

The Fate of the False Teacher

II Peter 2:20-22

INTRODUCTION:

Peter is warning us in the second chapter of his second epistle that the greatest problem the church faces is not danger from without, but rot from within.

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever picked up an apple and taken a big bite out of it just to discover that it is rotten inside or is infested with worms? If you do not spray for insects, an apple tree may produce apples that will have worms or rotten spots inside. I always cut the apples that I eat because, although the apple may look perfect on the outside, the inside may have a worm or rot. This is the perfect deception! You might take a bite of a nice, shiny, juicy red apple and discover that you were not alone in enjoying your snack. Hopefully, what you discover is a whole worm, because you know what it would mean if you found only half!

There are different insects that can cause worms to be in an apple. In the case of the apple maggot fly, the worm nesting inside that apple did not have to crawl inside it to make the apple its home, because the worm was born there. Apples are not only the worms' home, but their supermarket as well. Here's how it all happens.

During the summer, small fruit flies can be found buzzing around apple orchards. These are called apple maggot flies. Each female finds herself a sweet smelling apple that is ripening and lands on it. Using a small, sharp, hollow tube on the underside of her body, the fly stabs a small hole in the fruit. Then she releases her eggs, which slide down that hollow tube into the apple.

When the eggs hatch into tiny white worms, called railroad worms, they are already in the apple. The apple is a smorgasbord of food from which they eat their way into adulthood. When the apples are ripe in the fall and drop from the tree, the worms crawl out and burrow into the ground. It is inside this winter home that the worm becomes an apple maggot fly.

The following summer, the fly emerges, and begins to fly about the orchard starting the entire process all over again.

Peter has revealed to us that false teachers are very much like the worm in the apple. They were planted in the apple. Worms in the apples serve themselves and devour the fruit for their personal pleasures. Seeds in the apple mature and hold the life of the next orchard.

I have entitled my message this morning "**The Fate of False Teachers**".

Definition of "**fate**": The word "Fate" is defined as a power that is believed to control what happens in the future that someone or something will have.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 2:20-22 (NASB)

²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. ²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

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

Prayer

Let's look at verse 20 and consider:

BODY:

I. THE INFILTRATION OF FALSE TEACHERS.

2 Peter 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

The early church was still in bloom when the enemy, Satan laid his deceptive eggs of destruction. By the time Peter wrote this letter, there were already rotten signs in many of the churches where these false teachers and false prophets were doing their dirty work.

One of Jesus' most scathing rebukes is in reference to this matter of "inside corruption".

Matthew 23:25-26 (NASB)

²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

There are many examples of many false teachers who have been exposed throughout history. How many times have we seen a "pastor" or "religious figure" caught in a scandal. These individuals seemed to have everything going for them. There were large crowds that filled massive buildings. They had successful television ministries with hundreds of thousands of viewers, radio ministries with innumerable listeners, websites and podcasts with numerous subscribers, and books on the New York Times best seller list. They traveled the country speaking at conventions, conferences and other special

events. Then a video or police investigation comes out that reveals that they are involved in extramarital affairs, homosexuality, drug addiction, financial scandals, and many other issues.

Their actions do not go unnoticed by God. And one day, they will **meet their fate!**

Peter speaks of the fact that false teachers have escaped the defilement of the world, but in due time they return to it. As a result they end up in a worse state than before they knew “the way of righteousness”. He goes on to say it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness at all. By returning to their old ways of life they have increased their condemnation.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (NASB)

Tares among Wheat

²⁴ Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares(or weed seeds) among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷ The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ The slaves *said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ ²⁹ But he *said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.””

The Tares Explained

³⁶ Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” ³⁷ And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, ³⁸ and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one*; ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Just like the apple story, Jesus helps us to understand that Satan will plant worms (or false teachers) within the apple (or the church).

These false teachers may have escaped the **pollutions** of this world. But they have not escaped the **corruption** of sin. The false teacher may be **reformed** but not **transformed**. True believers are not **reformed**, they are **transformed**. The false teacher tries to be clean on the outside by appearing to be moral and Godly. The true believer is cleaned on the inside as a gift because of Christ's death on the cross.

God will allow corrupt people to live among the righteous until the harvest (or the second coming of Christ). At that time, those who are faithful will be gathered into glory and those that are working for the enemy will be cast into outer darkness.

If you ask these corrupt individuals they will boldly proclaim to be Christ followers. They have "turned over a new leaf". But they have not received a new life! They joined a church somewhere. Maybe they even went through baptismal waters. They have cleaned up their act. There has been an obvious outward change. But they possess **religion without redemption**. Those natural, sinful desires within the heart of man will not be conquered by **reformation**. Those sinful acts may hibernate for a while but eventually they will awake and chances are they will be stronger than before.

Only **transformation** by salvation can defeat the old nature and give new life. Without the transformation that Christ brings, eventually these false prophets will be revealed for who they are. Peter quotes a proverb that vividly explains this fact.

2 Peter 2:22 (NASB)

²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

Now that we have seen a little bit about the infiltration of the false teacher, let's move deeper in the text and consider their fate.

II. THE FATE OF FALSE TEACHERS.

2 Peter 2:20b-22 (NASB)

²⁰ ...they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. ²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

Once these individuals have escaped the pollutions of this world and have learned the "knowledge of Christ", if they return to the old life they are worse off than before. Peter says that they are overcome and the last state has become worse than the first. They never experienced true salvation. **They were never indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They only possessed personal works.** There is no power over sin without Jesus. Because there is no power they fall back into the same worldly ways that they had escaped. The sin they had escaped once again controls their lives and actions.

But they will one day face the severe consequences of their actions. Look again at verse 21...

²¹ For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

The more you know of Christ and his way, the more severe will be your judgment for not trusting and obeying Him.

There is an abundance of "church members" who do not know Jesus! There are many who have prayed a prayer, were baptized, and joined a church who turned over a new leaf but never surrendered to Christ in faith. These people attempted to escape the "pollutions of this world". They may have had some success in cleaning up their lives. (on the outside) And unfortunately, many have become church leaders, teachers, and even

preachers. As is the case with the false prophets, eventually their true colors will be revealed.

Look again at verse 22...

22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

You can take a dog and train him. You can house break him. Teach him to roll over, sit, lay down, and play dead. But no matter how much training HE IS STILL A DOG. He will always have the nature of a dog. You can take an old hog and scrub him down and clean him up. When you turn him loose the first thing he is going to do is return to the mud and wallow in it!

You can take a lost sinner and clean him up. Put him in a suit. Give him a bible and put him behind a pulpit. He may have changed his look, he may even improve his actions but without Christ he is still lost and on his way to **eternal punishment!**

The same is true for you. You can quit a certain habit. You may stop using profanity. Abstain from pornography. Avoid going certain places and doing certain things. You can spend time in prayer and quote the bible. You can attend church every Sunday. But if you have never been **born again** you are lost. You remain in the flesh. And eventually you will return to what comes natural...SIN!!! These false prophets will eventually be seen for what they really are.

The Bible makes it clear that judgment is coming. Peter says that "the last state has become worse for them than the first".

III. AVOIDING THE SAME FATE AS FALSE TEACHERS.

The person who is not living a new life in Christ will share the same fate as the false teacher.

So how do we start this new life in Christ?

John 14:6 (NASB)

⁶ Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Just living a clean moral life will not save us. There is nothing that we can do that is good enough to erase our sins and make us righteous before God. It is only through Jesus that we can have our sins wiped away. This requires that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. That we understand that we are sinners. That we repent of those sins. And that we obey Christ's command to be baptized for the remission of sin at which time we are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus explained it to Nicodemus this way:

John 3:1-6 (NASB)

³ Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ² this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

⁴ Nicodemus *said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Nicodemus did not understand what Christ meant when He said you must be "born again". Jesus explained that when one is born of water and the Spirit then he can enter the kingdom of God.

Peter explained to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost that they had crucified God's Son on the cross. Being pierced to the heart for their part in Christ's death, they asked Peter, "What must we do to be saved?" and Peter tells them.

Acts 2:36-38 (NASB)

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Too many people believe that once they have done those things, they have earned salvation. And since Jesus died for their sins, they can just keep on sinning and let the grace of Jesus keep forgiving them of their sins. This is where the false teachers make their mistake! We are told that we must then live a **new life in Christ**. If our lives have only been **reformed** to do moral things without a **transformation** into a new life in Christ we are still lost!

Listen to Paul as he describes this process that creates a "**New Life in Christ**" in us.

Romans 6:1-7 (NASB)

⁶ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death,(when we are baptized, we are buried under the water and die to our sins) so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life (we are raised back out of the water and we resurrect into a new life in Christ). ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin (when we are resurrected out of the water, Jesus takes on our sin).

You know in your heart whether you are living a new life in Christ. You know whether or not you are giving your time and energy to the service of the Lord. You know if you are wasting your time and energy on your own selfish desires. You know if you are committed to the cause of Christ or just showing up on Sunday morning to hitch a religious ride for an hour or so a week.

You know! You know if you are a worm in the apple or an apple seed. Don't you? Worms in the apples serve themselves and devour the fruit for their personal pleasures. And you know what? God knows your heart and He knows too!

Seeds in the apple mature and hold the life of the next orchard. If you are a seed, you must be willing to die to your old self and begin a new life in Christ. **Listen to Jesus!**

John 12:24-26 (NASB)

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Jesus was talking about His own death and resurrection here, but then He applies it to us as well. A seed is just a seed and will bear no fruit until it is willing to die. When it is planted and dies to itself, it will start a new life and begin to produce fruit. You can count how many seeds are in an apple, but you cannot count how many apples are in one seed!

CONCLUSION:

Ask yourself this question "Are you a dog, a pig, or a sheep"?. Jesus said,

John 10:27-28 (NASB)

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Dogs return to their own vomit. Hogs return to the mud. Sheep hear the voice of the shepherd and follow Him. When we hear God's voice, we obey. Dogs and Hogs escape the pollutions of the world for a time by learning the ways of Christ and **reform** their actions. They try to live a moral life, but they are unwilling to allow Christ to **transform** their lives. **Listen Carefully!** They accept Christ as their Savior, but they do not accept Christ as their Lord. They are too wrapped up in themselves!

Are you bearing fruit? If you are not living a new life in Christ, I wish I could compel you to follow my Lord and Savior. He is the only way to salvation. He deserves your devotion. He demands your complete surrender.

Jesus died to give you life. He was crucified as an innocent sacrifice for your sins so you can be found righteous before God on judgment day. He has spared you life until now. When your life ends, your opportunity to accept and serve His Son is gone forever. He wants to save you and he is calling you. Will you hear His voice and follow Him?

He is Lord!