

2Peter 11-12-02b

Let's pick up our study now in 2 Peter chapter 2, we are in verse 18, they speak great over-inflated words of emptiness. And the other word that you have here is you would think there might be a word for speaking that would be normal such as *lego*, *laleo*, something along those lines. But this is P-H-T-H-E-N-G, *fathengamanoi*, *fathengamanoi*.

This is an interesting word. If you look this up in the lexicon, it means to proclaim, to call out loudly. It has an emphasis on the sound, on the euphonious noise that the speaking makes.

There are different things, *laleo* has the idea of the actual speech, and there are many different words, *answer* is a word that is used often for speech. But this one emphasizes the sound, it's the round tones, it's the charisma that comes across in the person's speech, there is no accent that this has chosen. Why it's such a difficult word to say, because *fatha* is not an easy combination to start a word with, P-H-T-H.

But it has the idea of oration, you're going to speak in an impressive way, and it's the sound and the sonorous tones of your voice that kind of carry the message when it doesn't actually have much freight or weight of its own. And they say in the lexicon to speak bombastically, but it's not the bombast, bombast is where you just fire hose somebody with your words, it's used only a couple of places in the New Testament, and about the only other place is here in this passage, I didn't mention it because I was waiting until now, but if you go back to verse 16, Balaam was rebuked for his iniquity, a dumb donkey delivering an oration. This is also from the same root, this is the aorist middle participle.

And you know what the aorist participle does, the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb, right? So, a dumb donkey having spoken restrains the madness of the prophet, having delivered a persuasive speech, having delivered a sound that captivated the ear of Balaam, and of course it was coming from a donkey, but when you make the connection down here, the only other person in this letter, the only other person practically in the whole New Testament that has ever delivered thugamai is a donkey, and it took the thugamization of a donkey to restrain the insanity of this wayward prophet, and so now you've got these false teachers who are thugamaing, so it's no accident, but it really throws the spotlight on the sound itself, and just as a side note, more or less apropos of nothing, it's not widely known that in the ancient world, not only was prayer always done out loud, but reading and writing were vocal projects. When someone wrote, they spoke, and usually somebody else, an amanuensis, would write it down, but even if a guy was writing down his own words, he would speak them while he was writing them, and if anybody ever read something that was written, they always spoke it out loud. It wasn't until the 3rd or 4th century that people figured out a way to read silently.

Augustine makes a big deal, he saw some other scholar reading silently, and he was so dumbstruck by it that he proceeded to go home and spend about a month trying to teach himself

how to read silently, because it was just unheard of. Everybody, there was no such thing as orations in your head and silent stuff, they spoke out loud, so since speaking is already spoken out loud, if you have a verb that puts emphasis on the sound, what does this tell us? Watch out for somebody who's elegant, captivating, sonorous speech is what attracts. There are guys that could read you the phone book, and you could listen to them all day, because they've just, I like guys that have an accent from England or Australia or somewhere, some guys have just this great accent, and they could say anything.

Richard Burton, he could read Uncle Remus or Curious George, and if it's that voice, these guys from Wales, they've just got this great accent. Well, you've got to watch out that whether or not there's a very captivating delivery, what is the content? Don't let it be a triumph of form in the absence of content, but that's what they do. But look at this, they speak overinflated words of emptiness, they perorate, they bloviate, they expectorate, they give these vast presentations that look very substantial, but you poke it and there's nothing there.

But what is the purpose of these orations? What is the purpose of these presentations? These erudite speeches of persuasion, what is their purpose? It says, they speak these words in order to allure through the lusts of the flesh through lewdness. Now, what I find interesting about this is, you see it says, through the lusts of the flesh through lewdness, and nothing's in italics there in your New King James, but there's only one through in Greek, and it sort of stands alone. What it literally says is, they allure through the lusts of the flesh through lewdness, but the actual, the word here is *epithumia*, that's your word for desire, it can be a good desire or a bad desire, but this is a fleshly desire, and right in the middle of it, it says, desires of the flesh and then debaucheries or lewdness.

The word is *aselgeia*, A-S-E-L-G-E-I-A. So what it says in Greek, it says, they ensnare for speaking overinflated words of emptiness, they ensnare, the next word is trap, or drag down, drag to the ground, you've got an animal that's trying to flee, but you drag it down, you trap it, you snare it. By means of, this is N-E-N, the preposition, *epithumias sarcas aselgeias*.

There's only one word N here, by means of, and it's a little bit of an odd construction because you've got *epithumias sarcas aselgeias*. So it's desires of the flesh, debaucheries, but *aselgeia* is not really debauchery, and I could give you the long process of the word study, I will just give you the result. If you look at this word and figure out what it actually means, it means perverted freedom, perverted freedom.

It is a synonym in the classic Greek usage was *hubris*, I can do anything I want, because I like it. Consciousness pursuit of self-gratification, lewdness and debauchery always sounds like it's strictly limited to the physical realm, but ask yourself this question, how could somebody stand up in church and deliver a flowery speech and appeal to your base lusts? Are they going to be describing some heinous physical act? I mean, how could you stand up in church and deliver a beautiful oration that would appeal to base sensuality? That's not what *aselgeia* means in this

context. It means that you are, you remember when Jesus stood up on the last great day of the feast and he pronounced, he quoted Isaiah and he proclaimed liberty to the captives.

Remember that? Sight to the blind, the lame will walk, liberty to the captives. And he stops short of the second half of the verse that talks about the great and terrible day of the Lord, but he says, this is the acceptable year of the Lord, proclaiming liberty to the captives. This is a false declaration that tries to emulate the same thing.

This flowery oration declares freedom to do what you want to do and be what you want to do, it's okay. I used to have a paperback copy of that book that came out in the 60s, I'm okay, you're okay. Well, it's the I'm okay, you're okay message in the church.

You're not under the strictures of the law. You're not under any compulsion to be obedient or to be good or to restrain yourself. Feel free to take off the fetters.

God is in you to will and to do, so do whatever you want. It is of God. Your desires are of God.

They'll twist the scriptures, they will say that your impulses are given to you by God. It's natural. This is how they preach.

How do you think they get so many homosexuals to feel comfortable in Christian churches? They say, forget about those old cultural hidebound strictures that seem to be reflected in the New Testament. That was then, this is now. God is a God of love, and if you love and if you are committed, it's okay.

They preach, and it seems to be a message of liberation, and it seems to be a positive message, and it sounds good, and it fits with what they want to do anyway, and it's given in the name of God. It's given in the name of scripture. It's given in the name of the Holy Spirit, and it is a great over-inflated package of emptiness.

There is no such license. There is no such freedom. God never calls us to unfettered self-gratification.

Never. But this is the message that infiltrates the church, and it is a distorted, twisted representation of scripture, taking just the positives. Take this medicine, and if two spoons will relieve your headache, four spoons will really relieve your headache, and six teaspoons will make you feel even better, and just drink the whole bottle.

It's great stuff. Don't want to give the negative. Don't want to give the balancing scriptures.

Don't want to get at the truth. We want to select, cherry-pick our scriptures, and we want to remove and excise the ones that don't fit our message of asialgia. They take freedom in Christ and make it a license for all sorts of perversity.

And it has ever been this. It was happening in the first centuries of the church. It is happening exponentially today.

That's what Peter is talking about. He says, look at the damage that tolerating false teaching can do. What's the best way? Here's a little quiz question.

What's the best way to identify false teaching? We've been given some characteristics of the teachers, some characteristics of the message, but what's the quickest and best way to identify false teaching? Know the truth. Know the truth. If you know the truth, I'm an artilleryman.

I'm a former gunnery instructor. And if somebody tries to tell me something strange with regard to a complementary angle of sight or the corrections that need to be made as a result of a meteorological message or powder temperature, if somebody tells me that colder powder will make the projectile travel further, even you could probably stop them in their tracks at that point. Powder temperature has a direct effect on range.

Colder the powder, shorter the range. Kind of makes sense, doesn't it? Hot powder is going to burn more efficiently, going to produce more pressure, going to impel the projectile at a higher muzzle velocity. It's got more intrinsic energy.

It oxidizes more rapidly and completely when it is hot. That's why you have to adjust when you first start firing out of cold tubes. Very soon you've got to drop your elevation a little bit because as the tube warms up, the bore expands, less resistance, greater muzzle velocity.

Powder heats up while it's sitting in the chamber before you give the command to fire and they yank the lanyard. Powder heats up. Powder temperature changes.

Range changes. All kinds of things. Well, I know this.

I know all about artillery. I could regale you all day long about the factors that go into effective gunnery. And so if somebody comes up and starts trying to tell me a bunch of nonsense about gunnery, I can stop them right in their tracks.

Why? I know what I'm talking about. I am an expert in field artillery gunnery. I know all about it.

I helped write the field manual. I know all about it. I don't know as much as I used to, but I could still hold my own in a conversation.

So I'm not going to be bamboozled by somebody that tries to fly some weird French gunnery at me. I went to Lebanon and was trying to teach gunnery over there and the French had been there trying to teach them gunnery. They were all messed up.

The French don't know up from down about gunnery. They didn't in the 1980s, I can tell you that. They were blowing up their own people because the French had been teaching them.

I haven't got much use for the French, frankly, and I can say that because I am one. I'm nearly a quarter French, but I've got no use for them as a culture and as a people, a bunch of surrendering guys. But you have to know what you're talking about.

If you want to resist false teaching, the best way is to know the truth so that you can separate truth from error. What does it say in Hebrews chapter 5? At such time as you should be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. You ought to know enough to be a teacher by now, but you need somebody to teach you.

You need milk and not solid food. Solid food is for the mature who have their senses exercised. The mature have their senses gymnastized to discern good and evil.

Not gymnastized to please themselves and gratify themselves and lead others into error. That's what Peter is talking about here. So what is the point of their teaching? They are alluring, they are attracting people through an appeal to their desire for freedom.

Their desire to not feel guilty, to not feel ashamed. I've got a dark secret, I've got an illicit passion, I've got bad habits, I've got areas of evil and sin in my life and I'm under conviction on those. False teacher comes in and says, no, no, no, no, no.

Listen, God gave you these desires. It's healthy, it's natural. Christ died for all sins.

We have freedom in Christ. We're not under the law, we're under grace. If it feels good, do it.

And they are preaching license. They are preaching perverted freedom. Aselgeia.

And everybody wants that. Teenagers would love to be told, physical relations with those of the opposite or the same gender. Fine, if it feels good, experiment.

We'll give you some devices to help you keep from instigating a pregnancy. It's natural, it's normal. Don't feel bad.

Aselgeia. Perverted liberty, perverted freedom. This is the essence of the message.

In some way, shape or form, this is going to be intrinsic to the false teaching that Peter is talking about. They are alluring through this epithumia that's part of your sarx and it partakes of liberty. It's okay, don't worry about it.

And they are alluring who? It says the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. In Greek, it says they are ensnaring in these perverted freedom desires of the flesh, the ones who are oligos, apofugantos, fugae, fugantos, this fugue, P-H-E-U-G is the root of that word. This means to flee, to get away.

Like fuse and fugas. Fourth of July, black cats, like fuse, get away. Fugas is how they would put

that in Greek.

Well, apofugas, fleeing from, somebody has recognized the danger of what they're in and they're trying to get out of it. Oligos, we've covered this many times, means what? Few, little. You have it over in Acts, where Paul is talking to Agrippa, and King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.

And Agrippa says to Paul, an oligos, do you persuade me to become a Christian? And in the King James it says, almost thou persuadest me. An oligos, and what Agrippa is really saying is, you've given me this ten minute testimony here with so little, do you think I'm going to quit being the king and turn into a Christian? In so little, by means of oligos, you expect me to convert? And Paul answers and says, I would to God that not only you, but also who hear me today, might become both oligos and altogether converted. In little and in much.

Oligos. So what does it mean, those who have oligos fleeing from the ones who are behaving deceitfully? It means barely. You've got some people that are just barely, they're just in the first stages of getting away from this deceitful lifestyle, and this bad environment.

They've seen the light of Christ and they're trying to move toward it, and these false teachers are bagging them, and tagging them, and dragging them back into deceit with their great swelling words. Appealing to their, telling them, you don't need to leave, there's nothing wrong with where you are. You don't need to change, you're fine just like you are.

Perverved freedom. Taking away the conviction, taking away the recognition of the need for change. I'm fine like I am.

Oh, I'm so relieved. I was trying to escape, I was trying to get out of this lifestyle, I was trying to abandon these practices, I was trying to live a different life that would reflect the glory of Christ, but you're telling me I'm okay just like I am. This is the heart of the false message, and you see it all around us today.

Listen to almost any radio program, watch almost any television program, especially those with the prosperity gospel. If you don't have stuff, there's nothing wrong with your lifestyle. It isn't that you're not working, or that you're not praying, or that you haven't dedicated your life to God, and that you haven't trusted Him for provision.

It's that you haven't sent in your tithe yet, you haven't sent in your seed offering yet. Just do that, you don't need to change, you're fine. It's just a matter of sending me a little bit of money, and you're going to be fine.

Great swelling words of mataiotes. Power of positive thinking. It has nothing to do with faith, nothing to do with prayer, nothing to do with relying on the integrity of God and the promises of God.

It's mechanical. God's a big vending machine. You put in a nickel, and you'll get out a great return.

False gospel, false teaching. Great swelling words of emptiness. They allure through appealing to the desire of the flesh for unfettered, unrestricted freedom, perverted freedom.

The ones who were just starting, just oligos, just beginning to get out of that deceitful lifestyle. Those practicing error, behaving in error. Look at verse 19, in case you think we're going down the wrong path.

While they promise them freedom, they promise them liberty. No judgment, no consequences. You're fine, relax.

You're free. You don't need to shake off any bonds, any shackles of sin. You're fine.

They themselves are slaves of corruption. They are promising others freedom. They themselves are douloi, bond slaves.

This is the word that Paul uses of himself. Paul, a servant, a bond slave of the Lord Jesus. 100% sold out to the service of the Master.

Doulos. Got no other agenda, no other business, no other objective than serving my Master. Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ.

Well, it is that level of dedication, that level of commitment that these people have to corruption. Whatever overcomes you, enslaves you. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcomes, John says, 1 John 5, 5, but he that believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and everything that is ours in Christ, that's the power for freedom, that's the power for opportunity, that is the power for meaningful, fruitful living, is being in Christ. And we overcome the weakness of the flesh. We wrestle not against principalities and powers, we wrestle against flesh and blood.

Actually, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against these principalities and powers. But it's a warfare. It is a fight, it is a struggle against an ideology, against a philosophy, against an insinuating, deceitful darkness.

We wrestle, we've got a conflict. They say, there is no conflict, you're already free. You don't have to struggle.

You're there, you've arrived, when we haven't. And by whom a person is overcome. If we are overcome instead of being overcomers, we're enslaved.

If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge, notice, it isn't through their effort, it isn't through their gritting their teeth and trying really, really hard. It is through knowledge. This whole conflict, Peter is spending this chapter addressing the danger of false teaching because it is the truth of the knowledge of Jesus Christ that sets us free.

What did Jesus say? Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. Not error, not deceit, not over-inflated mataiotes, not perverted freedom. Knowledge.

If you escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, if they are again entangled in them and overcome, instead of being overcomers, they're overcome. Now whose fault is it? What's the problem? There's some kind of a lack of overcoming here. Is Jesus not strong enough to deliver them from the pollutions of the world? Salvation just wasn't sufficient, you just got kind of a weak second-hand salvation that was used, had some tatters and some ripped seams.

It wasn't really the powerful salvation that was delivered to others. How come some people escape and others don't? Each one is convinced in his own mind. We decide, we choose.

We choose either the spirit of truth or the spirit of error. The spirit of error is the spirit of antichrist. Look at 1 John 4, 1-6.

The spirit of antichrist is the deceitful, false teaching, and to overcome that is to overcome the world. You can't study, Troy and I were talking about this earlier this week, you cannot overcome and be an overcomer if you do not understand the difference between truth and error. John talks about this in 4 and 5 of his first epistle.

And it's worse than the beginning. We talked about this last time. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, not to have signed up and put on the uniform, than to put it on, grab a bunch of other people, and defect, and betray the colors, betray the uniform, betray the cause, betray the mission, betray the Lord Jesus Christ.

It would have been better for Judas that he had never been a disciple than to become one and betray the Lord Jesus. It would have been better for him to have just been some guy out in Judea somewhere. But he signed up, he got close, he had that great opportunity, and he was overcome by what? His selfish ambitions, his selfish desires.

Some people think it was just greed for the 30 pieces of silver. I don't think it was that. Although he was a greedy guy.

Kept dipping into the till. But it was more than that. He thought he could make something happen.

He had an agenda of his own. And when you go to Jude, and I promised we would do this before we got finished, flip back over to Jude. If I had to guess, and it's just a guess looking strictly at the

context, if one of these came earlier than the other, I would say that Peter's letter came first and then Jude wrote.

Jude seems to be amplifying and working with material that he heard from Peter. That's just a pure guess on my part. But pick up at verse 12 in Jude.

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the wind, late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead. They have deadened themselves and become fruitless, and God pulls them up by the roots.

He weeds them out, twice dead. They kill themselves, and then God kills them on top of that. Raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame.

When you're a believer and you get associated with the waves of the sea, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt. No peace saith my God to the wicked. Foaming up their own shame.

Wandering stars, instead of being fixed. This is what a good teacher should be. He shines forth the truth, illuminates the truth, so that people can guide themselves by it.

Navigational stars. Well, if the star is wandering all over the heavens, if it's a helicopter searching for a criminal, and you think it's the North Star, you're going to be wandering all over. It's a wandering star, unreliable, can't be used for anything.

Wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. And what gets interesting is the forever here, there is no textual problem. There is no text that doesn't have forever.

What does that mean? You can reach a point of irredeemability. You can reach a point where there is no recovery. You can paint yourself into a corner.

This is the sin unto death. Remember, John talks about that. He says, there is a sin unto death.

I do not say that you should pray for that. If somebody has moved themselves so far down the road that they are under the sin unto death, John says, don't waste your time praying. It's not going to do any good.

There is no return from that status. And when you look at the spectrum of believers who will be greatest in the kingdom, greatest in the eternal future, and those who will be least, we are talking about the least of the least. We are talking about the bottom of the barrel, saved yet so as by fire, and they're never going to advance out of that darkness.

They're saved, but they are accursed children. And that's as good as it's ever going to get for

them. Even when the healing leaves from the tree of life, come forth from the new Jerusalem to them, it's not going to do any good.

There's always going to be this bottom-rung, lowest-level, get-nowhere group. It's just the word of God. The blackness of darkness is reserved here.

Le'olam, eis eonos. It is reserved for them. Now, the punishment is reserved.

This, to me, is like the flames of the lake of fire that burn forever. It doesn't mean the people are going to burn forever, but the judgment, that eternal flame, is going to burn as a reminder. In the same way, this darkness is reserved forever.

The only way you can get out of this, the only way you can kind of squirm out, and I don't really subscribe to this, but when it says, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever, is a punishment of being in the darkness forever what is reserved, or is the darkness reserved for this kind of person always and forever? Is it an always reservation? Is that punishment always waiting? You see what I mean? Is the reserving what is spoken of as the forever, or does it literally mean somebody is going to be shoved into the darkness and kept there forever? Technically, grammatically, the adverb forever applies to the verb reserved. It is reserved forever. And you could say, well, you could try to weasel and say, well, it's reserved forever, maybe it's not applied forever.

I don't know. It sounds very serious to me. And my solution, whenever there's a sort of a conundrum like this, my solution is, I think what I will do is be so far away from this line that it's purely academic.

Whoever it applies to, it doesn't apply to me. I'm not going to have to worry about it. We'll find out later if it's reserved for or applied for ever.

Let's make sure we are so far from it that it's purely hypothetical. What are the chemicals in the shot they give you to execute you? Well, why would I care? I'm never going to be executed by lethal injection, so I don't care what the chemicals are. That kind of thing.

But look at what he says next. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds, which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. Harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts, and they mouth great, swelling words. You get that same overinflated idea there. Flattering people to gain advantage.

What is more flattering than telling somebody their flaw is a feature? Don't worry about that homosexuality. Don't worry about that adultery. Don't worry about that fornication.

Don't worry about that covetousness. Don't worry about that obsessive, compulsive behavior. Don't worry about any of this.

You're okay. Flattery. You're fine.

God made you that way. You're of God. What does John say? Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

These people, these false teachers, flatter people to gain an advantage. There's always something in it for them. Nicer car, fancier suit, bigger TV, ministry.

You, beloved, remember the words spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't this a summary of Peter's message? Remember what was spoken by the holy apostles and prophets. Jude says the very same thing.

Remember the truth, and you won't be led into error. This is why we place such an emphasis on regular, consistent, in-depth Bible study. If you know the truth, you will have the freedom that comes from Jesus Christ, not the false freedom of aselgeia.

But we have to be constantly vigilant. This kind of thing is insidious. It is sneaky.

It is underhanded. It is deceptive. It looks good when it's bad.

It feels good when it's bad. It has only the positive side of the medication labeling on it. And it sounds like the next big thing.

And it's not. And the people who purvey this sort of thing are going to receive the severest of possible judgments from God. The severest judgment you can receive without losing your salvation is reserved for false teachers.

And this ought to give us some pause. We want to speak the truth to one another in love, not soporific, analgesic, happy, glad statements that don't reflect the truth. The truth of God sometimes skins us alive with a whip.

It sometimes depresses us. But it's truth. And it is that truth that sets us free.

Well, we'll pick up and start moving through Chapter 3, the final chapter in this great letter next time. We'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You.

We're so grateful for the truth of Your Word and the ministry of Your Spirit to enable us to understand it, to remember it, to see its pertinence and application in our lives. We pray that as we meditate on these words from the Apostle Peter in the days ahead, that they will shine a light on our path and on our souls, show us our hidden errors and our secret faults, purge us with hyssop and make us clean, wash us, make us whiter than snow. We know that through the

gracious forgiveness and cleansing that You have promised to us through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can walk in the light where You Yourself dwell and have fellowship with You and enjoy the presence of the Father, Son, and Spirit in our hearts and prepare ourselves for that experience in greater fullness and greater visibility in the ages to come.

We ask Your blessing on all who have assembled and attended with us tonight. May each one of us be more motivated and more faithful to the great example left for us by the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in His name.

Amen.