

False Teachers are Animals

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into 2 Peter chapter two, highlighting the severe warnings against false teachers and the consequences of their actions. It emphasizes the importance of discerning the fruit of preachers' lives, cautioning against being enticed by attractive messages that lack spiritual depth. The passage draws parallels between false teachers and the prophet Balaam, who prioritized personal gain over God's truth, ultimately leading to their condemnation.

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:1, Matthew 7:15, John 10:11, Ephesians 6:12, Hebrews 1:4, Genesis 22:1, Jude 1:11, Galatians 1:6, 1 Corinthians 11:17

Topics: "Discernment", "Consequences of False Teaching"

Description

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Transcript

All right, let's go to Peter, 2 Peter chapter two. 2 Peter chapter two, and we'll read four through 17. 2 Peter two, reading four through 17.

This is a tough passage, and so this week and next week is gonna be a little bit hard because it's not that encouraging. But it's part of the word, and we are committed to teach through every one of the verses whether we like them or not. So 2 Peter chapter two from verse four.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world but saved Noah, one of eight people, preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly, and delivered righteous Lot who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked. For that righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.

And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority, that they are presumptuous, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels who are greater in power and might do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness as those who counted pleasure to carouse in the daytime. There are spots and blemishes, carousing in their deceptions while they feast with you.

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, they have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. But he was rebuked for his iniquity, a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice, restrained the madness of the prophet.

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness and darkness forever. And so, we ended, I think, on verse nine, at the beginning of verse 10. So, he introduces the chapter with the idea of the fact that there are false teachers, and then he says their judgment is sure.

And then he gives us examples from the Old Testament that God's judgment happened, but at the same time, he delivered those that were his. And so, the Lord knows then how to, verse nine, to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. Now, verse 10, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority.

So, now, he's coming back to the false preachers or the false teachers. And in fact, most of all, the rest of the chapter is going to be devoted to them. This is the strongest passage in all of the Bible that deals with false teachers.

He is ruthless in his statements concerning these guys. There are some really, really strong passages in the Old Testament against false prophets. Paul has a few very, very strong things to say.

He speaks about the fact in Galatians that if they preach another gospel, let them be accursed, let them be anathema. And so, but none of them are as forceful as Peter is. And Peter devotes this entire chapter to his condemnation of these false teachers.

And as I looked at it again this afternoon, and as I prepared to speak, and as I said, these are hard things to speak about because they're not particularly encouraging. And they may not be particularly relevant to us unless we are teachers, and particularly if we are false teachers. And yet, I came to understand that it's very easy to try to be nice about false teachers.

And yet, God doesn't see them as people that you need to be nice to. Now, it doesn't mean that we must be un-Christlike, that we must be ungodly. Remember that Jesus cleansed the temple.

And in cleansing the temple, the scripture from the Old Testament is quoted concerning him, that the zeal of your house has consumed me. And so, there is this burning desire to see the house of God cleansed and purified. And so, this passage really condemns these guys.

And so, God does condemn them. And the reason He condemns them is because they lead innocent people astray. That is the problem.

If someone is just a bad dude, and he lives a sinful and wicked and evil life, obviously, God's gonna judge him for that. But he really does not necessarily impact on anyone else. It's him and his life that he's messing up.

But false teachers will lead many astray. And many, many are influenced by their teaching. And the problem is that many more are often influenced by the false teachers than by true teachers.

Because false teachers present a pleasant gospel, a pleasant message, a message that is acceptable and that is easy to follow. Whereas the true preachers and teachers and prophets speak the hard things that require of us to get our lives right and to get our lives in line with the word of God. And so, that's why Peter is so strong about this whole thing.

And so, he says that the judgment of God is coming, especially on those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authorities. There are three different things. I was hoping to get through up to verse 16 tonight.

I'm not sure that we're gonna make it, but let's see. And so, three things. They walk according to the flesh.

In other words, they walk in human wisdom. They are driven by sensuality. And when we say sensuality, we're not meaning sexuality.

We're meaning the human senses, the taste, smell, hearing, feeling. They're motivated by human stuff and not spiritual stuff. They're walking in the flesh and not in the spirit.

So, they are what the scripture calls carnal. And Paul is very clear that those who are carnal should not be teaching. And the writer to Hebrews says that when you should be teachers, you are still carnal.

And so, fleshliness is something which shouldn't be present in a teacher. And yet, this is very much present in teachers today. I'm just constantly horrified by the kind of total carnality that you find in preachers.

And many of them are pretty popular and have huge followings. And yet, there is no spirituality about them whatsoever. Yes, they put on a show, but there's really no substance to it whatsoever.

So, they walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. Now, remember that in the Old Testament that when the priests came to serve in the temple or the tabernacle, they had to go through tremendous rituals to cleanse themselves. They had to bath, they had to put on special clothes.

They had to abstain from things that would defile them for a week before the time. So that when they came, they were clean. Now, obviously, that dealt with a physical cleanness, which was symbolic of a spiritual cleanness.

And yet, those who handle the Word of God must handle the Word of God with purity, with a pure heart. Because if we are, those who are preachers are channels, and that word is used badly by Satanists or mediums, but we are channels through which God speaks, through which God flows. And if the channel is dirty, doesn't matter what comes in on the one side, what's gonna come out on the other side is filthy.

And so, the conduit or the pipe affects what comes out on the other side. And so, you can have the best, purest, cleanest water come in on the one side of the pipe, but if the pipe is a lead pipe, it's gonna come out on the other side poisonous. And instead of being life-giving, it will kill.

And so, the preacher, even if he is handling the Word of God, even if it is God's Word, when it goes through a pipe or a conduit or a channel that is unclean, it's gonna come out unclean, and it's not gonna have the effect that God wants it to have. So they walk according to the flesh. In the lust of uncleanness, the lust of uncleanness driven by uncleanness.

It's not just that they are unclean, but the lust of uncleanness, never satisfied with the degree of their filth. But this is real today. This is real in many, many, many cases.

And sometimes these men are exposed, sometimes they are not. But they are there, and we get to see it. And they despise authority.

Now, he's gonna speak about this issue of despising authority. Now, if you remember where we started, where Peter started on this issue in chapter two, it says that, verse one, there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them. So denying the lordship, denying that he is the master.

And you'll see that he bought them. Remember, we dealt with this two weeks ago, I think. So because he bought them, they are his.

They are his slaves. But they deny his lordship. They deny the fact that he is the master.

And here he's coming back to the same idea, and he says that they despise authority. They despise all forms of authority. You see, here's the problem.

When someone despises authority, it flows to every form of authority. You don't get people who respect some kinds of authority, but they disrespect other kinds of authority. And we've emphasized this so many times.

That's why children must be raised to respect the authority of their parents, because if they don't respect that authority, they will not respect the authority of the school teacher. And if they don't respect the teacher, they will not respect the policeman. And if they don't respect the policeman, who will they respect? And that's where this lawlessness comes from in our society today, because there is no respect for authority.

They despise, they look down on authority. And so, but here he's applying it, obviously not to the policeman, or to the government, or to parents, but he's applying it in a spiritual sense. So the first, the highest level of authority that they despise is God's authority.

Who's God to tell me what to do? God is not the boss of me. I am my own, the captain of my own ship. I can make my own decisions, as we heard the testimony of that man from Michelle earlier on.

I can make my decisions. I don't need God to tell me what to do. And when he tells me what to do, I rebel against that.

They despise authority. And that despising authority flows all the way through, we're gonna see it deals with powerful forces in the heavens, but it also ultimately flows through to the authority that God has vested in the church. And so when someone comes to these people and says, brother, you need to get your life right, they reject that authority, because there is a general despising of authority.

Now he says they are presumptuous, self-willed. Presumptuous meaning they think that they're something. They presume to be somewhat.

And they are presumptuous in the sense that they think that they are more important and do not have to bow before even God, let alone other people that he has put in their lives and around them. They are self-willed. They make their own decisions.

They don't listen to counsel. They don't listen to advice. They don't accept correction.

They do their own thing. Folks, this is a sickness which is present in the many, many teachers. I know you try to bring correction to a pastor today, and he will turn on you.

There are very, very few pastors. There are very few preachers. There are very few teachers who will take correction today.

And they will immediately turn it around and say, but you. But it's not the messenger, it's the word of God that they need to submit to, because they are self-willed. Now, he's coming back to this issue of authority, and you can see how it flows through this whole, their whole attitude, their whole spirit.

They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries. Now, this is a difficult verse, and the commentators have about six different opinions as to what this means, and I'm not going to bore you with those. I'm gonna tell you what I understand this to mean.

Now, he says then, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. All right, so let's go back and try and unravel this. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, powerful ones, and that's the problem.

Who are the powerful ones? And in speaking evil of these powerful ones, they speak evil of these powerful ones before God. Whereas angels, he says, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. So, they are not afraid to speak evil of powerful ones, of dignitaries.

If you look at Jude, Jude has a similar statement, and I believe that that helps us to understand it a little bit better. My understanding here is that these that he is speaking about are fallen angels. Remember, we dealt with angels and with demons last week.

These are fallen angels, demons. Demons are dignitaries. You say, well, they're not very dignified.

Well, the word has nothing to do with being dignified. It has to do with power. When we speak about dignitaries in Washington, it doesn't mean that they necessarily dignified.

We know many times they don't act very dignified, but they are dignitaries in the sense that they have power. They have authority. Demons have power.

Demons are very powerful. They are not all powerful. We've said this many times.

We do not fear them because greater is he that is in us than he that is against us. But if we don't have the Lord, demons are very powerful because they're angels. And while they have been cast out of heaven, there's nothing in scripture that says that God stripped them of their power.

And when you look at the angels, you see that they have tremendous power. And so, they are powerful beings. They are called princes in the Old Testament.

And so, they occupy positions in the heavenlies. We wrestle not, Paul says in Ephesians 6, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in high places. These are the dignitaries.

Now, he says these preachers are not afraid to speak evil of demons. Now, does it mean that we must say nice things about demons? No, but they need to be treated with respect, not because we like them. You see, here's the problem we have with authority.

We say, well, you know, if the government is my party, and I like the government, then I will obey the government. If the government is the opposition party, that I don't like, then I don't have to obey them. That's the thinking, particularly in America today.

And so, I have every right to disobey a government that I don't like. No, the government is the government, and the government has authority. Whether I like it or not, I need to submit to them.

I need to submit to the authority that they have. Obviously, we understand as long as they don't overstep the limits of that authority, and begin to infringe on my faith, and begin to give me commands that are contrary to the scriptures, contrary to the word of God. We dealt with that wall last year.

But they have power. Whether you like the policeman or not, he has power. Whether you like the government or not, they have power.

And whether we like demons or not, and obviously we don't like demons, they have power. And they need to be treated with a certain amount of respect. We say, well, on what basis? On the basis that they are powerful.

Not because we are afraid of them, but because we respect authority. Now, you can see the problem. Now, if we go to the next verse, you'll see how he then quotes an example.

He says, angels who are greater in power and might. These are good angels. They are greater in power and might than preachers, than the false teachers.

Remember, angels are greater. I think we quoted this last week. Hebrews chapter one, speaking about Jesus, that he was made a little lower than the angels when he was made a man.

So from that, we understand that man is lower than the angels. The angels have power that we don't have. The angels seem to have a form of eternal life, which we only get in Christ.

And so Jesus, when he was made a man, was made lower than the angels. So he says, the angels who are greater in power and might than the preachers, or the false teachers, do not bring a reviling accusation against them, against the demons before the Lord. In other words, they can't slander these demons before the Lord, because God upholds their authority.

Now, it doesn't mean God approves of them. We understand, this doesn't, we're by no means saying we approve of the devil and the demons, but we recognize that they have power. I don't like Putin.

I don't think any of us like him, but he has power. He may be running a small little country. California has twice the economy of the whole of Russia, but he has power, and you need to be careful.

Not afraid, but careful. There's a difference between being careful and being afraid. And so the angels do not bring a reviling accusation against them.

So what's the point? The point is the angels respect their power, their authority, and yet the preachers don't. That's the point that he is making. So how does this play out? Well, you'll hear preachers running up and down and saying, oh, I got the devil, I've got his tail.

He's, and they make jokes of the devil. He is not someone to make jokes of. We don't worship him, we don't fear him, but he has power.

They call him old Nick, call him all sorts of names. Peter says, the angels don't do that, and they are more powerful than you are. So basically, who are these preachers then? What is the point here? The point is simply that he is showing that they have no respect for any form of authority, whether it's God's authority, or whether it's the power of demons, or any other form of authority.

And that's the whole problem. They have no respect for the authority of God's word, because they are self-willed. They will do what they want to do, they will preach what they want to preach, and not what the word of God says.

All right, so let's move on. Now it gets really hairy, and we're not even yet near verse 16. But these, these false preachers, teachers, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption.

Now this is strong stuff. You can paraphrase this first part. He says, these are like animals, natural brute beasts, made to be caught and to be killed, the word destroyed, killed.

Obviously, animals are there unless you are a PETA supporter, but animals are there for our use. We kill them, we eat them, except my cat and Jason's cat. Those are off limits.

But for the rest, they are there, they are slaughtered by the probably millions every day in the abattoirs. They are disposable. Now I know some people, you know, those who really like to hug trees and that kind of thing find this objectionable, but that's just the reality, that's just the way it is.

Remember that God made an order, and that man is above the animals, and below that is the vegetable kingdom, and below that the mineral kingdom, but we've turned the whole thing upside down, and so now even animals are more important than people in many cases. And people will spend more money trying to rescue the penguins than feeding the hungry. Now, that's another story.

But he says these people are animals, and just like an animal will die, they will die at the end of the verse and will utterly perish in their own corruption. Strong, strong words. So these like natural brute beasts, and remember this thing of the animals because we're not gonna, I'm not gonna get there tonight, we'll get there next week, but he's gonna come to the donkey.

Now let me go there quickly because we'll pick it up again next week. What does he say about the donkey? The donkey rebuked the prophet. So in fact what he is saying is these people are worse than animals because even the animal rebuked the prophet.

And so they speak, remember they speak evil of dignities, they speak evil of the things they do not understand. I'm so tired of listening to preachers who speak about things they don't have a clue about,

trying to preach a message from their own understanding. And it's clear they don't know what they're talking about.

They speak evil of the things they do not understand, and they will utterly perish, verse 13, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness. So again, he's emphasizing their judgment is coming as those who counted pleasure to carouse in the daytime. The word carouse here is the word from which we get the English word now forgotten, hedonism.

The Greek word is the same root, is the root word for hedonism. In other words, they are pleasure centered, carousing, they are pleasure centered. And they don't even do the stuff that they do at night.

Remember that all of the sin of the world is often done at night, getting drunk, the adultery, the fornication, because the night seems to at least cover it to some extent, doesn't change it, doesn't fix it. But he says these guys have so little shame that they do what the bad guys do at night, they just do it in the daytime, openly. And I really have a policy about not getting into names, but I can name names of preachers that openly do these things, and nobody bats an eyelid.

And so those who counted pleasure to carouse in the daytime, they are spots and blemishes. We're gonna come back to this idea about spots and blemishes in chapter three, so quite a long time coming, but we'll get there again. They are spots and blemishes.

Keep that thought in mind because he's going to come back to where they're the spots and blemishes in a moment. They carouse, same word again, in their own deceptions while they feast with you. So their hedonistic lifestyle goes on while they feast with you.

What does he mean when they feast with you? Who is the you? The church, Christians. The feast here is what we call the agape feast, the love feast. Today, we call it communion.

Those days, you remember from Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 11, you eat and there are others who are going hungry. Some are getting drunk and others don't have anything. So those days, their communion was a potluck and you had a meal and then part of that meal would be the breaking of the bread.

And that continued for a long time until it became such a problem because there was more emphasis on the meal than on the communion that the church separated those things way back in the second century. And so they separated those things so that when you had the Lord's supper or the Lord's table or communion or Eucharist, whatever you want to call it, that that was a separate, dedicated thing. So these meals, this feasting that they're talking about is when the church comes together and the church has a potluck and they have communion, they have the Lord's table as part of that.

And so they are in your communion services, just to put it in plain English, while at the same time, they are feeding their sensuality. And there are spots and blemishes on the communion. That's what he's saying.

There are spots and blemishes on the communion. That's why we are very strict here. If you're born again, you're welcome to partake of the Lord's table.

But if your life is not in order, you will be asked to abstain. And the reason is because those who continue in their sin are spots and blemishes on the Lord's supper. It's a holy time.

And we're not high church. We don't put all of that ceremony and stuff on it. But at the same time, it's a time of intimacy, when we meet with our Lord, when we meet with the Lord Jesus.

And it's a time of examination. It's a time of remembrance of what he has done. It's a time of looking forward to his coming again.

This is the most intimate moment in the life of the church. And we cannot have that spoiled by spots and blemishes, by those, Paul uses the same idea, which I won't go to now because we're gonna run out of time. But they are spots and blemishes basically on your communion, because they continue in their sin, they're carousing in their deceptions, at the same time, feasting with you.

So they're trying to live this double life. All right, let's go to verse 14. Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin.

The only reason some of them are in the ministry is because it's easy pickings. It's easy to find vulnerable women, and in some cases, vulnerable boys. Folks, this is the time in which we're living.

And we're not just talking about the Catholic church. This is real in every church today. Only a small portion, only the tip of the iceberg is evidenced when these people are exposed.

Generally, they are not exposed. Generally, the church protects them, and just simply sends them away to another church. Exactly like the Roman church does, the evangelical church does the same thing.

The denominations do the same thing. There'll be a slap on the wrist and say, brother, you need to have some counseling, and they'll send him to another church where he will continue to do the same thing. And so while they're serving the Lord's table, while they're ministering the word of God, their eyes are full of adultery.

Folks, let's be careful about who we let into this pulpit, and who you lend your ears to when you listen to YouTube, or to other sermon sites. I'm not gonna go there, but there are certain sites that host my messages, and I'm horrified by some of the other stuff that is hosted on those sites. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.

This word trained is interesting. They have a heart trained. The word trained there is the word from which we get gymnasium, or gym, not this gym.

Gymnasium, where you train, where you exercise to become strong in a particular sport. Remember, the gymnasiums of those days wasn't weight rooms like ours are today. But if you were a runner, you would go to the gymnasium to practice to run.

If you were a wrestler, you would practice so that you became good at what your sport was. That's the word he's using here. So they have trained the same way as an athlete trains, they are trained in covetous practices.

Their whole thinking, their whole mindset is trained, developed in greedy, covetous practices. We spoke about covetousness on Sunday. And remember that in this context in 2 Peter, when he speaks about covetousness, it is not just greed for money.

While that is a very real issue, I'm not gonna speak about money preachers, but money is one issue. Power is another issue. Many of these guys just never get enough power.

Sex is another issue. And the list goes on and on. They are never satisfied with these carnal things.

And folks, I know this is hard. It's hard to read, it's hard to listen to. And yet this is real, this was real 2000 years ago and it's more real today.

And he says they are accursed children. Verse 15, I'm trying to make verse 16. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray.

So they knew the right way, they were on the right way at one time, but they have gone astray. Following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Now maybe you don't remember who Balaam is.

Balaam was a prophet. We don't know exactly what his connection with Israel was, but he was a, he lived not as part of Israel, but he was clearly a prophet of God. And Balak, the king of the Midianites got their king Balak to call for Balaam.

So what was happening is Israel was marching from Egypt to the promised land. Along the way, they had tangled with two kings and they had beat them up, gotten victory over them. So when Midian heard that Israel is coming, they quaked in their boots and they said, we're in trouble.

If they do to us what they did to Sidon and Og, the kings on the other side, we're done for. So their plan was then to call for Balaam, a prophet, a prophet of God. And the king offers Balaam a lot of money if he would curse the people of Israel.

So even the Gentile king recognized the authority of a godly prophet. And so he comes and he opens his mouth to curse the people of Israel, and God takes hold of his tongue and he pronounces blessing. And this happens several times.

And in the end, Balaam, the king is very angry with the prophet. And he says, you've done me in. I've paid you all this money to do this job and you, instead of cursing Israel, you've blessed them.

And Balaam says, well, you know, I can't help it. God's not allowing me to do this. And then what Balaam did is he pulled the king aside.

He said, look, I can't curse them. But if you get your beautiful women to seduce their men and in the process to worship idols, God will be angry with them and God will deal with them. God will judge them.

And that's exactly what happened. And so they sent the women in, they seduced the men, the men committed adultery against their wives, but also worshiped the idols in that whole process. And God's judgment comes on Israel.

What a prophet. But can you see that what he is saying is they followed the way of Balaam, who instead of being a prophet speaking truth, became a prophet for hire and would turn against the people of God. Just for the money, just for the money.

And he will forever be, and he's quoted by at least three other prophets in the Old Testament. He's quoted several times in the New Testament as the most shameful thing that you can imagine. A man who should have spoken for God, speaking for the devil and bringing judgment upon the people of God, instead of bringing blessing upon the people of God.

And he's saying, this is what these people are like. And so they have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor. And there is meaning to the word Beor, which I'm not going to get into, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

It's about what he could get out of it. And for preachers who are there for what they can get out of it, whatever it may be, Jesus speaks about them. Remember in John chapter 10, he speaks about the good shepherd, speaking about Jesus.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. But the hireling comes. He's not the shepherd, but he's a hireling.

He's working for wages. And when the enemy comes, the hireling runs away. But we don't need hirelings.

Yes, the preacher is worthy of his wages, but if that's what's driving him and motivating him, then you have nothing to do with him. He is a hireling. He works for money and not for God.

And so they loved, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but he was rebuked for his iniquity. This is Balaam, the false prophet. A dumb donkey, now obviously a donkey brays, makes a noise, but it cannot speak, doesn't speak words.

But even the dumb donkey, speaking with a man's voice, restrained the madness of the prophet. Now you can go back in the Old Testament and read the story, but the donkey, he's riding on the donkey. The donkey pushes him against the wall, crushes his leg, and he, just abbreviating the story, gets out his weapon, beats up the donkey, and the donkey speaks to him with a man's voice.

So what is the point that Peter's making? And of course, now it continues. This is not the end of the conversation. Verse 17 continues with us, but I've just felt that verse 16 is a place where we need to break it off this evening.

But I told you earlier what the point was. They are like animals. But now he comes down, in the earlier verse, verse 12, but these like natural brute beasts, they're like animals.

Now in verse 16, he's saying that even the animal, even the donkey, had more sense. Now we understand it was a miracle, it was God that used, but was able to speak more sense than the prophet was able to speak. Folk, what a statement.

What a statement, that even animals can have more sense than some of these preachers. And so, how does that apply to us? Well, obviously, we need to be careful who we listen to. We need to examine their fruit.

And if you can't examine the fruit of a man, then don't listen to him. And when I speak about fruit, it's not about how big his church is. It's not about what kind of motor car he drives.

It's not about how expensive his suits are. It's not about how loud he can shout from the pulpit. It's not how many times he can run up and down on the platform.

It's not even how eloquent he can speak. The fruit is the fruit of his life. What is his life producing? How does he treat his wife? What is his attitude to money? In the context of what we've looked at tonight, is he correctable? Can he be corrected when he's wrong? The list goes on and on.

Is there the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness? If you don't know the fruit of a man's life, don't listen to him. And I'm not just saying this to you. I say this often.

And I say this to people who watch me online. Those who are watching online, I'm telling you again tonight. If you don't know who I am, then don't listen to me.

Find out who I am. Ask people in this congregation. Ask my co-elder.

Ask the other pastors that I work with. Who is this man? What is his life like? Because if you don't know the fruit, Matthew seven, remember? Wolves in sheep's clothing, but by their fruit, you will know them. That's the only protection we have today.

Folks, we're in a very dangerous place these days. Because the deception is worse than ever. But the problem today is that we have this thing called the internet.

And while it's a great blessing, we're able to preach the truth and we're able to affect many people through the internet. There is no filter on the internet. You can buy a filter for your kids.

Those parents should know that. And you should have filters on your computers and on your devices. So the kids can only go to certain sites.

But there is no filter for good Christian sites. And even if it's a good Christian site, there's often a lot of nonsense on it. And there is no app that will filter that out for you.

The only way you will know that you can trust someone is if you know who that person is. Don't just turn on YouTube. Or anything else.

And just scroll and say, oh, I like that title. Because that's what people do. Folks, we've just proven it again this last weekend.

That if we choose the right title, if I choose the right title, and I didn't choose the title of that conference, someone else chose the title. But the viewership goes up by five times. Instead of getting 500 views, I get almost 3,000 views because of the title.

At the same time, last Sunday's message was posted on the same site, not my site, on another site, was posted right above or below, I can't remember, the two messages. I don't remember the title of last week. How to Get Spiritual Wealth, I think, was the title.

Someone help me with a good title. And it's a good title, but it's not what people want to hear. The other one was a message for the last days, or the church in the last days.

Five times more people wanted to watch that one than that one. They're not interested whether I'm preaching the truth or not. They just want to hear what they want to hear.

Folks, you cannot choose what you listen to, what you watch, on that basis. It has to be on the basis that you can trust the preacher. You say, well, I can discern.

I can figure out that what he's saying is truth or not. I don't know that you will. I missed somewhere in the passage, and don't worry, I'm not going to preach the whole thing again.

I've lost it. But somewhere in here, there's a fishing term. He says that they, and I think it is, oh yeah, here it is, enticing.

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. The word enticing there is a fishing term, putting out the bait for unstable souls. So what kind of bait? Well, I've just told you what one of the kinds of bait is.

A sermon on the second coming. The signs of the times. Prophecy update.

This is bait that attracts people, entices unstable souls. Souls that are not grounded and firm upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. And we know what happens with that bait.

Once the fish takes the bait, the hook sets, and it's the end of the game. That's what happens. Let's be careful.

Don't be fooled by preachers who present a good message and it sounds like it's good. And maybe 80% of it's good, but the 20% is gonna get you, and it's dangerous. Father, we pray that you'd help us.

Lord, help us to be discerning. Lord, help us to know the voice of the Spirit. Help us to know the voice of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus.

Lord, help us to know the difference between false and true preachers and false and true prophets. Lord, there are many going around, proclaiming to be teachers and preachers and prophets and pastors, and yet there are exactly these people that Peter is speaking about. Lord, I pray that you'd help us.

Lord, help us to not just listen to and read anything that we see and come across. But Lord, that we may hear the voice of Good Shepherds and that we may learn from them. Lord, I'm not the only Good Shepherd.

I don't even know if I am a Good Shepherd. I want to be, Lord. But Lord, I pray that you'd help us, each one, to be discerning and to know when you are speaking through a man and when you're not speaking.

To recognize when it is the voice of the Spirit and when it is the voice of the flesh. The voice of the flesh is attractive. And Lord, we know how Adam and Eve were seduced by that offer of the flesh.

But Lord, we pray that we may not be those who are seduced, that we may not be those who are enticed, that we may not be those who are unstable. But Lord, that we may be those who recognize the voice of the Spirit. I pray this in Jesus' name.

I pray that you'd go with us now, keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely on Sunday, we pray. In Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/K5cjG4BD7Js.mp4>

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