

Marks of a False Prophet

by L.R. Shelton Jr

The sermon highlights the characteristics and consequences of false prophets, and the marks of a true servant of God.

Duration: 1:23:40

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:6

Topics: "False Prophets", "Holy Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher, an old man, addresses his flock with a sense of urgency as he is about to leave this world. He emphasizes the need to prepare for the perilous times that are coming upon the earth. The sermon focuses on the book of 2 Peter, which serves as a warning against false prophets and teachers. The preacher highlights the condemnation that came upon the angels who rebelled and the people in Noah's time, urging the listeners to be prepared and watchful for the truth. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of faith, righteousness, and the power of God in leading a holy life.

Transcript

Let us pray, our Father and our God, we come to Thee in the name of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We come on the basis of His precious blood that was shed for the remission of our sins. We thank Thee, our Father, for the gift of Thy Son to us, for His work upon the cross, for His resurrection, for the shedding of His precious blood that You may pass over our sins.

You may give us justification, we might stand before the clothed and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we could come into Thy presence through that new and living way, to have fellowship with Thee, and to commune with Thee from above the mercy seat and pour out our hearts unto Thee in praise and thanksgiving, in confession and intercession, when I pour out our hearts to Thee in all things, dotting one prayer after the other up to Thy throne of grace, to help in time of need. We never get tired praising You for this, thanking You for this, and praising Thy name as You have kept us to this hour by Thy marvelous grace. We thank You for all the blessings of the past week, for health, for strength, for the fellowship with Thee, for the fellowship with Thy people.

We thank Thee and praise Thee for the opportunity to be part of this body, of this church, of this ministry, to send forth the word of life. We thank Thee, Father, for all that You have accomplished and all that You have done, and we wait before Thee that You may deal with our hearts this morning. Thou knowest, our Father, the word You have laid upon our heart.

Thou knowest that we need Thee, O that our speech would be always with grace, seasoned with salt, so we may know how to answer every man, and that we might speak the truth in love with our hearts going out to Thee and to the souls of men. And our Father, we have cried to You over and over and over again this past week, and especially yesterday, last night, and this morning. I do not want to deliver this message unless I deliver it with a broken heart, with a contrite spirit and in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

So here we are. Give us a clean heart and pure heart and clean hands. Give us freely of Thy Spirit so we may speak in the Spirit, filled with the Spirit.

Give us hearing ears, seeing eyes, and alert in due season. We might heed Thy word. It may be written upon the doorpost of our heart, so we cannot get away from it.

Our Father, bless it, Thy word this morning, tonight, bless Thy word as it goes forth in every form that You have given us to send it out, direct it to those individuals who are prepared to receive it, and may hearts be turned to Thee. Again, we want to praise You for Thy great love wherewith You loved us. So again we ask for cleansing.

Take away every thought that might hinder. Every thought, Lord, because Satan comes with his fiery darts to disreluct our minds and our hearts, to get our minds elsewhere instead of where You want them, stayed upon Thee. But it is only by Thy grace and by Thy power that this can be done, so we rest in Thee, and look unto Thee, to pray and Thy will be done, for in Christ's name we pray, Amen.

I want you to turn with us this morning to the second chapter of 2 Peter. As we read it together, I want you to understand that the whole chapter is concerned with false prophets and false teachers. Of all the chapters in the Bible, and you'll see it as we go through, of all the chapters in the Bible, this second chapter, 2 Peter, is among the most terrible, it's a book of threatening, it's a chapter of threatening, it's a chapter of warning, it tells about the doom that's coming on false prophets and those that follow them, the disaster and destruction that abounds.

I do not believe that nowhere in Holy Writ, is there anything that surpasses this particular chapter of warning, it is a chapter we would not normally read, it's not a chapter that we would pick up and just read, if we were not reading through a book, or reading through the Bible as we go along, it is a chapter that is one of the least, I believe along with you, the least two chapters in the Bible read, unless it's the genealogies back in 1 Chronicles. But the apostle here is helping these Christian people to face the future, he wants them to look ahead to the future that was coming, he was an old man, he was about ready to leave this world, but before he went, he wanted to stop their minds, chapter 1 verse 13, yea I think it's suitable, as long as I'm in this tabernacle, this body to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this, my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me. So as a good shepherd of the sheep, he wanted to warn his flock of what was coming in the future, and to prepare them for what they were going to face in the perilous times that were coming upon the earth, and it started real soon there.

And so this book is primarily one of warning, but it is a book of gracious promise, and we should look into it, and especially that second chapter, which by the grace of God we are going to start into this morning. And I want you to pray, let's read it together. But there are false prophets also among the people, even as there should be false teachers among you, who privately should bring in damnable hellices, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, and many shall follow their

pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, that cast them down the hill, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the old world which saves no of the earth's eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly. And deliver just that vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, for that righteous man dwelleth among them, him seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels which are greater in power and might bring not rare an acquisition against them before the Lord. But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime. Spots they are, and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls, and heart they have exercised with covetous practices, cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray following the way of Balaam the son of Hosea, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity, the dumbass speaking with man's voice for the madness of the prophet.

These are whales without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the midst of darkness is resolved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the flesh, lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. For they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for a real man is overcome of the same he is brought in bondage.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, but it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her waller-in in the mire, reading 2 Peter chapter 2. If you don't think that's heart-searching, get out and start studying it, and let the Holy Spirit begin to open it up to your heart. This poor man that stands before you this morning has cried and cried and cried for mercy and grace to deliver this, but it's been upon my heart for some time, I've been thinking and praying about giving an exposition of either 2 Peter 2 or Jude on the subject of the false prophets and false teachers, and waiting on the Lord the Holy Spirit directed me to preach on the sin of covetousness last week, to show us our hearts, and to let us know that we, I, was no better than these false prophets spoken of in this second chapter of 2 Peter.

All of our hearts, except for the grace of God, are wicked and depraved, but if we've been saved, the only difference between us and them is the distinguishing grace of our God in Christ Jesus. If we have been kept from following false teachers and preachers, and being partakers of their sins, it is because of God's

marvelous grace, and only God's marvelous grace, that has been given to us by the Holy Spirit in Christ. And because of his sacrificial bloodshedding for our sins, and the grace of the Holy Spirit to hold us, and keep us from going the way of the apostate, that's the way God's been dealing with my heart.

It's been a time of heart searching, it's been a time of crying to God for mercy, but it's also been a time of praise and thanksgiving, that God, by his marvelous grace, has held me these many years, and held me in the truth, and showed me the truth, and taught me his truth, and has brought me to this hour, and I praise him and praise him for it. The only difference between me and a false prophet, a false teacher, is the distinguishing grace of God. And if I do not have the marks of a true prophet and a true teacher, then you have no business here.

Did you hear that? If I have not walked among you these years, and have preached to you the truth of God's precious word, and you have not seen the marks of a Christian, and the marks of a true servant of God, then we might as well close the doors and let us all get out of here. But I believe, by the grace of God, I have, by life and word, shown forth the marvelous grace that God has had upon me, in all these many years, for which I praise him and praise him. And you're going to see why I praise him, as we get in to see a lot of questions I know in reading this that you would want to ask, I hope we can answer them.

And I pray that God will open up our hearts, for we are living in a day more and more and more of false teachers and false prophets, and false word going forth, and we need to be warned. We need to count where we are, we need to know what the scriptures teach. We may be having done all to stand by the marvelous grace of God.

Now, it was marvelous when the Holy Spirit showed it to me, these three chapters, the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Peter to lay the foundation in chapter 1, and to not say anything about warning, except in one place, until he had showed them the great salvation that he had given to them. Let's look at chapter 1, let's take our time. I don't know if I can be able to give you everything I want to this morning, to start off, but an introductory message, by the grace of God you know where we're going, and I want you to hear the word, and not turn away from it, because we're in such a chapter as this that there's a chapter of warning, and that's what it is.

We've got to face it, and we're living in that day, and among that people, and what are we going to do? How are we going to stand? Where are we going to walk? So he begins the epistle in the first chapter, Simon Peter, a servant of the Apostle Jesus Christ to them, that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. He starts off by talking about that precious faith that's been given to us, that perfect righteousness in which we're clothed, the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ. He shows us that grace and peace have been multiplied toward us through the knowledge he's given us in verse 2, and then he talks in verse 3 about that divine power, beloved.

People talk about having power, people talk about getting power, and wanting power. What we want, and what we should desire, is the power of God that turns us from sin, and the power of God that keeps us, that we might walk in the pathway of righteousness and true holiness. For watch what he says, according as his divine power has been given unto us, he has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that have called us to glory and virtue, to moral excellency.

He has called us to a life of moral excellency, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. He said this salvation that God gives, by his marvelous grace, is the salvation of

power. That leads to a life of godliness, and he has given us the precious promises that we might plead them.

He has made us partakers of his divine nature, that is he has given us his moral nature, we might have the mind of Christ. And by all of this, by the grace of God, we are able, watch that word, to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. And that's what that second chapter is all about, it is the corruption and the lust of fallen men who are in the place of authority, the pulpit or the teaching platform, who have not been called and have not known God, and it is by that they have been captured by Satan.

And they bring as many as they can into their pernicious or their lascivious ways day by day. So to keep in mind, he had already warned them, the salvation that God gives, is the salvation that gives them a divine nature, that has caused them to escape the corruption that is in the world, and the power of lust and the power of sin has been broken. He had warned, he had told them of this.

And then not only that, but he told them to go on, to give diligence, to add to that precious faith, virtue, that is strength, moral excellency, and to that virtue, knowledge, more knowledge, and to that knowledge, temperance, self-control, and brother, the second chapter speaks nothing of self-control, it speaks of men who have given themselves over to Satan to be used of him, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity, or love, the capstone of it all, for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you should neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Then this is the warning, in fiat the warning, that he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. So he tells us in verse 10, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrant shall be ministered unto you abundantly in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Then he goes on down and talks about his blessed Lord, and verse 16, for we have not followed the cunningly devised fables whom we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty on the mountain of transfiguration. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, and there was such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the mountain.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy wherein ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place unto the day dawn, and the day shall arise in your hearts. He tells us that this salvation that is in Christ causes us to walk in light and not in darkness, and so he forewarns them of what is coming. And then I love the way the book closes.

In chapter 3, it is all concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In spite of the false prophets and the false teachers, Christ is coming. That is not going to keep the Lord from coming.

He will come in judgment to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he shall come in righteousness and love to those who know the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he holds this hope out to them, a hope of a new heaven and a new earth. He holds the hope out of them, that they might grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then he tells them what they should do in verse 11 of chapter 3, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, that is, the judgment that shall come when our Lord comes, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and the godliness.

He continually calls them back to godliness. And this is one of the marks. This is one of the marks of God's true servant.

Holiness and sanctification is in his theology. A false prophet does not have sanctification and holiness in his theology. He never preaches on it.

He never talks about it. He cannot afford to, for he will condemn himself. So bear with us now until we get into the heart of the matter.

Ask the Lord to plan in your mind what you should do. This outline I'm going to give you of this chapter, so you can rightly understand it better. Ask him to.

In verse 1 he talks about these false prophets bringing in destructive heresies. In verses 2 and 3, he shows these false teachers shameful ways. And verses 4 through 10a, he shows the condemnation, listen now, and we'll go into this.

He shows in these verses the condemnation that came on the angels that kept not their first estate, called the Jew. He shows the condemnation that came upon those in the flood in Noah's day. In verses 6, 7 and 8, he shows the judgment that fell upon the cities of the plain, including Sodom and Gomorrah.

And then in verses 9 through 10a, he shows the condemnation upon the sin of these apostate false prophets and teachers. And then from verses 9 to 10, he shows the condemnation of these false teachers and false prophets. And then in verses 10b through 16, he lays out before us, and God does it, I don't, it's the word of God, the fragrant misconduct of these individuals.

And you will not find in the word of God any greater description of the misconduct of false teachers and false prophets that you'll find in verses 10b through 16. First of all, in 10b and 11, they are slanderers. In verse 12, they are blasphemers.

In verses 13 and 14, they are adulterers. In verses 16 and 17, they are covetous and full of wickedness in the sight of God. And then in verses 17 through 22, we find the inevitable doom of these false prophets and false teachers, for they know not the Lord.

So let's see what the scripture has to say about these false prophets and teachers and how they describe them. Of course, the most striking one, beside 2 Peter 2.1, is the one found in Matthew 7.15. In the Sermon on the Mount, where he said, Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, devouring everything and everybody that comes under their control, or his. Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, devouring wolves, ready to draw you away from the faith, from the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Now briefly, this is a subject that is spoken of very much throughout the Old Testament, and I could give you more scriptures than what I'm going to read you this morning. But it was the downfall of Israel in one respect, was the false prophets and their false prophesying in the name of God, and God had not sent them. It was one of the reasons for the downfall of Israel.

In chapter 5, verse 30 and 31 of Jeremiah 5, a wonderful and horrible thing was committed in the land. The prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests they ruled by their own means, and listen, and my people love to have it so, and what will you do in the end thereof? Man has always been the same. Man has

always loved for the preacher or the teacher to speak smooth things to him.

He doesn't like to be warned. He doesn't want to be shown his sins. He doesn't want to turn to God from his sins.

He does not want to repent. He does not want to give up the life that he has and that he's been in, especially if he's been such a deceiver that he has people under his control. He wants to keep that power.

He does not want to give it up. The prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests they ruled by their own means, and my people love to have it so, and what will you do in the end thereof? In Jeremiah 14, verse 14, we have it again, Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them.

They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their own heart, and they do not speak in my name, saith the Lord. He was against them. But in Jeremiah 23, 14 and 16, I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing.

The same thing is said about them that the false ones in 2 Peter 2, they commit adultery and walk in lies. They stand in also the hands of the evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. They rule all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

In other words, they speak smooth things. They never speak anything to disturb the hearts of men. They never speak anything that's got a sword in it that will cut and lay bare, because they know the hearts of men, and they know what's going to happen if they preach truth in the name of the Lord.

They're going to be turned on. Their name is going to be cast out as dirt in the streets. Then in Ezekiel 22, verses 25 and 28, there is a conspiracy of the prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey.

Same words used in Matthew 7 and in 2 Peter 2. They have devoured souls. They have taken the treasure and precious things. In other words, they covetous.

They go after the precious things, and they have made many winners in the midst thereof. In other words, it's like 2 Timothy 3 tells us, that there are those who will lead astray captive, silly women, going to their houses and devouring them of everything. Verse 28, that her prophets have dubbed them with untempered mortar, sin and vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken.

In other words, like a mason would build a house, and he would not build it with the right kind of cement and mortar, but they dub it with untempered mortar, where it's going to fall apart. And all of these were lies sewn against it. False prophets then were one of the chief factors, as I said, in the apostasy and destruction of Israel.

And these passages are recorded for our admonition and our warning. And then in the New Testament, that's turned there. We would have given you that one in Matthew 7. Beware false prophets who come among you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, ready to devour and take whatever prey they can get, that they may have the souls of men instead of God having them.

In Matthew 24, 11, And many false prophets shall rise and deceive many, our Lord said. And verse 24, For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Then we ought to be prepared.

We ought to have our hearts open to the truth and to the word of God, and prepared. Then if they could even possibly deceive the very elect, then what? Then our hearts ought to be prepared to receive the truth and to learn the truth and to know the truth, and to watch for them. I guess the most famous one of all is the one found in Acts 20, when brother Paul was leaving Ephesus for the last time, and his heart was broken, and he told him, verse 28 of Acts 20, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

What's this? For I know this. What does he know? Verse 29 of Acts 20, That after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparn flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Brother, you've got to be careful of a man whose motives and desires are to get people to follow their teaching and their advice and their ways, and what they think is the truth. Therefore watch, he says. He says, watch.

And remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one of you, I did say, with tears. And then this one in Romans I often go back to, and I repeat it. It's found in Romans chapter 16, verses 17 and 18.

I've preached from it a number of times. That I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.

And by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Watch them. Watch these individuals that will not sit under the truth of God's word.

Then in 1 John 4, 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits with the veil of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Then one more, Jude 4, and 2 Peter 2 and Jude, practically identical chapters they differ, they're along the same line, they differ in a lot of ways, but they're similar in a lot of ways. In Jude 4, for there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of all ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I want you to pray for me. I've broadly outlined the whole thing, I've given you an outline, I've showed you the hope that he gave them in chapter 1 of the great salvation that they had, the hope in chapter 3 of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but right between them is one of the most heart-searching warnings in the whole Bible, of us to be warned against false prophets and false teachers that shall come in among the people. Now, there's one thing that you want to do, when you hear a man, lead after a man, or live a man, who claims to be able to teach and to preach, you want to have a, you want to search out and be a good Berean, to search out the word of God, that they are preaching the truth.

Not that they are building a doctrine on one verse of scripture, but that they are, have the whole rounded work of the scripture. Now you all understand that I'm not going to be able to tell you all of this in one

message. For I want to give you, I'm going to give you this morning the marks of a false prophet.

But I do want to give you the marks of a true prophet, so that you will know the difference and can be warned. And since this is in our text, we'll go first with the false prophet. But we should be, we should, we should watch and wait upon the Lord.

So let's read verse 2, verse 1. For there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. They will subtly and secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves, it says. So what are the characteristics of a false teacher or a false prophet? I'm not going to be able to cover them all this morning, but I'll give you as many as I can get through into this chapter.

May subtly bring in damnable destructive heresies. Teachings which will not stand up to the word of God. They have taken a verse here and a verse there and a verse there, and have put a doctrine together to deceive you because it sounds, is the word of God, sounds like the word of God.

But their motives in doing all of this is to get honor themselves, power unto themselves, to get wealth unto themselves, to get a following after themselves, and more than anything else, are you listening to me? To bring people under their control. That is one of the marks, identifying marks, of a false teacher or prophet, is trying to bring people under their control. And beloved, they will fight you for that.

They will even kill you for that, if their little domain is being threatened. I thought, do not touch God's anointed. That's their defense, one of them.

Alright, you listen. Heresies refer to a chosen course of thought or action that an individual takes, or that a group of people adopts, as an article of faith and a way of life. Now let me go over that again when I explain it.

Listen with me now. Heresies refer to a chosen course of thought or action that an individual takes, or that a group of people adopts, as an article of faith or a way of life. And that's the reason why we have thousands upon thousands of denominations and churches with different names all over this country, is because people have run off with heretics and heresy, and they have adopted, they have adopted this false doctrine, this false heresy, and have made a faith out of it, this is their creed, and so their church is built upon it, and they go and run from there.

And we've got to be careful. What else is it but, and there's so many of them today who call themselves oneness. Do not believe in the trinity, only Jesus, that's a heresy, that's a false doctrine.

They have taken that and they have made a cult out of it, many churches like it, and that is a heresy. So they have taken that, they have made that their article of faith or faith for their assembly, and therefore they are called oneness. And a piece of it, I've got to, we could all, you would not believe, as we are, as we have a mailing list that's a mile long, and there's others out there that have a mailing list that's a mile long.

You ought to see the material we get. We just put them in the folder and if I can read them, I'll read them if I can. I'll take it.

Anyway, we had one come across the desk the other day, and big bold letter. This is the truth. This is the whole truth.

Read it. So I opened it up, and I read it, what was it? Denying the trinity, right away, the wholeness, oneness. Well, you see, that's a heresy.

And that's what he's talking about, we should be careful. And there are those groups who have gone off on the wrong end, and say that if you do not speak in tongues, you're not saved. In other words, you've got to speak in tongues to be saved.

So they go off with this, that's a point in their bylaws, and that's what they believe, and that's what they teach, and therefore they have no revelation of God in their souls. And then there are others who say that you must be baptized to be saved, and their favorite verse is Acts 2.38. And if you're not baptized, then you're not saved. So water enters into it.

And I had a man come to me one time, trying to force that doctrine down my throat, and I said, well, if what you're saying to me is true, then the apostle Paul was the greatest liar, and the greatest apostate that ever lived. He looked at me and said, what do you mean? I said, well, just go read 1 Corinthians 1, where Paul said that I was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he says, I don't remember in current baptizing over three or four families, because God did not send me to do that.

I said, well, here's a man who's a false prophet. You call the apostle Paul a false prophet when you say that if a man is not baptized, he cannot be saved. You put the water in there.

And beloved God's not going to let us take away from the blood in any way. The blood is everything to the living God. Nothing more and nothing less than what we stand on in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then there are those who said that if you don't belong to this church, you'll be a denomination. I don't know how many letters I've received. You preach the truth, but, always watchmen and butts, and the therefores, and the wherefores.

But, you were not saved under this type of ministry. And I will forget, I was in the bookstore in Richfield, where we lived and worked and served for nine years, all by myself one day, when this man walks in the store. And we get to talking for about the first ten minutes, man up, and I really had a live child of God.

My heart was just pumping as fast as it could go. And all of a sudden he says, tell me how God saved you. And I did.

When I got finished, he looked me straight in the eye, and he says, you're not saved, you're heading straight for hell. Oh, I says, I am? I says, how did you figure that out so quick? He said, because you were not saved under an apostolic Lutheran minister. Well, he had told me about ten or fifteen minutes before that he was one.

And then he started to walk out. Why I did it, I'll never know. I must have been about fifty at that time, or I never could have jumped over that counter like I did.

I jumped over that counter, I headed for the door, I blocked the door, and he said, what's the matter? I said, you're not getting out of this place. He said, what do you mean? I said, you're not letting me out of this place until you tell me how to be saved. You told me I was lost and going to hell, because I wasn't saved under an apostolic Lutheran minister, and you said that you were one.

And I said, you're not getting out of here until you tell me how to get saved. Well, he started and stammered, and he finally told me about three easy believers, and I said, bye-bye. I said, you don't know what you're talking about.

The next Friday he came into town, where did he go? He didn't come to the bookstore, he went to the ballroom right across the street. So I'm glad I wasn't saved under him. But you see, the thing is that I meet him everywhere.

I had a man down in Tampa, told me, wrote me one time and says, he damned Luther, he damned Calvin, he damned John Knox, he damned Sturgeon, he damned Whitfield, he damned all these men to hell along with me. He said, because they weren't saved under this type of minister. And I wrote him back, I said, this will be the last communication I'll have with you, and I want to tell you, thank you for putting me in such a good company.

Why did I tell you this? Because we've got to be careful everywhere we turn. They will make works salvation. You've got to watch.

You watch their preaching, they'll make works for salvation. Another one will leave out sin. You'll hardly ever hear him ever say anything about sin.

Another one will leave out repentance. Never a word is said about repentance, a sin returned to God, and a complete surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Another one will leave out the work of the Holy Spirit and regeneration and telling men that they must be born again, they must be made a new creation in Christ Jesus.

This is all false. And I guess the one today that we hear so much about, they leave out the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You can be saved, in other words, you can divide Christ into half and you can take half of this, you want him, and that'll be saved if you take him, but the other half is Lordship, you don't have to have that.

They preach a divided Christ, that's false, that's heresy. It's not the will of God, we've got to be careful. And then let's come a little bit closer home, will you? Are you listening to me? Then you have been listening.

And I'll praise God for it. They deny the sovereign God who bought them. There are more than one way of doing this.

Listen now. They deny he has bought them, or brought them, by just leaving them, leaving him out altogether. They deny him by leaving Christ out.

I've heard some wonderful messages in my life, and they're preached on God, God, God, Christ was never mentioned in the whole thing. But beloved, God loves his Son, and we must come to God through his Son, and by his Son, and his Son must get the glory for all that he has done for poor sinners. God is not going to let any creature deny and not bring glory to Christ.

Even at the judgment, it is said in Philippians 2, that God has made this same Jesus. Both the Lord and Christ at Acts 2, but then it says in Philippians 2, it says that the day is coming where every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So you see, he can be denied down here just by leaving him out of a message.

And not preaching his blood redemption. There are so many ways to deny him. They say that they are preaching a Christian message, and yet the name of Christ is never mentioned.

Sometimes they deny him by making him, without making him in absolute control of their hearts and in their lives. In other words, they deny him absolutely because he is not the Lord or the center or the vital essence of their lives. If Christ is not the center, he is being denied.

He is either the center, or he is nowhere. He's got to be the center of our preaching, he's got to be the center of our living, he's got to be the center of our witnessing. Again, they may deny him by denying his person, by regarding him as a man only, and not the Lord God of glory, the united deity of Christ.

And that's everywhere today. In all of this, the glory and fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ and his person is denied. But they do not say that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, is the blessed eternal God from eternity, the second person of the Godhead.

Or, they deny him most of all, and most seriously, by denying his atoning work. By denying the fact that if he had not gone to the cross, every man would remain doomed and under the wrath of God. By denying this way, they have denied the way to God.

It is only by blood that we can come unto him. It is only by the blood of Christ that we can come. And they fail to see themselves.

By denying the blood of Christ, then they fail to see themselves as hopeless, damned sinners, who are only saved because of what the Lord Jesus Christ did upon the cross. They deny the centrality of the cross. They deny the Lord that brought them.

Whatever teaching a man may have to offer to you, if the Christ of Calvary, if the Christ of the cross is not the central part at the heart of it, I say he is a false prophet and a false teacher. Listen for the thing. If a man is always on the radio, the television begging for money, send money for this, send money for that, and he has maybe three or four minutes to say something about the gospel, count him a false prophet.

That was one thing when God laid on my heart to go on the radio. Most of you don't know it, but at one time, I covered the whole nation with the Word of Truth broadcast. But I said, oh my God, I will not do it unless you won't make me ask for money.

If I've got to ask for money, I won't do it. I don't want my faith trusting him. I want Christ to be the central.

I don't want to spend 10 or 15 minutes begging for a dollar and then say, if you don't send in your money right away, then we're going to have to go off of this station. As if God was sitting up there as a pauper and couldn't furnish anything. Brother, to deny the cross, to deny Christ, Christ is the vocal point, the center of everything.

The one and only hope for poor sinners is to deny what God has wrought for us. Now having denied all of that, you can understand what he is saying in him, even denying the Lord that bought them. Now go to verse 20-22 and you'll have that scripture explained to you.

People ask me, how can you fall from sin? How can you deny and leave the Lord that bought you? If he bought them, will you live forever? But go to verse 20-22. Verse 2 Sanctification or holiness is not a part of their theology. Beloved, false teaching will always lead to false living.

There was a Lutheran pastor who was about 20 miles from Redfield. He came in about every 6 weeks. We had a good fellowship and conversation together.

One time he told me, he says, there's 3 couples coming up from Florida and for a renewal, a week of renewal. And he told me who they were and what they did and how they did it and everything. I said, well I'll tell you brothers, I love you, I'm your friend, I want to tell you to be aware.

Usually, all of that leads to fornication and adultery. Beloved, when you get down to pray for a spirit and you're unsaved, you'll get a spirit. But usually it's an unclean spirit.

I know what I'm talking about. He didn't come back in the store for 6 months. He came in that day and his head bowed and he said, I should go listen to you.

I said, why, what happened? He said, well I found out that while these 3 couples were here teaching us to do this and to do that and to be better Christians and all that kind of stuff for renewal, they were lies swapping the whole week that they were here. I said, I tell you, this is what it leads to. This is what this chapter says it leads to.

Eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. Verse 14. Verse 3. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

It is said that these false prophets are filled with covetousness. You see, this man, there's a lot of women today claiming to be prophets and prophetesses and all this. He, this individual, he is not teaching or preaching only for the glory of God.

If he was, he would be inclined to the Holy Spirit to keep him broken before God, walking in righteousness and true holiness. He would be a man full of humility, designed to be made like Christ in every phase of his life. No, he will with feigned words, cunning thoughts, arguments, he will exploit you, to order over God's heritage.

He loves power, he loves dominion over people. He will do anything and everything he can to keep you under his rule and under his power. He doesn't want it to be broken.

He covets your gold and your silver, your lands and your houses, doing his best to get all he can out of you to use on his own lust. And if he sees you are about to slip out, and going to say something about him and against him, as I told you before, his favorite cry is, don't touch God's anointing. Covetousness eats them up.

We'll get into that more when we get to verse 15. Let's skip over to verse 10. We're coming back to these other scriptures in next Sunday's message.

Verse 10, but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, and they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. These individuals walk after the flesh, they indulge in the lust of polluting passion and scorn and despise authority.

They will not have anybody to rule over them. They've got it. You can't tell them any difference.

I don't care how much you bring before them, they have an argument for everything they do. They might be raking in a million dollars, and they have an argument from the word of God that that's what they should

have. They'll be living in sin, and they will tell you that it's God's will.

I had one tell me face to face when he was living in open adultery, and I told him about it. He says, oh, that's not lust, that's love. What? Love? Living, breaking God's seventh commandment? But they weren't.

Beloved, you don't know what this message has cost me. I have cried and cried and wept. When you see this young man standing before you this morning, he's only 75 years old.

And I've lived a long time. And I've seen a lot of people in my lifetime. And I've seen a lot of false prophets in my lifetime.

And the one sin that is common to them all, they love the greed of money. They love to satisfy their own abominable lust. And for you to get in their way is to bring their wrath down upon you.

They walk after the flesh and indulge in the lust of polluting passions and scorn and despise authority. They do not love authority. You can bring them before, you can take, and I've showed it, and I've proved it, you can take the very words that they preach and bring them back to them and apply it to their own lives that you see them in.

That doesn't apply to me. But it doesn't apply to you. It doesn't apply to them.

Why? They want nothing to disturb their lust of polluting passions. They scorn and despise authority. That's the most amazing thing.

I wish I could get it over to you. It is the truth. I speak before God.

It's the truth. These false prophets usually are so puffed up with pride that you cannot teach them one solitary thing. They know it all.

They have it all. Then who are you to try to tell God's anointed what is right and what is wrong? Since I've been here, I had a man stand me right in my face. He says, if you take them glasses off, I'll put this fist in your face, and you'll never get up again.

I said, oh, do what you gotta do. He was mad because I preached unholiness. I know what I'm talking about.

Their self-will, their self-loving. If I was not giving you the word of God this morning, I'm only interpreting the word of God. This is not my God.

I'm not up here to try to tear down somebody. I've mentioned nobody's name. I'm here to warn you this morning.

I'm here to teach you from the word of God. Because perilous days are coming. And there might come people in among us who, for a while, will seem to be alright, and then rise up.

We're big animal heresies. And we've gotta be careful. We've gotta watch and pray.

And God would make us to know these things when it all comes about. Then again, they hate anybody in whose heart God has worked the work of grace, and who walk according to Titus 2, that the grace of God, it does not teach us to sin. Most of them believe, well, I've heard it.

I've heard it in my own ears. Well, you don't know what the grace of God is. Yes, I do know what the grace of God is.

When the grace of God comes, it makes a new creation out of you. It does not give you a license to sin. But you know what grace is.

Grace covers it all. Yes, it does. If you're in Christ.

But if you're not in Christ, grace is not going to cover anything. But grace does not teach us for the grace of God to bring us salvation at the period of all men. This is what it teaches us.

That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope that the glorious appearance of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify, isn't that a word, purifying himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. So these false prophets, when you get to know them, or you try to help them, or you try to talk to them, they do not like it, they do not like to be around you. Why? They deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

That is, they do not deny it. As the believer denies it, they deny it for themselves. But the believing child of God, he denies ungodliness and worldly lusts.

We have been soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. And the life of holiness that the individual lives before them, convicts them. They can't stay around.

Well, I'm just going to read verse 13 and close. I'm going to comment on it. I just want to read it with you.

Another characteristic of these false prophets is that they have eyes full of adultery, that they cannot cease from sin, beguile in unstable souls, and heart they have exercised with covetous practice, cursed children. Or, comparable along with that is 2 Timothy chapter 3. Verse 5, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive, silly women, laden with sin, laid away with diverse lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

I say this in love. I say this in love to your soul. I say this in love because I love you as my people.

Women, please, be careful. Because this admonition is written to you, a warning. These individuals have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.

Their lives have never been changed from such turn away. Then he declares who they are. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive, silly women, laden with sins, led away with diverse lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

That's a warning to you women. Be careful. Be careful.

I tell you to be careful. Did you hear what I said? I said be careful. Be prayerful.

Wait upon the Lord. Look to him. Ask his understanding and leadership about these things.

Take it to him. I pray by asking some questions. In going over this today, have you been able to see that this world that we live in is a place of a mighty spiritual conflict going on? It's a conflict between the host of

God and the host of Satan.

The battle, beloved, is fought in the spiritual realm. And these false prophets, they want your soul. Satan wants your soul.

Beware. I've prayed a thousand and one times. Father, I'd rather a millstone tied around my neck and be cast in the depths of the sea, than to stand in the way of the least of one of God's living creatures.

I've actually begged him. Will you listen to me? I've actually begged him that there would not be a facial expression, a word comes out of my mouth that I'm with women, that would give them any indication whatsoever that there's anything in my heart other than the glory of God and the grace of God. I've cried for that.

Lord, may there not be even a facial expression, a word that would come out that would indicate that there's any motives in my heart other than the good of the soul to whom I am talking. And I do not desire to bring anybody under my control. I guess that's one thing that people who have worked with me all these many years here has against me.

I may take a long time in making decisions sometimes, most of the time. And come on, I ain't going on this story no more. That's not after I've prayed about it.

I'd rather wait for the Lord to work and wait upon him to do what he's going to do. I ask you a vital question then. Do you realize that this will be a mighty spiritual conflict between the forces of glory and the forces of hell? And do you see and know and understand that everything's heading up to an ultimate charismatic crisis? We're headed for it.

Just as fast as we can get there. Beloved, 33 million slain babies' blood is going to heaven crying. God's not going to stand for that holding.

This homosexual and lesbians, that's what brought the fire down from heaven against Sodom and Gomorrah. And this nation is steeped in it from the top to the bottom. From the very top to the bottom.

God's not going to stand for that always. Judgment is coming. Morals are gone.

That time is unknown, but the fact is inevitable. He's coming. I'm running late on my time this morning.

I ask you to forgive me, but I've got to close this out. Okay? We don't know when he's coming. And it's Friday night, about 8 o'clock.

I get a phone call from a man whose voice I recognize, but I could not put a name to that voice whatsoever. He says, I got it all figured out. Then the Lord Jesus is coming back.

Then he began to spiel, and he took me through this, this, this, this, this, this, and this. And when he got finished, he said, Hallelujah! Praise God! He's coming! I said, yes, he is coming. And I'm telling you, that could knock me off my voice box.

He says, you're not shouting. He's coming. He's coming in October 1999.

I got it all figured out. In the Bible. He hung up.

But he did tell me his last name. Some of that conversation. Some of it on my computer, and I brought it up.

He lives in the state of Washington. He's been on our mail list for a long time, and he's got a lot of new material from here. We do not know when he's coming, brother.

We've got to be ready. Today could be the last day for repentance. I don't know.

Today could be the last day for us to get right with God. But I've got to ask you these questions a lot, and I won't put an emphasis to any of them. I'll just ask you these questions.

These are vital questions. Directed to our hearts. To your heart and to mine.

In all of this, I ask you this question. What does the Lord Jesus Christ mean to me? What is the Lord Jesus Christ to me? Ask yourself that question. Where does the Lord Jesus Christ come into my scheme of things? Is he my all in all? Think again.

A. Is he absolutely vital to my existence? That's a good question. Is the Lord Jesus Christ absolutely vital to my existence? Again, am I depending utterly and completely upon him? What do I have in reserve? Am I cast upon God and Christ continuously? Do I say with honesty, simply to Christ and his cross I cling? Helpless, I look to him for grace. Have I ever despaired of life apart from Christ? There is no hope.

Then let me ask you this. Do I have a deepening view of the holiness of God in the same fullness of myself? You heard what we had to say this morning. You heard God's word this morning.

It should drive us to our knees before God. Asking him for mercy. Seeing more of his holiness.

A deepening view of his holiness and the more of my sinfulness and how much I need to cast myself upon him every day. Can I honestly say that I see the holiness of God more than I ever done before? And my sinfulness more deeply than I ever sinned before? Am I driven more and more back to Christ? That's a good question. Am I driven more and more back to Christ? The Lord that bought me? And him who said, I will hold you until that day that he presents us perfect and spotless without blame and without blemish in the presence of the Father with exceeding joy.

Are we dependent wholly and completely upon him? And then my last question is, do you know Christ? Have you met him? Have you come to him? Have you surrendered all to him? That message cost me my soul. That message cost me many a cry, many a tear. You might not have thought that, might not have struck you like that, but it's this chapter that has struck me like that.

So I've looked into it. And the grace of God this morning to my soul is the greatest it's ever been. Because beloved, beloved, only by the grace of God have I been held all of these many years.

Only by the grace of God. But I point you to Christ. And I point you unto him.

And ask that you will take these things and ask God to take them home to your heart. Write them there. We may know and understand the things that are made for our peace.

And what Christ means. What he's done. And how we should walk in holiness.

And how we should keep our hearts and our eyes open for those who would try to deceive us. Walking in the way of the world. Go to Michael.

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