

Facts about False Teachers

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[0 : 00] what false teachers want to undermine. And you'll hear me say that several times now through this message. The title of what I want to bring to you from 2 Peter, 2 Peter chapter 2 this morning, facts about false teachers.

This isn't everything the Bible says about false teachers, but we're going to look at several important facts that Peter brings to us in the first few verses of chapter 2. Now, before I read the text and introduce more of this material to you from those first three verses, let me offer this to you in the way of getting you to think clearly with me about what is at stake regarding this topic of false teachers.

I want to tell you real quickly, when we moved out to California in the late 90s, as I mentioned earlier, John MacArthur was finishing up 2 Corinthians, preaching verse by verse.

Suzanne and I had just come off of a very, very difficult two and a half years of ministry. My first staff position, I was on staff. I was one of four men ministering.

[1 : 13] I was the family life minister, the counselor in the church. I had a full-time counseling load through the week, plus a number of other responsibilities. So I got to see a lot of pain and a lot of hurt.

And that was my introduction to ministry. During that time, we were introduced to a number of false teachers in the church. And I was terribly ill-equipped and unprepared to meet that challenge. Suzanne and I had come from a really, really good, solid church out west. And when we took this staff position, I was in seminary in Fort Worth. And we came from her home church in Arizona. And we just thought all churches were like that. A great staff, great people, great ministries, unity. It was just wonderful. And we found out very quickly, when I was on staff at that church, that that is not the case.

But I was ill-prepared to see the attacks come from within the body. From unprincipled people. So I really, that may sound terribly naive to you now. And it was, for sure.

[2 : 16] But that really boiled me over. It sent me into a deep funk that it took me a long time to get over that. When we got out to California, John was preaching on false teachers from 2 Corinthians.

And it was just lifeblood to us. It was fresh air. We wept every Sunday we went. As we healed and as we grew. And as the word of God ministered to our souls.

And began to help us understand biblically what we encountered. Because we didn't know where to put all of that. We had no theological framework to understand it. All of that is for me to simply say to you, this topic is real.

And it's here. And it is not going away. It's going to get worse as Jesus tarries. So until Jesus comes back, the problem we're going to be dealing with in the coming weeks throughout 2 Peter 2 is here to stay.

I don't want it to scare you. But I do want it to sober us together as a church. So that we're all on the same biblical page in dealing with it.

[3 : 21] Now friends, when the Holy Spirit applies God's calling and choosing to your heart. That's what Peter's been talking about in chapter 1. God calling and choosing you.

The wonderful blessings of salvation. The precious promises of God. When God, through the Holy Spirit, applies His calling and choosing you to your heart.

A new and truly life-saving miracle, reality, breaks into your awareness. In that moment, God brings you to a true knowledge of your need for His forgiveness.

In Jesus Christ. Until that moment, the best that you could have done apart from the Holy Spirit is just to have a head awareness. That that's a thing.

But your heart never embraced that truth. Until the Holy Spirit opened your heart to it. And made you aware. I need God's forgiveness.

[4 : 29] In Jesus Christ, His Son. God brings you to a true knowledge of your need for forgiveness in Christ by the power of the Spirit. So by God's grace, through faith in Jesus.

God gives you life in His Son, Jesus Christ. In other words, friends. This is very important that I'm going over this with you. You become, in that very moment, you become His disciple. His learner. And consequently, His follower. And all of that is contingent upon faith in Christ. Christ being your Lord and Savior. And living in you. At that moment, you start a brand new journey in a brand new life. And you, you learn to love and follow Jesus.

Everything about you is now about becoming more like Him. Becoming more like Jesus means that you must grow in grace.

[5 : 45] Peter ended this very letter that we're studying together saying, But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Chapter 3, verse 18.

At the beginning of his letter, in chapter 1, verses 5 through 8. If you'll look there with me. Peter joined God's work of our salvation with God's work of our sanctification. God's work is joined with our work to grow us in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

I want you to understand and remember, when I preached this, I made it very clear to you that God's salvation through Jesus Christ is a work that God does all on His own to bring us to that salvation.

That is a work exclusively done by the Holy Spirit. You remember that? We talked about it being monergistic. A single act of God working in your life.

[6 : 50] You don't cooperate with your salvation. How can you? You're dead. You're a spiritual corpse. You don't breathe spiritually. You don't see spiritually.

You don't live spiritually. You're dead. And so God does a miracle by bringing you to life spiritually. Now, once He's brought you to life in Christ through the power of the Spirit, now you join with God in that walk of faith and it becomes synergistic.

It becomes a cooperative effort between you and God as you live out your faith. All of that still done by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I'm saying all of that because I want to show you Peter urged us to supply superior efforts in living out our faith in the Lord.

What does your effort involve? That's the question. What is your effort involved? Well, if you'll look with me at the text, God tells you to generously supply beginning in verse five.

[7 : 53] Now, for this very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith, in the faith you've already come to by the work of God in your life.

Now you supply moral excellence. God tells you to generously supply these things in your life.

And then notice with me, friends, verse eight. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If these qualities that he's just outlined in those verses, if these qualities mark, note it carefully, your lifestyle. Not just simply your profession, your lifestyle, the way that you think and live, the way that you go about your life.

And if you have committed your heart to grow and show these character traits of Jesus, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in what?

[9 : 26] In what? In the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a wonderful treatise on you having a confidence in your salvation in the Lord.

This lifestyle that you're able to lead, this way of God working in your life is evidence of the Holy Spirit living in you. God's divine power has granted to you and I as Christians everything, note, everything pertaining to life and godliness.

God would not call us to this kind of life and not give us what we need to be equipped to fulfill it. And so we are equipped by the Holy Spirit to live a godly life, a God pleasing life, a life that can help you live in the confidence that when Jesus comes again, he will come for you.

Not only will he take you to glory then and you can spend eternity with him in heaven, but God through the Holy Spirit will also ensure that you don't live a life now wasted, wasted on yourself.

We win-win as we follow Jesus as his disciples. This is the process of what the Bible calls your sanctification, your set-apart-to-holiness walk with the Lord.

[10:53] There are a number of ways that we talk about this. On Wednesday night, I gave our folks a number of different phrases from Scripture synonymous with the idea that we are sanctified and that we are being sanctified.

We are growing in the grace of the Lord Jesus. Folks, it is all about you growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ all to the greater glory of God.

Let me say it this way. Your spiritual growth is the issue. This side of heaven. And the means for that growth in grace is Scripture.

God's precious and magnificent promises containing all you need to please God in holy living. I can say it this way again. Let me take another stab at it in just a little bit of a nuanced way.

Your spiritual growth is the means to the end of glorifying God. Say, Jeff, how do I glorify God in my Christian life? Well, if we wrap it all up, all the different things that the Bible tells us about how we glorify the Lord, if we pull all that together and sum it up, your spiritual growth is the means to the end of glorifying God.

[12:17] It's the process. It's the process. As you grow spiritually, it's not a one-off thing. Your spiritual growth, your daily, your daily, moment by moment growing into greater Christ likeness is a way that you and I glorify God.

As Jesus lives in us and grows in us in terms of our understanding of him, our love for him, our devotion to him, our loyalty to him, that all begins to come out in the way that we live and speak and relate to each other.

And as we're doing that, we're glorifying God. We're reflecting the character of God in our life through his son. Yes. All right. These are critically important realities that you and I rehearse together and hold on to and believe and know from the teaching of the word of God.

This is what scripture tells us. God's precious and magnificent promises are all that we need to please God in that holy living.

Now, the issue Peter is answering in chapter one that we've already gone through and looked at concerns God's saving grace in Christ and his provision of his truth to establish us in Christ likeness.

[13:42] Why am I hammering on this? You'll see. You'll see Christ likeness. If you'll look at chapter one, verse three. Seeing that his divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.

What? Through the true knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. If you'll drop down and look at verse 12 of chapter one.

Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them and have been established in the truth, which is present with you.

And then if you'll look at verse 16. For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. This process. Let me show you this process that I'm talking about now is what all false teaching undermines.

[14:53] That's why I'm hammering it. Everything I've been saying to you now is what false teaching and false teachers do not stand for and serve to undermine.

Bottom line. They undermine us. And so in chapter two, Peter unleashes a devastating truth barrage against false teachers and their deceptive lives.

In chapter two, verses one through three, our passage for today, Peter begins with three foundational facts about who these false teachers are and how they operate in their fight against God and his truth.

And I hope, at least by the end of today, knowing that God willing and he gives me breath for life, we'll come back and spend, I don't know, two or three more weeks in chapter two at least.

That over the course of this, by the end of today, you will have a very sobered appreciation for what the Bible has to say about the very real threat that these men pose to our church.

[16:05] To our mission and our family. Folks, hear me very carefully as I say this, and then we'll read the passage and I'll start moving into it with you.

We understand and very tangibly understand and have made provision for dealing with this terrible reality. Men coming into our congregation are trying to kick the door down with assault rifles and come in here and just indiscriminately start shooting people or toss stuff in here.

That's bad, right? We don't want that. Has that happened in our country? Have people walked in? I lost somebody I went to seminary with in Fort Worth.

She was murdered in cold blood sitting in a service in Fort Worth in a church shooting. A guy walked in and just indiscriminately started shooting people and she was the first one to get hit. Killed her instantly. There was a police officer in the congregation and in that day, for some reason, he decided not to carry in the service. I don't remember the rest of the story, but I remember her name.

[17:14] I remember who she was. I had classes with her. This is a very real threat and we have made it our business to be prepared for that terrifying reality, possibility, potentiality in our country.

It's sad. It's terrible that that's the case. But now let me tell you something that is a lot harder, but just as dangerous in the way of recognizing and spotting.

Those guys show up like that. We have some men that are ready to respond to that. They're watching for that. Do you know that? You're all looking at me, but I see where their eyes are looking.

They're watching you. They got your back. But here's another reality. It's at least as dangerous, if not more, because this involves your souls. These are men who sneak in through those same doors and sit among us and sound like us and act like us.

And yet what they want to do is undermine your faith in Jesus and draw you away from following the Lord. They're unprincipled, wicked, wicked agents of Satan.

[18:32] But when they walk through that door, you won't recognize them. They'll be here with us for a while before it's all shown. Now, again, I don't want you to be scared.

I want you to be prepared. So let's talk about these foundational facts of who these men are, how they operate and what they do. The first fact that I want to give you from our text is this one.

False teachers are among us. Now, you'll notice Peter is not speaking in the present tense. The book of Jude speaks in the present tense about false teachers. They're with us.

Peter speaks in the future tense. These are men who are going to be among you. We understand living in the last days as we do the days after the cross. We are living in that present tense reality. These men are among us. For all I know, they could they're one of two of them could be sitting in this congregation right now. False teachers are among us. Let's read the text and see what he's talking about.

[19:34] Chapter two, beginning in verse one. But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be future tense false teachers among you who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Many will follow their sensuality. And because of them, the way of the truth will be maligned. And in their greed, they will exploit you with false words.

Their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. Now, I have three points I want to bring to you this morning.

We will spend 90 percent of the time on point number one. And then I'll just kind of close out some comments with the last two. The reason for that is I want to use this first point to introduce this material to you, knowing that the other two things that I'm going to say to you toward the end, I will be dealing with in greater detail as we move through the chapter together.

All right. The first thing that we need to deal with in terms of these false teachers being among us is what Peter tells us. False prophets also arose among the people just as there will also be false teachers among you.

[21:01] Jude tells us they are among us. Peter uses just as to connect then with now.

He draws on the fact of the constant presence of falsehood, the constant presence of lies working as a poison among God's people.

Folks, we can never shake this off. We will never be able to completely eradicate this threat and reality in our congregation. This will always be with us until Jesus comes again.

And so we need to be carefully aware, prayerfully aware of what it is and what it means for us. Look at this. Peter goes on in the text as he mentions these false prophets.

These are the pseudo prophetai. And you know the word pseudo. I'll give you the definition of that in a second. Pseudo prophetai. These are the heralds of lies.

[22 : 06] They plagued Old Testament believers. Now, he says, and there will also be, Jew tells us they are here. There will also be false teachers.

Here's another pseudo word. Pseudo didaskaloi. That's the plural form. Pseudo didaskaloi. These are the false teachers.

They teach what is contrary to sound doctrine. Pseudo in the English means not actually, but having the appearance of.

Isn't that interesting? That was the first definition that came up when I looked it up. Not actually, but having the appearance of. Other definitions?

Pretended. False. Spurious. Sham. You get the idea. Now, to highlight this similarity between then false prophets and now false teachers, to highlight that, please notice the context of this passage.

[23 : 09] In direct contrast with what Peter has just said about God's word not being the product of cleverly devised myths or the product of someone's human will, false prophets and teachers will come to, what does it say, secretly introduce destructive heresies.

Peter and the apostles taught God's truth with openness. They taught God's truth with much love. They taught God's truth openly with integrity over several decades.

They had a pronounced ministry over time with these people, spending time in their lives and with them. So their track record as apostles speaks for itself.

There was no cleverness on the part of James and Peter and Paul. No. There was no hidden agendas. No explanation. They were accused of all this.

No exploitation. No attempts to defraud or mislead them. And yet, in reality, even living among them, Paul had to write several letters, we have at least two of them, to the Corinthians to say, I am not a charlatan.

[24 : 28] I am not a fake. I am telling you the truth. Will you hold it against me that I am spending and being expended on your behalf? Will you not love me as I've loved you?

I am telling you the truth. In Christ, I am not lying. This is the kind of language Paul had to use. Why? Because false teachers had crept into these churches and began to undermine his ministry and bring these people, lead these people away from the Lord Jesus.

And Paul, like a good shepherd, went running after them. And he was ready to take a rod to them if necessary. This is the Apostle Paul. This is what's at stake.

He pled with the Corinthians, even in the second letter, Don't make me come in severity. I'm prepared to do that if I have to, because your souls and the gospel are at stake. This is the Apostle Paul.

This is what these men do in contrast to what the apostles do. They defraud. They mislead. But they accuse the apostles of that. If you'll look with me at 2 Corinthians chapter 12, let me give you a little more ammunition biblically here for this.

[25 : 40] I'll load you up. 2 Corinthians chapter 12. This is what I've been referring to. And I just want you to see it and read it with me. In verses 14 and 15, and then we'll do 13.

Paul says, Here for this third time, I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you, for I do not seek what is yours, but you.

For children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. Now notice, I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls.

If I love you more, am I to be loved less? He's just pouring his heart out as he closes out this letter. Why is he having to say, I am not coming to exploit you.

I don't seek what's yours. I seek you. Why is he having to say that? Because the false teachers have accused him of this very thing. Paul's just after your money. The truth was, they were the ones after their money.

[26 : 49] Then if you look at chapter 13, verses 7 through 9. This is how he's ending the letter now. Now we pray to God that you do no wrong.

Not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. We're ready to suffer being made fun of and mocked, or whatever else they say about it, as long as you guys remain solid.

Now verse 8. For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. For we rejoice when ourselves, we are weak, but you are strong.

This we also pray for, that you be made complete. You see, that's a true shepherd. We're willing to suffer the indignities of following Jesus and being called fools for Christ.

As long as we see you growing. As long as we see you loving Jesus and becoming increasingly loyal to him. As long as we see you growing as the body of Christ, we're willing to be spent and be expended on your behalf.

[28 : 05] Now that's a shepherd. That's the heart of the Apostle Paul. Folks, the heart of the Apostle Paul expresses the hearts of all God's true shepherds who love God, who love God's people, and who love God's truth.

Now, in contrast to this picture of biblical servanthood and shepherding, Peter scathingly exposes these false teachers for who and what they are as they exploit God's church, God's people. Peter's first emphasis about these men of falsehood, where we're spending most of our time this morning, his first emphasis is that they are among us.

A sobering, sobering warning to us. Again, you understand, I'm taking Peter's future tense and Jude's present tense and bringing them into the reality of us living in the last days together. The days after the cross are the last days. They are among us. Turning again to Paul's similar teaching, I want to show you where he warned the Ephesian elders, the pastors who were serving with Timothy in Ephesus, of the same reality which Peter is addressing.

[29 : 26] If you look at Acts chapter 20, here is a good shepherd, a faithful man, a man of integrity, a man who loves Jesus, speaking the truth in love.

I wish I could read this entire chapter to you. I don't have time. Let me just hit some of the highlights with you, beginning in verse 17. Let me put these references up there for you if you want to write them down.

From Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called to him. This is Paul. He wrote to the leaders in Ephesus from Miletus where Paul was and he called these elders of the church to meet him. And when they had come to him, Paul said to these pastors, you yourselves know from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time.

Now, that's important. Paul is calling on his track record. He's saying, look, I am. I'm not in and out, in and out, in and out. I come and I minister with you and I suffer with you and I know you and I weep with you and I labor with you and you see my life.

[30 : 39] I stay with you long enough for you to see my life and know the kind of man that I live and the life that I live. That's so important, folks. Longevity and ministry is a beautiful thing.

He says, you yourselves know from the first day that I set foot in Asia how I was with you the whole time serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews.

How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you publicly and from house to house. Look, I taught you the public ministry of the word.

I preached to you. I taught you in public settings and from house to house. I taught you privately. I counseled with you. I disciplined you. I was in your life solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, the gospel. I ministered the gospel faithfully with you. We got our knees scraped together. We wept together. We prayed together. We talked about life together.

[31 : 52] We did life together all around the gospel. And then if you'll notice down in verse 28, he tells them this as he wraps it up.

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves, men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them.

Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that day, night and day for a period of three years, I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

[33 : 02] Isn't that wonderful? That's a true shepherd pointing them to Jesus, pointing them to truth, drawing on the track record of ministry and life that they held together as precious as he ministered that gospel.

Now, friends, please, back to 2 Peter, take careful, careful note of something here. Careful note of Paul's description and how it parallels what we're going to see in Peter's.

I just want you to see this up here. First of all, false teachers are savage wolves who will ravage you. It is not a matter of if.

It's a matter of when. Given the opportunity, these men will ravage you. This is the picture of a pack of wolves tearing a carcass to pieces.

Messy, awful, sick, violent. That's the picture that he wants in our minds. These people were all too familiar with this picture.

[34 : 07] They will come from within the body. Paul tells these men. They will speak perverse things. Their ministry will be a ministry of flattery.

And it will be a ministry of perverse flattery. They will tell you what you want to hear. They'll figure out what kind of person you are, what kind of personality you have.

They will figure out your Achilles heel and they will start to speak into it and lure you and deceive you. Make note. They will draw you away from Jesus and his truth to follow them.

They will accomplish this through perverse teaching. As I've told you before and I've mentioned to you before and I'll continue to remind you the most important thing, the most critical element of what false teachers are after.

I'll show you in a minute the money that they're after. They want a following. That's what they want. They are not effective apart from a following.

[35 : 22] We all understand that. For them to get what they want, they have to have people following them. I'll show you in a minute what Peter says they want most.

A following is key to this. How do you suck the oxygen out of the room of false teachers? You don't follow them. You don't listen to them.

You don't give them half a second. I'm going to tell you, I hope I have time to tell you a couple of little anecdotes, little stories that were true. I've mentioned one of them to you about Europe, but I want to tell you more about that.

This is fresh on my heart and mind. In Europe, I had two different pastors pull me aside while we were in Europe and talk to me privately about what was going on in their churches.

And both of those men were talking about false teachers who were in their churches and they were gathering a following, they were writing emails and writing letters and they were trying to subvert the pastors.

[36 : 20] They were causing no small stir. One of the pastors said, Jeff, when I go back, I don't know if I'm going to have a church. I don't know what's waiting on me.

It's real. I've seen this throughout my ministry. They will draw you away from Jesus and his truth to follow them and they accomplish this through perverse teaching, flattery, telling you what you want to hear.

Look at this. If you can see this at the bottom of the screen, the Greek word for perverse is from diastrofo or diastrofo. In addition to perverse, it has the idea of to turn different ways.

You and I would say to twist about or to distort. That's the idea of perverse. False teaching distorts or twists the truth.

And what false teachers do is make their teaching appealing to lure you away. These men are not going to walk into our church and begin their ministry by denying Jesus.

[37 : 29] They're not going to go after the cardinal doctrines of the faith that you and I hold to and speak to those doctrines in illicit or perverse ways right off the bat.

It's them taking the truth and pouring just a drop of poison in. So as you drink it, it tastes a little different but we're good. So you barely notice. Barely notice.

Now I'm looking you in the eye now and I'm saying to you we've been doing this 30 years and I have seen this over and over and over again. I have been with pastors who have wept with me over and over again about these very things that we're talking about.

It's real folks. Please, please understand that just because we have been well protected and guarded to this point. There are a couple of things about what's happened in our four and a half year history that isn't public knowledge.

Why? You don't know about it because you were protected from it. Now I'm not ringing my bells. I'm telling you that your pastors sniffed it out and cut it off. That's what's supposed to happen.

[38 : 36] We don't want it to gain oxygen here. We don't want it to provide it room to breathe. We want to suffocate it before it can ever get a good breath. I'm talking about false doctrine.

We don't want that to get in among us and spread like gangrene. They want to lure you away. Let me show you in Jude again and remind you Jude 16. We're going to be going back and forth in Jude throughout this time together in chapter 2 so it's good that we get familiar with this little book. In Jude 16 I'm talking now to you about them luring you away. What does it say? These are grumblers finding fault following after their own lusts.

They speak arrogantly. Look, flattering people for the sake of what? Gaining an advantage. There you go. They want a foothold. They want an audience.

They want a listening ear. They want to catch you in a moment where they can say things to you and they get you going like this. Yeah.

[39 : 46] Yeah, I mean, now that you mention it, yeah, Jeff is kind of like that. He does come off like that. Huh. Yeah.

They're grumblers. Have you ever noticed when Jeff and Greg do this, they da-da-da-da-da-da-da? Huh? You ever notice that?

It is amazing to me. There can be 10,000 people in a congregation and these people will find people like them. They watch you. They listen to you.

The slightest indication that you're unsettled, not happy, not satisfied, maybe a little bit off on what's, they gravitate toward that.

It draws them like a magnet. And then they engage you and they say a few things and they test the waters and if they can see you start to go, huh.

[40 : 53] Right? Now, please hear me caveat to you. Greg and I are not above people coming and talking to us and even bringing criticism to us.

That's one way that we grow. Hopefully it'll be kind. It's not always kindly done. This is not what we're saying. This isn't a sermon about insulating your pastors from being confronted.

It's not that at all. It's about us being brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus with one Lord over the church and working together to minister to each other and make sure that this kind of nonsense doesn't get any room to breathe in our church family.

That's what this is. It is no stranger from the New Testament that we would read the New Testament and realize that these men are constantly talking about false teachers coming against them and trying to separate them from their congregation, from their flock.

Doesn't it make sense to you that that's exactly what Satan would want to do is separate you from your shepherds? That's what they do. Now I'll tell you I'm going to try to be very careful because when I preach this I'm mad about it.

[42 : 12] I'm going to already tell you I carry a mad in me about this because I see what it's done. I hope it's righteous but I see what this has done. I don't have any patience at all with men like this.

None. If you're ever in my presence and we sniff one of these guys out you won't like what you see. because I can't stand this kind of stuff. I have seen this destroy families and split churches that I've been a part of because it wasn't dealt with in a biblical way and these men were given license.

Paul tells pastors notice this folks notice what Paul says. Paul tells pastors to be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock.

look. He reminds them he reminds them of their solemn servanthood. What is that? Among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

Do you see the emphasis there? This is one of the major differences between false teachers and God's true shepherds. False teachers do not have the Holy Spirit living in them.

[43 : 28] So the Holy Spirit has not commissioned and made these men overseers of the church because the Holy Spirit doesn't live in them. That is a big difference between a true shepherd and a false one.

But that doesn't come out right away. Then to shepherd the church of God. These men are not interested in spending and being expended for your benefit.

These men are not going to take a bullet for you. Quite the opposite. They'll throw you under the train tracks in a heartbeat. Whatever it takes for them to grease the wheel of their agenda.

That's what they want to use you for. That's one of the reasons it makes me mad. And when I say that now, that's outside of my notes. You heard all of that. I didn't write in there. Tell them how mad you are. When I say that to you, I don't mean that I sin.

I've had to confront these men before. Folks, I have had to confront men about this and the stories are so lewd and so sickening and so bad, I couldn't even tell them in a room full of my Christian brothers, much less than Mick's company from a pulpit.

[44 : 35] It's that bad. Imagine the worst and multiply it by ten. And that's what we have been in. It's sickening and horrible and disgusting.

And what it did to the people as I watched as we tried to deal with it, broke my heart. It broke my heart. And in the end, those men packed up together with a bunch of other men from a church and fired me and sent us packing.

And we left that ministry with streams of tears. But I was able to tell them, I'm not done yet. I know there's more going on here and we're going to get to the bottom of it.

You can fire me. You can get rid of me. But we're going to continue to try to figure out what's going on. And we did. And what we found out was even beyond what I could have thought it would be.

Who am I talking about? I'm talking about the two pastors of the church. Who were secretly involved in things that, again, would blow your mind to think about.

[45 : 43] And they were the pastors. pastors. They brought me there to pastor with them. And I was only there a couple months, Suzanne, before a couple of men came to me and sat down with me and began to talk with me about some things.

And I had no idea. I'd only been there a couple months. And the next thing we knew, we were having to confront what they were talking about and deal with it.

And it just went from bad to worse. At the end of the day, it made me wonder, Lord, what in the world? I remember talking with a fellow pastor of a very large church.

He conveyed to Suzanne and I and took him probably 30 minutes to tell us the whole story about a man in his church who fits all these descriptions.

I knew that man. I was in seminary with him. And he went and served at this pastor's church and was there. They were friends. He was there for years.

[46 : 48] And then it came out what he was doing behind the scenes. And when this pastor conveyed to my wife and I what it was, it it was shocking.

And I'll never forget what this man said when he closed out of his out his story. I looked at him with tears after listening because this guy is my friend and and has had a huge impact in my life.

And I said I called his name. I said how in the world? How in the world have you continued to move forward with that so fresh in your life?

This had just happened and in the life of your church. What are you doing? And he said this to me. He said, Jeff, if God wants to put a Judas in my church, that's up to God.

Who am I? I just deal with it and face it biblically. That sobered me. So I'm like, oh, my goodness.

[47 : 48] What that says to me, you're right, Judas. Oh, my goodness. There's no guarantee about how to stay away from this. What we are guaranteed is these men will come and God has given us a prescription to deal with it as a church family.

So I hope that you'll labor with me as I labor through this and know that this is very close to my heart and in some ways I'm probably still a little raw about it.

Solemn servanthood among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church.

The Holy Spirit has done that work. A primary aspect of biblical shepherding is protecting you from wolves who will ravage you, who will seek to lure you away from true devotion to Jesus by all sorts of interesting and attractive teachings.

Now, if you're sitting there now and you're saying, I don't I just don't think that could ever happen to me. Think again. Please think again. You are up against a formidable enemy in Satan.

And he knows your Achilles heel. Peter and Paul warn and instruct us in similar ways. No surprise there. So look again at 2 Peter 2.1.

[49 : 07] And let me ask you this. What do wolves do as they prepare to ambush you? Look at verse 1 again. But false prophets also arose among the people just as there will also be false teachers among you who will secretly introduce destructive heresies even denying the master who bought them bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

The question on the table that I'm wanting to ask you now is what do these men do? How do they lure you away?

How do they prepare their ambush? Well they're stealthy. They're sneaky. They deal in secrets. They stalk you. They size you up. They study you. They study me.

They study Greg. You say Jeff is it that calculated? Yes. Yes. Yes. It is. This is not happenstance. [50 : 22] This is not something that happens in a congregation and they just are opportunists. They are opportunists. But these men are working out a strategy.

It is a calculated attack as they size us up and look for the weak spots. Isn't that what wolves do when they lope along behind a herd?

Don't they look for the weak one? And they go after it don't they? That's what's being described here. So my friends please be sober.

This is not a game. It's a coordinated attack orchestrated by the father of lies to destroy local churches. If you look at 1st Timothy chapter 4.

You'll see where I get this from. So you don't think I'm just saying these things to alarm you. I want you to be sober but I don't want you to be scared.

[51 : 19] I just want you to be aware. Now what I'll have to do is come back behind these series of messages when we're all done and preach something that will say don't be looking for false teachers under every rock.

When the visitors show up at our church don't be lying to them. You know. Don't do that. 1st Timothy 4.

But the spirit the Holy Spirit explicitly says that in later times that's our times the times after the cross some will fall away from the faith. Why paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

By means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron. Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

These are men who will sneak in unawares. These are men who are being led by Satan to teach doctrines of demons and represent deceitful spirits.

[52 : 30] These are human beings. These are men empowered by these spirits and these doctrines to do this. These are men seared in their own consciences as with a branding iron.

That's why I say they'd throw you under the railroad tracks in a heartbeat because they're seared over. They don't care about you. We want to be very careful about that. Ignoring this reality from scripture will not make it go away nor will it help protect us from the reality that this threat is among us.

Notice from the text who will secretly introduce destructive heresies. Peter describes both the nature of this teaching and the method destructive heresies.

They will secretly introduce literally means to bring alongside. So they infiltrate by coming in alongside us and by putting their teaching alongside the truth to eventually undermine and replace it.

They are not interested in the truth winning the day. They are interested in undermining it and then eventually replacing it with their own what opinions, their own views, their own clever spin on the truth.

[53 : 55] heresies refer to false doctrines. That is everything and anything counter to scripture. Now these men are very adept at using scripture and twisting it.

You remember the definition of perverse to twist and distort? So they are going to say enough of the truth to just keep you moving along with them and then they are going to put the barb in.

They are very very adept at what they do. I have listened to some of these guys sometime and some of these men they are formidable formidable. I remember when the two men came to me after that short time in that ministry to recount to me some things that were going on and all that.

I remember asking them at one point so why are you guys coming to me? Have you guys tried to deal with this before I came? And these are two very smart young men.

Smart. One of them had been to seminary and gotten a degree. One of them had his own business. I mean these are not slouches. In fact these if I had gone to two young men in the church to say hey I think these two young men are ready to be trained for ministry I would have picked these two guys.

[55 : 11] And I remember they answered me when I asked them have you ever dealt with this?

They said we're scared to death of these guys. They said Jeff you don't understand when these two guys get together they are a formidable team.

They'll talk circles around us. That's what these men are. Look what Dr. MacArthur says about heresies here.

He quotes from Vines Expository Dictionary in his commentary and he says heresies an opinion especially a self willed opinion which is substituted for submission to the power of truth and leads to division and the formation of sex.

If you look with me again at Jude and just be reminded this is exactly what Jude is saying beginning in verse 17 but you beloved ought to remember the words what?

remember the words that were spoken beforehand by whom? The apostles of our Lord Jesus.

Remember those words that they were saying to you in the last time there will be mockers following after their own ungodly lusts.

[56 : 28] these are the ones these are the ones who cause divisions they're worldly minded men they're devoid of the Holy Spirit but you beloved building yourselves up on your most holy faith praying in the Holy Spirit keep yourselves in the love of God waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life that's all the stuff they want to undermine the point is in this quote is that these are men who cause divisions and splits and create doubt in the congregation Peter turns the tables on their fables I want you to remember that Peter turns the tables on their fables they're the ones telling myths and lies they've accused Peter of teaching clever myths and fables but Peter's own attack unmasks these guys as liars they substitute God's truth for their or their brand of truth for God's truth that's what they that's the craft they excel in is substitution cleverly masking their lies and their myths the idea of destruction here destruction the result of heeding heresies and it has the idea of quote the termination of something by causing so much damage to it that it can't be repaired or it no longer exists that's destruction

I just want you to hear this stuff so you know what's at stake this is not a game your families are at stake and our ministry here at Grace is at stake in this destruction refers to eternal destruction and damnation of the false teachers and all who follow their lies so it's Satan's damning power through false teaching to steal kill and destroy from John 10 10 now in contrast and I wanted you to see this contrast put up on the screen here in contrast God's divine power not his damning power but his divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness the process of your sanctification is about you growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus to the greater glory of God will continue to remind us of that our single trustworthy source for knowing the truth about Jesus is scripture what they want to twist and distort sound doctrine biblical teaching is limited to God's precious and magnificent promises containing all you need to live a God-pleasing life these men will tell you you need more you need Jesus plus you need this doctrine and this doctrine plus or have you ever considered that you can interpret this passage this way and then they'll throw some Greek on you or maybe some Hebrew on you it's no surprise to learn that the central aspect of their destructive doctrines is what does Peter say even denying the master who bought them verse 1 that's the central aspect of their teaching does this teach that Christians can lose their salvation are we talking about men who were saved and now they're denying the master who purchased them in the power of the Holy Spirit no no to understand or believe that would contradict what Peter has already taught about salvation in his first letter and in his first chapter of this letter so this refers to people who made an outward profession of belief in Christ but who never truly were trusting

Christ inwardly for salvation you see that's the issue folks please catch that these men come in and it's all a pretense it's a sham they're acting like us they talk like us maybe they've even gone to seminary seminary is no guarantee these men are in the faith this is what they do now I want to help us understand they're not Christians they never were Christians so what does this phrase mean well I thought it was very helpful what Tom Schreiner commentator Tom Schreiner said about this let me throw this up here I'm getting close to the end here hang in with me he says in every church there are members notice are who appear to be believers and who should be accepted as believers according to the judgment of charity as time elapses and difficulties arise it becomes apparent that they are wolves in the flock that's what I read to you from

Acts that though they called on Jesus as Lord their disobedience shows that he never knew them Matthew 7 that they are like the seed sown on rocky or thorny ground that initially bears fruit but dries up and dies when hard times come Matthew 13 let me go back to this first part of it and say a couple things before I move to a close in every church there are members who appear to be believers and who should be accepted as believers according to the judgment of charity what is he

saying there he is saying that people who come in and profess Jesus and want to join our church we can only do so much diligence in order to be able to satisfy ourselves that they are really in the faith and there's still the potential that they're not but be based on their testimony of faith in Christ and to the best of our ability and doing our diligence Greg and I doing our diligence on the front end of membership to make sure that we're not allowing people into our church who are not born again you say

[62 : 34] Jeff is the primary concern there that they're wolves no the primary concern there is we're letting people come into our church who believe they're saved and they're not they're going to end up in hell under our watch no no I don't want that so we have a membership process we want to know are you in the faith help us understand that you understand you're in the faith what is that understanding and we work through that with you we're not in a hurry to do that we want to make sure that you understand and that you're speaking biblically we've had too many instances one recently where somebody thought they were in the faith and lived in the faith right here from this congregation thank God right praise the Lord and now they're saved they're going to get baptized and you'll hear that testimony that's what we're concerned about but we accept the fact that their testimony to us is

I'm in Christ we can only go so far so charity love love believing the best 1 Corinthians 13 we receive these people in doing the best we can to understand they're in the faith doing our diligence but you understand there's only so much we can do and so he's saying later as time tells and they live among you this will begin to surface you'll begin to hear the odd thing but more than anything as you get to know them in their life you'll see the way they live please hear me as they get in their life we're not talking about people who make mistakes and you know we're not talking about people who struggle and they're struggling against sin and they're trying to live a holy life that's not who we're talking about here we're talking about people who are fakes charlatans so they're married going through the motions but you hang around them long enough and it'll start to show the lids going to blow off in places in their life and that's how they begin to get exposed for who they truly are the end of verse one makes it clear in the context itself we're not talking about true believers look at the end of verse one in second

Peter if you would bringing swift destruction upon themselves the Bible teaches that true believers will not face the condemning wrath of God that's Romans 8 1 for example therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus false teachers misrepresent and malign Jesus knowing and growing in Christ likeness and glorifying God are what false teaching and false teachers fight against and seek to frustrate false teaching causes you to miss Jesus and false doctrine opens your life to satanic error now look this is just one of the reasons we are so cautious here at grace about mixing man's wisdom with God's wisdom and our efforts at soul care with each other we don't want man's wisdom telling us how to be the church or how to care for each other as the church what do they know now what is the effect of this seductive deception on people I told you that 90% of everything I was going to say was in the first two points here I'm going to prove it true the second point that I want to bring up to you to answer this question is this many people follow them many will follow their sensuality and because of them the way of the truth will be what captivates people into following them answer sensuality if you look at hold your finger there and look at Jude 4 for certain persons have crept in unnoticed those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ these men are full of lust and greed they are masters at appealing to the flesh their emphasis on self indulgence often turns into various kinds of sexual sin but it isn't limited to just sexual sin we shouldn't be surprised when false teachers are found to live secret immoral lives that was the case in the story

I was telling you earlier I don't have time to go into more of that but that was exactly the case I can think of three off the top of my head and all of them had this component as central feature behind the scenes in a secret way I understand Peter's meaning here to have the idea of a carnal or fleshly approach to life often expressed in sexual immorality so here's the bottom line what's the bottom line on this their teaching supports an anti authority do your own thing way of living in other words they help flatter you into chasing whatever it is you desire in that moment what are you most disenfranchised with about our church about the leadership what's the Achilles heel that you see boy they're going to poke on that they're going to get into that they're going to try to talk to you about that yeah shouldn't they be doing this and shouldn't they be doing that why aren't they doing

this and why aren't they doing that and have you ever noticed yeah yeah yeah that kind of thing when confronted with truth from scripture you'll hear this common refrain yes but have you considered whatever or

[68 : 47] I know and we all have our opinions Jeff but that's not the way I see it oh my goodness if I had a five dollar bill for every time I heard that Peter says many will follow many many people wouldn't follow if the teaching required self denial selflessness self control and self forgetfulness would they no self is at the center of all false teaching and the emphasis on self over the savior an opinion over the authority of God's truth those things will combine to malign the way of worshiping Jesus in spirit and truth and then finally many people are verse three exploited there it is in black and white and in their greed they will exploit you with false words their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep false teachers and their followers live by the greed of their hearts greed is an insatiable desire for what

God forbids here in this text it refers to the pursuit of worldly pleasure self indulgence their greed drives them it's their primary motivating force behind everything they say and do their words are carefully chosen from a putrid well of rotten desire in their hearts so they plan and purpose to take advantage of people who are also inwardly and perhaps secretly craving autonomy and license they sniff you out and they live now in the spoils and accolades of sinful deception destruction but the text tells us that in the end their judgment destruction will catch them and they will pay the ultimate price for their greediness destruction now who bears the full weight of responsibility for protecting our church family from these predators and their destructive heresies if I stop now two questions and I'm done if I stop now y'all are really going to have to sing on this next one I'm losing it and I ask this question and ask you to answer I wonder based on what we studied so far what would you say just don't answer just think what would you say I'm not setting you up I just want to show you something the answer is probably what you're thinking right now boom right do you see the ellipsis dot dot dot and the men of our church the pastors equip and encourage the men of our church to be brothers in arms to act as fellow guardians against this ever present ever real threat to our unity and mission as grace church Williamsburg

I'm going to close it right there because that ends where we're going to pick up next time God willing is talking about that very reality the men of our church have the responsibility as brothers in arms and fellow guardians of the truth because we love the Lord Jesus lock arms together and safeguard our congregation against wolves gentlemen Greg and I need your help your support your love we need your strength and your walk with Christ let's pray together father father we have seen this now as truly a call to arms this is what the apostle Peter is saying as he realizes he's drawing his last breath father we understand that we want to take the context and we want to understand that that this man is pouring out his heart these are the things that are most weighing on him as he concerns himself with

God's people knowing that he's about to leave his precious flock so as he realizes he's about to be martyred he sobers us to call our men to faith and to a walk of guarding the flock watching over our flock with great love and care and gentleness and giving no quarter and showing no mercy to false teachers if men like this will come into our church men like this plant themselves here and seek to do their worst I pray that they will find there's no oxygen to breathe there is no followership here for error and for sin and for self I pray that our men will help sniff these things out and encourage speak the truth in love and if these men would repent these false teachers would repent all glory to

[74 : 12] God and if they won't then we'll send them packing Lord help us to be this kind of church and these kind of men to put the premium on the truth and speaking the truth in love and ministering to each other but help us to put up with no nonsense when it comes to the damage and the destruction that these men want to wreak on other people dragging their souls into hell with them help us to be sobered by that picture and that reality of ravenous wolves ripping people to pieces showing no mercy and giving no quarter men women and children may the blessed truth of the Lord Jesus and his precious and magnificent promises help guard our hearts in Christ Jesus help us to live a life of sober minded truth being discerning people always gracious always ready to see people repent and turn to

Jesus and also being able to carefully discern truth from error in the way that people speak so God as we go through this please hedge our minds and our hearts and help us not to lose our edge of graciousness that fine cutting edge of being a gracious godly loving kind hearted witnessing people we don't want to become those people looking for a false teacher under every rock just help us to

be aware of what we hear and carefully point people to Jesus and to that truth we love you father
and we want to care well for your word and for one another we pray all of this by your glory in Jesus
name amen