

Life Link

Video Illustration: **Bible Connection**

Title: "Counterfeit Gospel"

Big Idea: **Introductory Illustration:** When I was a teenager living at home, my dad and I would sometimes would stop at the local cafe to have his cup of coffee and our breakfast. On one day we stop and ordered our meal. We enjoyed the served food and service and then time came to pay the check the waitress had given for us. My dad reached into his pocket for his billfold and when he opened it to pay, he found that there was no money in it. The waitress observed the empty wallet and looked concerned. My dad said that that was not a problem, he would just print some more money. He pulled out his " money printing machine" and began to twist the knob and roll in a piece of blank bank paper the size of a of currency and sure enough out came a fresh crisp \$20.00 bill. He handed the \$20 to the waitress which she promptly examined it and then she proceeded to wade it up and placed in the trash can. She then looked back to my dad and said " I need a real \$20." Little did she know that prior to coming into get eat breakfast my dad had loaded his little money machine with the real thing.

COUNTERFEIT GOSPEL

Real currency is backed by the issuing government but, counterfeit money is lacking in authority—it does not have the backing of the federal government. A good counterfeiter can dupe some people into accepting his copy work as legitimate currency. But eventually, when the fake money is brought before the authorities, it will be found false and sentenced to destruction.

Likewise, a false gospel lacks something very important: the authority of Christ. The preacher of a false gospel may believe it and persuade (others) to accept its message. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, there is no salvation in this fake gospel. (Green, M. P. (1989). *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching : Over 1500 sermon illustrations arranged by topic and indexed exhaustively (Revised edition of: The expositor's illustration file)*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.)

Read Sermon Text:

2 Peter 2:1-9 (Destructive Doctrines) 2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) — 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, NKJV

1. Beware False Teachers (vs. 1)

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. NKJV

- a. Satan is out to deceive and dissuade believers from following the "real" Jesus by teaching "destructive heresies". By not just teaching a counterfeit Gospel but, also by living falsely. Peter is warning us as Christians that we must be aware of the wicked devices of the devil and his deceptive attitudes to bring down Christians. Therefore, Peter warns us of three (3) specific dangers. First (1), "**false prophets**", secondly (2) "**false teachers**" and thirdly (3) "**destructive heresies**". Their ultimate goal is to dissuade Christians to question and doubt their decision and faith in Jesus .
- b. "**False Prophets**" Those who say that they are speaking for God's and intentionally lead God's people to down the path to destruction will bring destruction on themselves.

Matthew 7:15-20 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. NKJV

These false prophets can be identified by the fruit the produce in their lives. Even though they are dressed as sheep (believers) are hiding their true nature. These false prophets true motive is to lead God's people to destruction.

- c. "**False Teachers**" While they may not claim to be "prophets of God" there false teachers who teach God's word in a way that intentionally lead people down the wrong path and away from righteousness. These are not just individuals but also false religions.
- d. "**False Teaching**" There is a plethora of false religions in the world today just as it was in Old Testament and New Testament times. Not only is their message false but also their methods are false. Christians must be able to recognized the counterfeit teaching. By knowing what God's Word teaches. I am not talking about just demonization but following God's Word.

The Bible Commentary: "They do not throw out the truth immediately; they simply lay their false teachings alongside the truth and give the impression that they believe the fundamentals of the faith. Before long, they remove the true doctrine and leave their false doctrine in its place.

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Text Illustration: BAIT AND SWITCH**Mart DeHaan explains:**

In an unethical selling technique called the bait-and-switch method, a retailer lures customers into his store by advertising a well-known product at a very low price. When the buyer asks to purchase it, however, he is told that it is out of stock. The salesperson then tries to sell him an inferior line of merchandise, hoping to pocket a bigger profit. The brand name was used just to get potential customers to step inside.

In a similar way, a false teacher uses biblical words to capture interest and gain a hearing. He may talk about Christ, redemption, the cross, and the resurrection, but these "trusted terms" amount to nothing more than a come-on. The "seller" uses them to advertise truths that, as far as he is concerned, are "out of stock." When an interested person responds, he is confronted by beliefs that are completely contrary to God's Word. [Source: Our Daily Bread]

2. Beware False Doctrine (vs. 3)

2 Peter 2:3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.
NKJV

Text Illustration:

The seriousness of errant doctrine can be compared to a missile aimed a mere one degree off target. The difference seems slight and negligible at first, yet the results of the error increase dramatically throughout the flight, until the missile totally misses its intended target.

So it is with false doctrine. At first it may seem to be a tolerable mistake, a little error – but not that serious. But, as with all errors, the effects compound over time until they become so serious that they may not be correctable. (Bobby Scobey, Cornerstone Church: Sermon Central)

- a. Have you ever heard someone say " it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe" ?

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. NKJV

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble! NKJV

- b. From the beginning satan has been deceiving God's crowning creation; men and women with partial truths and lies. **Genesis 3:1**, satan deceives Eve with

deceptive words **"Has God indeed said"** this is the same tactic that is used today by false religions and false teachers in the world. They start with what appears to be God's word and slowly and gradually lead the spiritually inept and ignorant to destruction.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" NKJV

Text Illustration:

"The Screwtape Letters" by C. S. Lewis are fictional letters written by a senior demon "Screwtape" to a novice demon. While these are only fiction in the sense that the characters and the dialogue sprang from the imagination of one of the greatest modern Christian writers. Yet the reality of the issues confronted in this book play out in our lives every day.

As each letter unfolds, we find the Christian slipping more and more out of the hands of Jesus and into the hands of Wormwood and his temptations. Screwtape's advice to the novice tempter becomes more firm and yet more subtle. And, by degrees, we come to see the workings of evil in our own hearts.

3. Beware of False Teachers Lives (vs. 4)

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; NKJV

- a. The false teachers use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary. They talk about "salvation," "inspiration," and the great words of the Christian faith, but they do not mean what we mean. Immature and untaught believers hear these preachers or read their books and think that these men are sound in the faith, but they are not. (from The Bible Exposition Commentary. Copyright © 1989 by Chariot Victor Publishing, and imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

In verses 2 Peter 2: 4-9 Peter reminds these false teachers they will receive punishment for their deception and destruction. However, this will not excuse the believer of the consequences and failure to seek and know the truth of God. As believers we must study, discover and learn God's truth for ourselves. There is nothing wrong with following the teaching of a Godly Biblical teacher but, that does not excuse us from not knowing the truths of God's Word for ourselves when the teacher errs from the truth of God's Word.

Matt 18:3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. NKJV

1 Cor 3:2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; NKJV

Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. NKJV

Text Illustration: MODERN-DAY PHARISEES

These Pharisees were not true shepherds, but actually thieves and robbers. Killing the sheep, leading them to their destruction. How many so-called shepherds today are leading their flocks to destruction by giving them religion instead of relationship? By leading them in legalism instead of love? By teaching them false doctrines instead of faith and discipline?

--Ron Daniel, former pastor, Cheyenne Calvary Chapel

Conclusion: As Christians we must be aware that are traps and snares in our journey through this life and we must be knowledgeable and aware of the dangers of this life. Our military men and women are trained to be observant to the booby traps and IED (individual explosive devices) that are set to explode in our lives. Satan sets trip wires along our path in such a way that the unsuspecting Christian warrior may not notice the danger but yet it is there whether we see it or not. But the end result is the same, "destruction, heart ache and loss!"

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. NKJV