Rise Above
Know Pain – Know Gain series
By Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How are you all today? What's something you're grateful for? Just shout it out. Oh, health, family. Say what? God's grace, okay. Being retired, awesome. Football. All right, in football we trust especially during the fall. Thank you. Just so you know, I decided this month before we even begin to study. I want you all every week, every every Sabbath this month, I want you to share something that you're grateful just like we do. Okay. So, by next week, you got seven days to think of something. And by the way, if you want to take an opportunity, if there's something that you're grateful, and you want to acknowledge it in the back, we have these little cards that we can put up later, either today or next week. Okay, let's pray.

Father in heaven, thank you for your goodness. Lord, we're more than halfway through our small group series. As we tackle Second Peter, chapter two today, Lord, especially today give us wisdom and understandings better understand what you want us to learn today. That we may not only take it but apply it Lord and share with others in Jesus name. Amen.

It was August 18 1920. So how long ago 102 years ago? Okay. State lawmakers in Tennessee filed into the Statehouse to cast their ballot on the ratification of the 19th amendment. Anybody even have an idea and a clue what the 19th Amendment is. Sorry, I had to look up too. The 19th Amendment is the one that which gave women the right to vote. Carrie Chapman Catt have lobbied hard for the rights of women to vote. And the 19th Amendment had already been ratified by 35 out of 36 states that were required. And with other states refusing to call special ratification sessions, Tennessee remained the suffragists last opportunity letter last chance to vote in 1920. Can you believe that? how far we've come in only 102 years ago. And so the debate, it lasted for days, not hours, days in the chamber and committee rooms spilling out into restaurants and hotels. And by mid day of August of 18, the outcome was still close to too close to call. And there

are a young legislator by the name of Harry Burns switched his vote to Yes. And the amendment passed by his singular vote. Now most of his constituents, they oppose the idea of women voting, but the constituent who mattered most to him was who? His mother. That morning she sent a note urging him to be a good boy and help Mrs. Cat. Can you believe that bill 102 years ago, and we were debating if women should vote? Oh my.

Well today we're gonna jump into the second chapter of 2 Peter. It's a tough, challenging chapter. One that Peter says wisdom and a warning to be mindful of influence people who are teaching. Does everybody in this world have good intentions? No. Clearly we can see that. And sadly, with even in the church, there have been times and still at times, people come into the church with ill intentions. The prophets spoke about it. Jesus spoke about it. Paul warned them and Peter as well warns us. So today. Let's go to Second Peter chapter two, verse one. We're going to divide this chapter into two parts. verses one through 10 A and then the second half 10 B to verse 22. Second Peter to After two verses one through 10. Well there All right, let's begin.

But there were what? false prophets among the people, just as there will be false prophet teachers among you. So Peters already acknowledging that there were people in the past, who were false prophets, false teachers, there are now at that time that he was speaking about and there will be in the future. And by the way, everything that we're studying can not just be related to the church, but even in our general allies. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Sovereign Lord, who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves, many will follow their depraved conduct, and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed, these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories, their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. For God did not spare angels when they sin, but sent them to hell putting them in chains of darkness, to be held for judgment, if He did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others. And if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he burned them by burning them to ashes and making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. And if you rescue live, a righteous man who is distressed by the depraved conduct

of a loss, for that righteous man living amongst them day after day, was tormented in his right to soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard, if this is so than the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from the trials, and to hold the unrighteous, for punishment on the Day of Judgment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.

Strong words, pretty strong words, and essentially, what is Peter trying to say? That ultimately, God is what God is just. And there's accountability. And we look back, we can see that there's some evidence, there's some stories that are mentioned, for instance, he talks about Noah, and what happened, the flood took place, even dealing with the angels who had chosen to go a different direction. He also brings up Lot. These are three stories where God's justice prevailed. Now, when we look back here, and it says, especially in the beginning, for instance, chapter, the verse, first verse, there were false prophets who brought, you know, who tried to lead the people astray? There will be false prophets, teachers among you, and what do they do they bring in these destructive heresies. And that's also just keep in mind too, when heresy it didn't always have a negative connotation, because when we think of like heresy today, we think of oh, this person is not speaking truth, they're trying to lead people astray. Heresy at the time was kind of a way of, of as I was reading this week, in a commentary, it's, it was a choice you could make. But here, he says, it's not just a choice, it's a destructive choice. It's a destructive heresy. That which some of the attributes of these individuals they're trying to, they even deny who, who the Lord is even Jesus, who brought them in, and essentially bringing swift destruction on themselves.

So, you know, when you look back, even on the, the Jewish community, the Jewish leaders, they even have their own little denominations. We think of the Pharisees the Sadducees. Into a lesser note, you know, it's not spoken about as much, but even the essence, when you look at Judaism, and Christianity, in many ways, it was a way of life. When, when Jesus he always basically considered himself a Jew, and even the Christians that following Jesus death, still, for some time considered themselves, Jews a continuation. And for them, faith was everything. But the group that Peter is writing to their Gentiles, more than likely, their mindset came from more of a philosophical background.

And it's important that Peter is writing here is that it's important that we, we develop the gift of discernment, being able to be in tune to see and understand what is right what is wrong to think, to understand, look at the longer picture and hear these individuals, these teachers, these prophets, they're trying to trap them in they're trying to lead them away. Now at this point, Peter is probably dealing with a very early form of what's called Gnosticism it wouldn't blow up till later in the second century. One of the key traits though about Gnosticism, is such that they have a special message and knowledge that only they have gleaned. Right? And they're not quick to share it with everybody. Because they want to keep it special. They're protected. Does that sound familiar? And yet, when we look at Scripture, we know that everything, it's an open book, right? We're able to read it for ourselves. So scripture, as I mentioned before, points out that you know, there will also be there were false prophets in the past. But yet, the prophets, Jeremiah, Jesus, and Paul reminds us to be mindful. And so what is Paul then say about these individuals? How does he identify them? These individuals, they're causing doubt. They're denying the Lordship of Jesus. And eventually as well. They're denying the fact that is there really going to be a second comment? Is Jesus really going to come back?

So what are some of the characteristics as we read this? Let's go ahead and keep in mind what some of these characteristics are these false teachers, they're bold, and arrogant. They're not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings. Yet even angels, though they are stronger or more powerful, do not keep abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. But these animals, that these are these people blaspheming matters that do they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals, they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. The idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery. They never stopped sinning, they seduce the unstable, they're experts in greed, the accursed and a curse brood, they have left the straightway and wandered off to follow the way of Balem son of Bezer, who loved the ways of wages of wickedness, but he was rebuked for his wrongdoing, by whom anybody know, a donkey. You imagine being told off by a donkey. God spoke through the donkey, an animal without speech, no doubt, who spoke with

the human voice and restrain the prophets madness. These people are springs with water and mist driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved, reserved for them for the mouth, empty, boastful words. And by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in terror. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of what depravity for people are slaves to whatever they have mastered them. If they've escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they're worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them to have not known the way of righteousness, and you have known it, and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. And one of the problems is true, a dog returns to his wet vomit and a sow, returns to her wallowing in the mud or a sow, I should say.

So, so again, Peter is going hard in the paints kind of pretty district, descriptive, what are some of the things that he points out? Right at the beginning, they're bold arrogance. ever met somebody who tries to persuade you with boldness and arrogance? Do you trust that person? Nope. In fact, they can be abusive. Well, here's the thing. In some ways, like Peters point out, they're popular though. They have influence. They feel like they are liberated. They're strong. They're smart, they're enlightened. We know more than you. So you need to listen to us, not everybody else.

But yet they slander other people. Oftentimes, when you hear somebody who's immediately trying to speak ill of somebody else. Should that be a red flag? Right. And as it says here to these individuals, they're carousing. I had to look this up because I've heard that term before Y'all know what carousing is. It's basically drinking a plethora amounts of alcohol and enjoying oneself in a noisy, lively way. Can you imagine? Let's say for instance myself enjoying a lot of alcohol? Would you respect me? And doing it in the middle of the day? Please tell me no. Gustavo, don't don't don't give impressions. But you see the thing too is Peter is pointing out that even the other guys, the non believers, even they're like, Dude, what are you doing? Even we don't do that at least wait till 9. Right? Now I'm not promoting alcohol. But even the non believers are like, what's with you guys? You say you don't drink. You say you don't do these things. But even your leaders,

your teachers are saying one thing and doing another. So they keep going. So even non Christians didn't do that. Can you also imagine they were bringing alcohol to potluck and communion? That's what Peter is saying here. When it says feasts, they would get together. And they have, they would have their form of potluck and even sometimes communion. We celebrate communion once a quarter, four times a year. It's very simplistic, right. But traditionally, in Bible times, and Peter and Paul's time, it was a full blown meal. There's some other things that would happen to you. But I'm not going to leave it here. I'm not going to say it because kids are here and don't want your parents have to ask uncomfortable questions.

So they were greedy. They were bold. They were arrogant. They were promiscuous. And it says here too, I think the clicker, the clicker, the capstone of this is they were slaves of depravity. They couldn't know between what was right and wrong. And so Peter is calling on them to please be mindful of, yes, these people are here. But yeah, don't listen to them. And if you listen to somebody, if you stop listening to somebody, what's the effect of them, they're gonna continue to try. They'll keep trying and trying and trying them once they realize that there's no way that they're going to be able to influence you what eventually happens. Hopefully, they actually leave. And if you have to, just tell him, dude, you're no longer welcome here anymore. You are not speaking the truth.

Now God gives us a bread, amen. But it's important that we actually use the break. Amen. And God gives us again, the gift of discernment, the ability to ask a couple questions. Who's saying it? Why is she saying, what's the purpose? Who, what, where, when, why, and how? Whenever we come across questions, think of these things. What who's seen it? Why What does it make sense? Does it make sense? what's been said in the past? And especially when we look about when we think and, and reflect on thoughts and ideas? What does it align with the principles of Scripture? In fact, these guys they're so full of hot air that that Peter called them waterless springs, that's an oxymoron. How can you have a spring when there's no water? It's just a bunch of dirt and rocks? Or how about storm driven mist? The storm is dark and cloudy and everything, and yet, it's just a mist? No, it needs to have rain or snow. And what's heartbreaking about this is that these are individuals who had followed and accepted Christ. And yes, somewhere

along the way, whether because of their own ego, or being influenced by somebody else, they've been led astray. And they think they're trying to do the right thing.

So who can we trust? Is their teaching and wisdom congruent with scripture? Is their life and principles aligned with scripture. Ultimately, their behavior will lead them astray. The choices that they make, will ultimately choose their fate. And as Peter ends this chapter, he says one of the proverbs here is true, a dog returns to its vomit kind of thing. It's kind of weird, or a cow or a pig that's washed, goes right back to the mud. Maybe because they like being muddy. But yet, they can't know anything else. They only go back to what they know. And they intentionally choose to go against what they knew in the past, and ultimately know what is true. challenges we're all accountable to our actions.

Napoleon Hill once said, think twice. Think twice before you would speak because your words and influence will plant seeds of either success or failure in the mind And of another, there's a quote that says everything rises and falls on leadership. Leadership can occur anywhere. It can occur in your home. It can occur at work. It can occur at the nonprofit, there's leadership here, there's leadership everywhere. Parents often forget that you are a leader in your home, how you lead, not necessarily even by what you say. But I'm sure you learn along the way that your kids follow what not what you say, but what you do, right, and how you influence them.

Over the last decade, Werner Geyser wrote an article and he pointed out that from the We are Social report, over 3.4 billion people actively use social media, that's about 45% of the world population. And the social media boom has given rise to the social media, influencer influencers they leverage their knowledge, and expertise to shape and mold culture, but influencers are they're always right. No, do they also maybe have agendas? Yeah. And that's something that we have to be cognizant, not only just in church, but also in our practical, daily life. Because everything's true on the internet. Not true. My friends, we all have an opportunity to lead an influence here in the church, in your home, in your community. How are you influencing those around you? Who are you being influenced by the people that you surround yourself? are more than likely going to influence you?

Do you get your news from the TV? Or do you get them from means? admitted? You know, they're funny. Kind of a joke, but kind of true. Because memes in a way, though they're funny can also point out truth. So remember, think critically, ask questions. And for instance, if a leader doesn't like being questioned, that should be a big clue to I'll leave, I'll tell you right now, I'm not afraid to be asked questions. Because if I'm wrong, then I need to know. But a leader should be able to ask and should be able to not only be asked questions, but also explain the why. We can't accept everything. Without asking questions. Unfortunately, sometimes you have to look at the fine print. How many of you have perhaps ever made a big purchase like a home or a really nice car? Did you read every single line? No, we didn't. We got the most of it, right. But if you don't read what's going to happen, you could get you could the terms of agreement may not be what you thought they were right. And that could put you in a pickle. Or how about here's, here's a really easy, subtle one. How about the free trial for streaming service? Okay, oh, NatGeo? It's just I'm gonna make up a number because I don't really know how much it is. It's $9.99. Right? But then it's free for a week. And then by the 11th day, it's like, Oh, I forgot to unsubscribe. Oh, it's just a month. But what if Nat Geo says, oh, no, this is not just for you're gonna pay $9.99 just not for per month, but every month for a year. And when you go back, you can see they'll have a little sign that says you agreed to this. And then you're going to be steaming and fuming inside. And you have to admit, I wasn't paying attention. I should have been more discerning.

So my friends who are what influences you? And are they beneficial to your life? Okay, what? Who? Or what do you surround yourself with? Where do you get your information? Who do you hang out with? Are the people that you hang around with? Are they positive? Do they add meaning to your life? Or do they suck you dry? And the things that perhaps where you get your information? Are they truthful? Do you think about it? Because even though maybe you might be part of a site is everything right about what they're thinking? Or is there variances? Use the sermon my friends and rise above rise above the challenges rise above. Use the sermon and rise above. So every day this week, I want you to pray for discernment. Especially in the mornings, maybe when you wake up because it's good to start your day with discernment. Amen. To make peace positive choices in your life. And as you do so, next Sabbath.

Let's reflect and see, as I pray, did I make better choices this week than I have in the past?

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank You for Your goodness and Your love and Your patience and grace. Lord, help us to be true and faithful to you. May we be positive influences around those who are close to in daily commune with but also Lord, may we be mindful of what influences us. May you be the greatest influence in our life? May we start our day with you, Lord. And above all, may we be a blessing to others. And Lord, were there things that maybe seem suspect, help us to have discernment and to make the right decisions. In Jesus name. everybody said, Amen. Grace and peace, everybody.

Have a great week.