

Don't Stand For Tolerance

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[0 : 0 0] page 1222 second peter chapter 2 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 many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute 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 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 and 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 if he condemned the cities of soren and gomorrah by burning them to ashes and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly and if he rescued lot a righteous man who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless for that righteous man living among them day after day was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard if this is so then the lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment for the day of judgment this is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desires of the flesh and despise authority bold and arrogant they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings 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 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 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 with eyes full of adultery they never stop sinning they seduce the unstable they are experts in greed and accursed brood they have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of balaam son of bezair who loved the wages of wickedness but he was rebuked for his wrongdoings by a donkey an animal without speech who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness these people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm blackest darkness is reserved for them 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 they promise them freedom while they themselves are slaves of depravity for people are slaves to whatever has mastered them if they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our lord jesus 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 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 of them the proverbs are true a dog returns to its own vomit and a sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud this is the word of the lord thank you so much sean and andy for what you shared and thank you for reading the word of god there um you may wonder why second peter so i got an email from martin would you come and speak and i said yes yeah and i said what on so then began to list the books of the bible that you did and there's roughly 65 in the list and i thought what's left and we're stuck we're stuck today with second peter thank you martin um so anyway this is why we're in second peter um what's fascinating though is the way second peter as peter deals with false teachers and the continuing presence of false teachers in the church um i know a bit of the history of since the recent history of saint silas is uh just from watching from afar watching from uh the church of ireland um i'm in the historic i'm ordained and serving in a church that's in the historic structures can't be related the line structures of the church of ireland we're having our issues um big drive for the change of doctrine on marriage in the church of ireland um there was a listing process 2013 through to 2017 on human sexuality uh so we are close in

church of ireland so we know that we're going to be facing and have faced already some of the things that you guys have faced here and you've been a model to us across the way um painful difficult um but unsurprising because second peter chapter two tells us this is an ongoing reality for the church of christ where there are false teachers present and that strikes us and we know that that false teaching it's not just to do with the kind of the human temporal institution of earthly marriage if you like on the human sexuality question um it's to do with people's souls and salvation that is how significant these issues are but we know that those who teach against god's word are present and will be an ongoing presence they are promised and we see this very clearly in chapter two so i want to pray um what time we finish that martin half past 11 12 even 22 that's all right 20 so that's right i've got time that's bad news for you good news for me anyway second peter chapter two and thank you so much sean and andy for that story um those who've come through similar uh always say how do those who do not know christ or don't have hope how do those people cope with this um and these things so thank you so much you you bird your souls to us today thank you let's pray father we give you thanks for your sustaining power for us for your sustaining love for your sustaining word may we hear that word now as we tackle chapter two of the second letter we pray these things in jesus name amen i think for the bbc whenever it comes to something like songs of praise or when it comes to something like the coronation you watched that spectacle last week when was a couple of weeks ago last week um the key thing the thing that makes the thing christian at least i've been noticing i may be entirely wrong but not that i watch songs of praise please don't think i watch songs of praise ever um but just occasionally i flick it on by mistake the thing that seems the thing that seems to be here is the zenith of christianity is the tolerance of others expressed in the interviews expressed in those who participate that seems to be the the the thing that's the marker tolerance at the king's coronation he was very keen wasn't he that all religions were at least participating he remains defender of the faith but at least all religions because they're all equal aren't they they're all kind of you're you're this and you're this and you're this and you're this and you're this and we live in a society where there's this this and this and this religious expression and they're all the same really i mean i happen to be a protestant as a king that's just me but they're all more or less the same we've got to be tolerant and the idea of tolerance is a noble idea it's a virtue isn't it in order to live with difference we must tolerate at least put up with at least kind of allow to live and others to express and that's hugely important but one of satan's lies is that very lie that all of these religions all of these ideas are equal and true and true and valid equally as true one of the other therefore when it comes to christ when it comes to how we understand the true and the living god therefore well one isn't better than the other isn't closer to the truth than the other at that level i think it's we see this everywhere where tolerance used to be the characteristic that you will defend to the death your right or their right or the other person's right to express their view right to express their opinion but now it's kind of there you must accept their opinion intellectually philosophically you must get into it's it's moving towards i don't know whether you feel that pressure we're beginning to feel that pressure in northern ireland um i know that we'll call this the mainland those of you are from northern ireland please don't be offended by me saying that um those who are on the mainland i think have faced these pressures a bit before us we're now beginning to face them you i guess are facing them in this country where tolerance means well actually believe it or not the suppression of a particular view a christian's view tolerance is a virtue yes but when it comes to issues of truth and what is truly true what is true truth in the words of francis schaeffer we have to say well no that view is wrong that doesn't correspond reality all religions don't lead up the hill to the same destination there are yes differences but there are falsehoods and the bible is true that's hard for us to hear i guess and it's hard for us particularly when it comes to the church um this idea that truth doesn't really matter that what we believe doesn't really matter that's just your thing i'm this thing i'm a i kind of i'm a i'm a practical christian you're a believing christian you like your theology books you like all that sort of stuff and we leave what we believe aside because that how does that relate to reality how does that relate to my everyday life i think you had a bit of an example of it earlier on how what we believe actually impacts how we live so what about what the threat what the promised existence of false teachers how does that work what is that about well you've had in chapter one the certain and sure truth of god's word the certain and sure truth of god's witness the certain absolute beyond any shadow of doubt truth about the lord jesus christ upon which is based our hope we will swing into into eternity on that hope that certainty and of course satan seeks to devour christians and how does he do it well look at chapter two verse one there were also false prophets among the people notice the prophets the the

prophets no word of prophecy just at the end of chapter one there chapter two verse one as there were false prophets in god's people just as there will be false teachers among you notice the change of terms there false teachers among you and what do they do well they will secretly introduce here's the methodology secretly introduce destructive heresies even denying the sovereign lord who bought them bringing swift destruction on themselves many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute in their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories their condemnation has long been hanging over them and the destruction has not been sleeping where would you rather be i'd rather be in chapter one verses 19 through to 21 the world of certainty the world of truth the world of words that correspond to eternal reality and certainty that it is true we would rather be there wouldn't we than the world of chapter two verses one to three but we need to hear chapter two one to three because if we don't well then the threat that's mentioned here in chapter two might actually take hold so the false teachers are promised present and effective notice how they do their thing they don't come with a t-shirt saying false teacher or a baseball cap they don't come with a kind of a jacket that's a certain color and you can tell oh they're wearing that color of jacket therefore they're the false teachers they don't come like that in fact that is not their strategy because that would have revealed everything about them it would reveal their message and would have revealed their motives well look what's their message well their message are look verse one they will secretly introduce destructive heresies their message is heretical they will bring untruths about the true and the living god they will do what satan did in the garden and say did god really say just as there were false prophets there will be false teachers amongst you they will secretly notice secretly introduce destructive notice that how these heresies are described they will bring destruction even denying the sovereign lord who bought them bringing swift destruction on themselves many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute their message is false their message is heretical it's a distortion don't believe it notice how they work

secretly introduce but notice how seriously god takes it in their greed notice there is a motivation in their greed in their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories this is in complete contrast to chapter one isn't it verse 19 right through to 21 for prophecy for example verse 21 prophecy never had its origin in the human will but instead god moved and spoke these guys the false teachers the message is all from them they preach their own ideas and god takes it seriously i don't know if you're struck by the language of god's judgment in chapter two do you see how seriously god takes false teachers and false teaching because false teaching will lead people to hell the language that's used here look verse three their condemnation they will be condemned long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping this is how seriously god takes false teaching so how do we view them well these false teachers will come to an end in the midst of all of this in the midst of the false teachers entering and causing havoc and kind of wrecking christians how will god deal with it is there any way out well look at how god has dealt in judgment on those before and he begins with the angels this is a big long sentence in the original big long sentence so you just have to kind of keep up if god did not spur we'll not go like too much in depth here but just to take the big points here if god did not spur angels when they sinned but sent them to hell putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment if he did not spur the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people but protected noah preacher of righteousness and seven others 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 and if he rescued lot a righteous man who is distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless but for that righteous man living among them day after day was tormented and this righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard if this is so if this is so see what it's doing here you can hear it it gives examples of how god can hold people for judgment why why don't the false teachers be dealt with by god right away like now sort them out god

[19:14] I'm sure whenever you guys were going through the particular issues of last decade I'm sure you were thinking why doesn't god sort these false teachers out right now god is patient this is said in chapter 3 god is patient that's why jesus is not back yet been returned yet god is patient where his example mentioned the many examples here god has held over for judgment those who receive his judgment he's held them whilst and this is the draw of breath whilst if this is so verse 9 then the lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment he's able to do that god is so judged god is so wonderful and his justice is so magnificent that he's able to do that able to hold over for judgment and to rescue the godly from

trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment this is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority we know what's motivating the false teachers they've given in to themselves their desires in terms of greed we've already read that at the start of the chapter their desires and their attitude in terms of we'll have a look at verse 10b absolutely arrogant bold and arrogant they're not afraid to heap abuse in celestial beings the angels yet even angels although they are stronger and more powerful do not heap abuse in such beings when bringing judgment on them from the lord but these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand they're like unreasoning animals creatures of instinct born only to be caught in destroyed like animals they too will perish what do they know these false teachers well they don't know anything really what are they speaking out of well boldness and arrogance boldness and arrogance because they blaspheme the angels they would even dare do that they blaspheme the celestial beings yet even the angels who see exactly the reality and the truth of the celestial beings wouldn't even dare to do that arrogance boldness the false teachers are arrogant they're destructive they're seductive verse 13 they will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done their idea of pleasure is to garouse in broad daylight they are blots and blemishes that's a real contrast isn't it to Christ who's without spot or blemish reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you they're what's the word they're driven by their instincts by their passions there's no restraint with eyes full of adultery and this spills into the sexual arena verse 14 with eyes full of adultery they never stop sinning they seduce the unstable how wicked this is so people who are desperate for hope desperate for help they pray on them they pray on those who need

Christ and they offer an alternative come and do this thing and your problems will be gone come and pay this amount of money to my program and you'll be sorted we'll sort you we'll give you the answers how wicked with eyes full of adultery they never stop sinning they seduce the unstable they're experts in greed experts in greed imagine having that you know someone writes a reference for you right in your CV you put down greed right really good at greed and then your referee agrees with you oh brilliant he's brilliant in greed oh brilliant fantastic that's quite the thing they're experts in greed and a cursed brood they have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer who loved the wages of wickedness but he was read about that in numbers you can look that up in numbers sometime but he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey how ridiculous

God laughs doesn't he God laughs how God brings to nothing the attempts of those who oppose him but not in our timing not in our way he does this in this instance rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey an animal without speech who spoke so he speaks who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness they're arrogant and seductive I went to the Church of Ireland Theological College and the principal was a man who didn't really believe the Bible he was a scholar quite a reputable scholar of three or four books in the Apocrypha which is the books written during the time of the Old and New Testament so he's a bit of a historian so he and I were over my three years in college constantly at loggerheads us as little grievous and we were always very pleasant we would always sit down at dinner and that kind of thing but it always became a bit fractious particularly after Wednesday evening communion service which we all had to attend and would sit down at dinner and basically for the last seven or eight months of his time as principal at the theological college he took every basic belief of biblical

Christianity basic Christianity and denied it things like the virgin birth God he took the creed basically and gave his alternative creed I believe in God and one of his comments was whoever he she may be right the virgin birth bodily resurrection there was nothing left so much so that someone had an old bible and after a couple of these services he brought it I think maybe two or three of these sermons into the series he'd bring a bible and just rip a page out every time the principal of the college said something like the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection he'd just rip a page out rather dramatically and put it on the ground that's where we were at with this and when I read 2 Peter I see my principal former principal of the college he had nothing to say but said a lot and was all destructive of basic

Christianity and we wonder why the church of Ireland is not doing so well we wonder why the ministers the preachers the teachers the leaders have no confidence to speak about Christ have no confidence to speak about Christ in a world that needs to hear about in a world not just an island but a world that needs to know Christ we wonder why he was speaking of things he did not know I mean speaking of the resurrection and the way that he spoke of the resurrection God whoever he

may be that's a quote and what did he have to offer at the end of the day when all is said and done what did he have to offer at the end of the day when all is said and done what did these false teachers have to offer nothing verse 17 these people are springs without water how useful is that how useful is that you go to the tap you're thirsty you're really really thirsty you turn the tap and nothing comes out or you're mountaineering someday we have the

[28 : 03] Mourne Mountains superior mountain range in Ireland than anything you've got and people get a bit thirsty up the way and they'll find a little spring imagine going to it and there's nothing there mist driven by a storm blackest darkness is reserved for them God takes them seriously very seriously there's a special place in hell reserved for those who damage God's people for those who deny Christ for those who confuse God's people undermine God's people in whatever way it's happening there's a special place in hell blackest darkness special room it's darkness there's a particular type of darkness blackest darkness is reserved for them for they mouth empty boastful words and by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh yes they get somewhere with people because they see something in someone that someone wants the prosperity gospel for example particularly in Africa but we have our own prosperity gospel version don't we certainly where I'm from you know be a

Christian in this context and you know you can look good you can drive a nice car you can be comfortable have a nice life you know and the demands of Christ really won't make that much of a difference to your life so be part of our church where there's a great desire to reach the lost or pray for revival or you know send people to the other parts of the world that don't know Christ you know come and be part of our church and everything you'll look good and you'll be cool and you'll have lots of cool friends and so we have that kind of prosperity gospel version it's a softer prosperity gospel but it is there it's the same it's tantamount to the same thing because it appeals to me it appeals to me I want to go to a church where the message is not clearly preached but other things are emphasized for example our diversity and that's a beautiful gospel characteristic of the faithful church yes but if that's the forward fit of a church do you know what ultimately does that do for anyone will lives be transformed they promise them freedom you see there's just for their mouth empty boastful words about appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh the enticed people who are just escaping from those who live in our error they promise them see how damaging this is those who are seeking those who escape from error sorry those who are living in error they promise them freedom come and do this sign up to this course or follow me or sign up to my instagram page or you know you can look like me or you know that kind of thing they promise them freedom there'll be great freedom in this this of course the son of man you know come to bring freedom the son shall set you free and that's what this means they've escaped the corruption of the world verse 19 sorry my eye keeps dropping down while they themselves they promise them freedom while they themselves are what what's really going on on the inside of them slaves of depravity for people are slaves to whatever has mastered them if they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our lord and saviour

Jesus notice that if verse 20 if they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our lord and saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome they are worse off the end this is a big contrast to chapter one how God's divine power enables participation in the divine nature is a big contrast isn't it a big contrast where faith heads towards love or self-control perseverance godliness mutual affection complete contrast to the true believer these false teachers are just overcome entangled and overcome it would have been better verse 21 for them not to have known the way of righteousness and to know it and turn to then to turn their backs and the sacred command that was passed on to them they knew Christ they knew who he was they knew the truth they were apparently saved but how bad it will be for them on that day they go back to their vomit they go back to their mud this is how serious the Bible takes false teaching and false teachers are you on your guard or have you gone soft have you thought okay we've got it sorted here in St. Silas we've got it sorted in our group there's no real danger we've got Martin he preaches and we believe notice here the promise they will be present may not be sitting in here amongst us but maybe those who are sitting in here amongst us are influenced somewhere and perhaps they are talking to and working with this is not new in the Bible sure it's not Paul had to deal with this as he spoke to Timothy as he spoke to Titus he spoke about the false teachers he said listen if you're going to preach and teach and pastor you've got to be able to teach the truth and to deny error we know this as you track the growth of the church and acts the false teachers we know this we know

that false teachers exist most of the New Testament is written because of the existence of false teachers interestingly whenever we get into the third chapter

I don't know whether this is autobiographical or not from Peter he speaks of denying Paul he speaks of denying Paul because you remember that big conflict between Paul and Peter as Peter drew back from eating with Gentile Christians false teaching and the denial of the gospel the denial of the freedom that the gospel the true freedom that the gospel brings is always a threat always a threat it requires you to listen carefully it requires you to grow in the knowledge of Christ so that you know what is true and what is not true for you to be able to smell a rat in all scenes in the church building in Belfast in an area called the Holy Land right because the streets are named Jerusalem Jericho you know

[35 : 30] Carmel that sort of thing it's quite a misnamed place I would say Holy Land you're only six feet or so away from a rat and I was preaching last Sunday night Revelation talking about you know Revelation 18 where Babylon and all sorts of unclean animals are living in the destroyed Babylon chapter 18 I made the comment you know you're only six feet away from a rat and then the next day there was a dead rat lying out the front so anyway just thought I'd share that do come and visit anytime make sure you're well inoculated but you've got to be able to smell a rat you've got to spot where does this not tie up with the truth of the word of God you've got to listen they are a threat they will damage you they will take away your freedom they will take away your confidence they will take away your trust in Christ

Christ for example is not the savior just a good example Christ for example is not the only way I mean there are other ways aren't there I mean those other religions have really nice people and they're really moral really upright people in them surely how can God say oh I mean you know in terms of human sexuality I mean really it's a bit archaic or Victorian to think that marriage essence of marriage is too gendered heterosexual it's a bit old that isn't it so if you begin to think that well who are you listening to you're in chapter 2 territory really aren't you maybe you are chapter 2 territory chapter 1 people listen really carefully listen really carefully God takes this so seriously there is a turn isn't there that we'd rather have an experience than deal with the truth we'd rather have a feeling as we gather we'd rather have a feeling not deal with the facts of Christ and his word that's a reality that I see in the circles that I'm in and that is perhaps the moment where the false teachers will be present because you take away the word you turn to feeling so who are you listening to are you listening carefully are you aware that this is a reality are you sleeping or is your leadership team sleeping on the job you need to ask all those sorts of questions because I think those are the only questions that chapter 2 will lead us who are the false teachers what is the message of the false teachers you can work it out it will always appeal to our basic instincts comfort this is probably like teaching granny to suck eggs you guys have been through this you've dealt with the false teachers you've worked through the false teaching but don't think that it's all done and dusted there's a promise here that they will be present they will be effective they will be arrogant they will be seductive but they will come to an end and that end is a dreadful end this is how valuable you are

God's people are God's precious people are this is how valuable you are you're the most precious entity on earth because Jesus Christ's life blood was shed for you to buy your back to him it's no surprise sure it's not that these terms are used the blackest darkness element it's no surprise so listen carefully and beware watch out these words are true live in chapter one be these chapter one people who grow in the grace and the knowledge of Christ which is the commendation at the end of chapter three but you can see what that knowledge does to you it changes you and avoid these false teachers call them out get your bible study leaders to call them out get your children's workers to call them out your youth leaders to call them out your pastor teachers to call them out to equip you to understand now if I take that line that particular perspective well actually that's chapter two territory not chapter one territory these are sobering words but it is the word of God to which we apply ourselves and which we trust

God will apply to us as we reflect on these things let's pray heavenly father we pray that we would love the truth and so know the truth and know the freedom that the one who speaks the truth gives the truth and know the freedom that he brings father we pray that we would watch out we would listen carefully that the wolves would be kept at bay that the messages of the world which appeal to our instincts which will lead us astray from Christ we pray that they would not get very far amongst us and into us thank you heavenly father for the promise of judgment thank you heavenly father for

the promise of salvation we thank you for all of these good things in Jesus name amen and we thank you for so long thank you for so long