

Sermon Info:

What You Need To Know About False Teachers: Part 2

The Identity of the False Teachers

1. They once had the appearance of believers

- **v. 15**, “Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray.”
- **vv. 20-21**, “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

Application: Don’t Assume the Gospel

2. They openly practiced their sin in church

v. 13-14, “They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. ¹⁴ They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!”

The root of their teaching

1. Arrogance

vv. 10b-11, “Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, ¹¹ whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.”

2. Sensuality (v. 2, 13, 14, 18, 19)

3. Greed

v. 3, “And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.”

v. 14, “They have hearts trained in greed.”

v. 15, “They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing...”

Application: Enjoy earthly pleasures as gifts, not gods.

The Outcome of the False Teaching

1. Instability

v. 17, “These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved.”

2. Slavery

vv. 18-19, “For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.”

3. Hardness of Heart

vv. 20-22, “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Application: Don’t envy the freedom of the wicked.

Psalms 73:3-7, “For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. ⁵ They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind. ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. ⁷ Their eyes swell out through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies.

Psalms 73:12-13, “Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. ¹³ All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.”

Psalms 73:16-17, “But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, ¹⁷ until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. ¹⁸ Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. ¹⁹ How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!

Application: Let’s look out for each other.

v. 14, “They entice unsteady souls.”

v. 18, “they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.”

Quote: Look to Christ, speak to Christ, cry to Christ, just as you are; confess your sin, your impenitence, your unbelief, and cast yourself on His mercy; ask Him to give you a new heart, working in you true repentance and firm faith; ask Him to take away your evil heart of unbelief and to write His law within you, that you may never henceforth stray from Him. Turn to Him and trust Him as best you can, and pray for grace to turn and trust more thoroughly; use the means of grace expectantly, looking to Christ to draw near to you as you seek to draw near to Him; watch, pray, read and hear God’s Word, worship and commune with God’s people, and so continue till you know in yourself beyond doubt that you are indeed a changed being, a penitent believer, and the new heart which you desired has been put within you. The emphasis in this advice is on the need to call upon Christ directly, as the very first step.

“Let not conscience make you linger,

Nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness He requireth

Is to feel your need of Him”

—so do not postpone action till you think you are better, but honestly confess your badness and give yourself up here and now to the Christ who alone can make you better.

- J.I. Packer