

Hold Fast to the True Word of God

II Peter 1:16 - 2:3

INTRODUCTION:

If you would open your Bibles this morning, we will be reading from II Peter Chapter 1 starting in verse 16.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 1:16-2:3 (NASB)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— ¹⁸ and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹ So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

² 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. ² Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³ 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.

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Peter has spent all of Chapter 1 reminding us how we can have assurance of our faith.

What is faith? Let's review.

Hebrews 11:1 (NASB)

¹¹ Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

"The CONVICTION of things not seen."

We did not personally see Jesus and His miracles, but we are **convicted** (or thoroughly convinced) that Jesus **DID** exist and that He **DID** perform them based upon the eyewitness of the Apostles and the fact that they all were willing to face even death for their testimony.

"The ASSURANCE of things hoped for."

We have read the Old Testament prophecies and have seen the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Christ as the Messiah. Especially, the fulfillment of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We can be certain that if the prophecies concerning Christ was fulfilled, then the prophecies concerning the future like eternity in Heaven will also come true and we can have an **assurance** of those things!

"The assurance of things HOPED for."

Peter tells us in I Peter 1:3 that our hope is a "living" hope.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NASB)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **living** hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

A Christian's hope is not just wishful thinking, but a firm conviction.

What are we hoping for?

Verse 3 tells us that we will resurrected just as Christ was when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and are buried into the waters of baptism. When we are buried under the water, we die to our old self of sin and rise back out (or resurrect) into a "new life" in Christ. This creates a "living" hope within us that we will receive an inheritance of eternal life **with** God in Heaven when we die or Christ comes again as Jesus has promised us.

Peter wrote it this way in his first epistle:

1 Peter 1:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

We have a conviction of things not seen based upon a first-hand eyewitness of the apostles and the inspired Word of God that they wrote for us through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

And Peter said "**We were eyewitnesses of His majesty**".

This leads us to today's message.

Peter has reminded us what our faith is and how to identify it as real. That our faith is based upon the **true** knowledge of the scriptures.

BODY:

I. THE TRUE WORD OF GOD.

2 Peter 1:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

Peter said that the apostles did not make up "cleverly devised tales" concerning Jesus. They lived with and were taught by a real person who lived and breathed and performed many miracles to prove that what he was teaching them was from God.

- He healed the sick,
- made the lame to walk,
- raised people from the dead,
- identified and removed evil spirits,
- walked on water,
- revealed his glory at the transfiguration,
- claimed to be the promised Messiah and God,
- and was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead.

All by the will of His Father.

John tells us in his Gospel:

John 21:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.

They were so certain of the Gospel message that Jesus had taught them and of certainty to his claim as the Messiah that they lived the rest of their lives preaching their testimony and suffering persecution, even to the point of death.

If this was just a "cleverly devised tale", they would not have been willing to give up their lives for it. **They would not have died for a lie!**

Peter was writing to Christians who were scattered throughout Asia Minor due to persecution in Jerusalem. He tells them in Chapter 3 the purpose of the letter.

2 Peter 3:1-2 (NASB)

³ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should **remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.**

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave the apostles the "great commission" to teach the whole world what He had taught them.

Mark 16:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶ He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

What the apostles wrote has been preserved by the will of God and it is available to us even today in the Holy Bible. **(Hold up the Bible)** This is the true Word of God.

Peter tells us that we obtain a **true** faith by reading and applying God's Word in our lives.

But now he is going to warn us that there will be false teachers among us who will try to deceive us and teach us false doctrine.

II. **BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS.**

2 Peter 2:1-3a (NASB)

² 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. ² Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³ and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words;

One of the tactics of the enemy is that Satan uses spies. A spy is simply someone who pretends to be on your side, but yet is your enemy and is constantly trying to destroy your army. The higher in leadership the spy can become the more effective the spy.

The Bible refers to the Satan's spies as false prophets or false teachers. In order for us to be able to march onward for God each day we must be able to not only recognize those spies but also understand that we may have to take a stand against them.

It definitely appears that false teachers are deliberate in what they do. They are not false teachers by accident. A teacher can be wrong. A teacher can be deceived. But a "false teacher" isn't just **teaching** what is false; he **is** false. His goal is to destroy with his words and his tactics. He is a servant of the enemy and there is nothing ignorant or accidental about what he is doing.

In these three verses Peter identifies three descriptions by which a false teacher can be recognized.

1. The first description given is the spy will "**secretly introduce destructive heresies**".

The Greek meaning to "heresies" is a false self-willed opinion.

That's why Peter calls them "destructive heresies". The false teacher's aim is to destroy unity in the body, destroy the church's effectiveness, destroy Godly relationships, and destroy the purity of the Gospel message itself.

Notice that these divisions are "smuggled" or "sneaked" in with no one noticing. The purpose for this is to put the believers against one another. If Satan can get God's Army to start fighting each other; then it makes the battle easier for him to win. Now we all

know that God wins the war, but it is the daily battles that many of us lose each day. That is not God's fault, it is ours.

2. The second description given is the spy will deny the Word of God.

The false teachers will use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary. They talk about "salvation," "inspiration," and many great words of the Christian faith, but they do not mean what we mean. We must be grounded so deep in the scriptures that we can immediately identify false teaching.

Satan only has to put a drop of poison in the stew to ruin the whole batch. He is not going to pour in enough to flagrantly alert you by a bad taste or smell.

It isn't stupid people who are snared by the false teachers. It is spiritually immature people, ignorant of the Word, people who through lack of concern and spiritual neglect do not have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Hebrews 5:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

We must understand that these false teachers and false prophets will use parts of Scripture, just as Satan tried to do with Jesus, but only enough to try to convince you that they are genuine because they are using Scripture.

This is why we need to be constantly reminded of Scripture. So we can respond to the false teacher with the truth of scripture. "As it is written."

Why? This is the main reason right here. If you do not know Scripture, how will you know what is true and what is false? Just because it sounds convincing doesn't make it true. The Bible tells us to "**study to show ourselves approved**". Anytime you hear something that doesn't quite add up, first study the Scripture for yourself and then ask yourself this simple question: "Do I believe this because someone convinced me of it, or do I believe it because this is what the Holy Spirit has shown me through Scripture?"

3. The third description given is the spy will "**follow his sensuality**".

According to several passages in 2 Peter and some parallel verses in Jude, sensuality is a distinguishing mark of false teachers.

Jude 4-7 (NASB)

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.

⁵ Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

There are verses coming up here in 2 Peter Chapter 2 verses 7-22 that give us the same descriptions.

And here is the red flag for this type of false teacher.

2 Peter 2:2b (NASB)

² ...because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

This is what is so destructive about this characteristic of false teachers. Families get ruined and ministries are destroyed, but what false teachers leave in the wake of their sexual exploits, when they are exposed, is a black mark on the message of the gospel.

In addition to all that, Peter says they are also greedy. "**in their greed they will exploit you with false words;**" They are out for personal gratification and personal gain, and they use their lies to get it.

CONCLUSION:

Briefly, I want to remind you that we are in a war against Satan and his followers. We are either fighting for God or we are fighting against God. There is no in between. Paul tells us that we are to put on the "Armor of God"

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NASB)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

As Christians we are members of God's Army. We are at spiritual war every day and God has given us the armor necessary to not just survive but to be victorious. Notice that the armor is comprised of KNOWING and LIVING the TRUE Word of God.

This shows once again the importance of not just reading the scripture, but studying it daily so you can know what the true will of God is.

After all our faith and salvation depends on it!

2 Timothy 2:15e (NASB)

¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today.

He is Lord!