

Series: **A Firm Foundation** – week 6

CDOBC – beginning on 8/28/16

Today's Title: "**Lipstick on a Pig**"

*October 2, 2016 ~ 2 Peter 2:10b-22*

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OBJECTIVE: To help people identify false teachers, their true motives and destiny.

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### *Opening Prayer*

Open your Bible to **2 Peter 2**. (Al Fadi speaking here 10/16)

Our relativistic and tolerance-obsessed culture finds itself paralyzed if it ever needs to make a value judgment - if it ever has to declare something 'right' or 'wrong'.

*Tolerance without limits is negligence and indifference toward real and legitimate dangers.*

Technology today has its limits and negatives, but it also has many positives - many things which can help you in life.

One of the ways it can help is in keeping you safe from potential harm. In most communities you can access specific websites where you can see where convicted sexual predators are living in your community. If you have young children, this is something for you to know for obvious reasons.

Protecting your children from sexual predators is still something our society supports - but when it comes to taking a public stand on spiritual truth - this is a different issue. Declaring exclusive truth in the spiritual realm is taboo - today's scarlet letter and forcefully rejected in today's world.

This is a mentality and belief without logic, a mentality rooted in theological ignorance because it's the equivalent of saying there's no difference between  $2+2=4$  and  $2+2=7$ . But make no mistake - this is the mentality of our modern relativistic and overly-tolerant culture.

What the culture doesn't realize - but you must realize - is God has given clear commands and directives to Christian leaders and teachers - to protect the church - protect the people of God from false teaching. And this protection is not just to stay away from it, but to rebuke it and prove its falsehood - expose it for what it is!

**Acts 20:28-31**

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God...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. Therefore be alert...”

**Titus 1:9**

“He (an overseer) ...must...give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

This is why, in our passage today, Peter gives a devastating list which describes the person and practice of false teachers. The Apostle holds nothing back as he describes in great detail their present wickedness, their enslavement to sin, along with their future judgment.

**Their arrogant mouth** vs. 10b-13a

“Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, 11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. 12 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, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.

They are “Bold and willful” - which shows they are not ignorant of the truth and mistakenly lead people away from God - this is “willful” on their part. They know exactly what they are doing.

There are a number of views on this, but I believe the “glorious ones” at the end of vs. 10 refers to the fallen angels mentioned in the previous verses. When Peter uses the term “glorious” in reference to these fallen angels, he’s simply referring to their power. The idea here is the false teachers are so arrogant in what they say, they have no understanding of demonic power, and their ego is so inflated they foolishly approach evil.

Peter says even angels (holy angels), though much greater in might and power than the demonic forces / and the false prophets themselves - “...do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.”

We read in **Jude 9**

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.”

Have you ever seen a preacher taunting the devil or a demon - and speaking and acting in a way in which they give commands and tell the devil / demon what to do - and they have hand motions and bodily expressions which emphasize what they are saying?

This is what Peter is talking about. False teachers who believe - or who make the claim of controlling and casting out demonic forces and it's something they do every time they speak or every time they have a large gathering.

Peter goes on...

These false teachers act “like irrational animals, creatures of instinct”. They operate fully in the flesh - not in the Spirit of God. Their choices and thoughts are not influenced by the Word of God or by the Holy Spirit, their choices and thoughts are governed and controlled by their instinctive, fleshly desires.

Peter says they will:

“...be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.”

Their actions destroy - and their actions will bring God's judgment for all the wrong they do.

### **Their shameless lifestyle** vs. 13b

“They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.”

I read this week that even in the debased Greco-Roman culture of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, partying and ‘reveling’ in the daytime was frowned upon. They didn’t care what you did ‘in the dark’.

The darkness hides the details of your sin from public view.

But these false teachers had become so brazen in their sinfulness, they flaunted their sin in the light of day!

They were shameless - something we see more and more in our own culture.

- We see the shameless on the TV talk shows which display ‘front and center’ the dysfunction and sinful living of the guests.
- We see the shameless in our culture on-line - and in other media as they don’t hide their sin - but they want the world to know it and see it!

Not only were the false teachers shameless, but they were “reveling in their deceptions” - meaning they were enjoying and were amused by how people believed their lies - their “deceptions”. They were deceiving people and they put forth fraudulent stories - and Peter says they did this at the church pot-luck - “while they feast with you.”

The Pot-luck seemed to be a struggle for a few of the young churches in the first century. The Apostle Paul wrote some strong words to the church in Corinth

because they were putting up with selfish, inconsiderate people who were also getting drunk at the pot-luck!

**1 Corinthians 11:17-21**

“But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse...it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.”

A lack of shame and “reveling” when the church gathered for the “feasts” (Lord's Supper) was not the only problem Peter addresses - but at these gatherings - and any other time the believers would gather together - the false teachers were not looking to help others and build the church up with the truth of God's Word.

Instead...

**They look for opportunity to sin vs. 14a**

“They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls.”

In my younger days - we called this *“cruising for chicks”*. This is the point Peter is making - they don't care about helping the church - they don't care about building up the believers by encouraging them with God's Word or through prayer - they're looking to see who they can sleep with! “They entice unsteady souls.”

“entice” = in Greek, this is a fishing term - a lure used to attract a fish or to lure someone into a moral trap.

Jesus called His followers to be “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19, 28:19-20), but these false teachers were fishing for themselves - and trying to lure “unsteady souls” to follow their sinful ways. These “unsteady souls” pictures someone who needs a staff or cane to lean on, but they don't have one. In a spiritual and emotional sense, it refers to those who are not established in the faith and not stable in life. They are weak spiritually, mentally and morally and they need protection, not exploitation.

**Their deep love of money vs. 14b-16**

Their motive is not only physical pleasure - but they have a deep love of money.

**1 Timothy 6:10a** - Paul says:

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.”

The false teachers didn't serve the church - they were serving themselves by taking advantage of the church and they used their position of spiritual authority to exploit and betray those who trusted their words.

“They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! **15** Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, **16** but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.”

“They have hearts trained in greed.” - “trained” is the Greek word: *gumnazo* - from which we get our English word:

gymnasium. The point is they are intentionally greedy - they have developed and increased their greedy heart - as an athlete trains in the gym. They weren't born this way - they have developed and fed the greed in their heart to the point it encompasses their life motives.

Balaam was a prophet in the O.T. (Num. 22) who would do anything for money. He was not loyal to God - or to anyone but himself and his pocketbook. Balaam was rebuked by a donkey which God supernaturally caused to speak. This is actually a humorous story because the point is the donkey had more spiritual sense than this 'supposed prophet'.

The same applies to the false teachers - Peter puts them at the same level of spiritual insight and greediness as Balaam.

**Their promises are nothing but empty words vs. 17**

"These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved."

They are full of 'hot air'!

When we lived in Phoenix, nothing was more disappointing and frustrating for this Midwestern boy than Monsoon Season. Monsoon Season here in Tucson is great - I love it! It actually rains.



But in Phoenix, it's usually just a big tease - looks like rain - even smells like rain - but usually only provides a few drops and a bunch of hot, dusty air!

Those who teach and preach the Gospel bring living water to quench the spiritual thirst of the people.

In **John 4** Jesus said He had water to give and:

"...whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (vs. 14)

After hearing God's Word - after gathering together and worshiping with God's people - you should be refreshed - revived - ready for another week of living for Christ in the world. But Peter says these false teachers:

"...are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm."

How disappointing is that!

"waterless springs" - the false teachers promise refreshment but provide none.

"mists driven by a storm" - The promise of rain which never materializes.

"The gloom of utter darkness has been reserved." - see **vs. 4**

"gloomy darkness" (for the fallen angels)

Judgment is already reserved for the false teachers.

Their eternal destiny has been sealed.

**Their words impress but lead to slavery vs. 18-19**

18 For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.”

Seneca (Roman philosopher - 1<sup>st</sup> century) said: *“To be enslaved to oneself is the heaviest of all servitude.”*

“speaking loud boasts of folly”

False teachers are often very powerful and persuasive speakers - very gifted in public speaking. They often sound very impressive and knowledgeable, but they never really say anything of consequence or truth. Their words are “folly”.

I think of the intellectuals - the so-called (often self-labeled) enlightened critics and skeptics who deny the inspiration and authority of the Bible and sit in judgment of God’s work throughout history and the claims of Christ.

When you hear them speak, they impress with their vocabulary and they are very intelligent and knowledgeable about many things - but they lack any wisdom and are without any spiritual insight.

The Apostle Paul said in **1 Corinthians 2:14** the “natural man (false teachers) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

The false teacher doesn't believe anything he says when he teaches - he knows his words are empty and spiritually ineffective. But he keeps us the charade because it's a means to an end.

“they entice by sensual passions of the flesh”

Their motive is to entice women into sexual favors and how they can squeeze money out of the people.

Those most vulnerable are:

“...those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.”

Refers to new Christians - or those who are spending time with Christians and are trying to leave their former lifestyle. Bottom line, they are not established in the truth of God's Word, so they are susceptible to the false teachers - and the false teachers know it. They specifically target these people, and the word “entice” in vs. 14 and vs. 18 makes this very clear. They are looking for these people - stalking them as they try to lure them into their way of thinking and living.

**External change never changes the heart.** vs. 20-22

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to

them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

When you first read these verses, they seem to teach a person can lose their salvation if they choose to go back to their old life of sin.

Something which is helpful when you run into a passage like this, is to remember: when a verse is unclear or seems to contradict, refer to the larger testimony of the Bible regarding the issue / topic. The larger and clearer testimony of the Bible is this: the elect do not become un-elect - the saved do not lose their salvation (John 10:28-30; 1

Peter 1:5; Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 8:29-39).

### **Philippians 1:6**

"And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

So how do we understand what Peter is saying?

Peter is telling us in vs.20, that in the beginning, these false teachers left their old way of life - "they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."

This terminology seems to indicate they have become Christians, but I would suggest it describes those who left the sinful life they were living, began to hear and learn about the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - and like Judas, for a time, everything looked good. Externally,

they were living more righteous lives and learning about Christ.

Then something happened.

They decided to go back to their old life - to their life of sin.

Peter says their latter state is worse than the first because everyone will be judged on the amount of light which they rejected (see Matt. 11:21-24; Luke 12:47-48). These people had been exposed to a lot of truth, but they turned their backs on it to pursue their own sinful lusts. They will be judged accordingly.

He closes this section with a common proverb his readers were familiar with:

22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

As cute as your dog is...it’s still a dog.

Our dog is cute - but she’s a dog - and she does things which are downright nasty!

You can feed a dog the most expensive dog food you can buy - but they will still eat its own vomit.

A pig with lipstick is still a pig. You can clean it up - dress it up - take cute pictures - but when it gets back to the barn - it’s still a pig and it’s gonna roll around in the mud. Changing how the outside looks for a time doesn’t change the inside - it doesn’t change the habits

and instincts of a pig. In the same way, someone who changes their external behavior may look good for a time - they may fit right in among other Christians - they may “look” Christian - but unless they have faith in Jesus Christ which transforms their heart - they haven’t been saved.

### **Apply it...**

Grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ

Study Christian doctrine. Learn the essential truths of the Bible so you will have the ability to identify false teachers and their message.

Join a small group

We have many options - Sunday morning groups - mid-week groups both on / off campus.

In a small group you have more protection from false teaching. A group of Christians who are growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ will be a better defense against false teaching.

In a group you can ask questions and together, find the answers in a healthy and helpful way.

The Church is a community - and we help each other stay faithful to God’s Word and encourage each other to live a strong and vibrant faith.