Watch Out for Fakes!
2 Peter 2:1-14
Rock Solid – Week 33

November 2, 2014

In 2 Peter 2:1-14, we are given an insider’s look at spiritual deception. Truth is all-important, especially when everything about our lives is on the line; in these situations, tolerance is no virtue. God wants us to know the truth because He loves us, and He wants us to discern truth in order to protect us! From this passage, Pastor Skip summed up Peter’s message in three statements that provide us with three principles, or rules, in dealing with counterfeit teachers.

Peter warned us to be aware of their falsehood by noting that all counterfeiters have these common traits:

- First, they’re always around. From the time of Moses to the time of the Messiah and even now, there have always been “false prophets among the people” (v. 1). In Matthew 24:4-5, Jesus told us that as history moves closer to the end, we should expect a proliferation of false prophets.
- Second, they distort the truth as they “secretly bring in destructive heresies” (v. 1). *Heresy* originally meant to choose or to have a preference for something that is not true. We must be vigilant for such deceivers, who use our vocabulary but not our dictionary. They speak of essential doctrines such as salvation and inspiration, but they pour different meanings into these words.
- Next, they “even [deny] the Lord who bought them” (v. 1). To deny Jesus Christ is to deny His incarnation: that He left heaven and came to earth as a man; to deny His salvation: that He lived the perfect life and died the perfect atoning death; to deny His substitution: that He took man’s sin and bore our judgment; to deny His resurrection: that He overcame death and guaranteed our eternal life with Him; and to deny His ascension: that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father and deserves worship. Friends, Christianity is Christ! If anyone denies that Jesus is who He claimed to be, then that person is a deceiver and not of true Christian faith.
- Furthermore, they broaden the way, and “many will follow their destructive ways” (v. 2). Counterfeits are popular because they make the way easier than it actually is. While salvation is free, it does demand faith in Jesus Christ, which includes repentance. Conversely, false prophets preach a counterfeit gospel—free of guilt and repentance—that is easy and comfortable to hear.
- Additionally, they cover their motives, for “by covetousness they will exploit you” (v. 3). Their actual goal is not to advance the gospel of Jesus but to accumulate money, power, and status by exploiting people as merchandise. In contrast, Paul explained his own actions in 1 Thessalonians 2:5, where he wrote, “For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness.”
- Lastly, counterfeiters despise authority, for “they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries” (v. 10). The term *dignitaries* here refers to demons, such as those referred to in Jude 8-9. False teachers are so arrogant that even though they are merely humans and no match for the power of Satan or fallen angels, they confront and mock them, which even Michael the archangel did not do (see Jude 9).

Peter then went on to warn false teachers that they should be assured of their fate (see vv. 1, 3, 12-13). Nothing is more offensive to God than deception, especially when it involves falsifying facts regarding Him and His truth. False teachers who enter the true church face certain judgment, and Peter cited three illustrations: fallen angels, the ancient world, and Sodom and Gomorrah. Why is God so punitive in this matter, and why was Peter so descriptive of the punishment? Because it matters what you eat spiritually, and God loves us enough to want us to eat biblically healthy.

Lastly, Peter called us to be aligned with the faithful by following the examples of faithful people. Verses 5 through 9 mention two imperfect men to emulate: Noah and Lot. Lot’s inclusion alone shows us that the bar is not set too high. These men and those who obeyed their message all escaped God’s judgment. This should encourage us that God loves us enough to warn about judgment and that He has overwritten the permanent sin record of every believer with His permanent bloodstained ink.

Adapted from Pastor Skip’s teaching

The BIG Idea
God loves us enough to warn us, to put up a sign that says, “Beware! Watch out for false teachers!”

- William Barclay said, “A heretic [is]...a man who believes what he wishes to believe instead of accepting the truth of God which he must believe.” Nothing is more offensive to God than heresy and deception, especially when it falsifies facts regarding Himself. Why?
- God rescues the godly before He judges the ungodly. Have you found a faithful person, a Noah or Lot, who you can mimic so that you may find yourself in the godly category? What are some ways you can provide a faithful example for others to follow? (See Philippians 3:17.)