

# Stop, change direction?

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Date: 26 April 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good for us to be able to join together again as we do so this morning to worship God. Just by way of intimation, can I just say that the service this evening will be our monthly Gaelic service. That should be online just before six o'clock tonight and Mr. Farrecher MacLeod, one of the elders here, will take that service. YF will meet again tonight on Zoom as they have done over past weeks and the Ladies Bible Study also meet on Zoom on a Monday night. If people need any information on that, please speak to either Mary or Lucy Tua. And the Wednesday night prayer meeting, again half past seven on Wednesday evening on Zoom as well. And there's details of these things on the Facebook page. So these I think are all the intimations. Let's now worship God and we sing to his praise.

We sing that well-known hymn where we look to the God who is immortal, invisible, God, only wise, enlightened, accessible, hid from our eyes, most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days, almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise. So we sing the verses of that hymn to God's praise.

God and we sing the verses of that hymn to God.

Thy great name we praise.

Of goodness and love. To all life thou givest, both great and small. In all life thou livest, the true life of all.

[ 3 : 06 ] We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree. And wither and perish, but not change a fee.

Great Father of glory, your Father of light, Thine angels adore me, all veiling their sight.

O Lord we would surrender. Oh, help us to see. Tis only the splendor of light hideeth thee.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise In light, inaccessible, hid from our eyes Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise Let's unite our hearts in prayer now, let's pray Our Heavenly Father we thank you that we are able to come to you again on this day We are able to bow before the God who is immortal, who is invisible The only wise God and we thank you for the hymn that we have heard and that we have sung A hymn that impresses upon us the majesty and the glory, the power

The mighty, almighty power that you have And yet Lord we thank you that we are able to come to you this morning And we are able to bow in worship and able to draw near And know that sense of intimacy and that sense of blessing As we come into your presence And once again Lord we acknowledge with great thanksgiving That we are able to do so only in and through the name and the finished work of Jesus You are the almighty, the holy, the majestic God And we confess Lord that we are those who are sinners Our thoughts, our words and our deeds are so often an offence Lord to you And they are a barrier to us coming before you And yet Lord we thank you that Jesus died on a cross to take our sin from us

[ 5 : 54 ] And we thank you that we are promised in your word that as we confess our sins You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins And to purify us from all unrighteousness And so Lord we come this morning As we do each morning confessing that we are sinners Agreeing with you that we are deserving of punishment But we thank you that we believe that Jesus took our punishment on that cross For us and from us And if we are trusting in him We thank you that we are able to come before the throne of God And we are able to find that intimacy, that blessing That sense of your presence That sense of forgiveness and the joy of your salvation of us We thank you that we are able to come to you Even as those who are your children We come before you as our father

As we are taught to And this is all because of what Christ has done So enable us never to lose sight of that And enable us we pray As we thank you for your grace Not to take that grace for granted But to seek to live lives Which express our gratitude For all that has been done for us Our thankfulness For all that Jesus is and has done On our behalf We ask Lord that you would help us In this day You know us Lord You have made us You sustain us To all life thou givest To both great and small And we thank you That the life that we have The breath that's in our lungs The measure of health and strength That we enjoy Is a gift from you And we pray for those Lord Who are struggling at this time With their health and with their strength We pray for those who are struggling

To find breath We know many who are sick In our land We hear the reports day by day And we know that with this virus The struggle is for breath And we pray Lord That those whom we know Those whom we bring to you We see them in our mind's eye Even now We ask Lord That you would lay your hand Of healing upon them You're the God Who is able to drive back Disease and viruses And we pray Lord That you would do so In the lives of those That we bring to you We pray especially for Fiona Glenn At this time As we have prayed for her We continue to pray for her And we ask that you would Make her well And Lord That she would know your presence And your peace We pray Father For those Who are struggling also With that sense of grief And we thank you That you're the God Of all comfort And even this week As we have As we have attended funerals

As we have laid to rest Those who have been much loved In this place And elsewhere We thank you That we are able to come To you Seeking comfort And bring others to you To receive that comfort And Lord We pray For the family Of the late Graham McLeod We pray for Maria And for Norma We pray For Stevie And for Lily And for Callum And for Stuart We think of those In Kylas As well Lord For Kathy Ann And Craig And Myrdo Farrakhar And Rachel And for the brothers And sisters And sister Lord We bring them to you For Myrdo And for Roddy And for Rachel We pray Lord That they Would know your comfort That they would know Your nearer presence That they would know That in That sense of grief That you are God And that you are with them And we thank you For the hope of the gospel A hope Which we believe

Graham took hold of In these last few weeks We thank you That when that is the case Everything has changed As the Apostle Paul said O death Where is your sting And yet Lord We know That when we are separated From those that we love We need your comfort And we pray that For those who are grieving We ask now Lord That you would continue with us In this service We pray for your help Lord the help Of the Holy Spirit That as we read your word And as we meditate upon it That our eyes would be opened Our ears would be unblocked Our hearts would be stirred And that we would know And be able to say That we have been with Jesus So hear our prayers Take away our sin And lead us and guide us By your spirit And we pray these things In Jesus name Amen Boys and girls I hope you're behind That screen today It's good to see some of you Just when I'm out From my exercise

[10:57] I've seen some of you In the distance It was good to see At least one of you At the prayer meeting On Wednesday night I saw Jono there On the camera And it was good to see him Boys and girls You're very welcome To come to the prayer meeting On Wednesday night And to listen in As various people Lead us in prayer And you can pray As well There So Anyway It's good to see you In the passing It's good to see you On screens And I want to just speak To you For a minute or two Just now In the last wee while You know that We've not been able To go a lot of the places That we went in the past So We might have gone To the gym Or we might have gone Down to the sports field For exercise We might have gone All over the place For walks And yet We're only allowed To go out Certain places At certain times In this In this period of lockdown And one of the places That I've gone Quite a lot In the last few weeks That I never Really went before Was up the back

Of the hill Up behind the house And you climb up The back of that hill It's quite steep At the beginning And it's quite wet And then you get To the top part And you can see All the way Over Tarbert And it's a beautiful View over there But you never see Any people up there You never really see Any things up there It's just heather And it's rocks And it's a good place To go and walk But There was one day That we were walking Up there Mary and I And the girls And One of us Saw something In the heather Just underneath The heather And it looked A different colour To everything else That was there So we had a closer look And I dug down A little bit And do you know What it was That we find In the heather That Can you see That It's Well it's a golf ball It's a It's a

Max Fly DDH 500 Golf ball And as I Picked the thing Up I was thinking How on earth Did that get here When I've heard That Russell And Kuna Are a bit Their drives Can go a bit Off course But I don't even think We can blame Them for that Because They're all the way In Skaristar And this Golf ball Was just In at the back Of Tarbert And so The thing I wanted to say Is that Sometimes you find Things Unexpected Things Like a golf ball In unexpected Places It's the last thing I expected to find In the back Of our hill And I wonder In this time Of lockdown We didn't Expect to be In this situation When we were When we're in a church And you're not Here with me And we're all Sitting at home And we're watching Things on screens

We didn't expect To be in this position But I wonder What you're expecting In this period Of lockdown We might not be Expecting very much But maybe God Will actually Give us more Than we were Expecting Because Think about this Before the lockdown We were so busy All the time We were never stopping We were going From club To club To club And we were going From lesson To lesson To lesson We were always On the go Whether we were young Or whether we were Middle aged Or older And all that Or almost all of that Stopped And now we have Time And we have A bit of space And I wonder In that time And space Maybe God Will come Much closer To us In that We might not Have expected That But it does say In the Bible In Psalm 46 Be still

And know That I Am God Maybe that's What God Will do In lockdown He'll come Close to us And we'll get To know him Better And at the moment You're not in school I'm sure you're Missing up a whole lot Or most of you Are not in school And we're maybe Not learning As much maths And English And languages As we were learning When we were When we were When we were In school But maybe In this time Of lockdown We'll actually Get to Learn much more About About Jesus And how much He loves us And how much We can We can trust him During school time We We don't get To open the Bible Very much Do we But In this time Of lockdown Even In school hours We can be Opening the Bible A lot more And learn How much Jesus loves us

[ 16 : 01 ] And how much He did for us Maybe we're Missing our Friends Just now We want to Be with them And we want To play football With them We want to Go out for A cycle We want to Go and do Whatever it is We always Used to do Maybe we're Really missing Our friends I think most Of us are But maybe In this time Of lockdown We'll get To To To know More About Jesus Not just In our heads But in our Hearts And maybe By the end Of this Period We'll be Able to Say Like that Hymn we Often Sing says What a Friend I Have in Jesus Maybe we'll Be able to Say that In a real And a really Deep way In our hearts That we have A friend In Jesus He wasn't So much of A friend Before lockdown But maybe In this period Of lockdown When other Friends are not Close Jesus will Come really Close And we'll Get to To know

Him As that Friend That sticks Closer Than a Brother In this Period of Lockdown We were Seeing people And they're Very worried And they're Very stressed And they're Going from This to that And they're They're always Anxious But maybe God will Teach us That when Everybody else In the world Is getting Stressed When we're Close to Him We can Know real Deep Peace And maybe In this Time of Lockdown When we Can't go To the Shop And buy All the Things that We normally Want to Buy God will Actually Show us And teach Us That the Greatest Contentment That we'll Ever Find is Not in Things But it's In Knowing Him So I Don't know What you're Expecting In lockdown I certainly Wasn't Expecting To find A golf Ball Up the Back of The hill Maybe We're not Expecting Very much But maybe God will Do a Whole lot In your

Life And mine To Teach us About how Great he Is And how Much We Need him And how Much We love Him When we Come Close to Him So we'll Pray about That night Our heavenly Father we Thank you That you've Said to us In the Bible That in All things You're Working And you're Working for The good Of those Who love You And you're Working for The glory Of your Name And so Even though We're not Able to Do very Much at This time We pray That you Would be Doing much In our Lives and In our Hearts We pray That we Would know Your peace Each day And we Wouldn't Be anxious Like so Many people Are We pray That in This time We would Come closer To you That we Would get To know Jesus More and More As our Friend As our Saviour As our Lord And we Pray that We would Know that Contentment And that Joy

That comes From being Close with Jesus So be So be With the Boys and Girls We pray Keep them Safe Keep them Well Keep them Close to You And we Pray that Soon We will be Able to Come back Together And have That joy Of seeing Each other Back in This place And we Ask all These things In Jesus Name And for Jesus Sake Amen Let's open God's word Now and We will Read from Second Peter Chapter Two Second Peter Chapter Two And we Read the Whole Of this Chapter This is God's word But there Were also False prophets Among the People Just as There will Be false Teachers Among you They will Secretly Introduce Destructive Heresies Even denying The sovereign

Lord Who bought Them Bringing Swift Destruction On Themselves Many Will Follow Their Shameful Ways And will Bring The way Of The Truth Into Disrepute In Their Greed These Teachers Will Exploit You With Stories They Have Made Up Their Condemnation Has Long Been Hanging Over Them And Their Destruction Has Not Been Sleeping For If God Did Not Spare Angels When They Sinned But Sent Them To Hell Putting Them Into Gloomy Dungeons To Be Held For Judgment If He Did Not Spare The Ancient World When He Brought The Flood On His Ungodly People But Protected Noah A Preacher Of Righteousness And Seven Others If He Condemned The Cities Of Sodom And Gomorrah By Burning Them To Ashes And Made Them An Example Of What Is Going To Happen To The Ungodly And If He Rescued Lot The Righteous Man Who Was Distressed By The Filthy Lives Of Lawless Men For That Righteous Man Living Among

[ 21 : 03 ] Them Day After Day Was Tormented In His Righteous Soul By The Lawless Deeds He Saw And Heard If This Is So Then The Lord Knows How To Rescue Godly Men From Trials And To Hold The Unrighteous For The Day Of Judgment While Follow The Corrupt Desire Of The Sinful Nature And Despise Authority Bold And Arrogant These Men Are Not Afraid To Slander Celestial Beings Yet Even Angels Although They Are Stronger And More Powerful Do Not Bring Slandorous Accusations Against Such Beings In The Presence Of The Lord But These Men Blaspheme In Matters They Do Not Understand They Are Like Brute Beasts Creatures Of Instinct Born Only To Be Caught And Destroyed And Like Beasts They Too Will Perish They Will Be Paid Back With Harm For The Harm They Have Done Their Idea Of Pleasure

Is To Crouse In Broad Daylight They Are Blots And Blemishes Revelling In Their Pleasures While They Feast With You With Eyes Full Of Adultery They Never Stop Sinning They Seduce The Unstable They Experts In Greed And Accursed Brood They Have Left The Straight Way And Wandered Off To Follow The Way Of Balaam Son Of Beor Who Loved The Wages Of Wickedness But He Was Rebuked For His Wrong Doing By A Donkey A Beast Without Speech Who Spoke With A Man's Voice And Restrained The Prophet's Madness These Men Are Springs Without Water And Mists Driven By A Storm Blackest Darkness Is Reserved For Them For The Mouth Empty Boastful Words And By Appealing To The Lustful Desires Of Sinful Human Nature They Entice People Who Are Just In Error They Promised Them Freedom While They Themselves

Are Slaves Of Depravity For A Man Is A Slave To Whatever Has Mastered Him If They Have Escaped The Corruption Of The World By Knowing Our Lord And Saviour Jesus Christ And Are Again Entangled In It And Overcome They Are Worse Off At The End Than They Were At The Beginning It Would Have Been Better For Them Then To Turn Their Backs On The Sacred Command That Was Passed On To Them Of Them The Proverbs Are True A Dog Returns To Its Vomit And A Sow That Is Washed Goes Back To Her Wallowing In The Mud Amen And May God Bless That We Of His Word To Us Again We We'll Pause For A Moment To Pray Our Heavenly Father We Thank You For This Letter From Your Servant The Apostle

Peter And We Pray Once More That The Same Holy Spirit Who Inspired Him To Write These Words Would Guide Us In Preaching And Listening And Responding Be At Work Lord We Pray Amongst Us As We Have Your Word Open Before Us Speak Into Our Lives And Mold Us And Shape Us That We May Become More Like Jesus Enable Us To See Jesus We Pray In These Verses And Enable Each One Of Us To Trust The Lord Jesus And For Any Who Are Listening Who Have Not Yet Done That Enable Them To See The Danger The Peril Of Being Outside Of Christ And Help Them Help Each Of Us To Hear The Call Of The Gospel To Come To Jesus And To Find That Salvation So Hear Our Prayers And Help Us We Pray And As We Pray For Ourselves We Pray For All

The Other Churches In This Place That Gather As We Do In These Days We Pray That The Gospel Is Preached That You Would Add Your Blessing Lord That You Would Build Your Church That You Would Encourage Your People That You Would Glorify Your Own Name And We Ask All These Things In Jesus Name And For Jesus Sake Amen Well If You Could Open Your Bibles If They're Not Already Open At 2 Peter Chapter 2 We Return To This Letter From Peter The Apostle It's A Letter Which Was Addressed To Christians Back Then In AD 65 AD 68 And It's A Letter That Still Comes To Us As Christians Today

[ 26 : 28 ] Saving Saving Saving Relationship With Jesus That's What A Christian Is We're To Make Sure That We Are Those Who Have Taken Hold Of Christ Who Are Righteous in Christ, who have received that grace of Jesus, who are in relationship with Jesus.

And if we are Christians, the thrust of this letter is an encouragement for us to be growing. We're to be growing.

And that's really the gist of chapter one. There's that encouragement there for us to be sure that we are Christians and to be sure that we are Christians, that we are growing.

And as we move from chapter one into chapter two, Peter, still in this theme of growth, which runs all the way through the letter, Peter, he deals with some of the dangers that Christians can encounter, that stifle growth.

He deals with some, you could say, growth killers. And we have to deal with growth killers in various aspects of life. I look out the window just now, it's a beautiful day.

[ 27 : 43 ] And we see that our grass is growing, our gardens are growing. But when we look out and we see that, we see very quickly soar the weeds. They're growing.

And there's bugs which come onto the plants and the vegetables. These things are growth killers. And we can't ignore these things or they'll choke and they'll kill every plant that's coming through.

Growth killers cannot be ignored. In the economy as well, in a different sector of life, there are certain things the economists tell us, which if left unchecked, they can do harm to an economy.

They can plunge us into financial danger. They're economic growth killers. COVID-19, we could say, probably comes into that category. It's an economic growth killer.

And in the spiritual realm, these lessons apply also. There are things, there are people, there are factors which cause our spiritual growth to cease.

[ 28 : 50 ] Now, how do we grow? Well, we touched on that last Sunday. We thought about that with the children. In the children's song that we often repeat, read the Bible, pray every day, and you'll grow, grow, grow.

That's the simple but powerful truth that is all the way through the teaching of God and Scripture. But what Peter addresses in AD 65 were some people, Peter calls them in verse 1, false prophets or false teachers.

And they were causing the people that he was writing to, these Christians, to be led away from the Bible. The Bible is the means through which we grow, and yet these people were taking people away from the Bible.

They were taking people off their knees. They were growth killers, these false prophets, these false teachers. So in this chapter, Peter, he takes the spotlight and he turns the spotlight on them.

And he gives us clear advice on how we can spot a false teacher. And he gives us clear advice on what we are to do with false teachers and what we are to do with the teaching that they seek to introduce.

[ 30 : 21 ] So what we'll look at this morning is, first of all, how we can spot a false teacher, according to the advice we are given by Peter here.

And we'll look, secondly, at what becomes of false teachers and what becomes of those who follow false teachers. And finally, we'll come to that point where we ask the question, in light of all this, what should we do?

How should we respond to this? So first of all, how to spot a false teacher. Now, most of us at some point in our lives have watched Crime Watch UK.

And part of that program was to warn the general public about criminals who were at large, who were out on the run, who hadn't been captured.

And the way that they would do this in the program is they would tell a story to the viewer of what these particular criminals had done, what charges were upon them.

[ 31 : 25 ] And then they would give a description and perhaps a picture of these offenders. They would always give the advice, don't approach them. They're dangerous.

Avoid them. And essentially, that's what Peter does here. He warns us of the danger that these false teachers bring.

And he gives us a description of them so that we can spot them. So there's three marks that are given here that guide us in being able to spot a false teacher.

The first thing that Peter highlights here is that they are often insiders. They're insiders. Verse 1. But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.

Now note that. These false teachers, these false prophets, they wouldn't be people who would come from the outside in. But these were insiders.

[ 32 : 32 ] These were people who would be moving and doing damage, even as he wrote, even as they read this, amongst the people. Among you, says Peter.

At this point in time, in lockdown, the police, I understand, are on the lookout for those who would break the rules, for those who would be moving amongst people when they should be staying at home.

So how did the police address this? Well, what are they doing? I understand they're scanning all the cars that are passing through Harris. And if they, in their computer, find a car that doesn't have a local registration plate, they'll stop it.

And ask them, what are they doing here? Now Peter says, these false teachers, these people who are moving amongst you, who shouldn't be moving amongst you, these people who are bringing risk and danger and stopping growth amongst the Christian fellowship, they won't have foreign plates.

These will have local plates. They may be in the membership of the church. They may be office bearers. They may be preachers. And so he says to the Christians in this place at that time and throughout time, be alert.

[ 33 : 53 ] At the YF, when they meet in here, they often play a game called wink murder. And in the room, they sit in a circle.

And in the room, somewhere in the circle, there's the murderer. And the only person who knows the murderer is the murderer. But the murderer will, in the course of this game, wink at people who are sitting around the circle.

And when he winks in the direction of somebody who's sitting on the chair, and they see it, they collapse. And they fall down dead. And the object of the game is to try to identify who the murderer is before they do too much damage.

And here, Peter is saying that the people you're trying to spot, the false teachers who I'm warning you of, they're in the circle. They may be in the room.

They're insiders. So, so watch. How do you spot a false teacher? Well, he says often they're insiders. The second thing he says here is they are introducers.

[ 35 : 08 ] Now, very often in the Bible, true teachers, true apostles, they keep on reminding the people, the Christian people, the same gospel truths.

1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul, he says, Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel, you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you've believed in vain. So he keeps on reminding them of the gospel that he preached to them.

Peter, in 2 Peter 1, the chapter we were in last week, he says in verse 12, So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.

I think it's right to refresh your memory, as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me, and I will make every effort to see that after my departure, you will always be able to remember these things.

[ 36 : 18 ] True teachers, true apostles seem to be people who keep on reminding of the same gospel truths.

They keep telling, as we sing in that hymn, the old, old story of Jesus and his love. But by contrast, false teachers are not concerned with reminding the people of what is established and true and known to be thoroughly biblical, but they are introducers of new thoughts and new ideas.

And we see the contrast between chapter 1 and chapter 2. In chapter 1, Peter, as he speaks to us, says, We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

That's 2 Peter 1 verse 16. But the false teachers, by contrast, what do they do? Well, 2 Peter 2 verse 3, he says, These teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up.

Peter says, The things I'm telling you, they're not cleverly made up, invented stories. I'm just passing on what we saw about Jesus. The false teachers, they're exploiting you, with stuff that's straight out of their own heads.

[ 37 : 42 ] They use verse 3 to quote the authorized version, feigned words, or false words, as the ESV puts it.

The word in Greek is the word *plastos*, from which we get a word *plastic*. So these false teachers, they use plastic words, they bend, they shape, they twist the words to suit themselves.

And using this tactic, they verse 1, secretly introduce destructive heresies. They verse 2, bring the way of truth into disrepute.

This is how they operate, says Peter. Heresy, false teaching. You know, it never comes with an advanced warning. It never comes with an alarm system.

Just the scammers or con men, they never tell you about the risks of losing money. They secretly try to trick you. It's all very subtle.

[ 38 : 42 ] These false teachers, they mix a wee bit of heresy, a wee bit of false teaching in with the truth.

In verse 1, the literal translation of what's said there is, they secretly bring in alongside. They take heresy, they take falsehood, and they secretly bring it in alongside the truth.

When I read that, it took me back to a debate in an assembly hall many years back, and the debate concerned God's design for life and for relationships.

And I remember so clearly, some people were standing up and they were opening their Bibles and they were plainly and they were clearly and they were faithfully reminding us of what was clear and what was true.

And there were other people that were standing up and they had closed their Bibles and they were introducing their own new ideas. And when they used a word from the Bible, they would twist it.

[ 39 : 54 ] They would make it like plastic and shape it and misshape it to say what they wanted it to say. And the thing that they said in this debate that stuck so much with me that reminded me of that day when I read this, is they kept on saying, why can we not have a mixed economy?

That was the phrase they used, a mixed economy. Why can we not have a little bit of old biblical thinking? But let's bring in also a little bit of new modern thinking.

And we can have the two together. We can have a mixed economy of these things. And when we think about that in relation to 2 Peter 2, we see that that's a classic false teacher strategy.



Straight out of the chapter. They take their introduced, made up false teaching and they set it alongside the truth.

And the problem with that is that just one drop of false teaching can spoil the whole gospel message.

[ 41 : 06 ] I was watching MasterChef with the girls the other day and the contestants in this particular challenge, they were making macaroons or macarons, however you say that.

And the teacher, the expert, was giving them advice on how they make these things. And she said, they're actually very simple, very straightforward to make. But under pressure, you have to be so careful because one drop of water into this mix, one speck of egg yolk into this mix and everything will be spoiled.

And that's the way it is with false teaching. Paul makes that point clear in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 6. He says, Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Just a wee bit of false teaching. It goes a long, destructive way. Think about the ship that's setting its course, mapping its course for the destination.

If it's just one degree out, then it may look in the early stages like it's on track. But within very little time, we can see it's veered way off course.

[ 42 : 19 ] It's never going to reach the destination that it was supposed to reach. And that is true of the gospel. If we tolerate false teaching, says Peter, if we bring any of that into the mix of the gospel, it will get through the whole batch.

It will take us way off course. So watch for it, says Peter. Watch for those who would introduce ideas that are not from this book, the Bible.

So how to spot a false teacher? They are insiders, says Peter. Very often they are introducers. And the final thing here is their indulgence.

Sometimes we might look at someone and we say, I'm not quite sure what makes them tick. Here Peter tells us exactly what makes the false teachers tick, what drives them, what motivates them, and essentially it's self-indulgence.

a Christian is someone who has accepted Jesus as saviour, the one who will save our souls and as lord over us.

[ 43 : 37 ] We can't have Jesus as saviour but not as lord. We have to accept him as saviour and as lord. A Christian is someone who has been bought by the blood of Jesus.

We say with the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20, we are not our own. We are bought at a price but the false teacher, says Peter, will not accept that.

The false teacher is seen, verse 1, denying the sovereign lord who bought them. The false teacher, verse 10, is one who despises authority, who will allow no one to rule over them.

They are king. They are lord. The false teacher, verse 3, is driven by greed, that insatiable desire to have what I want. They follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature, verse 10, says Peter.

They are bold and arrogant, verse 11. They blaspheme, verse 12. They believe what they want to believe. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, verse 11.

[ 44 : 54 ] As the King James puts it in verse 13, spots they are, spots they are, and blemishes, which is a carefully worded way, it's a technical way of saying they are not like Jesus.

Spots and blemishes they are. Now Peter, in 1 Peter 1.19, describes Jesus as a lamb without blemish or spot.

The false teacher is in his or her very essence, spots and blemishes. Their lives are all wrong. That's what Peter said.

That there's a problem at the level of their character. They don't deny self. They feed self. They indulge self. Whatever they want, whether it's on the track of belief, whether it's in carnal desires, whether it's a case of authority, whatever they want, they must have.

They don't take up their cross and follow Jesus. They turn away from Jesus. They turn away from the cross. They go their own way. They are indulgers.

[ 46 : 11 ] And Peter says, watch for them. So there's a pretty gruesome profile of the false teacher.

And we are told in these verses to watch for the false teacher. Where do we watch? Well, I suppose we watch, first of all, we look, first of all, in the mirror, don't we?

We look at ourselves to make sure that we don't see any traces of this in us. If we find that we are veering away from the Bible, God's word, and determining that we will go our own way, we see something of the false teacher.

if we are allowing the old man of self and sin to have more and more of his way and to rise up and to take us on a course that is not the course of Christ, we see something of the false teacher.

So we begin by looking in the mirror in our own hearts. We are to watch for the false teacher, not to allow any of that to rise up within us.

[ 47 : 27 ] And not to tolerate any of that around us. Anyone, any person, any group that would seek to take us away from Scripture, away from God's clear, authoritative, reliable word is taking us down a track of false teaching.

And we are to watch for that. So we see here first of all how to spot the false teacher, we see secondly here what will become of the false teachers and those who follow them.

Sometimes we can be at a crossroads and we're considering going one way or the other way but we can be confronted as we select one direction with a danger sign and that makes us stop and it makes us think and reconsider the wisdom of going ahead.

Remember out behind our house in Stornoway when I was a wee boy and there was a little electricity substation just like a wee shed with a high-sided fence around it and it made this constant hum, this buzzing noise which was intriguing to a child and I got pretty close to it on a number of occasions but there was a sign attached to the sides of the fence and it said do not enter danger of death and that's what kept me back and that's what Peter is saying here he's saying false teachers and those who are considering following them that there's danger of death up ahead where will their false teaching take them and those who follow them well it will take them says Peter down a dangerous destructive path in going their own way and not God's way they are says Peter in verse 1 bringing swift destruction on themselves he says in verse 3 their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping in verse 12

Peter says like beasts they too speaking of the false teacher and those who follow them will perish verse 13 they will be paid back harm for harm for the harm they have done verse 17 blackest darkness is reserved for for them and it couldn't be clearer could it Peter as he as he's pressing this upon us is saying this is a huge stop sign in this chapter for anyone who is starting to veer off course and follow the false teacher rather than the Lord and God is saying through Peter if you go down this route if you follow that course and not God's way you're on the road to destruction verse 1 condemnation verse 3 perishing verse 12 eternal payback and punishment verse 13 blackest darkness verse 17 and we know from a wider reading of scripture that these these words are a collection of metaphors for for hell so the warning given here that it is the most dangerous track to be on going away from the

[ 51 : 06 ] Lord and his word and down the course of the false teacher and then there follows in the next few verses various examples of God's judgment to impress upon us how serious God is about this sometimes we can make we can make threats we can say if you don't do this then this is coming and then we don't deliver on it I mean in the days of being a being a homeschooler say to the children if you don't work hard this morning you're not going to get your snack but by the time snack time comes I'm so frazzled they're going to have their snack whether I've said it or not I don't follow through sometimes on the things that I say but Peter is saying here that's not how God is what he says he will do in terms of both salvation and judgment and he says to press this in on us if you're questioning the fact that to go down the route of false teaching is a dangerous course then think about the angels and think about the ancient world and think about the atonement first of all the angels verse 4 for if God did not spare angels when they sinned but sent them to hell putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment then the logical conclusion there is if he didn't spare them he won't spare those who are on this false teaching track and I'm not going to delve deep into this but what's been taught here is that when Satan and those who sided with him stood against

God they were and they will be judged for it they were cast out of heaven they are destined it says for the gloomy dungeons of hell so think about that says Peter there is evidence here of God's judgment then he says think about the ancient world in the verses 5 to 10 he gives examples of Noah and the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah and you can go back and you can read these verses and you can read the accounts in full you'll read about Noah and the flood in Genesis 6 to 8 you can read about Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 but what do we see in these accounts well we see that that God in his mercy and his grace and in his love he makes a way possible for people to be saved he goes to great lengths to allow people to escape judgment he calls them he pleads with them to be saved but but if they will not listen if they will not follow his way and rather go down the way of the false teacher than judgment false we read in these accounts of many people who did perish perish

I think it's fair to say that we at the cultural level don't take this as seriously as we should we think often about judgment as a caricature of yesterday's preaching and the sad reality is it may well have been something that was very much in yesterday's preaching that is absent from today's preaching but what Peter is saying to us here is that God was and God is serious about judging sin he is serious about what will happen to those who turn away from the way of truth and embrace what is false and that's what's been driven through in this teaching that's what's been driven through in these examples and if we need another reason to see that God is serious about judging sin where do we look we've looked at the angels we've looked at the ancient world and finally here we can look at the atonement now you might ask the question where do you see the atonement in these verses

I think we see a hint of the atonement in the phrase that Peter uses in these verses he says in verse 4 and 5 the same phrase he says for if God did not spare angels verse 5 for if God did not spare the ancient world now does that phrase not ring a bell in your mind as it does mine when we think about this who else was not spared well Jesus was not spared in Romans 8 32 that amazing chapter that speaks to us about the hope of the gospel for us in Christ if we are trusting him it says in verse 32 of Romans 8 he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all and that's the reality that's the central reality of our gospel hope

Jesus died now why did he die he died because our sin had to be punished and he died so that we could have atonement he died so that we who were at odds with God we who were at war with God we who were enemies of God and under judgment because of our sin could be made at one with God atoned with God through Jesus so if you want to see evidence that God is serious about judging our sin serious about those who turn away from him and go their own way then look to the cross because there we see that Jesus suffered the destruction of verse one he suffered the condemnation of verse three he suffered that perishing of verse twelve he suffered the eternal payback and punishment our sin deserved in verse thirteen he suffered as the confession the

[ 58 : 15 ] Nicaean creed says he descended into hell he descended into the blackest darkness of hell so that we if we trust him and turn away from false teaching can be saved and can be kept and that takes us to our final point what should we do we've been given the we've been given the profile of the false teacher so we can spot them we have been given the stark reality of what becomes of false teachers and those who follow them they lead those who follow them down a track of judgment and so the question that we end with is what should we do it's where all this is leading it's leading to us being confronted with this issue of what must

I do this is no dry lesson in theology this is no hypothetical scenario that Peter is thinking through with us here for his own intellectual stimulation this is real life when Peter writes these things he writes from the bitter experience of his own life Peter had known people who looked genuine Peter had had known people and been close with people who were so much insiders that they were part of the twelve and yet ultimately were lost we know who we're talking about here it's Judas Iscariot and yet as Peter thought back he could remember one time in his life when he looked not much different to Judas having denied his

Lord three times having walked away from Jesus having gone back to his old life of fishing he had got off the straight way to use the terminology of this chapter he was wandering dangerously but God in his mercy called Peter back and Peter repented he changed direction when he heard the call of Christ he came back and now God is using Peter even in this chapter to call others who are off track who are far from Jesus to come to Jesus or to come back to Jesus if they are straight so what should we do we come to Christ we come back to

Christ that's what we should do perhaps there's someone listening just now who's been wandering dangerously for a long time and yet you're hearing the call of Jesus through Peter it's time to come back why would we not come back look at the profile that we have here look at the realities that are in this chapter false teachers if that's the track that we're on there only is two ways we can go the way of false teaching or we can go the way of Christ false teachers they're springs without water verse 17 they leave us forever thirsty but Jesus is the one who promises living water that brings eternal satisfaction and life to our souls false teachers verse 17 they lead us into blackest darkness we experience some measure of it in this world and then it's an eternal reality but Jesus leads us into everlasting light life false teachers lead us into error although they would have us believe that it's not error but Jesus leads us into the truth he himself is the truth false teachers their words are empty verse 18 but Jesus words are full and they bring nourishment life to our souls false teachers verse 18 they promise everything but they can deliver nothing and yet every promise of God is kept and is delivered to us in Christ false teachers verse 19 they lead us into captivity they promise freedom they say sin sin sin and you'll enjoy freedom after freedom and yet the reality is they lead us into captivity we become slaves verse 19 to depravity but Jesus gives us freedom and I could go on that's just a touch of it but surely that's enough for us to see what we must do what must we do get away from the false teachers and the false teacher turn back if that's the track that we're on and turn in faith to Jesus or turn again in faith to Jesus as Peter did we pray heavenly father we thank you that you are patient with us we thank you that you call us and you call us and you call us we confess that we are those who who are prone to wonder as we often sing we pray that if we are wandering today if there are those who are wandering and on that dangerous track today we pray

Lord that you would draw each one back and that we would be brought into a close walk with God the only safe place to be the only satisfying place to be so hear our prayers help us we ask and enable us in this day of grace to respond because as we see in chapter three the day of the Lord is coming soon and by then it will be too late enable each one of us to be able to say and act on the instruction of your word today is the day of salvation may we not harden our hearts we pray these things in Jesus name and for Jesus sake amen we will close by singing to God's praise from psalm 51 and from verses 7 to verse 13 this psalmist

[ 66 : 00 ] David the psalmist who has been away from God for a period who has been off track hears the call of God and returns to the Lord in confession and knows that intimacy and that joy of God's cleansing and God's salvation again in the soul do do do thy with this sprinkle me I shall be cleansed so ye wash thou me and then I shall be whiter than the snow down to verse 13 which is what Peter is doing here then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be and those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee these verses of Psalm 51 to God's praise do thou with his sox sprinkle me I shall be cleansed so yea wash thou me and then

I shall be whiter than the snow of gladness and of joy fullness make me to hear the voice that so this very born which thou hast broken me rejoice all mine iniquities brought out life is this hide from my sin create a clean heart lord renew a right spirit me within cast me not from thy side nor take thy holy spirit away restore me thy salvation's joy with thy free spirit me stay then will

I teach thy wisdom to those that transgressors transgressors be and those that sinners shall then be turned unto thee and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore Amen