The Wages of Unrighteousness
2 Pet. 2:15-16

Introduction:
A. Balaam’s dilemma (Num. 22)
   1. His love for God (vv. 8-13)
   2. His love for “the wages of unrighteousness.”
B. Balaam is typical of Christians who love the wages of unrighteousness.
   1. Want to maintain their relationship with God.
   2. But, also want to find a way to also enjoy “the wages of unrighteousness.”
   3. So, they rationalize themselves into various compromises – while still professing love for God.
C. Let us beware of the most common “wages of unrighteousness” that often leads to compromise.

Discussion:
I. Profit.
   A. Balaam’s profession versus his practice (vv. 18-22)
   B. Gospel is sometimes compromised for profit.
      3. Preachers and churches often ignore open sin for profit (cf. 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Thess 3:6)
      4. Brethren often neglect duty to Lord for profit – find a way to “justify” it.
II. Prestige.
   A. Balak offers Balaam great prestige (vv. 15-17)
   B. Truth is sometimes compromised for prestige.
      1. Peter’s efforts to protect his prestige among Jewish brethren (Gal. 2:11-13)
      2. “Clergy Appreciation” week – preachers honored in an effort to promote “world brotherhood and religious understanding among all people, regardless of religious persuasion.”
      3. Membership in social and civic organizations that promote things inconsistent with godliness.
III. Popularity.
   A. The Lord’s way and His people have never been popular with the world. (Acts 28:22)
   B. Gospel is sometimes compromised for popularity.
      1. Immodest dress often makes one more popular than modest dress (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9)
      2. Pop psychology and entertaining stories more popular than “preaching the word.” (2 Tim. 4:2-4)
      4. Carnal means of recruiting members more popular than gospel plan.
   C. “Pleasing men” (popularity) must never be our aim in life (Gal. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4; Eph. 6:6)
IV. Pleasure.
   A. Sin offers transit pleasure or it would not be effective (Heb. 11:25; Tit 3:3)
   B. Easy to compromise our principles for a moment of pleasure.
      1. Esau (Heb. 12:16)
      2. David.
      3. Rationalize - “How can anything so pleasant be so bad” (cf. 1 Cor. 6:13).
V. Peace.
   A. Peace is great and to be pursued (Psalm 133:1; 1 Pet. 3:10; Rom. 14:19)
   B. Peace at expense of truth and purity is fatal (Jas. 3:17; Jer. 8:11; Lk. 12:51)

Conclusion:
A. Few of us are likely to completely forsake the Lord and His way for these wages.
B. But, we are more likely to compromise with sin and error for these wages.
C. Remember these wages are temporary, but the final wages is eternal (Rom. 6:23)