

Denying The Master

2 Peter 2:1-2

¹ But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. (2 Peter 2:1-2 (ESV))

As we continue in our study of these words today, I want us to focus our attention on this phrase in verse 1, “denying the Master who bought them”. Why? It is because, of all the sins that men can commit, this one is by far the worst. And yes, all of those other sins are wrong and they are abhorrent to God, sins such as lying, stealing, cheating, and on and on. But to reject God completely, forgetting that He is the one who has bought us with the greatest price ever paid, His own shed blood and life, our rejection of Him crosses a line from which there really is no return.

God warns about that kind of rejection in Hebrews 6. Listen to these words,

⁴ For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. (Hebrews 6:4-6 (ESV))

This is the danger, both for the false teachers and for those people who follow after their beliefs.

These are indeed mysterious words, words that should bring great fear to our hearts? And while we cannot imagine ourselves doing such a thing, this warning given here is clear and plain. Given the right pressing enticements and provocations we can easily start down that path of rejecting Christ without our even realizing it is taking place.

A good example is in our recent Sunday School study in the Book of 1 Samuel. We saw there how the people of Israel were crying out for Samuel to give them a “king” to rule over them. Those people were frustrated with the corruption that had seeped into the practices of some of the “Judges”, especially involving Samuel’s own two sons. And they were also living daily in constant fear of attacks by the Philistines and other raiding groups, killing their families, stealing their animals and crops. So the stage was set for them to “want” a king who would lead them and protect them.

But their cries of complaint did not tell the whole story of the problems that were taking place within their hearts. The real underlying truth that had brought them to the condition they were in and to all the difficulties that were besetting them was far more of a “spiritual” problem. When they had first come into the Promised Land, with Joshua there to lead them, they had held strong to their faith and their trust in God. But as time passed and Joshua died, their hearts grew cold, and they slowly drifted away from the faith and the trust they once held so strongly and they stopped calling upon God’s name for help.

So then here, as they began to cry out to Samuel to give them a “king”, God knew very well all that was taking place. And He told Samuel the real truth. He said to Samuel, “these people are not rejecting you as their leader, they were rejecting Me. They no longer want Me to be their “King” and their protector. They want their own choice of a leader.

Folks, please understand something very basic about God. He really does know every thought and every motive of our hearts. As we are told in Psalm 139, He knows every thought we think and every inclination of our hearts long before the words reach our tongue.

And as we know from our study last week in the Book of Genesis, rejecting God and His leadership over us is a sin that is basic to every human soul. Adam and Eve, who had never sinned and were otherwise perfect in every way, needed only a slight nudge from a clever demonic tempter and they easily fell over the edge into a life of corruption and suffering.

And unfortunately for you and me, as Adam and Eve fell, they dragged us with them. Now our DNA is filled with sinful desires and tendencies, especially this inclination spoken about here, the inclination to reject God in favor of our own choice of a master. And no, we usually don’t word it that way. We actually don’t want any master over us. We want to be our own master. But the choice is all the same. We are rejecting God!

And you can hear the argument, “Is it too much to ask, for me to just be able to make some of my own decisions? Haven’t I got a right to a life of my own?”

But folks, the problem is, once we have made our break with God, as Adam and Eve did, then we are “out there”, on our own, making rapid-fire decisions about things that we know so very little about. And unfortunately, many of our decisions turn out wrong.

And here is where this all fits into the words of our scripture text. Most of us, especially here in the South, still have a degree of “fear” within our souls, so we don’t often openly and completely reject God. We instead do what we think is the “next-best thing”. We stay in our churches, faithfully attend, and try our best to have the “best of both worlds”. We incorporate a mixture of “what God says” and “what we want” and we come up with just enough “religion” to make us think we are doing OK. But listen, that never really works out very well for us.

And to add to our dilemma, many of our church leaders have shown a consistent inclination to compromise biblical beliefs and standards in favor of what they are calling “relevancy” and “inclusion”, a misguided effort to merge the beliefs and the activities of the church so as to “fit” the mainstream desires of some of their members, a mixing and matching of biblical Christianity with secular world view.

And this problem is rampant within our churches all over America today. Our teachers and preachers have themselves learned and adopted a “blurred” biblical doctrine, often passed along to them by their predecessors, their bible teachers, their seminary professors and others. And now they are passing those same blurred doctrines along to their congregations, building new generations of confused and misguided people.

And to be sure, those church leaders are not innocent in their misapplication of these scriptures? Not at all. Remember that God is always working within the mind and heart of every person. And He will be faithful to give every preacher and every teacher the pure and incorruptible truths from these scriptures. But to hear Him, the preachers and the teachers have to be humble and submitted to the Spirit of God at all times.

And too often, we aren’t. We have the inheritance we received from Adam and Eve deeply imbedded within our souls. And from that, we have our own opinions and secular world views about everything that takes place in our world today. And when you add all those factors together, we church leaders begin to produce sermons and teachings that will lead a congregation astray and into believing destructive heresies.

And please understand, it doesn’t matter the denomination, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Charismatic, they each have their own favorite destructive teachings and heresies.

In the time we have left today, I’d like for us to examine some of the most common of the “destructive teachings and heresies”, again, their intent being the same intent that satan began with in the Garden of Eden, to cause us to “deny the Master who has bought us”.

And may we use a word that most bible scholars use to describe these heresies? The word is "liberalism". "Liberalism". But what is "liberalism"? "Liberalism" is defined as, the moving away from the traditional and literal interpretation of Scripture into "new" interpretations that are more consistent with and favorable to "secular world views."

May I repeat that definition?

"Liberalism" is the moving away from the traditional and literal interpretation of Scripture into "new" interpretations that are more consistent with and favorable to "secular world views".

How does "liberalism" work its way into the teachings that take place in ordinary church congregations? It works its way in subtly, very subtly, and often not through demanding preaching and teaching, but instead through constant questioning of some of the most foundational of the beliefs of our faith, questions about such essentials as the Deity of Christ, is Jesus really God, salvation by Grace alone, the resurrection of Christ, the gospel itself, and especially of late, questioning if there is more than one pathway for us to get to heaven.

False teachers have made great inroads in recent years, especially in being able to cause many within the churches to question and even deny the inspiration of scripture, its inerrancy, and its authority, saying that the Bible has errors and contradictions, that it is "written by man," and intended only to be as a guide, not as absolute truth.

As a young Christian, I was counseled by an older and wiser Christian to listen carefully to some of the first words that a preacher or teacher would say as he opened his bible and began to read. If he prefaces his reading with such words as, "let us look into these scriptures and find God's truths within them, he is revealing that he believes that not all of the words within those pages were truth, only some of them. That folks, is heresy! Heresy! All the words within these pages are the inerrant and infallible words of God, no exception.

Other false teachers will deny God by questioning the historic accuracy of the Bible, some of them denying that Adam and Eve really existed, insisting that they are just metaphors. I recall that my high school biology teacher told us that the story of the flood and the story about Jonah were not real, they were just "metaphors". And the same thing was said by Bill O'Reilly of Fox News, that most all of those stories in the bible were not really real, they were just metaphors, used to make a point.

Some might argue that Bill O'Reilly and my biology teacher are not the same as the "false teachers" who spread destructive heresies that are spoken about in these words. Oh, but they are. And there are many, many more just like them, all spread throughout our high schools and college campuses, and in our seminaries and in many of our ordinary Sunday School classes, bible studies and youth groups.

Another of the destructive heresies comes from those who would deny that there is an actual hell with eternal punishment. Again, because the bible has so many, many obvious references to hell, such teachings that deny the existence of hell is just another way of denying that the bible itself is the true, inerrant and infallible word of God.

Another destructive heresy that we are very familiar with and is part of the church's misguided quest to be more "relevant" and more "inclusive" is the preaching and teaching that homosexual behavior is not really a sin, that it is simply an alternative lifestyle. Some of those heretics who teach and preach that heresy have gone so far as to declare that the real sin that caused God to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was not the sin of "perverse sexual behavior", but was the sin of a "lack of hospitality". A "lack of hospitality". How silly! I can imagine that those demons who put such ideas into those people's minds are probably laughing hysterically at the idiocy of humankind to believe such foolishness.

Folks, on the authority of these scriptures, I declare to you that homosexual behavior truly is a sin and it is heresy to believe and to teach and to preach otherwise.

And there are so many, many other destructive heresies being taught, but I have run short of time. I'll close by repeating the one "destructive heresy" that I mentioned in our message last week, the heresy of believing that God is a "God of love only", that He will forfeit His "righteousness" and His "holiness" in favor of making sure that everyone gets to go to heaven.

Folks, such teaching is not in these scriptures and it is not the truth of God. Don't believe it! Such teaching denies the need for Christ to have suffered and died for us. As these words tell us, it "denies the Master who bought us.

Listen as we close.

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