

Pursuit and Promise, Pt. 5

Empty Promises

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RESOURCES:

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE REALITIES AND HARMS OF THE PORN INDUSTRY:

<https://truthaboutporn.org> (Documentary)

www.Fightthenewdrug.org

<https://brainheartworld.org> (Documentary)

<https://www.barna.com/the-porn-phenomenon/>

<https://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>

FOR MEN:

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/life-and-relationships/men/flesh.html>

FOR WOMEN:

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/life-and-relationships/women/desire.html>

FOR FAMILIES

<https://www.covenanteyes.com/e-books/>

Last week — Pastor Steve walked us through the first half of **2 Peter Chapter 2** — Peter was writing to the early church to address false teaching that had made their way into the church. Just as there were heresies creeping their way into the church then — the same thing is happening today.

Today — the second half of Chapter 2 is actually heavier than the first half. Peter goes deeper into the dangers of false doctrine and what it leads to.

2 Peter 2:12-22

¹² But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, ¹³ suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you. ¹⁴ They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! ¹⁵ Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, ¹⁶ but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. ¹⁷ These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸ For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² What the true proverb says has happened to them [ESV]

**THE PROMISE OF SIN
THE JUSTIFICATION OF SIN
THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN**

The Promise of Sin

Have you ever heard someone say, “I believe in Jesus, but I just want to have fun for a while... I’ll wait until I’m older to get serious about my faith... I just want to live life for now... I’ll get back in church when I get married or when I have kids... I’ll get back on the path someday, but right now, I’m just gonna have.”

Question—*Why do we/people think that?*

Answer — Because of what sin promises.

2 Peter 2:13,19

- They equate sin with pleasure. Sin is freedom.
 - *“It’s our Christian liberty. God’s grace covers it all, doesn’t it? Live how you want to live... get religious later on in life, follow Jesus later... for now, let’s live! Let’s indulge, don’t take that religious stuff so seriously, let’s have some fun...”*
- the promise of sin is that the way to enjoy life is to fulfill your carnal instincts
- it’s immediate gratification, and self-indulgence
- *it’s using whoever you want, however you want, whenever you want, to get whatever you want*

2 Peter 2:12

But these, like **irrational animals, creatures of instinct**, born to be caught and destroyed...

Question — *What separates human beings from animals? What makes you different from your dog?*

Answer — You have a conscience. Your dog has an urge and just goes and does whatever it feels like whenever it feels like doing it. A dog doesn’t understand why it does what it does most of the time. It’s following its carnal instincts.

Peter says:

- false teachers and those that follow them, people that live only to gratify their flesh, *are like irrational animals*
- they’re like dogs, there’s no conscience, there’s no forethought, or wisdom to what they do
- they have an urge and they immediately seek to fulfill it, regardless of the consequence
- the deception of Peter’s day, and deception of our day — is that this is how to live life to the fullest
- we’re told that this is really the path to life

Peter tells the church:

- if you believe that, you’re being deceived
- you follow this path, it’s end is death and utter darkness. It’s destruction!
- it’s waking up one day and realizing that even though you said you were coming back one day — you’ve lost your way and can’t get back.

**It’s been said that,
“Sin will take you farther than you want to go,
keep you longer than you want to stay,
and cost you more than you want to pay.”**

The Justification of Sin

That's not even the worst part — look at verse 13...

2 Peter 2:13

They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, **while they feast with you.**

Peter is saying:

- it's not some teacher out there shouting from a stage somewhere across the world...
- *it's the people in your midst right here and now — the people in the church!*
 - it's the person you're having lunch with... who says, *"what's the big deal about getting drunk every now and then? What's the big deal about having sex before marriage? It's not the unpardonable sin... we're all good. Oh, what's the big deal about divorce? God's grace has got you covered. Don't take this stuff so seriously."*
- we are in far more in danger of accepting false teaching from one another than we are from some teaching on the other side of the world
- you are spouting falsehood
- you are falling for false teaching
- you are entertaining your sin
- **if you know the Truth and choose to minimize and dismiss your sin anyway — that's a really scary place to be**

**While we think we're really making progress by judging
and condemning the godless world out there,
what we're really doing is deflecting the attention off of our own hypocrisy,
and excusing the sins that are right here in our midst.**

2 Peter 2:14-18

They have **eyes full of adultery**, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts **trained in greed**. Accursed children! ¹⁵ Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved **gain from wrongdoing**, ¹⁶ but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸ For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by **sensual passions of the flesh** those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.

GREED

It says, their hearts are trained in greed.

- so given over to fulfilling their instinctual appetites, any ounce of conscience and self-restraint have been removed
- you view your neighbor not as someone to be loved — but as an obstacle to be overcome.
- people have simply become a means to an end — that end is *"my own well-being and momentary satisfaction regardless of who it affects or destroys in the process."*
- even in Williamson County, "Let's help those poor people" — "But what about me?" "Where's that going to leave me?"
- For some of us, that's the first thought we have. Why? **Because our hearts are trained in greed.** Our first instinct is self-preservation.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

2 Peter 2:14

They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin.

Question — *How can you have eyes full of adultery?*

Answer — For some of you, you've been physically faithful to your spouse, but that doesn't mean you've been faithful.

Matthew 5:27

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Here are some of the latest stats from Barna Research Group and CovenantEyes.org

- The porn industry's **annual revenue** is more than the **NFL, NBA, and MLB combined**.
- **64% of Christian men** and **15% of Christian women** say they watch porn at least once a month.
- **1 in 5 youth pastors** and **1 in 7 senior pastors** use porn on a regular basis and are currently struggling. That's more than 50,000 U.S. church leaders.
- **59% of pastors** report that married men regularly seek their help regarding their struggles with pornography use.
- 13% of Christian women say they never watch porn – **87% of Christian women** have watched porn. Don't fall for the lie that it's just the men. It's not.
- **56% of divorces involved** one party having "an obsessive interest in pornographic websites."
- **55% of adults** 25 and older believe porn is wrong. That number goes significantly down with younger generations.

According to these stats and Jesus' definition of adultery... more than half of the men in the church and 15% of women are committing adultery once a month. And as the ages go down, the percentages go up.

- the porn industry and the trafficking industry are intimately linked — they are inseparable from one another. Porn fuels the sex trade. Every time you visit one of the 42 million porn sites, you communicate with traffickers, that increases the demand for sexual exploitation of vulnerable people
- According to anti-trafficking nonprofit Rescue:Freedom, in 9 countries, 49% of sexually exploited women said that pornography was made of them while they were being sold for sex.
- Sex trafficking generates \$99 billion annually, just from commercial sexual exploitation alone. (International Labor Organization)
 - Enslaved people being sold as a commodity and filmed for sex. \$99 Billion.

Every time you visit that site, every time you click that link, or watch that video, you are putting money in traffickers' pockets! Every time you do it, you incentivize traffickers to kidnap and repeatedly abuse and assault, women, children, and yes, even men and boys.

You watch porn? You're clicking those links? You even just visit the websites... You are complicit, you're telling them, the demand is there, where's the supply?

I'm sharing this with you so that those of us who are caught in the middle of it, and those who are unaware of it might wake up to the Devil's schemes!

Question — *what we can do right now, is start right here... looking in the mirror and asking the question... Hearts trained in greed, eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. Is that me? Is that us? Don't deflect it. Lean into it. **Lord, is this me?***

Answer — if that's you, if you're there... you can't stop looking at porn, you're insatiable for sin, you never have enough, where do you start?

James 5:16

...confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

- Start here with Spiritually Mature followers of Jesus that you trust who have found freedom. Someone who is discipling you, or mentoring you. A LifeGroup Leader, a pastor, a friend...
- If you don't have anyone that you feel like you have anyone in those categories, **call the front office**, reach out to our **pastoral care team** and we'll will help you find someone. There are resources available to you.
- You're not alone. Don't let the devil use this to isolate you even further.
- Bring whatever it is you've got into the light and let the Lord do His miraculous, redemptive, healing work in your life...

The Consequence of Sin

2 Peter 2:20-22

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

There are those who know the truth, who've heard the truth, who are aware of the truth, who've been raised in the truth who deliberately choose to give themselves over to lives saturated with sin anyway. And Peter says in verse 17, these are the ones who the gloom of utter darkness is reserved for.

**The more you know about God,
the more accountable you are for what you know.**

2 Timothy 3:5

...having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

- we look out at the world and say, wow, look how evil they are...
- the Bible is saying, do you know who is truly evil? The ones who know the truth and choose to go the other direction anyway.

2 Peter 2:22

What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

- Peter is not talking about the loss of your salvation
- A dog will eat its vomit to hide any traces of its smell from other predators. It's instinctive. It's in its nature.

- The pig rolls around in the mud... you clean him off... what's he going to do? Go right back to the mud. Why? Because that's what pigs do.

Question — *why is that important? It tells us that the dog never changed its nature. The pig never changed its nature.*

Answer — But when God's Spirit comes into you and takes up residence in you, you are given a brand-new nature! You're no longer a dog, you're no longer a pig. You are a child, a son, a daughter... you're made clean, you're washed.

The Freedom Only God Can Give

After God got a hold of my life

- whenever I'm tempted... if I even begin to move the direction of something I'm being tempted by...
- if I move toward sin... the weight of conviction, something in me goes, *this isn't you!*
- *this isn't who you are any longer!*
- I look at the sin I used to enjoy, and thought of what I once did... who I was...
- and what God rescued me from — **I could never go back.**
- after everything Jesus has done for me... how could I go back to the things He freed me from?

God places His Holy Spirit in you,

- He takes your heart of stone and gives you a moldable, pliable heart of flesh...
- you become a new creation...
- all of those sinful habits that used to entice you, have no hold on you any longer
- if you try to go back, you feel the weight of conviction, of guilt, the lack of enjoyment...
- *you know that you have a new nature because you don't ever want to go there again...*

But if you enjoy your sin...

- if you love your sin...
- if you entertain your sin...
- if you don't ever want to give up your sin...
- if you get angry when your sin is threatened...
- it's like a dog when you try to take away it's bone and it growls at you...
- it's a sign that maybe your nature never really changed in the first place.

The hope in this passage is that it's not about legalism...

- it's not about doing more, trying harder, focusing on 'not sinning'
- it's about entering into the freedom that only God can give you
- ***it's about no longer being a slave to sin, but becoming a slave of righteousness***
- it's about entering into every good thing that God wants to give you
- it's about your working with Him, cooperating as He purifies, and sanctifies you over time...

**If your nature changes, your desires will change.
If your desires change, your life will change.
If your life is changed, your world begins to change.**

Discussion Questions

1. Do you know anyone who is putting off a commitment to Christ because they want to “live life” for a little while longer? Can you identify why? What can you say to them?
2. What are some sins in the church that have become “more acceptable” or are “overlooked”?
3. Do you know anyone who is entertaining or minimizing his sin? What can you do?
4. What is the relationship between pornography and sex trafficking?
5. How does someone’s personal, private pornography habit affect the sex trafficking business? How does it affect other family and friends? Their own personal life?
6. Read 2 Timothy 3:5. What is he saying?
7. Discuss: “The more you know about God, the more accountable you are for what you know.”

NOTES