

The Possibility of Apostasy

By Paris Reidhead*

Will you turn please to II Peter Chapter 2 and I shall read more of the Chapter than we did this morning. Beginning with the first verse and reading straight through the Chapter. Remember our theme Possibility of Apostasy II Peter 2:1-22:

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. ⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁷ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: ⁸ (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) ⁹ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: ¹⁰ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. ¹¹ Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. ¹² But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; ¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; ¹⁴ Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: ¹⁵ Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbad the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷ These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. ¹⁸ For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. ¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. ²⁰ For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ²¹ For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²² But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

It seems to me very natural that individuals who know and love Jesus Christ would want to make others know Him. Those that are born of God want to have others come to know the joy and peace that they’ve experienced. It seems quite unnatural, actually unbelievable that there should be men and women dedicated to this sole task of dissuading people from following Jesus Christ. To use their skill and their talent and their ability in proselytizing to impiety. This just seems impossible. But this is the case. In fact, we could say, there are far too few who are seeking to share the Gospel with men and women that are desperate dying need of it. Far too many that are using all of their ability and persuasiveness to induce men and women to forsake the way of life.

We would ask you tonight to examine your own experience. You haven’t time to do it though there maybe suggestions given that will be of help to you this evening. Have you encountered along the way those by some either by direct statement or by subtle suggestion have tried to dissuade you from the way that you’ve accepted and to which you have committed yourself? I think back in my own experience and remember that shortly after I came to a real knowledge of Jesus Christ and committed my life to Him, that I heard such voices as these that dimly echo in my memory. “Well, religion is alright, but remember you’ve got to keep it in balance. You don’t want to go overboard on it.” And again a man that employed me for a time when I was a student in Bible School, when he pointed to his liquor cabinet and said, “The last fellow I had I had to fire because he use this too much. But it would really give me pleasure to see you go to it now and then.” And when I stay with him for some three

months and didn't, he said to me as I left, "All I can say is you're a fanatic." Every pressure that this man had possibly been able to exert on me he had done. Trying to get me to do the thing that had been a problem in his life and in the lives of so many others. So if you can join to my experience and others that I have not mentioned, your own. I'm sure you will agree that Peter was quite wise and correct when he sought to warn us against seducing teachers.

This morning we spoke concerning teachers again, but I think that this chapter, that we had no time to touch in the morning service, will give us something further concerning the description of teachers or those who would seek to woo us away from this way of life. So we will confine our attention this evening to verses 17-21. And look immediately to verse 17 to see description of teachers that would dissuade us from this way.

They are called first "wells or fountains without water." Supposedly teachers have a fountain of wisdom upon which they're to draw. They have spent time in school. They've spent time in preparation. They've had experiences. And everyone who would in any wise try to influence your life is going to make some claim of authority. Either experiences that he's had or observations that he's made.

Peter says, "These are wells without water." Water speaks to us of reality, speaks to us of true happiness. It would speak further of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that would enable a Christian to have something to share. Those who would come to you and seek to prove to you the Bible isn't true and Jesus Christ is not God and that you're acting in foolishness to commit your life to Him, are claiming to have some ground for their statement. Peter says, "Their wells without water." But my experience has been the best defense in situation of this sort is probably a strong offense. And if you have a positive testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ and you're seeking to make Him known, you'll be amazed at what wonderful insulation this provides. And you will be surprised how quickly it will be that such will no longer waste their effort on you. The best thing that you can have such a situation where you have opponents to the Gospel, is to be known so affirmatively committed to Christ that you just can't be dissuaded, that you are hopeless. I say this as both as good insulation and it furnishes marvelous opportunities for witness.

You're going to be in a most dangerous predicament if your well is dry. I recall hearing of a testimony that someone gave at a rural church years ago. For years and years every time testimonies were offered this good man gave the same one. He said, "When I was 20 years of age, I dipped my bucket into the well of salvation and I've never had to dip again." Well, finally after hearing this testimony for 20 years, one man said as the other finished, "I've heard my good brother say that so many years ago he dipped the bucket into the well of salvation and he's never had to dip again. But I would suggest to him that if he looks in that bucket he'll find it full of wiggle tails." And I think there is a good many Christians whose lives are full of wiggle tails. Because they haven't dipped frequently enough into the Word of God and in fellowship and they really haven't anything refreshing to share.

"Wells without water" characterizes those that would seek to dissuade you from the way of Christ. But I wonder, if you in turn have that water with which you can answer their need and sometimes meet the question of their own heart. For frequently those that are seeking to push you out of the way are simply trying to test whether or not that this way is so good that you won't be pushed.

Then we find that Peter not only says that "wells without water," but he describes them "clouds that are carried with a tempest." Clouds that promise rain, but they have none. These clouds are driven by a tempest of pride and ambition. Almost invariably if you'll check with a person who is militantly opposed to Christ, and is anxiously seeking to uproot you from your faith, you'll find that somewhere in his past or her past there's an unfortunate experience in respect to religion or Christianity or the Gospel. So frequently, the one that would seek to keep you from church says, "Well, I went. My folks dragged me. And when I got old enough, I said I'd never go." They seem to have good excuses and good reason.

But actually the opinion of Peter, I think, is one that you've got to continually keep before you. There's some reason why, some reason why. One of the things I have found is that sometimes people are trying to live down their past. And I've found some preachers that were trained in Evangelical schools reared in firm warm Christian homes that when they get out they become militantly anti-evangelical or anti-Gospel and sometimes even anti-Christian.

But you see they're barking too loudly to avoid suspicion. Really, what they are trying to do is continually prove to themselves that they are right in the decision that they made. And if they can endue you to go their way, then, of course they have in you that added proof they need. Clouds driven by tempest, tempest of fear. Fear of being discovered on the one hand or a fear of being given some term they feel is difficult.

Today, with modern literature writing with such vehement and vicious tones of fundamentalism. It's almost amazing to find some of my good brethren who believe like I do, disavowing the fact that they believe in the fundamentals or that they are fundamentalists. I'm just too stupid I guess to learn or something. But not that I want to associate with all things which are to be criticized. But I believe in the fundamentals of the faith and if that makes me a fundamentalist, then I can't do anything about it. And the castigations and the allegations and all of the diatribe leveled against our kind, alright. We're big enough in Christ, I trust, to bare it. Let's not try to avoid the term.

Strange how often people say, "I'm evangelical not fundamental." It is like saying that I like food but I don't want to eat calories. They're the same thing, it's just a matter of how you call it, you see and you can't avoid it. If you're going to be evangelical in the Biblical sense then you're going to have to believe in the fundamentals.

So why? Why run? So frequently people are clouds that are driven with the tempest of fear of having a term leveled at them. Again, someone may in vanity and ambition want to spire to someplace he is teaching in a school or his is working in a place that he feels that if he is known as an evangelical Christian, why his chances of promotion are going to be lessened. He is just going to slip around a little bit and he will listen the person who comes along who says it's alright to go to church, but don't teach a Sunday school class. It's alright to be a member of the church, but don't let anyone you tithe, don't take an office in the church. Oh yes, I've had men come to me with corporations and say that they have been given this advice by their superiors, if they were to make the rapid climb otherwise would be expected of them.

These are the voices "the clouds without rain carried with a tempest." Almost invariably such arguments come with flattery. You know a person as good as you are in school with the brain you have, the intelligence you have, is the way it starts. Anyone with your personality and your prospects. Fortunately, some of us have don't have enough of either prospects or personality or intelligence to be seduced this way by such. But if you are in that place where they're putting that kind of pressure on you, remember that if the situation were turned around they wouldn't think you were that wise that that good prospect. No, they're going to appeal to your vanity and if they can convert you to their way of thinking. It's going to be a feather in their cap and it's also going to confirm them in their present attitude. Again, they not only will make an appeal to your vanity, but they are going to appeal to knowledge and to science. And they're going use as Peter says, "Great swelling words," lofty expressions which appeal to, now a days of course, appeal is to psychology. The field of physics with all of its done more or less confirmed in many respects, at least I am told, is the Christian position. And at least substantiated it in ways that were not so a few decades ago. But the field now where it's open season is the Christian is psychology. And we're going to find an increase deluge of attack upon us, because we stand for such old fashion things as discipline and the reality of sin and the necessity of salvation and forgiveness.

So "great swelling words," is the term Peter uses. They allure with these swelling words great sound but little sense is the way it has been characterized by some. Now all the advantages is theirs, these seducing teachers that are going to draw you away from the things of Christ, because they are appealing to your carnal appetites and your corrupt affections. They're going to appeal to you on the level that the Gospel doesn't. For the Scripture says self-denied is the path and obedience is the path, submission to Christ is the way. So when someone comes along and says this way is quite wrong, absolutely wrong. And then gives full license to indulges, affections and appetites you understand all the leverage is there from a human point of view. And of course the ones that they are going to work the hardest on are the ones that have made a real effort to escape from the world that is its corruptions and its lusts. These are the ones for apparently there is far greater satisfaction in getting someone who's had a vibrant testimony for Christ to deny the Lord and turn away than someone who has been kind of an embarrassment from the very first.

Peter describes these not only being “wells or fountains without water and clouds being carried with a tempest.” He also says they are slaves of corruption in the 19th verse. “While they promise liberity, they themselves are the servants of corruption, the bond slaves of corruption.” And if it would be possible for one to look into the lives fully of these that would be most avid and anxious to dissuade you from the path of Christ. You would find that they are in terrifying bondage, dreadful bondage.

Peter is saying that anyone that has known less than the liberality that is in Christ, is a slave. And how can one slave produce freedom for another. The only one who can possibly be the means of bring one in bondage to freedom is the one that himself has experience that freedom. But notice now a description not only of the teacher that does puts forth the effort to get you to give up your faith, but notice the description of the person who submits to this. Let’s look at the supposition from verse 20 on, you have an illustration. Peter isn’t describing an individual, nor is he setting forth a doctrine, but rather he is supposing for he is saying these things are true for one who does. So by giving the illustration, he enables you to see your own heart and your own life.

The man who is apostate is described by Peter here in this 20th verse. He is one that has had some contacted with Christ. He sees that salvation is by Jesus Christ alone, even by His shed blood for the remission of sins and by His righteousness imputed to make us acceptable with God. “For he has escaped the pollutions of world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” (II Pet. 2:20) The only one who can be apostate, therefore, is the one who knows this much about Christ. Furthermore, he not only has correct information about Christ, he has experienced so much from this knowledge of Christ. So as to have been in a considerable degree changed by it and delivered from the pollution of the world. He has also practically and experimentally known the way of righteousness.

Now look back on that, Peter is describing the apostate the one who listens to the enticement hears it, heeds it and turns away from Christ. What is he saying to us? The only one that can be apostate is the one that has had this degree of knowledge of Christ. Now you’re going to say, “Was he saved?” And I am going to say, “Peter didn’t use the words, so why make me use the words.” I don’t know. I know what Peter says. I’ll stick to what Peter said. If you want to take what Peter said and say this equals it is up to you. As far as I’m concern I’m going to stay right with the text, not because I’m wise, but because I am a coward. And I don’t know what else to say, because this is what the text says. This is what I want you to see. I want you to stick with the Word and not to take terms. Because if I ring the changes on terms you may not, as I have said before, most people don’t know what Calvin¹ taught or Arminius² taught. They’ve just been condition to know which word to get mad at. If I use one word or the other, they’re going to get mad at it. And so, I’m going to try to avoid using the word, so as to cause you to think.

Look back, see what Peter said. Let’s go to the 20th verse: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Now they know that salvation is by Jesus Christ alone, by His blood for the remission of sins, by His righteousness making us acceptable to God. For then they have experienced so much from this knowledge so as to have been to a great degree changed by it. And said “to be delivered from the pollutions of the world.” Furthermore, “they have known the way of righteousness” in verse 21. I’m not going to give it a turn. I’m going to let the text stand for itself.

This is the individual, who is to become so entangled with the world as to overcome by the world. He is to be so overcome by the world as to turn away finally and forever from the holy commandment delivered to him. That’s what the text says.

Now, you say, “Well, that doesn’t apply to me.” Peter intended it to apply to you. You say, “Well, I’m a Christian. I’ve been saved.” Peter writing to people just like you and me. And this description is given to us that we should seriously consider it. And we should recognize that though it is a supposition, it’s a possibility. And he is telling you that you should not lightly pass it

¹John Calvin (1509-1564) A French theologian during the Protestant Reformation and the father of Calvinism.

²Jacob Arminius (1560–1609) A Dutch theologian from the Protestant Reformation period and the father of Arminianism and the Dutch Remonstrant movement.

by. First when you consider how extremely weak we are by nature and how prone to sin we are and how often we have fallen in the past you're not going to lightly pass this Scripture by.

Then when you consider what innumerable temptations constantly beset us. How that daily we are exposed to these temptations. Furthermore, when you consider that there is an arch enemy of God and of us that is using all of his power and his intelligence, and his genius to manipulate us into situations and circumstances where we are going to be susceptible to suggestion, then you will understand why it is that Peter is writing to you, why he is writing to me. But we'll add to these three things this when you concern what the Scriptures have said and what our experiences taught on this subject, then you will be careful. I'm going to take you through several Scriptures briefly. And I want you to see them and I think if you turn quickly. We have the sword for a moment. It will be very profitable to you.

Would you turn to I Timothy Chapter 1, verse 19. Paul is writing to the young man Timothy. And he is telling him there were problems he encountered by him. Notice now, I'll read verse 18 through 20 so the setting is complete. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." Now there it is. "Prophecies went before on thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience;" and then he warns him, "which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." Now that's the Scripture.

Come with me then if you will, please unto I Timothy 4:1, hear again the Spirit of God has something to say for us, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." We're in latter times, no question about that. And therefore we should expect from this "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" would be more rampant than any time in the past. And "the Spirit speaketh expressly...some shall depart from the faith." Well, it behooves us to accept the Scripture.

Will you turn to Galatians Chapter 4, verses 9 to 12, Galatians 4:9-12. Paul is writing to the church of Galatia which has been embroiled into that position of trying to establish again, though they were Gentiles, the Jews legalism laws and offerings and ceremonies and so on. "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, where unto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you be as I am; for I am as ye are. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Well, why? He's preached. He's prayed. He says I have labored night and day travailed in prayer for you.

Back to II Timothy if you please, Chapter 4 and verse 10. Paul is writing and elsewhere he writes of this young man Demas with such appreciation and such gratitude, but now this one of the last letters of the Apostle, which he gives his valedictory. The time when I'm ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand and he has to say in verse 10, "Demas hath forsaken me." Oh, what a sad word, "having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." What a sad testimony that he had to write this of Demas.

Let me ask you. Why? If there were no danger to you, would the Scripture so frequently and so urgently warned you to hold fast, to hold steady, to press, to move, to pray. Do you think God has just put these words in for someone else of lesser stuff than we. No. Because there is danger, God has written this way to me and He has written this way to you. Do you think the stony ground believers where the seed fell and sprang up and straight way when the sun fell upon it, it withered away. I say, do you think stony ground believers are so few that we needn't be cognizant of it in the twentieth century? Do you think thorny ground believers, where the seed fell among thorns, sprang up and was straight away choked by thorns and cares of this world? Say do you think these are so few that this doesn't apply now? Oh to the contrary.

It means then that Peter is writing to people just such as we are, in situations similar to ours. How many there are that try to invalidate the danger by appeal by some party which they belong or some group, some human system, but this is most unwise. It is so easy to attach oneself to a teacher or a scheme to such a degree that one can reject the Scripture? It is so easy to find out what's done.

I think of a lady down in Jacksonville, Florida. I was in a meeting there in the south Jacksonville. And there was one there that was quite ill. And she came to this home and the hostess said, "Well, why don't you talk to Mr. Reidhead, who was here with us for meetings about the Lord for the body? The Lord heals and I'm sure he would be very glad to talk with you." She listened for a few moments. So then she said, "Before I talk to him, I'm going to talk to my pastor and find out what we believe about this." The next day or two days later she came back and she said, "I'm awfully sorry. In our church we don't believe in healing, so I won't talk to him." Well, you see, it wasn't a question of what the Word says, it was a question of what do we believe in our church. She had attached herself to a group and the group thinking had absolutely closed her mind and prejudiced her heart against anything that God might do for her or say to her.

A more personal illustration on this score. When we were in Africa, I was sick. I had everything I guess going around. I didn't have leprosy, so don't be afraid. But I had Malaria over and over again and dysentery, just tough that was all. One day I had 80 grains of Quinine given to me, practically effected my sight. I think my wife's prayers spared me because I had terrific pain, sight was dimming. I'm still allergic to Quinine because of it, by the way. So when I got back from Africa, I talked with my wife and said, "Isn't that funny we drank the same water bitten by the same mosquito, I got sick you didn't. How is this?" And she said, "Well, God gave me a verse on the ship going over and I just claimed that every day while I was in Africa." I said, "What was that?" "Well," she said, "it was Psalm 91. 'The plague shall not come nigh thy dwelling' and not near you" (Psa. 91:10) I said, "Well, why didn't you share that with me?" "Share it with you, you old rigid dispensationalist. You'd talk me out of it! You'd have told me it was for the Jews and I would have been as sick as you and who'd have taken care of us." Well, I'm grateful for such love as that, that's willing to protect me from myself.

But it illustrates the point that it is so easy for one to attach themselves to a point of view. A scheme of interpretation that they can reject the Scriptures. They are some that would shut their ears as to the primary meaning of this text, because they suppose it disagrees with some dogma of their group. Now listen, don't you do that. You submit to the text, will you. Submit to it as God's caution. God's warning to yourself and improve the text, use the text so that you don't become an example of the very thing that he is talking about. It is extremely important that we should not join that company that Christ condemned who said, "The tradition of the elders made the Word of God of none effect." (Mark 7:13)

I mentioned just recently Theodora Beza, the succeeded to John Calvin, who understood exactly the presentation of this text as I'm enforcing upon your mind. I think would deserve the term of being called Calvinists. In one of his last epistles, Theodora Beza wrote to a friend and he said, "Oh, God, my daily prayer to Thy is that Thou will keep me from making shipwrecked of my soul when I am just in sight of the harbor." What did he mean? He met the faith that saves is the faith that perseveres, a faith the presses on. And he knew that as long as he lived in this world, the bark of his little boat, his little life was going to have cross winds blow on it. And that he wanted to go steadfast in obedience to the very end.

Notice now, the end of the apostate. We've seen the warning and the possibility, but notice the end, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (II Pet. 2:20,21) Noticed that he has said the last state of the apostate is far worse than the beginning. In the beginning, he was under the sentence that sin brings, but now something has been added to this. In respect to guilt, you'll have to notice that his guilt is the greater because of the light he has secured. He has more light and more light always brings more guilt. He's had enough of the light of the Gospel to know who Jesus Christ is and what He has done. And to have partaken to a sufficient degree that his life has been changed and he has "escaped the pollutions of the world thru this knowledge of Christ." He has had enough light to illumine his conscience and to enable him to see right and wrong and to choose right and to avoid wrong. He's had light enough to open the Scriptures to him. All of this has caused him to have greater guilt when he turns aside in apostasy. But every step into apostasy was aggravated by the fact that he had to go directly against all the ministries of the Holy Spirit. It implies that he had the Holy Spirit has tried to restrained him and tried to hold him. Now since he has had so much light and had so much ministry, his guilt is belong anything it would have been, if he had not known Christ at all. The Lord Jesus Christ in John 15:22 said, "If I has not come, they had not known sin, but now that I have come they have no cloke for their sin." And so this is what Peter is saying. In departing from God, in departing from this way of life, this way of

righteousness, they've dishonored God. They've disgraced the Gospel. They have weakened the hands of the godly and they have harden the hearts of the impenitent. No wondered their guilt is great.

But in respect to bondage, notice something else. Since it was true that they become Christians by the ministry or they committed themselves to this way and you define it. Since they came to this place, the Spirit of God had to move them. He had to illumine their mind to their need and to the work of Christ. He had to cause them to see and to decide to commit themselves to the degree they did to Christ. And so now, in going back the other way they've had to press all of the ministries of the Spirit of God. For as He moved to bring them this way, they must move against that motion of love in their turning from Him.

What are you going to expect Satan to do a situation like this? When he sees the door open the house swept, isn't he going break in and bind with cords twice as strong as they ever were before. He certainly will. Do you want to see the description of what happens to the apostate? Why is bondage so severe?

Will you turn please to Hebrews Chapter 6 and verses 4-6. Hebrews 6:4-6. I want you to notice now the word impossible and the word repentance and what's in between. Verse 4, "For it is impossible." In verse 6 it says, "To renew them again unto repentance." I want you to notice it didn't say it's impossible to be forgiven. It said the impossibility is not on the part of God's forgiveness. The possibility to get them to repent. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Here we find something happening in the human spirit. Their bondage is as great as their increased guilt, because now there is something taking place in them. Perhaps is having resisted the Spirit of God. There's no ministry that He can bring consistent with what He does to cause them to turn. They've given themselves over to a reprobate mind, but in respect to their condemnation, their guilt is greater, their bondage is greater, and so is their condemnation.

In Matthew the 10th Chapter, and the 15th verse the Lord Jesus speaks of Corsan(sp) and Beth Zeta(sp). And He says, "If the mighty works had been done in Sodom and Gomorrha which were done in you, Sodom and Gomorrha would have repented. And it will be more tolerable for them, Sodom and Gomorrha, than it will be for you." I think our Lord was trying to indicate that there were some degrees of punishment in this, whether He was or not, we can so interpreter it. But let it be known now that what he...the whole thrust of everything Peter is saying is trying to warn you not to listen to teachers that will try to induce you to turn away from Him. Not to give your mind over an acceptance of what you read in books that have as their intent even suggested or avowed to turn you away from Christ. Not to go into company and engage in that kind of conversation and communication that has at its end to dissuade you from following your Lord. Not to let any temporal advantage or seeming honor or position have the effect of inclining you to think about turning your heart away from Christ, but rather to resist as you would the plague. To resist as you would every kind of viral disease and filthy attack upon your body. Every effort of the enemy to get you to think so much as a moment about turning your heart away from Christ. But rather commit yourself to Him. And recognize that these teachers, these leaders these who would influence your thought, your life have been raise up of Satan for this expressed purpose to bring you into destruction.

Least you should become discouraged, I want you to see in closing the inference here. Thou Peter is saying something absolutely wonderful by implication on his part, an inference in ours. We read in this 20th verse, that everyone who comes to Jesus Christ in simple childlike faith can expect to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. He's not called you to failure. He's not called you to apostasy. He's not called you to this. He's called you to Himself. He's called you to eternal life. He's called you to walk in obedience. He's call you to and with the call He's made every provision for you to do it. But at the same time He sounds the warning in your heart saying, whereas every provision has been made all that you need is available. Everything you need is there. Everything that will protect you is there. The only thing that can incline you to walk in victory is to appropriate what's given. And the only that can cause you to fall in defeat is to give heed to these seducing spirits, these doctrines of devils, the lies that have as their intent to destroy you.

It is wonderful therefore to realize whereas there is taught in the Scripture the possibility of apostasy. There is not to be implied by you or inferred by you for as much as a moment the necessity of apostasy.

Julian, the apostate, was a young man of noble family in Rome that early met some of the prominent Christians and felt inclined to follow Christ. But through assassination and natural death, Julian became the heir to the throne of Rome became Empire of Rome, on the condition that he would repudiate his faith in Christ. Rather than to pass the scepter on to the other successor that would have followed him and would be eagerly waiting take this honor. Julian chose to become emperor even at the cost of resounding his faith in Christ. Thou ever seemingly desires to be friend to Christians. But one day in battle he was wounded, mortally wounded. He fell to the sand and then he felt that all of his life there had been this terrible mockery and loss. That he had given up everything for nothing. And laying there so traditional and history tells us, he reach down and took some of the sand that had been moisten with his ebbing blood, clutched it into his fist and threw it again and said, "Oh, thou Galilean, Thou hast conquer at last." And so it will be with every apostate, whatever it is that he gives up for Jesus Christ that he takes in the place of Jesus Christ, but for a moment and the Son of God must conquer, at last.

How wonderful it is to know therefore that you if you do not know Him can come tonight receive cleansing in His precious blood, receive the provision for every day's need to keep you in the way of temptation, and to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Be warned! As long as you walk there is a possibility of apostasy. Be encouraged. There is no necessity.

Shall we bow our hearts together in prayer.

With our heads bow, our eyes closed, and all the honesty that one day you're going to have at the judgment seat of Christ. Do you recall when last it was you felt the way to which call was too hard? If you could just somehow just slip the yoke of Christ and the harness of the truth and make your way unfettered and untraveled and unhindered that life might be easier, that you might prosper more, that your honors might be greater and quicker, that you might have pleasure of the sort you see your fellows professing to have. Do you remember Paul? Do you remember thou your heart incline that way you look so much a moment longing back to where licks and garlic of Egypt? And remembered what were the good days and yet evil. Oh that somehow today if you remember the last time you grieved Him, the last time you fell? The last time there was in your heart the inclination to turn from this wonderful, adorable Lord, it was to you then that Peter speaks. And he is saying to you, Beware, be alert don't listen to "wells without water, clouds without rain, slaves of inequity," who promise liberty and prosperity. You've seen the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords recognized the possibility of apostasy. But oh turn your eyes upon the Lord Jesus, "the author and finisher of your faith." (Heb. 12:2) Commit yourself to Him. Walk in obedience to Him. Don't try to destroy the Scripture. Don't try to arrest it. Don't try to eliminate the possibility. But commit yourself to Jesus Christ with a passionate longing to be found accepted in Him at that day.

Perhaps I speak to someone who does not know Him, oh what better time, what finer time than this could there being none I say for you to open your heart and to invite Jesus Christ in right now where you are. Perhaps I speak to someone that has fallen away given he into the lies, back slidden from that place of fellowship of once you knew. What better time to turn and return than tonight to your first love, to the Lord who gave Himself for you. Wisdom dictates, the Word entreats you, the Spirit of God woos you, tonight.

I wonder if those by up raised hands, would say pray for me. God has truly found my heart and I do want to meet Him in the light of what I heard. Returning to Him for all His good way and purpose in my life, would you raise your hand and be remembered? Thank you God. God bless you. Yes, I see it. Thank you. Others, anywhere? Yes, I see it, God bless you. Still others? Anywhere?

Our Father, Thou knowst the hands that have been raised and the heart these hands represent. Thou knowst oh God, How longingly Thou hast drawn how freely Thou hast forgive, and cleanse and purge and protect. And might it be tonight that these hands have been raised, right where they are, will see that fountain of cleansing, will confess their sin to Thy, and will in the confession know forgiveness and cleansing and will with the cleansing commit themselves a new afresh to Him who is their Lord resisting all the voices, all the pressures, all the teachers that would seek to move us from this way of righteousness. We

ask Thee Lord with these hands that are raised that Thou would meet them in their need. That they might know victory, tomorrow and the days that lie ahead through the finished work of Jesus Christ. While we wait for this moment thought discipline silence. If you feel your need can best be served by a time a prayer and counsel, while every head is bowed, every eyes closed why don't you slip from where you are, go to my right into the little room Wilson Chapel and I will join you shortly there. We can talk and pray together. I will wait for just a moment for any who might choose to do this. You feel your need can best be served there and in this further time of prayer.

Let us stand for the benediction.

“Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presences of His glory with exceeding joy the only wise God our Savior, glory and honor dominion and majesty now and forever Amen.” (Jude 24,25)

* Reference such as: Delivered at the Gospel Tabernacle, New York City, NY on Sunday Evening, February 9, 1964 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

©PRBTMI 1964