

This past week the wife of an Eagles football player announced, without any qualms, that she was expecting a baby in December – and they just got married in June. You do the math. As far as I could see, no one said ... wait a minute – it doesn't add up.

A nationally recognized college basketball coach committed adultery, and if the reports are correct, paid for an abortion. This from someone so deeply committed to his Roman Catholic faith, that he has a priest on the bench for his basketball games. There seems to be only a bit of outrage at his actions, but there have been calls for his resignation. However, at this point, the school has supported him and says he is their coach.

And just this last week the Eagles surprised the sports world by signing Michael Vick – with his past. At least he seems repentant and sorry for his sins and he wants a second chance.

Thinking about this we hear and read about all sorts of immorality and, for lack of a better term, licentious behavior – now there's a word you don't hear to often. I guess that we are numb from all of it around us – after all, Hugh Hefner is considered somewhat of a hero, in many circles. And they just opened a Penthouse Club in Philadelphia – where the advertising says: “The magazine comes alive!”

But Biblically we find that God has a standard and those that deviate from that standard are soundly condemned.

We continue our study in 2 Peter, as he writes his 2nd letter to the pilgrims of the dispersion – that is, those who had to flee their homes and cities because of their faith in Christ. One of the reasons that he writes to them is to warn them of false teachers that had arisen in the church. One of the signs of false teachers is that they often are sexually immoral – and that is exactly what we see in the portion of 2 Peter that we will look at today. Please turn with me to 2 Peter 2:12-22 (READ).

Notice that there is a clear denunciation of their sinful practices along with the judgement that is coming upon them for it. There is no beating around the bush ... there is no minimizing their sin ... there is no “well, God loves you anyway regardless of your behavior”. On the contrary there is a clear description of their sinful practices and the result.

Consider what Peter says in 2 Peter 2:12-13: “*But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you,*”

Basically, Peter is saying that they are like animals that act according to the instincts that they are born with. As you know, we have taken possession of a pure-breed German Shepherd. They were bred to protect, and that is exactly what Zeus does. If anyone or anything comes near the house, man or animal, he feels it is his duty to protect us – and so he barks and let us know that there is a threat.

These false teachers really don't understand what they are doing – and the result is that they will perish in their own corruption – they will receive the wages of their sin which they practice in the view of everyone – in broad daylight. Most wait until the night to do their evil practices – not these false teachers. As a result, they are *spots*

and blemishes – that is, they are a disgrace the name of Christ – just as there are those today that accept and approve of all types of immorality even within the so-called church of Christ.

As Peter goes on he tells us clearly what they are doing – 2 Peter 2:14: *“having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.”*

These false teachers are committing adultery ... they continue to sin ... and they are *enticing unstable souls* – that is, those who not grounded in the true Word of God. Again, this is exactly what we see today – those that do not know or ignore what God’s Word says, and they teach and hold to things that are an abomination to God.

The root of all this is clear – *They have a heart trained in covetous practices* – that is, they were trained in all types of sinful practices and were leading others astray. We then see the result – *and are accursed children* – they are cursed now and in the life to come – as are all those who do not follow the ways of God.

Peter then gives an example from the past – 2 Peter 2:15-16: *“They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet.”*

These people have gone astray from the ways of God as did Balaam. This is a reference from Numbers 22 to Balaam, a prophet, who was summoned by Balak to prophecy against Israel – for a price. God told him not to go, but he went anyway. And it took a talking donkey to rebuke him and do what God told him to.

Peter then describes what they are like – 2 Peter 2:17: *“These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”* A well without water is useless, as are clouds that do not bring rain.

He then begins to describe how they deceive the people – and see if this doesn’t sound very familiar – 2 Peter 2:18-19: *“For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.”*

Basically, what Peter is saying is that they sound good on the outside – they are eloquent in their speech – but they say nothing. Sounds like some of our politicians and definitely the false teachers. The point is, that we all have lusts of the flesh and this is what they are using to lead the people astray – even those who once lived in error.

And while they proclaim to be in liberty – that is, doing what feels good – they are actually slaves to their own corruption – they are in bondage to their sin. The root of this is in the fact that they don’t really know the God of their salvation. They do not know the God who has revealed Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ and they do not follow what He desires.

As Peter continues, it would seem to indicate that they once knew the truth and it would have been better if they had not – 2 Peter 2:20-21: *“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for*

them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”

It would seem that at one time they had escaped the pollution of the world, the flesh and the devil and now they again entangled with it. The result is their destruction. In other words, they once knew the truth, but now they are denying it. *For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.*

What has happened to them is nothing new – 2 Peter 2:22: “*But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”*”

What can we learn from all this? There are a few things. First, we must always be on guard against false teachers – even within the “church”. They have arisen and they always will. We need to test all teaching by the Word of God.

There has been a movement in Christianity to make the church “people friendly” – they did this by diluting the gospel ... by having dramas instead of sermons. Just recently they said that they were wrong. God convicted them of their sin – but how many people did they lead astray? I don’t know.

We can be on guard against false teachers by reading and studying the Scriptures. We have to know what God has said in His Word – and we have to accept all of it – even the hard parts. That is one of the reasons why I wanted you to read through the Bible. I pray that it was rewarding for you who did it.

The other thing that we need to do is pray – pray that God will always keep us faithful to Him and His Word. It is so easy to be led astray ... it is so easy to be enticed by eloquent words – words that sound good on the outside, but really are false teaching.

So again, remember, God has His standards – they have not changed, because He has not changed. He is same today as He was at the beginning of recorded time and He will be the same tomorrow.