

Protection in Identification, part 2

2 Peter 2:4-10a

(preached Pine Grove 5/2/20 Sun PM)

Introduction

On April 22, the Pope commemorated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day by giving an online address from Vatican City.

If you aren't familiar with Earth Day, it began in 1970 as an event to encourage environmental protection.

So the Pope celebrated the 50th anniversary of this day by reminding people of their need to protect the earth.

In fact, the Pope announced last year that some environmental sins may be added to Roman Catholic Church's Catechism, which is a collection of Catholic teachings and rules.

Though that hasn't happened yet, the Pope took to the stage on April 22nd to remind his listeners that "society has sinned against the Earth."

And as a result, the Pope believes that the earth is unleashing judgment on society.

“We see natural tragedies, which are the earth’s response to our maltreatment.”

According to Pope Francis, “If we have deteriorated the earth, the response will be very ugly.”

Now let me stop right there before my blood pressure gets out of control.

But understand this.

When you fail to honor the word of the God, you fail to know the God of the Word.

And the Pope and the Catholic church have long left God.

But they have to replace God with something, so often times, the environment becomes their God.

Or their own good works become their God.

Or their own political issues become their God.

But this is where false religion leads.

It leads to a worship of everything but God.

Now to be clear, the earth is God’s certain, and man’s relationship to the earth is to subdue and rule it.

Now that rulership doesn't mean abuse.

In fact, rulership implies care and concern and stewardship.

So clearly, Christians are not abusers of the earth.

We are good stewards.

WE are good managers.

But let me also be very clear that Christians are not worshippers of the earth either.

First of all, this earth belongs to the Lord for His glory and His use.

In fact, the Bible says that He will destroy this earth and remake it into an earth free from decay and the effects of sin.

It will one day be an eternal earth free of corruption and there will be no need for environmental protection.

As a result, worshipping this earth is foolish, and trying to stop its decay is worthless.

But furthermore, seeing the earth as something that deals out judgment is ridiculous.

Disasters are not the results of a mad earth.

The earth has no emotions and no power.

It is not 'mother earth' and there is no such thing as 'mother nature'.

And though mankind is evil and sinful, the earth has no ability to respond with disasters and diseases.

Judgment alone belongs to God.

Despite what the Pope says, the earth isn't angry over sin.

But God certainly is, and his anger is justified and his judgment is right.

Tonight, in 2 Peter we are going to learn about God's judgment.

In fact, we are going to discover 7 principles of God's judgment.

And the context of these principles is God's judgment that is aimed at false teachers.

Now remember, the purpose of 2 Peter is to help the church identify false and avoid false teachers.

It is a book written by Peter at the end of his life to help the church defend themselves from false teachers that were on the rise in the 1st century.

It is a book that was written by Peter who saw his life coming to an end, but wanted to not go quietly.

Instead, he wanted to sound the alarm on the danger of false teachers and their destructive doctrines.

So God inspired this letter to the churches in the mid 60s AD, and it along with the book of Jude becomes the go to book for identifying false teachers in the church.

And we have arrived at the 2nd chapter of 2 Peter, which is a chapter dedicated to helping the church identify false teachers.

If you look at the outline of this book, we have already seen that having a firm grasp on our salvation helps guard us from false teaching.

Specifically, when we understand that our salvation is secure and that we have been equipped with everything needed to live a godly life, our fear of false teachers is lessened.

We also learned in chapter 1 that knowing the Bible is a great defense from false teaching.

In other words, if you know the truth well, you will spot the lie.

So if you focus on the truth that God has revealed in Scripture, you won't have to know about every false teaching.

Therefore understanding your salvation and knowing your Bible is a help in combating false teachers.

But now in chapter 2, identifying false teachers is addressed.

And last Sunday morning, we looked at 6 traits of the false teacher.

- A. False Teachers Are Similar (1a)
- B. False Teachers Are Subtle (1b)
- C. False Teachers Are Self-Centered (1c)
- D. False Teachers Are Successful (2a)
- E. False Teachers Are Sensual (2b)
- F. False Teachers Are Swindlers (3)

Tonight, we are going to add a 7th trait of the false teacher..

False teachers are sentenced.

Let's read 2 Peter 2.

I am going to start back in verse 1 and read all the way to the first part of verse 10.

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a [a]preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from [b]temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of

judgment, 10 and especially those who [c]indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

The focus of verses 4 to 10 is clear.

God will judge false teachers.

Even though false teachers may prosper and have great crowds following them, they will have to face the Lord, and He will not be kind.

So let's look at the judgment of false teachers tonight, and as we do, let's identify 7 principles of God's judgment.

The first principle of God's judgment is this..

1. God's Judgment Is Delayed (4)

Look back at verse 4..

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

One difficult issue of false teachers is simply this, -why does God allow their ministries to exist?

If God is all truthful and all powerful, why doesn't He just extinguish these false ministries and teachers on the spot?

There are a number of reasons for God's patience, but don't mistake patience for forgetfulness.

God will judge false teachers even if it seems like it will never happen.

And Peter uses the example of fallen angels in verse 4 to remind us that God is known to delay judgment but He never forgets judgment.

And case in point are the angels who joined in Satan's rebellion and were cast out of heaven.

The Bible says that a 1/3 of the total number of angels joined with the devil in his rebellion in heaven.

And as they were cast to the earth and immediately became demonic, some began to commit the worst evil possible.

In fact, some angels in the book of Genesis inhabited the human bodies of men and procreate with human women.

And the result was an offering that was partly demonic and human.

You can read about that in Genesis 6:1-4, and we have examined that in the book of Genesis some time back.

But what Peter makes clear here is that God sent those demons to a pit of darkness.

The book of Revelation speak of a demonic abyss that will be opened as part of the judgments of God during the tribulation period.

In that day, this pit will be opened and those jailed demons will be released one again to commit incredible evil in the world.

But ultimately, those angels turned demons will be judged by God.

Now remember, they have been waiting a long time.

The events of Genesis 6 are roughly 5000 years ago, yet God have not forgotten about the judgment that he will bring on those evil beings.

You see, the passage of time does not lessen the judgment of God.

God has a perfect memory and executes percent judgment.

False teachers from all periods of history will be judged severely for their false teaching.

Though God's judgment of false teachers may be delayed, it had not been forgotten.

God will judge those who teach falsely about him.

A second principle of God's judgment is found in the first part of verse 5..

2. God's Judgment Is Delivered (5a)

5 and did not spare the ancient world,

As Noah built the ark for 120 years, no one believed a flood was coming.

That is until the heavens opened up and the springs of water burst forth and the water kept rising.

You see, no one thinks judgment is coming until it actually arrives.

But God delivers judgment.

And flood is an example that God judges.

We live in a day where no one thinks God is judgmental.

In their depraved minds, God would never send them to hell.

He would never condemn them.

False teachers rise in popularity and grow in fame because they constantly escape judgment.

And on top of that, their bank accounts and popularity rises.

And as those grow, so grows their confidence and arrogance.

The people in Noah's day laughed at him for 120 years as he built a boat, but they were laughing when the rain began to fall and the water began to rise.

God delays judgment but you can also be sure that he delivers it as well.

His perfect character won't allow to act unjustly, as judgment must come and it will for every false teacher.

But then in the midst of such grim news, Peter gives us hope in the second half of here 5.

Though God's judgment may be delayed and thought it will be delivered, God's judgment is also defined.

3. God's Judgment Is Defined (5b)

but preserved Noah, a [a]preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Though God's judgment falls, it falls only where it needs to fall.

God discriminates in his judgment.

So receive it and some are spared.

In the flood, Noah and his family were spared.

They floated in the ark while the world drowned in the flood.

Judgment comes but it only comes where the Lord directs it, and that is encouraging.

I used to have teacher who would keep the whole class in from recess even if only a few were misbehaving.

God doesn't judge in that matter.

He knows who deserves judgment and he know who doesn't.

Noah was on the ark and escaped judgment.

Our ark is Christ.

Our savior is Jesus.

Those in Christ escape judgment.

He is our Passover Lamb.

Judgment came to everyone in Egypt except those with the blood of a lamb over their door.

And judgment will come to every sinner except those with the blood of Christ over their lives.

God's judgment is sure but it is selective.

Make sure that you are in Christ when God's judgment falls.

A fourth principle of God's judgment is found in the first part of verse 6..

4. God's Judgment Is Destructive (6a)

6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes,

In case Peter's readers missed it in the description of the flood, they are reminded here that God's judgment is destructive.

Sodom and Gomorrah are two cities mentioned in Genesis 19.

Sodom was the home of Lot, who was the nephew of Abraham.

But Sodom was a city of widespread immorality.

Two angels came to visit Lot and were attacked by the homosexuals of the city to the point that Lot offered his own daughters to the men to protect the angels.

However, God pulled Lot out of Sodom along with his family and then rained down fire and brimstone on those cities until they were completely destroyed.

In fact, archeologists have never found the remains of those cities, and the reason for that is God's complete destruction of them.

In fact, the Greek word for destruction here is catastrophe.

It literally means that the cities were turned upside down by God.

They were completely abolished.

And this is the nature of God's judgment.

It is devastating.

It is total.

And false teachers need to be warned that they too will be completely destroyed in the judgment of God.

A 5th principle of God's judgment is found in the second half of verse 6..

5. God's Judgment Is Demonstrative (6b)

having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;

Though this is a reference to Sodom and Gomorrah specifically, every judgment that God has rendered and recorded in Scripture is a warning to the world.

The casting of fallen angels into a pit.

The worldwide flood.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The death of Lot's wife.

The plagues on Egypt.

And on and on the Bible is filled with examples of God's judgment.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 10:1-11

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock

was [a]Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.” 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them [b]did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them [c]did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them [d]did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

God’s judgments on people in the OT serve as examples for the generations that follow that God does judge.

Any why would God write this in 1 Corinthians 10 and 2 Peter 2?

Because people refuse to believe that God is a God of judgment.

Ask people if they think that God will judge sinners and see how they respond.

The majority of people today refuse to believe that God would judge anyone, much less send them to hell.

Yet, the Bible is full of the judgments of God.

In fact, every death every day is a picture of God's judgment.

No one has died because they are sick or had an accident.

People die as judgment for their sin.

We call it cancer or a car wreck to help us avoid the obvious and that is the reality that God takes lives because people have sinned against Him.

The obituaries are a constant picture of the judgment of God in the world.

Though I am believer, I will die and I will die because sin has killed me.

And death is reminder that God judges all who sin against Him.

The fact that you can't find Sodom and Gomorrah on a map or discover their ruins is a remind that God judges and He judges severely.

A 6th principle of God's judgment is found in verses 7-8..

6. God's Judgment Is Desired (7-8)

7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),

Now understand an important truth of Scripture.

Though someone is described as righteous in the Bible, it is not an indication of sinlessness.

Job was called righteous, but he was a sinner.

Abraham was declared righteous but he too was a sinner.

And here Lot is called righteous 3 times, but he was also a sinner.

When we return to the book of Genesis in a few Sunday nights, we will see the ugliness of Lot's sin.

Yet, God called him righteous and that is simply a reflection of Lot's belief in God.

Lot was only righteous because he believed the Lord.

And because of Lot's belief, God gave Lot relief for the sin around him.

In fact, this is what verses 7 and 8 are describing.

Lot was literally oppressed by the sin around him.

Now many point to Lot's desire to live among such sin, and we can't deny that.

But God saw fit to rescue Lot from his corrupt culture.

The point is that God's judgment is desired by God's people.

Look, God's judgment gives relief to God's people.

None of desire to see people cast into an eternal lake of fire, but understand that their punishment will make heaven what it is.

And that is a place free from sin and sinners.

Was Lot glad to see those lustful men destroyed who sought to attack the angels and Lot's daughters?

Sure he was.

Who wouldn't be?

And we will be glad to see ungodly people judged.

There is nothing wrong with desiring justice for those who have rejected the truth of God.

In fact, those who love the truth can't wait for the liars to be judged.

So God's judgment is desired by God's people.

A final principle of God's judgment is found in verse 9-10..

7. God's Judgment Is Determined (9-10)

9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from [b]temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who [c]indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

I love how Peter says this..

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly and judge the ungodly.

The Lord knows how.

In other words, God knows who deserves judgment and who escapes judgment.

I don't need to tell him.

I don't need to help him.

Judgment and salvation are fully in his hands.

God knows what He is doing.

He is rescuing those and protecting those and saving those who belong to Him.

He is also exposing those and keeping those and preserving those who reject his truth for a day of judgment.

And those two activities of God go on all the time and he glances both of those realities perfectly and rightly and God never makes a mistake in either area.

The righteous are kept safe and the wicked are kept for judgment.

And God has determined who are His and he has determined the time of regard and punishment for both.

Though we may like to make suggestions for who needs judgment, God needs no help.

He has determined his plan before the foundation of the world.

Conclusion

Now let's leave with a couple truths.

#1 - False teachers may prosper but they will perish.

God delays his judgment on false teachers in hopes that they come to repentance.

And let me add here.

There are many false teachers who have seen the error of their ways and repented and truly trusted Christ.

We should never forget that and we should rejoice when that happens.

But often the delay of God's judgment allows false teachers to gain a following and prosper for a while.

However, their prosperity will come to a swift end and their perishing will come just as swiftly.

#2 - Judgment may be difficult but deserved.

The Lord does not rejoice in the death of the wicked, but the wicked still die because God is just.

Thinking about the destruction of the false teacher is difficult to think but I can assure you that their destruction is deserved.

For men and women who take God's name and word and use it to serve their selfish and greedy and lustful desires, there needs to be a hotter part of hell and there is.

#3 - The church may suffer from false teachers but will survive.

False teachers have always set their sights on the church.

Yet the church has grown and the false teachers have gone.

Ultimately, God protects his people.

Noah and his family was saved by the ark.

Lot and his daughters were saved by leaving the city.

The Israelites were saved by blood over their door.

Over and over, God delivers his people from trouble while delivering trouble to those that don't belong to Him.

This is God's nature.

The church is battered but it never sinks.

Believers are tempted to false teaching but they never leave.

God is a God who knows how to rescue the godly and reserve the ungodly for judgment.

And let me tell you something.

What are we looking forward to right now?

The rescue of the rapture and the judgment of God to follow.

This is how the Lord works, so make sure you are one He will rescue by coming to His Son in faith alone.

Let us pray.