

October 8, 2017

Practicing Our Readiness Drills for Christ's Return - Seeking God's Guidance from 1st and 2nd Peter

Sermon Topic:

2 Peter 2:17-22

These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 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. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. 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. 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. 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." (ESV)

- Theme of 2nd Peter: Defend yourselves with biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity against the deceptions of false teachers.

Introduction: Lawless grace lovers, Grace denying law lovers, Grace loving, law lovers.

Critical Point #8 – You will know them (false teachers) by their arrogant disregard for authority, for their lascivious lifestyle, and for their love of money.

Critical Point #9 – You will also know them by their seductive yet empty message. **These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 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. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption.**

- Just like a fake oasis in the desert or a storm cloud that passes, these false teachers promise eternal life without repentance. There is no freedom in that false gospel!
- Unless you hear a preacher tell his people that genuine salvation produces spontaneous repentance like Zaccheus demonstrated then he is a false teacher.
 - Luke 19:8-10 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (ESV)
 - Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (ESV)
 - Romans 10:9-10 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (ESV)
- Even if 90% of what that preacher says is otherwise solid truth, he is still leading people to hell and Peter is so angry about that he says that the very worst punishment is reserved for such people - **For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved.**

- Their seductive tactic is to subtly loosen God’s morals by not practicing church discipline or brazenly endorsing immoral behavior - **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. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption.**
 - Modern Day Examples.

Critical Point #10 - Promising freedom (and experiencing some of it themselves), these false teachers will end up enslaved by their own sins **They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. 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. 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. 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.” (ESV)**

- The freedom these false teachers promise is not freedom from sin, but freedom from the law of God.
- Ironically, their so-called “freedom” is Satan’s chains of addictions in disguise. Unbridled lust will control a person’s will to the point they can’t stop lusting. Unbridled greed will do the same.
- The “they” in verse 20 most likely refers primarily (or only) to the false teachers who have heard the teachings of Jesus and gained a degree of spiritual benefit by following some of those teachings.
- Or it could refer to the false teacher’s followers (church members). Either way, there is a temporary benefit by living a godly life, even though a heart has not been changed. See Matthew 13:18-23
 - This passage then would refer to church members who claim they know Christ but have never been “born again” from above. They benefit from Christian fellowship and Christian morals, but their heart is still in the world.
 - This passage does not refer to genuine Christians who are in danger of losing their salvation.
 - The Bible teaches that it is impossible for genuine “born again” believers to lose their salvation:
 John 6:39-40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (ESV)
 John 10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (ESV)
 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. (ESV)
 - But the Bible does teach that “professing believers” who are not born again will perish. 1 John 2:9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. (ESV)
 1 John 2:4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, (ESV)

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. (ESV)

- For these “professing believers” Peter says that their last state is worse than the first. This is because they will be judged more severely for having had the truth. - **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.**

Matthew 11:21-24 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” (ESV)

- In any case, a person’s true nature will be revealed by his desires and actions. **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.” (ESV) Proverbs 26:11**

1 John 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. (ESV)

1 John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. (ESV)

1 John 3:9-10 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (ESV)

Application

Let’s review Zaccheus’ story in Luke 19 and the rich young ruler in Luke 18. Which one are you?