

### Lies, Lies, Lies

**III** – Lying video or stats. Lie to me?

How can you tell when someone is lying?...

Have you ever lied?... “That was a lovely dinner!” “Thanks for the socks – the perfect present!” “No, that dress doesn’t make you look fat” “I’ll be there in 5 minutes” ...

Have you ever been lied to?...

What are the consequences of lying?

In chapter 2, Peter is addressing a major problem of heresy – lies about the gospel - false teachers. Last chapter, he reminded us to remember the gospel. The truth. Remember what we were once first taught about the truth of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and coming again.

Now, he warns us of false teachers. Remember the truth – and watch out for the liars.

So in this chapter, Peter is putting the fear of God into the false teachers, telling them that God’s going to get them!

So what’s happening?

### The sin of heresy

Verse 1:

*They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.*

False teachers are secretly introducing lies into the church. It’s not an accident. It’s not like they’re accidentally misinterpreting something. They’re deliberately lying.

#### 1. So first – what IS heresy?

At it’s heart, heresy is about denying God.

Denying the true God. Denying his Word. And it’s the same scene in the garden of Eden. God said don’t eat from THAT tree, and Adam and Eve listened to the serpent and decided to deny God’s word and listen to the lie.

#### 2. Second – How do we SEE a false teacher?

They are shown by their depraved conduct. The way they act. That’s what happens with false teachers and those who follow them. Their life becomes depraved. And others follow that depravity, and it brings God’s church into disrepute. Child sexual assault or spousal abuse in the church is a typical example of this. Just one minister, one church worker, engaging in this depraved behavior brings the gospel into disrepute.

Same in the garden of Eden. Eve ate. Gave some to Adam. He ate. One follows the other, breaking their relationship with God.

#### 3. Third: What MOTIVATES them to do this?

They are motivated by Greed. The desire for more. More money. More power. More followers. More. Again, it was the same in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve wanted to “be like God, knowing good and evil”. They were greedy to be powerful like God.

Why I mention the garden of Eden each time here is because we need to see that sin doesn't change throughout human history. It's the same then and now. It's **always** about denying God. It's **always** about depraved conduct. No matter how "big" or "small" that depravity is. And it's **always** about greed. Greed for more. To have more. To WANT more. To BE more.

But the reason false teaching and heresy is such a big deal is because not only are those teachers sinning, but they are leading OTHER people into sin. They are leading others AWAY from the truth of the gospel.

**III** – Imagine if someone was to run into this building and say that there is a fire and we all need to get out - I'm guessing we probably would. But if it turns out that there was no fire, that they were intentionally lying to us, then we probably wouldn't trust them if they did it again next week. Or the week after. In fact, if someone ELSE came in and said there was a fire next week, we may even not trust THEM, even if there WAS a fire. We might begin to say: "People are always running into this church calling "fire!" Best to ignore them!

False teaching undermines the **real** truth. How many times have you tried to talk to someone about Jesus and they say: "I'm not interested in church because they hurt me when I was younger." Or "they hurt my family" or "a church took all my parents' money". You see, it doesn't matter if it was YOUR church or someone else's church who hurt someone or lied to them. Lies undermine the real truth.

And there are consequences.

### Can God Do It?

From verse 4, Peter outlines a few examples to get to a great conclusion:

1. First: Even Angels who sinned were not spared – God sent them to hell.
2. And remember the flood? God destroyed the earth but spared Noah and 7 others.
3. And then there was Sodom and Gomorrah – cities that were destroyed as an example – but God rescued Lot who was a righteous man.

What Peter is saying is this – verse 9:

*the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.*

God knows how to do that – rescue and punish. No one will escape punishment for their false teaching. And the righteous, the godly, WILL be rescued. God knows how to do that. He's done it before, so we can trust Him that he will sort it out. It's a threat AND a promise!

**III** – What's one of the most annoying thing to hear from a child?...

"It's not fair!"

He got more ice cream than me. How come she gets to play video games for longer? Why do I have to clean my room?

But Peter writes this to remind us that God IS fair. That the false teachers and the ungodly are not getting away with it. There is judgement coming. And for the godly, there is rescue. It is fair. God is fair. And that day is coming.

Peter wants to say to the church – God knows what these false teachers are doing.

## God knows

He knows they are bold and arrogant (verse 10)

And they will be paid back for the harm they have done (verse 13)

That's a great reassurance for us. God knows. He knows when people wrong us. He knows when people lead us astray. And he will be fair.

**III** – Don't you hate it when people cheat in a game. Sports. Board games. Cards... whatever. It's annoying when people cheat. And we can say to ourselves – it's just a game! It doesn't matter. No big deal.

But with God, life is NOT a game. It DOES matter when people lead others astray. We're not playing some game that God doesn't care about. Life is all about a world that has broken their relationship with God. And that's serious. And God's aim is to restore our relationship with him. Getting that right is not a game. Getting that right is the most important thing in the world because it has the greatest consequences in the world – eternity. And so there are consequences for false teachers who **cheat** in life by lying about God and leading others astray.

## Heavy judgment

*21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them*

Here's the problem. They KNEW Jesus. They KNEW salvation. They KNEW the truth – and they turned their backs on it. Now they are much worse off.

That's the greatest insult to God. To know him, and turn your back on him. To know him and accept him, and then reject him. To be out of relationship with him, to be brought into a relationship with him through Jesus' blood on the cross, then to not only turn your back on him, but start to lead others AWAY from him.

So what's this all mean for us?

God is fair. God knows. False teachers will be punished.

BUT, in the meantime, we are to remember the truth, as chapter 1 taught us. Remember the truth so we do not get fooled into following false teaching.

False teaching is often very subtle today. There are the obvious ones:

Jesus isn't God. FALSE.

Jesus didn't die. FALSE.

The Bible isn't relevant today. FALSE.

But the danger is in the subtlety of the false Christian culture that surrounds us. For example:

- The lie that Church is not important. Turn up when you feel like it. Yet Hebrews says: "Do not give up meeting together."
- Or the lie that Prayer is optional. Yet Philippians 4 says: "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions."
- Or the lie that as Christians we should just do what we can, and give what we can. Yet Romans teaches us to give our lives as "living sacrifices". In what we do, how we give.

It is EASY to be fooled by false teachers. But those false teachers are all around us. Not only in churches, but among our Christian friends. The ones that tell us, encourage us, not to worry about church, or prayer, or serving, or giving. Why? Because it makes THEM feel better about their own Christian life. It's a culture that waters down the call of discipleship. A culture that encourages us not to put in too much effort. And where does that false gospel leave us?

Let me finish with verse 19:

*"people are slaves to whatever has mastered them."*

Are we not called to be slaves to Jesus? Not slaves to a version of Christianity where we don't challenge or rebuke or encourage one another into a life of community and prayer and sacrifice. We're not slaves to a watered down, "easy living", "whatever you feel like" gospel.

We are slaves to Jesus. He sacrificed his life for us, and each day, our life is to be a sacrifice to him. It's not easy. It's not cheap. It's not popular. It's not tolerated in our world. It's not self-centred. It's not self indulgent.

The true gospel is simply this: We are slaves to Jesus. Any other gospel is false.

Prayer...

## **False Teachers and Their Destruction**

**1**But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. **2**Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. **3**In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

**4**For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; **5**if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; **6**if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; **7**and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless **8**(for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— **9**if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. **10**This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.

Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; **11**yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. **12**But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.

**13**They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.

**14**With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! **15**They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. **16**But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

**17**These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. **18**For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. **19**They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.” **20**If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. **21**It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. **22**Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.”