
Sermon Notes

April 7, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

The Character of False Teachers

2 Peter 2:10b-16

Nothing New

- ❖ *Elmer Gantry*, a novel published by Sinclair Lewis in 1927 and set in the early years of the 20th century, depicts the hypocrisy of false teachers and the danger they are to Jesus' church in every age
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 1:9, ... *there is nothing new under the sun.*
 - the same, basic, doctrinal errors are recycled and sown among generation after generation of God's people
 - such lies lead many astray and cause them to embrace sinful habits and adopt sinful patterns of relating with one another

Arrogance and Action

- ❖ Peter issues two indictments about the false teachers against whom he is contending
 - vv. 10b-13, the arrogance of false teachers
 - vv. 13b-16, the actions of false teachers
- ❖ The nature of Peter's controversy
 - no one knows exactly what brand of false teaching Peter is attacking

- the controversy has something to do with angels
 - dismissing the existence of angels or minimizing awareness about "the angels who fell" may be an attempt to steer people's attention away from the fact that God will judge the world just as He has already judged angels
 - the Bible is clear that there are both obedient and disobedient angels
- ❖ In v. 12, Peter compares the false teachers to brute beasts and unreasoning animals
 - the willingness of the false teachers to slander celestial beings shows their arrogance
 - even obedient angels do not presume to speak against disobedient angels
 - part of the false teacher's failure is due to ignorance
 - another part of their failure is because they are reacting to life and truth on the same level as irrational animals
 - the false teachers are looking at God-sized issues through human eyes
- ❖ False teaching is often revealed in false living
 - *You will recognize them by their fruits* (Matt. 7:16)
 - adopting bad doctrine leads to bad practices
- ❖ Carousing in broad daylight
 - hedonism, living solely for one's own pleasure
 - false teachers have no shame whatsoever about their open indulgence

- Peter compares those who live like this to "blots and blemishes"
- ❖ Eyes full of adultery... insatiable for sin
 - Moo: "... the false teachers are so addicted to sex that they look at every woman as a potential partner in their lust."
 - they want to take as many down their perverted path as possible
 - **enticement** = bait on a hook or meat in a trap
- ❖ Hearts trained in greed
 - not just greedy... they are TRAINED in greed!
 - greed encompasses far more than money
 - **accursed children**
 - they are like Balaam (Numbers 22-24) whom Peter uses as his "poster boy" for greed

Now What?

- ❖ Be aware of and do not go beyond the bounds of what Scripture teaches about the spiritual world that surrounds us
 - a prevalent interest in the "spirit world"
 - occult practices of all sorts, spirit guides
 - God has made us with a spiritual side
 - if that part of one's personhood is not filled in the appropriate way God designs through Christ
 - people will seek to satisfy it elsewhere
 - be ready to affirm and assert that angels are created beings God uses to do His bidding
 - we are not intended to seek contact with angels
 - WE do not rebuke Satan!

- ❖ Guard your heart against hedonism
 - "what satisfied me yesterday is no longer enough"
 - pornography is one form of "eyes full of adultery"
- ❖ Be vigilant in withstanding the pull of greed
 - a serious issue within the contemporary, Western church
 - too often, the bottom line reigns supreme
 - we must not individually, collectively or as a Christian subculture follow the error of Balaam
- ❖ We must ensure that we are not the kind of **unsteady souls** Peter warns us against
 - **unsteady souls** are "easy picking" for false teachers and wolves in sheep's clothing
 - people like to hear things that make them feel good and less guilty about their sins and failures
 - take the time and make the effort necessary to ground yourself in God's Word
 - gaze at Christ, listen to Christ, learn from Christ
 - how can I have the heart of Christ?
 - how can I be the hands and feet of Christ?
 - what does the Holy Spirit need to do in my life today to make me more like Jesus?
 - the facts and fundamentals of the Christian faith will ultimately serve as the best protection against the presence of heresy

Personal Reflection

1. How are you arming yourself and preparing your mind to withstand the presence and prevalence of false teaching?