
Sermon Notes

April 14, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

The Impact of False Teachers 2 Peter 2:17-22

Truth Matters

- ❖ Misdirected, deceived and deceitful teachers are a danger to the church
 - the message they sow is destructive as it drags down others
 - any turning away from truth brings terrible consequences
- ❖ In the end, both false teachers and those who follow them will face a terrible judgment and destruction

Picture This

- ❖ Waterless springs
 - the hot, dry, dusty Middle Eastern desert
 - imagine coming to a "watering hole" and finding it dried up!
- ❖ Clouds without rain
 - a farmer who is trying to nurse his crop along
 - but the clouds blow over without delivering any precipitation
- ❖ These pictures represent the empty claims of false teachers

What False Teachers Say

- ❖ As in *The Wizard of Oz*, when you peel back the curtain, the message false teachers bring is hollow, empty, devoid of meaningful content, unable to meet true needs
 - those who disillusion and harm others with their false doctrines and corrupt practices are headed for the darkness of an eternal hell
 - all who get sucked in by false teaching are headed down a one-way street that ends in futility and frustration
- ❖ False teachers entice others by appealing to the *sensual passions of the flesh*
 - Peter uses the same word he used in v. 7 to describe the lifestyle of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah
 - a picture of a licentious, sensual, pleasure focused lifestyle marked by sexual promiscuity, gluttony and drunkenness
 - in our day, false teachers are slick and skillful at snagging people into their corrupt ways by appealing to the sin-stained nature with which all people are born
 - *Doin' What Comes Naturally*
 - ♦ "That's just who you are... your identity... how you were born."
 - ♦ "Follow your heart. Accept your affections for what they are. Be true to yourself."
 - ♦ "It doesn't matter because God loves you just the way you are."
 - "Pursue materialism and greed or sexual adventure no matter the cost or who gets hurt along the way."

What God Says

- ❖ Peter's chief concern is not condemning the world but protecting the purity of the church
 - hold to the clear teaching of Scripture
 - pursue godly, holy living
 - God will glorify Himself through the salvation of sinners whose lives are transformed by His grace to become more like Jesus
- ❖ God sets His love upon you so you can be SET FREE from who YOU are to become who HE originally designed you to be as a new person in Christ
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - only when we embrace Christ and the purpose for which He came are we adopted into God's family
 - only when we are adopted into God's family are we enabled to love others as God loves us
 - as long as you cling to what you perceive to "your identity" you will never know what your true identity is in Christ
 - coming to Christ is not about maintaining the *status quo*
 - coming to Christ is counter cultural, and it means putting off the old and putting on the new

Think About It

- ❖ False teachers promise freedom, but how can a fellow slave offer you freedom?

- v. 19, *whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.*
- there is NO freedom now and, ultimately and even more importantly, there will be NO freedom in the future
- ❖ False teachers are not oblivious about what they are doing
 - v. 20, they have *knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*
 - they know **ABOUT** Jesus, but they fail to appreciate and apprehend what it means to **KNOW** Jesus
 - v. 21, they know *the way of righteousness*
 - but they choose to go their own way and do their own thing
 - they refashion truth to make it more fashionable, more popular and more profitable
 - they trade the truth of God for a pack of lies
 - in the end they will wind up being caught up in and entangled by the very traps they set for others
- ❖ For those who openly abandon the plain, clear truth of Scripture and proclaim lies from the pulpits of churches, judgment will be far worse than it would otherwise have been
- ❖ Never say or think: "This could never happen to me or that could never happen to us." (1 Corinthians 10:12)
 - we must never presume on God's grace or fall into the trap of smug, self-satisfaction
 - we must always press forward in our pursuit of holiness... the holiness without which the author of Hebrews tells us no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14)
- ❖ v. 22 ends with two picturesque and unappealing proverbs