercy and grace. Peter repented of his sins and turned to the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter was redeemed. Christ shed the blood of his own body for the soul of Peter. And Peter, the very one who denied Jesus Christ, who denied his master, wrote this book. There is still hope. Even the false teacher who is in the active process of denying his master and encouraging others to do the same. Which means wherever you are in your life, if you know that you are denying the master, the Lord Jesus Christ, there is hope for you.

He forgives sinners. Turn to him and repent. And you know what happens when you receive this great forgiveness? You know what you want to do? All you want to do is serve him. I told this story a little while ago to the ladies Bible study, but I was struck when reading a bit ago this anecdote in a book about, well, I'll just tell you. So there is this slave girl in the early 1800s, New Orleans, and she's put up to be sold. And some man waves and says, I'll pay double what she's worth. And he pays this large sum of money.

Slave girl gets down and she spits in his face and he wipes it off and he takes her to a place where they could sign some files and she could be free. So they sign the files and she's granted freedom. And she spits in his face again and he wipes it off and he says to her, do you know what I just did? I purchased your freedom. And she fell on the ground and she wept at his feet. And then when she got herself together she said, I only have one favor to ask of you. Can I be your slave forever?

And you see, that's what Jesus does for you. You don't want another master. This is the master that you want. He is the one who frees you so that you might live for him forever. I believe by God's grace, perhaps everyone maybe in this room knows Jesus. I don't know your hearts. but you should want him as your master if you know him. That should be good news to your soul. You should give thanks that you get to be the servant of this master Jesus. He is good. They denied the master, do not do the same.

Then we see the deliverance of God's people as we come to verses four through 10. We simply want to note a few things here. As you come to verses four through 10, Drilling home this fact that these false teachers, whatever they may believe, if they are not repentant, they and those who embrace their teachings will be judged. There's a day of judgment coming and they will be judged.

And he drives that home by giving three Old Testament illustrations. The fallen angels. You think if he was willing to condemn fallen angels, he won't condemn human beings? That's his point. Then he brings up those who were in Noah's day who were ungodly. He condemned those who did not get on the ark as they should have. And so if he did that then, he'll do it again. And then he says, I'll give another example, Sodom and Gomorrah. If he did it to Sodom and Gomorrah, he'll do it to those today in his timing.

So he's confirming this reality of the coming judgment, which the false teachers were apparently denying. But through this, you see not only is God the one who brings judgment, he's also the one who brings salvation. You see that kind of sprinkled throughout these verses. He brings judgment and he brings salvation. He does bring judgment.

Verse four, God did not spare angels. It was God, but cast them into hell. Verse five, he did not spare the ancient world, but he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. Verse six, he condemned them to extinction. But then you read this as well. This salvation mixed within this judgment. But you also see this, for example, this salvation. Verse five, he preserved Noah. Noah didn't preserve himself. It wasn't that he was such a good architect when he built the boat. God preserved Noah. God guarded him. He rescued Righteous Lot. And then verse 9, God knows how to rescue the godly from trials.

Peter doesn't want his readers right now that he's writing to, and by divine inspiration, he doesn't want you to lose hope in the midst of this harder teaching on false teachers. It could be intimidating, it could be scary. And so he wants them to know that with this coming judgment, which is real, there is also rescue. There is also salvation. He will preserve his people. He will rescue his people.

And so he shows that throughout these examples. This word rescue or deliver, which he uses in verse seven, is used in the Bible to often show deliverance or rescue not only from evil, but oftentimes it's positively to safety, and not just to safety, but to the deliverer himself.

So for example, in Colossians chapter one, verse 13, he has delivered us, that's our word, delivered us from the kingdom of darkness, but he didn't just deliver you from the kingdom of darkness and say, you can sit over here where it's relatively neutral, not that that even exists, neutrality is a figment of our imagination, but he says, delivered you from the kingdom of darkness, Colossians 1.13, and transferred you into the kingdom of his beloved son. He transfers you to himself, and that's the idea here with rescuing righteous Lot. He delivered him from Sodom and Gomorrah unto himself. God actively intervenes and saves his people.

Where do you see this combination of judgment and deliverance most fully? Let's say the cross, isn't it? That's where you see mingled judgment and salvation. At the cross, there is judgment on Christ for your sins, and there is salvation in Christ. Judgment for our sins and salvation at the very same moment in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the only place here in this life you can find deliverance. If you want deliverance, you're not gonna find it anywhere else other than in Jesus. It's in Jesus Christ and what he did at that cross and in his resurrection. It's in Jesus alone that you can have deliverance.

But notice the language used to describe Lot. First he's called righteous, which that might be shocking in and of itself, but it says he's greatly distressed in verse seven. He was greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked. It says, for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard. And a lot was greatly distressed, the text says. He was tormented, it's a very powerful word, over the things that he saw and heard. He was around a lot of immorality, he saw a lot of immorality, but he never became numb to immorality.

How is it with you here this morning? It's not a stretch to say we live in the days like Sodom and Gomorrah. That's not a stretch. We can acknowledge distinctions perhaps, but we must never become numb to immorality. We see it, we hear it, we do it sometimes. But we must never become numb to it. It's a healthy thing this morning if it greatly disturbs you. the sorts of things that transpire in the world around us. It ought to bother us. Sin should disturb the soul of the man who is in Jesus Christ. On our text this morning, we've seen the danger of the false teachers, the destruction of false teachers, but the deliverance of God's people amidst all of it. Perhaps one final takeaway from this text is just this.

Don't ever put your trust in any teacher. in any man-made teacher, any human being, other than the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, because here's the reality. Even true teachers don't live perfect lives, and their doctrine, even when largely correct, perhaps, is not perfect. But there is a place where you can trust every word, and that's at the

feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Delight yourself in Christ, because you have experienced, I am sure, because I have seen it my own self, the damage that can be done when a person puts their hope in any human teacher. Because when that teacher, if he should, when that teacher falls, they will often, at least emotionally, be extremely hurtful for those who followed them. But there is a teacher who will never let you down. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a lover of sinners and a savior for all who come to him. Find yourself delighting in that teacher because you will not be let down. He is a good teacher.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank you that in this world and filled with all sorts of evils, yes, of course, Lord, the evils of our own hearts, of course, Lord, the evils of the world around us, but perhaps most disturbing of all, the evil that can even take place in the highest ranking authorities in your church. Those men who assume positions of authority and use them for evil rather than for good. Those men who, with twisted motives, assume a position which ought not to be theirs and then use that position to harm and hurt and even destroy the souls of others. O Lord God, we've all known these people, and Lord God, we pray that you would protect us, Father, from this type of teaching, but we pray that more than anything else, you would use these truths to drive us to the only teacher who will never lie to us, who will never manipulate us for their own selfish gain, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. May we learn to sit at his feet and to know him, for he and his teaching is the one thing needful. May we know him and love him. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.