

2 Peter
Enemy Teachers (1)

2 Peter 2:10-14

9-22-24

HDBC

When you think about Bible verses found on wall in homes and churches, you think of a certain kind of verse. ***The 23rd Psalm. The Lord's Prayer. Romans 8:28. John 3:16.*** Positive, upbeat, encouraging verses. Often set against a peaceful landscape or a beautiful sky as a background. They are intended to remind us of the grace and mercy of God, of the goodness of God, of all that He does for us.

But there are other scripture verses that are rather unframeable. You would never find them in a Christian bookstore as home décor. They are just as inspired, just as important, and equally packed with truth. But they would be rather unwelcomed in a den, living room or office.

These verses remind us of the **dark side of sin**. They reveal the depravity of humankind. They describe judgment on sin. They warn, rebuke and correct. I really appreciate the fact that God does not pull any punches. He does not water down the truth. He tells it like it is. When He inspired the prophets to preach and write He never instructed them to go easy, to be careful not to offend, to hold back. He led them to **preach the stark reality of sin and its consequences**.

So, we should not be surprised by the strong language that Peter uses to describe the sinfulness of humankind in general and false teachers in particular. Jeremiah declared, ***the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick.*** (Jer. 17:9). Paul wrote, ***There is none righteous, not even one.*** (Romans 10:12)

Peter presents the depravity of mankind in harsh, graphic words. **They are dark and foreboding**. They paint a dark backdrop which beautifully provides the contrast that comes when a person is transformed by the gospel.

I find in this passage six comparisons that Peter makes to describe sinful humanity in general and false teachers in particular. We'll only deal with the first two today. False teachers are . . .

1. Like Arrogant Daredevils (10-11)

Peter refers to people who throw caution to the wind. They fail to think about the consequences of their actions. From the very beginning of sin (Lucifer's rebellion against God) pride has been a primary characteristic of those who are enemies of God. We see that in the descriptions found in these two verses. **Note the key words and phrases.**

Daring – The word describes reckless ones. For me, I would include
Swimming in bayous where gators were occasionally spotted,
Skiing in bayous with lots of trees and stumps,
Playing games with pocketknives,
Climbing a tall structure that I was not authorized to climb.
Hunting poisonous snakes with a BB gun.
Getting too close to a large giraffe in a game park.
Playing tackle football with no pads, the morning of my wedding.
Just to name a few.

BTW, the distance between reckless & stupid is pretty short. These false teachers were undisciplined in their actions & gave no thought to consequences. They challenged God with their bad teaching and bad actions. Challenging God is a reckless and foolish thing to do.

Self-willed – Focus only on personal gratification rather than the good of others or the glory of God. **Daring and self-willed** describe a presumption that they can sin without consequences or accountability.

They do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties – This is an illustration of their arrogance. **Revile** means to slander or to speak profanely about sacred things. In this context **angelic majesties** refers to fallen angels, or demons. This is confirmed in verse 11. There is a

residual majesty even found in fallen angels (demons) much like the image of God still remains in sinful human beings.

Peter is describing false teachers who considered themselves to be **superior to all angelic beings**, including demons. In the created order of things we know that human beings have been elevated by God as the most important of His created things. However, there is another sense in which **angels and demons live and operate in a higher, different spiritual realm from humans**, at this time. Therefore, there should be a level of respect given to those created beings. The false teachers Peter is thinking of were not doing so.

Verse 11 – Even from their sinless, exalted position, angels are unwilling to bring a reviling judgment on demons. **They are unwilling to do what only Christ should do.** Not so with sinful humans who at times operate like arrogant daredevils. No restraint. No concern for accountability or judgment. **The mighty angel, Michael, when he argued with the devil over the body of Moses did not pronounce a judgment against him, but said, *the Lord rebuke you!*** Like Michael, believers should not rebuke Satan or demons in our own authority of strength. Peter then moves to a second comparison. They were . . .

2. Like Wild Animals (12-14)

In these verses Peter paints **a portrait of animal appetites seen in human beings**. When God created Adam and Eve He gave them authority over all the animals. This dominion over the animal kingdom is part of what it means to be human and to be in the image of God.

It is interesting that in the fall, Satan took the form of an animal (a serpent) to attempt his deception. Instead of exercising dominion over the serpent, Adam and Eve yielded to him. They listened to his deceptive words and abdicated their role of dominion.

Even though humans are endowed with superior knowledge, awareness and reasoning, Peter writes that **in our sinful states** we often abandon our positions of dignity and embrace the base, subhuman impulses that can be found in the animal kingdom. **Animals are creatures of instinct. Their responses to stimuli are typically preprogrammed by their genetic makeup.**

He describes sinful people as **unreasoning animals** who simply follow their base impulses. False teachers take it to another level. Like predators, they hunt for weak, easy targets to devour. Notice a couple of things that Peter points out about them.

1st, in their destruction of others, they fail to realize that they will also be destroyed. One of the minor themes in the movie, ***The Lion King is the circle of life***. Some animals are food for others, who are also food for yet others. These false teachers destroy others without realizing that they are heading for eternal judgment and destruction. (Vs. 12)

2nd, they are driven by greed. (Vs 14). They have ***a heart trained for greed***. They are masters at deceiving others for personal gain. Jesus described such individuals: ***Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves***. (Mt. 7:15). **No wonder** Peter refers to them as ***accursed children***.

A few more things to note. As a general rule, **more sins are committed under the cover of darkness**, in secret than in open daylight. These false teachers are bold and arrogant enough to do their thing in the daylight, with little thought of judgment.

Stains and blemishes are terms that speak of filthy spots, defects, and things diseased. **They** have brought their false teaching into the church.

Carousing speaks of eating together or entertaining together. They are fellowshiping with the saints as if everything is just fine.

Several years ago when I pulled into the church parking lot I saw a large bird with a squirrel in its claws. Fortunately for that squirrel the bird was spooked by my entrance and let it go to fly off. That bird was to the squirrel what false teachers are to other people. **That bird did what it did out of instinct. False teachers do what they do because they have rejected the grace of God and are yielding to the sinful depravity that comes with an unregenerate heart.**

We may have a tendency to take lightly the damage that is caused by false teachers. Peter does not and neither Jesus nor the other writers of the NT. We must be diligent to test what we hear and read by the Word of God.

We'll look at the other four comparisons next time. But let me close with a few **principles about false teaching and false teachers.**

1) False teachers are always lurking around.

Like unseen virus it is in the atmosphere. False teachers can be found in some surprising places.

Quote from Pope. *Every religion is a way to arrive at God. There are different languages to arrive at God but God is God for all. But my God is more important than your god, is that true? There is only 1 God & each of has a language to arrive at God. Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, they are different paths.*" This is heresy! This is false teaching coming from the Pope.

2) False teachers disguise their bad theology.

Irenaeus grew up in Polycarp's church. Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle, John. Throughout his life he encountered numerous false teachings. He wrote a five-volume work to refute those teachings. He wrote, *Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced, truer than the truth itself.*

3) **Biblical heresy is always destructive.**

It leads away from salvation and not toward it. It retards spiritual growth, rather than enhancing it. It brings weakness rather than strength.

The destruction may not be immediate or obvious. But like a slow, steady leak in a dam it will wear away and ultimately cause the dam to fail. Like slow working poison introduced to the body it will steadily erode faith in God and the Bible.

A few years ago a wildlife researcher in Florida stumbled onto a gruesome scene. A 13-foot Burmese python had attacked, subdued and swallowed a 6-foot alligator. It was even able to swallow the whole alligator. However the victory was short-lived. While digesting the gator the snake's stomach bursts open. When found some days later the gator's head was in the snake's stomach, yet the tail was protruding out of the midsection. Neither survived.

What is our takeaway from this grisly event? Be careful what you swallow. That is certainly true physically, but also spiritually.

The church must be solid in its teaching ministries.

Parents must be solid in their teaching and practice in the home.

Mentors must be vigilant to watch and listen for error.

Parents, mentors, and the church must point out error when found.

It is a mistake to let it have time to gain ground and strength. Must be loving, but clear and direct.

Message about avoiding error. I must remind you of the truth.

You are a sinner by nature and separated from God.

God loves you. Therefore, Jesus died for you, paying your sin debt.

God will forgive your sins and save you for Heaven if you trust in Jesus.

You must repent of your sins and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

You can do that today!