

TITLE: SAD, BUT TRUE!

TEXT: 2 PETER 2

INTRO: In 2 Peter 2, Peter addresses and deals harshly with false teachers in the church. His words are a warning to us to beware of these people in the church today. However, as we study Peter's strong words, we must understand the difference between a false teacher and someone who teaches something false. Apollos taught falsely in Acts 18, but was open to correction from Aquila & Priscilla. We would never have labeled him a "false teacher." This word is used one time in the NT, and that's here in 2 Pet 2:1.

I. THEIR EXISTENCE (v. 1-3a):

- A. Many Christians do not want to believe these people exist, and tend to ignore problems in the church for this reason. But as the sermon title indicates, the existence of false teacher in the church is sad, but true. They've always been here and always will be.
- B. **1 Pet 5:8**- our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. What better way to do this in the church than to use false teachers?
- C. **(v. 1)** There were false teachers in OT times, and there will be in NT times also. They sneak in their destructive heresies (party, disunion, division, sect). Here we see the difference in Apollos. He was wrong, but he wasn't trying to sneak it in. He taught it "boldly" (**Acts 18:26**)! Change agents among us today do things quietly, subtly, and deceitfully.
- D. **(v. 2)** Many follow them (today, too). Because of them, people speak evil of the way of truth.
- E. **(v. 3a)** Covetousness! Greed! This is what it's about for many. It's hard to make this accusation, but Peter says it's true. And you'll know them by their fruits (**Mt 7:15** – *beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves*). These men ignore the Word. Their goal is numbers & money. I've personally heard this expressed in the past.

II. THEIR EXPECTATION OF JUDGMENT (v. 3b-9):

- A. **(v. 3b)** Their judgment is coming!
- B. **(v. 4-8)** Expectation of judgment is based on evidence of God's prior judgments
 - 1. **(v. 4)** Disobedient angels – we aren't given details regarding this event, but angels, who were created holy, sinned and were cast into Tartarus, which is not Hell (Gehenna), but the evil realm of Hades (**Lk 16**) where lost souls await final judgment.
 - 2. **(v. 5)** The flood – God did not spare the world during Noah's day, but flooded the world of the ungodly. (Yet in this, He saved all the ones who were righteous).
 - 3. **(v. 6-8)** Sodom & Gomorrah – Again, God did not spare these two wicked cities. He destroyed everything in them except righteous Lot, but Lot is not praised for remaining in Sodom. Noah had no choice, but Lot did.
*Lot was saved **when he left Sodom**. Had he remained there, even as a righteous man, he would've died with the others.
- C. **(v. 9)** God is just and righteous. He will save those who are righteous, while punishing the unjust.
 - 1. The expectation of the righteous is that they remove themselves from these false teachers. This is not talking about a member who just doesn't understand & needs further study. These are crafty 'teachers' who know what they're doing.
 - 2. This judgment (for the righteous and wicked) will finally happen at the Day of Judgment.

III. THEIR EVIL DEEDS (v. 10-16):

- A. **(v. 10-11)** **1)** They walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. **2)** They despise (disesteem) government/rulers. **3)** Presumptuous [daring], self-willed (arrogant); **4)** They aren't afraid to speak evil of (blaspheme) dignities ("glories" – leaders who are worthy of our respect and obedience). Even angels don't do this! Government is from God (cf., David who would not kill King Saul).
- B. **(v. 12)** They are natural brute ("alogos"- irrational, without reason, without the word) beasts. They're like destructive animals that can't reason – they're made to be killed. They shall utterly perish (**Jam 3:1**—teachers will receive the greater condemnation).
- C. **(v. 13)** They count it pleasure to riot in the day (bold - whereas most do it under the cover of darkness). They're spots & blemishes – a disgrace to Christianity! They sport themselves with (revel or take delight in) their own deceit, while the feast (revel together) with you. In other words, they are **extremely dishonest**, and glory in it!
- D. **(v. 14)** Eyes full of adultery – spiritual adultery, as w/the OT Israelites – serving other "gods" (anything but the one true God) Beguiling (enticing, entrapping) unstable souls; a heart exercised in covetousness (i.e., they're good at it) – like Balaam!
- E. **(v. 15-16)** Like Balaam, they love the way of unrighteousness. Balaam was asked to curse the Israelites, but God prohibited it, saying that "*he hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel*" (**Num 23:21**). So Balaam saw to it that God *did* find iniquity in Israel – he caused them to sin with the Midianite women (**Num 31:16**).

IV. THEIR EMPTINESS (v. 17-19):

- A. **(v. 17)** They are wells without water (you expect water, but don't get any; you expect spiritual guidance and don't get it). You expect to hear a Bible-based sermon, and all you get is jokes & stories!
- B. **(v. 18)** Here is one of the saddest comments in this chapter. Through great swelling words of vanity, they allure [entire] those that had truly escaped from those who live in error. New Christians are more susceptible to false teachings than "seasoned vets."
- C. **(v. 19)** They promise freedom, yet they themselves are slaves of corruption.

V. THEIR END (v. 20-22):

- A. **(v. 20)** Peter says they *had* escaped this corruption through the knowledge of Christ (i.e., these were Christian teachers). But they are worse off now than before they became Christians, since they fell away (another refutation of "Once Saved, Always Saved").
- B. **(v. 21)** Better to have not known the way of righteousness, than to know it and turn away from it.
- C. **(v. 22)** They are fulfillment of proverbs (**Prov 26:11** – "*As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.*")

CONCLUSION: Why do we need this warning about false teachers today? **1)** They exist. **2)** We need to recognize them. **3)** We need to know the Word well enough that they won't be able to lead us astray. **4)** We need to oppose them (**Eph 5:11; 2 John 9-11**).