

SERMON AT ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL KAMPALA – 18/10/2017

TOPIC: FALSE TEACHERS, SLAVES OF CORRUPTION (2Pet 2:19)

Introduction The church is tasked with equipping God's people for discernment—that is, helping them distinguish scripturally between truth and error, good and evil, darkness and light—and, very often, in the words of Charles Spurgeon, to know the crucial difference "between right and almost right" that is so often exploited by cults and false teachers

We cannot separate **chapter 2 from 1** it's a continuation. **In chapter 1 Peter highlights that;**

1. We are to put effort in our Christian walk Vs. 5-6
2. Prophecy originates from God at his terms and conditions Vs 20-21

Chapter2 Warning against false prophets!!!

Peter gives a serious warning about false teachers. Verse 1a says, **“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.”** False prophets spoke out of their own minds, imaginations and dreams as though it was the word of the Lord. They even performed signs and wonders to bolster the credibility of their teachings. They promised peace when God was ready to judge the nation, planting a false sense of security and hindering true repentance.

A false prophetAnyone who deviates in teaching from the major teachings of the Christian faith. Eg The divinity of Christ, The way of salvation,

Like it was in the past, false teachers are a serious danger to the church of Christ today, and many warnings are given about them in the New Testament (Mt 24:4-5,11; Ac 20:29-30; Gal 1:6-9; et al.)

When we think of “false teachers,” our minds immediately turn to false religions or the cults. Verse 1b says, **“They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them....”** False teachers do not wear t-shirts declaring, “I am a false teacher.” They are sneaky. They secretly introduce teachings which contradict sound doctrine. They rise up as those who are one with us in Christ. As Jesus warned, they come as “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15). They carry out their ministry in Jesus’ name, and they

are just as surprised at being called unbelievers as we are when we realize they do not share a “like precious faith” with us:

To recognize them requires discernment. So Peter exposes their characteristics, motives and behaviour.

Marks of false teachers

- **The first and foremost mark is that they deny that Jesus is the sovereign Lord.**

It is to deny that Jesus is God. We Christians believe that Jesus is God with authority as the Creator, Redeemer and Judge. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus purchased us and deserves our worship and obedience. We are not our own; we belong to Jesus. We listen to Jesus and obey him. But these false teachers do not want Jesus telling them what to do. They want to do what they want to do. They also tell other people what they want to hear, not the truth that they need to hear. They say, “It is okay. There is no judgment; God loves you—you don’t need to repent.” In contrast, as God’s servants, our aim is to exalt Christ and lead people to Christ, recognizing Christ’s divine authority as God. We should lead people to Christ, not to ourselves. In order to do so, we should teach the full gospel message, not avoiding sin, repentance, judgment and hell. We should teach the truth, seeking God’s approval not man’s.

- **False teachers can be identified by their morals and their motives.** False teachers are driven by their own lusts rather than led by the Holy Spirit. Greed motivates their ministry—not grace (verse 3). They do not seek to give sacrificially to others; they seek to gain from others. They do not seek to edify others but to exploit them (verse 3). Their life is one of sensuality (verse 2), not true spirituality. The false teachers of whom Peter writes are self-centred, self-serving, and self-indulgent (verse 10, 12-14).

Verse 3a says, **“In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories.”** They are motivated by a desire for money. This is nothing new. Prophet Micah says, **“...her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money”** (Mic 3:11a). In the New Testament as well, Paul warns Timothy about those who exploit Christian faith as a means to financial gain (1 Ti 6:5). Verse 14b says, **“They are experts in greed....”**

- **False teachers can be recognized by their methods.** When false teachers “arise,” their heresies are “secretly introduced” (verse 1). They “creep in unnoticed” (Jude 4). These false teachers are devious and deceptive, not wishing to be known for what they are. In some cases, they do not even recognize their own condition. They not only deceive, they are themselves deceived

They rely on slick methods rather than on the Spirit of God and appeal to the lusts of the flesh (Sensuality = Seductive = stunts appealing to senses)

- a. Scripture-twisting
- b. personal manipulation – telling clever lies vs 3
- c. man-centred approach to worship

- **A fifth characteristic is that they are hypocritical and apostate (17-22).** Verse 17 calls false teachers “**springs without water,**” and “**mists driven by a storm.**” They have big mouths and they are full of boastful words. Yet their lives are empty. Though they are slaves of immorality, they promise freedom. Verses 20-22 describe their apostasy, concluding with the proverbs: “**A dog returns to its vomit,**” and “**A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.**” A sow is a female pig. As a boy, I watched my father raise pigs on a small farm. From time to time, he would wash them with a garden hose. But even before they could dry off, they went and rolled in the mud to make themselves dirty again. In contrast, godly people grow in Christ’s likeness steadily. Peter began this letter by telling us that Christ’s divine power has given us everything we need to live a godly life. As we struggle honestly before God, he will surely help us progress in godly life.

Sin must be punished

In chapter 2, Peter warns of the serious consequences awaiting false teachers. He used the expressions: “**bringing swift destruction on themselves**” (1b), “**their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping**” (3b), “**They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done**” (13), “**Blackest darkness is reserved for them**” (17b), and “**they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning**” (20b). Peter was not expressing his own sentiment toward the false teachers, but the certainty of God’s judgment based on what God has done throughout history.

1. First of all, God did not spare angels when they sinned (4). Angels are ministering spirits created to serve God and his people (Lk 1:19,26; Heb 1:14). They have a great privilege to share God's important messages with his people. Verse 4b says, **“God sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment...”** (Jude 6). Though it might have been painful, God could not but punish angels when they sinned, because he is holy, righteous and just.

2. Peter's second illustration is the ancient world and Noah (5).

God destroyed them all, according to his righteousness and justice.

3. Peter's third illustration is Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot (6-8).

Genesis describes the people of Sodom like this: **“Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord”** (Gen 13:13). The Lord told Abraham, **“The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me”** (Gen 18:21).

There will always be false teachers

- The solution is not have a data base of all false teachers because we cannot have a complete list of them
- Focus on mastering what is true
(Banks focus on teaching their staff the features of an original note and not the counterfeit)
- Not all of us will go to seminary – Take time to study the truth and compare it with what the man of God is teaching

Conclusion

We need to ask certain questions to teachers of the word of God

- What is their testimony? Why are they in ministry?
- What is their source of power? Scriptures reveal to us the devil can do miracles....investigate
- *Do not let anyone take your eyes off Jesus*