

2 Peter 2, beginning in verse 10b, we'll read through verse 16. 2 Peter 2, 10b through 16. Last week, we began in the second chapter of Peter to see the false teachers that Peter, writing by divine inspiration, was addressing. They were false teachers. these churches that he is writing to and he is addressing those issues. At verse 15 of our chapter this morning, we see that they follow the way of Balaam. And it's a reminder to all of us that there is a way that seems right to a man and its end is the way of death.

Proverbs 14, 12. You may be here this morning and you're going away that seems right to yourself. Maybe you're going away that seems right to other men. But if you're not going the way of the Lord Jesus Christ, you're going the way of death. There is a way that seems right to a man. But its end is the way of death. And so ask yourself, am I going the way, not that seems right to me, not that seems right to other people, but am I going the way of God? Because that is the way that you need to be going. On our text, we'll see that these men are going a way that is the way of death.

Before we read God's word, let us pray and ask him to bless it to our lives. Dear Heavenly Father, we do come before your word this morning with fear and trembling, for it is the very word of God, but also with great joy and thanksgiving, because it has come to us as a light shining in a dark place, that we might behold your glory in the way of salvation, and by the power of your spirit, be granted eternal life. Father, I do pray that your spirit himself would go forth through the reading and preaching of your word now. It's in the name of Jesus that I pray, amen. Hear now the word of God, 2 Peter 2, beginning in verse 10b. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones. Whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction. Suffering wrong is the wage for their wrongdoing. They counted pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed, accursed children. forsaking the right way. They have gone astray.

They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain for wrongdoing, but with rebuke for his own transgression. A speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. This ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless now the proclamation of it to our lives. Well, there is a way that seems right to a man and its end is the way of death.

As we come to this passage this morning, you see something of the ways. of these false teachers. Now it should be noted as we begin to explore the way of these false teachers that not all false teachers look precisely like these false teachers. Some false teachers look different. You can think of the issues and the heresies that Paul was addressing in the book of Galatia and the Galatians and those Galatia heresies. Or you can think of the different types of heresies that existed in the book of Colossians. But this is, in our book, the way of these false teachers, and the way of many false teachers look quite similar to these. So this morning, the way of false teachers, and we see two ways of these false teachers in our text.

The way of false teachers is one of arrogance, and the way of false teachers is one of greed. You see that in our text. So first, the way of false teachers is one of arrogance. You see this in verse 10b through verse 13. Look again at the start of verse 10b.

Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones. Now, whoever these glorious ones are, it's obvious from the text that the false teachers should not have been blaspheming them, that it was evidence, a manifestation of their utter arrogance. Why do we know that they absolutely ought not to have been blaspheming these glorious ones? Because verse 11 goes on to tell you that even the unfallen holy angels weren't so arrogant or full of themselves to blaspheme these glorious ones. Look at verse 11 says, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them, that is the glorious ones before the Lord. So whoever these glorious ones are, the false teachers should not have been blaspheming them. They should not have been speaking ill of them.

And who are the glorious ones? Well, that's a debated question. Some people say that the glorious ones were the Orthodox teachers in the church. Others say that the glorious ones were civil authorities. Some even say that the glorious ones is a reference to God himself. However, if you compare what is said here about these glorious ones to Jude verses eight and nine, it seems that these glorious ones is actually a reference to fallen angels or demons.

Look at Jude eight and nine. Yet in like manner, these people, talking about false teachers and Jude, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. And then it goes on to say this in verse nine, but when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, the Lord rebuke you. And so it seems that in Jude, what is being said is that Michael the archangel would not presume in himself that he had a right to blaspheme the devil.

And in our text, it seems to be saying that these glorious ones, these demonic beings, are being taken lightly by the false teachers. That they're arrogantly toying with these glorious ones, these demonic forces, which even the angels know better than to pretend or take lightly. And so essentially this is what this means. It means this, that these people are not taking demonic forces seriously. They're not taking the evil one and fallen wicked angels seriously.

Now there are two errors when it comes to demonic forces, demonic beings. One is to describe to them too much influence. and the other is to ascribe to them too little influence. Those who ascribe to them too much influence might do the following, driving down the road, you run out of gas, the only conclusion is that the devil is out to get you. That's ascribing too much influence to demonic forces. However, You ascribe too little influence to demonic forces if you never pray against the power of the evil one.

If you live your life like there is no devil and no demons who are out to destroy your soul, because they are and they hate you, and these people in some way or another, while we don't know the details, appear to be taking them lightly, and you should not be like them. There are demons. Satan is real. Don't ascribe to him too much influence, but do not pretend he is not influential or real, for he is and his forces are real. Let me just ask you these questions and see if this helps you to believe that it's true.

Do you ever try to pray? And when you try to pray, All of a sudden, your heart is just riddled with sin and evil. Why do you think that happens at the very point where you're trying to pray? Because Satan and evil hate prayer. Do you ever try to read your Bible and then suddenly the last thing you want to do is read your Bible? Now, you're still guilty for your sin.

But it's not wrong to acknowledge that there are influential forces at play. There are evil spiritual forces, and they hate you, and they hate your soul, and they don't want you to grow in grace, they don't want you to be holy, and so you are to pray against these things.

If I could be personal for just a moment, without a doubt, it is not even a question in my mind The times where I am most unbelievably sensing evil is when I try to prepare sermons. It's as if there's just this internal war that is, it's hard to explain, but it's real and it's very powerful. Why would it be the case that that would be the sense that I get more than any other time when I'm preparing sermons? because Satan hates anybody who's trying to be a faithful servant of God. He wants to destroy me.

And let this be in some ways an encouragement to you here this morning if you feel these forces ever in your life. Because it may be the case that that's because you're striving to be faithful. It may be the case that the reason you're sitting here this morning and you feel that so powerfully and personally at points in your life, almost unexplainably, is because you are trying to read the Word, you are trying to be in prayer, and Satan hates that, and his forces hate that.

Paul himself said, I find it to be a law, Romans 7, 21, a law, a principle of life. Isn't this profound, this impossible? I find it to be not an occasional event, a law, a principle built into this world since the fall, a law that when I try to do right, evil lies close at hand. If Paul said it, and he's Paul, and you felt it yourself, You ought not to be ashamed.

That is a reality of fighting the powers of the evil one. And these guys in our text, at whatever degree and whatever manifestation, did not take demonic forces seriously. And you ought to. But that's their arrogance. They play with the devil. And then we go on. Their arrogance continues in verse 12.

But these like irrational animals, They're animalistic and irrational. Rather than subduing the earth and taking dominion over the earth, which we were supposed to do over the animals, they become like animals because of their sin. Now, when Peter calls them irrational animals here, don't get the impression that this means these people had low IQs. That these people are what we would call dumb. Because we already know back in verse one, they were stealthy and they secretly brought in destructive heresies. These were not dumb people. They did not have low IQs.

So why, if they don't have low IQs, can Peter, writing by divine inspiration, call them irrational animals? The reason he can call them irrational animals is because sin is always irrational. Because They are given over to their sin. And sin is always irrational. They are irrational animals because they are given over to sin.

And you see this all the time with very otherwise intelligent people. You can think of the Harvard professor. He's got an incredible academic resume. He can tell you all about quantum physics. And then he can't tell you the difference between a man and a woman. How is that possible? Because he's an irrational animal. Because he's given over to his sin. But let me speak to you, the not Harvard professor.

The truth is, sin is always irrational and animalistic. It's always degrading you. Anytime you do not believe what the Bible says or do what the Bible says, you're acting like an irrational animal. You're sinning against God. That's irrational. That's crazy. And why is it crazy? Because you're saying to him who literally knows everything, he has never learned anything. because he's always known it all.

Not only all actualities, but all possibilities. Not all things only that have happened in this world or will happen, but all things that could ever happen in any supposed worlds. This is the God about whom we are speaking. And he has told you who he is, how he asks us to live.

Anytime we do not receive with humility the word of God, And what he says about us, what we are to believe, what is sin, what is righteousness, that's irrational. That doesn't make sense. That's absurd. And so in your life, wherever that is the case, the text is saying to you, don't be an irrational animal. Believe the word of God. Whatever he says in this word, you are to receive it. That is actually rationality. Rational people receive the revealed word of God. If you wanna be a rational person, you receive the word of God.

That's why a child is so often far more rational than somebody with a PhD. Because many people get PhDs and they don't receive the revealed word of God. They do not believe it is true. And that little child, far superior in many ways in their understanding of the world than that person with a PhD. Why? Because that person with a PhD can't tell you where the world came from if they reject the revealed will of God, word of God right here. They can't tell you where the world came from, they can't tell you where the world's going, and they can't tell you who God is, they can't tell you about salvation, they don't know why they're here, they're completely Irrational. And that child, though young, many of them can say, yeah, God created the universe. Heaven's in the earth. They can tell you, I'm here to glorify God. They tell you Jesus Christ came and shed his blood for my sins. They can tell you these things.

We continue with this irrationality into this verse 13, where we read here at the start of verse 13, suffering wrong as a wages for their wrongdoing. You're getting to see this arrogance here. They're suffering for their wrongdoing and what is their solution? To keep doing wrongdoing. They don't stop after they realize that they're being punished for their sins. They just keep plowing headlong into them.

They have no shame according to the second half of verse 13. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. So they have no shame for their sins. They revel in the daytime about their sins that are so heinous that they should be ashamed of them even under the cover of night.

But they are not. They revel about them in the middle of the day. And again, this is true in our world today. It wasn't that long ago when Under even the cover of night, things that are promoted with the LGBTQ plus community would have been a shame and they should be a shame. But now, not only do they happen under the cover of night, they're paraded for a whole month during the middle of the day. You see, they're reveling in the daytime.

But the truth is, this is every single human heart's desire. This is the heart of man fallen and hating God at work. The heart of man, rather than wanting to repent of sin, wants to celebrate sin. The heart of man wants to delight in sin, not to hate sin. They want to coddle sin and not to kill sin. And so this happens in every human heart. where the sin is in your heart. Do not celebrate it. Do not pretend it is a small thing. Don't promote it or make it a joke. Sin is not a joke. Sin is awful and it offends your God. And Jesus came to die for those sins. Therefore, you too should not revel in them.

But these people who are doing these sorts of things, these false teachers, aren't being dealt with. Look what verse 13 goes on to say, in all their arrogance, the church is still keeping them around. They are blots, verse 13, halfway through, they are blots and blemishes reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you. These people are called blots and blemishes, they're a stain, they're an embarrassment, and yet they are still feasting with the church. Now this feast here is perhaps the Lord's Supper. I think that's very probable.

But if it isn't the Lord's Supper, it at least appears to be some sort of church gathering where it is the known expectation at this particular gathering that the people present are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, repenting of their sins, seeking holiness, delighting in the resurrection. This is a fellowship gathering not intended to be evangelistic like we might say. This is a closed communion gathering where it's supposed to be. And it's probably the Lord's Supper. But in any case, it is known that those present are supposed to really be believers. This is not your barbecue at your palace that you might do where you decide to invite over some unbelievers and then you think of this first, oh, should I have them over because of my feasting?

No, no, no, this is a particularly a corporate church communal type setting. And these people are being welcomed. Well, why wouldn't they just deal with them? Why wouldn't they just say, hey, you're, you know, I dare not make up a name, you know, because maybe I say somebody's name who's in here, but we'll just say blank, you know, blank, you know, blank. You know, you're not welcome here. We know what you've been doing is, you know, like Hophni and Phinehas, for example, in 1 Samuel 2 and 3. Yeah. Like them. Remember Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons.

Everybody knew what they were doing. and they should have been dealt with. That's the sort of thing that's going on. They should have been dealt with. They should have said, hey, blank, you're not welcome here. Until you repent, you are not allowed to be a part of this communion. This is for those who are trusting in Christ alone for their salvation and are striving to live in accordance with the gospel. But what do they do?

They let them into the feast. I'm glad that doesn't ever happen in the church today. It does, of course it does. We know it does. Why does it happen? Why do churches, why might we be tempted to allow people to be part of the communing body of Second Presbyterian Church, communing members? Not just visitors, probably people who have made vows. Why might we be tempted here? Why might the church across the board be tempted to allow people that don't have a credible profession of faith, that don't show the evidences of faith and new repentance.

And it's known, it's blatant, unrepentant sin. We're talking about obvious stains, blots, and blemishes. We're not talking about the person who's struggling. We're talking about the people where it's very clear to any honest look, yeah, this person does not evidence that they know Jesus.

Why might it be the temptation of a church to still let those people become community members and partake of holy communion, the Lord's Supper? It could be all sorts of different reasons. The person's rich, they're influential, they're popular, they don't want to offend them. They're connected to people in the community that it would look bad if they're not accepted as community members into the church. You just don't want to offend them.

You want to have church growth, you want to be bigger. There are a thousand different reasons that you would perhaps want to allow someone to feast at the communion table that ought not to be there. to be a part of the fellowship in a way that they ought not to be, who are living in blatant, unrepentant sins. John Calvin said that the pastor should have a voice to gather the flock, but also to ward off the wolves. And so if there's someone who smells like a wolf, they growl like a wolf, they look like a wolf, then the job of the church is to say, you are not welcome to be a communing member, not that you can't visit ever, but you're not welcome to be a communing member of this body.

Why not? Because you love Christ and you love his church and they're gonna be a blot and a blemish. Would you allow someone to come into your home if you knew that they were planning, or you had every reason to believe that their intentions were to destroy you and your home? You would say, oh, absolutely not, that's an obvious decision. Why would you let people into the house of God, who you know, you have every reason to believe, have every intention to destroy and harm the house of God? I think when you put it like that, it's very obvious the answer is you should not allow them.

So what's the call then for us? The call then for us is to Every one of us ought to strive to be a communing member in some church. And all of us ought to not make exceptions, particularly elders, in allowing people to be communing members of this church or any other church who are not evidencing a credible profession of faith. I'm going to do something that I've been given the permission to do. We're not going to be able to get into the second point today. There's just too much. I wanted to, and I thought this might happen, but I want to be mindful of time.

So with that being said, let me just encourage us then, having considered the arrogance in our text, that we strive to be a people who sit underneath the Word of God, receive the Word of God, believe the Word of God, that we do not go the way of these false teachers who arrogantly boasted and committed great sins without any real repentance. Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your Word. We thank you that it is true. We thank you that it doesn't really matter what education anyone has, what matters is do they receive the Word of God as it is written in the Old and New Testaments? And if they do, they are a rational person, and they are a humble person, and they are a person who wants to know and love Christ. Oh God, we thank you for giving us a Bible.

Oh Lord, we pray that none of us would go the way of Balaam, that none of us would, in arrogance and in greed, chase after the world, but that all of us in faith and repentance would seek after Christ. Father, we praise you and thank you for this word. We ask now that we turn our attention to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, that we would go to this table with repentant hearts, glad hearts, and thankful hearts for the risen, conquering Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.