

The Backstory

Know Pain - Know Gain

by Bill Aumack

Good morning again. Pastor is on vacation. So you get to hear from me for the next couple of weeks. Sorry. But you know, today we're starting with our introduction to First and Second Peter, we're going to be talking about this in our small groups that are coming up the series called Know Pain, Know Gain. And today I want to talk about the backstory.

But before we do that, you know, when we talk about the kind of sermons that people like, we can dice and slice and divide that up lots of different ways. But generally, in broad brushes, we kind of fall into two categories. Some people like the deep theological study, and we're gonna dive deep, and we're looking at the words and we're looking at the original Aramaic and Greek and we're comparing those words to where that words used other places in Scripture, we just really, really go deep. And that's fine. There's nothing wrong with that. It's not a sin, it's fine. But some people really like that. But you know, everything has a pro and a con. And the con side of that is sometimes some of the people that like that, that's all they want. And, you know, it's like, it's time to go do mission work? No, we need a Bible study. Right? And it's just I need more info, more info, more input like robot, give me more data, you know, just more and more and more. And that's not always a good spot to be.

You guys remember the movie from 2010, the Book of Eli? Anybody see that? Denzel Washington. it's a post apocalyptic world after some nuclear war. And apparently, we learned through the movie, that part of the reason of the war at least was people were fighting over the Bible, the Bible was believed to be a book of great power and to control people. And they were destroying Bibles. And eventually nuclear war breaks out over the Bible. And the character, Eli has found a Bible, he's trying to save it. He's trying to get back to San Francisco, where they're trying to reboot civilization. They're collecting books and printing them up again. So he's trying to save this, what might be the last Bible on Earth. And in his journey, he picks up a traveling partner. And at one point, he makes this quote, and he says, "I was carrying it and reading it every day. got so caught up in protecting it, I forgot to live by what I learned from it." Right? We don't want to be in that spot. That's that's not a good spot to be.

So that's the first group of people. The second group of people are the people who just "tell me what to do". Just give me a how to just tell me what you want me to do? I'll go do it. I'm fine. You know, just just tell me. I don't know Greek. I don't know Aramaic. I don't know Hebrew, I'm barely getting by in English. You know, just just tell me what to do. And that's okay. There's nothing wrong with that. There's, there's whole books in the Bible like that. But you know, the whole pros and cons thing. And so the con side of those types of sermons is that you ended up with this really long list of do this, don't do that. Do this don't do and you don't know why. And it's difficult to know what to do with it.

Reminds me of a story I heard about a mother who was teaching her daughter how to cook. She was showing her how to make this pot roast. I don't know how to make pot roast. So they're, you know, folden and slicing and dicing and doing whatever you do when you make pot roast. Don't laugh at me.

Philip, our chef here, I don't know how to make pot roast. Anyway, they're making the pot roast. They get it all done. And just before she sticks it in the oven, she pulls out this big ol knife wacks off the ends and sticks it in the oven. And the daughter looks at mom and says, Mom, why did we cut off the ends? And mom says, I don't know. That's how my mom taught me to do it. Let's call up grandma and see what she says. And so they call up grandma. And Grandma says yeah, that's how my mom taught me to do it. Why don't you call your great grandma and see what she says. So they dial up great grandma, who's in the nursing home takes a while to get her and get connected to her. And they asked her, Why do we do this? And she goes, Yeah, I used to cut off the ends of the pot roast. But you remember back in my day, I had this little tiny stove, with a little tiny oven, and it didn't fit. And I had to cut off the ends. But honey, you got a nice big stove, you don't have to do that. We don't want to be there either. Right? Not a good spot to be.

So you know, in these different pros and cons and how we do it. We try to have balance, do a little bit of both right? Because the Bible has both. Romans deep theological study, James, very practical how to. The Bible has both, we try and do both here. I hope we're finding a good balance of that. But I want to tell you today, both groups are going to be upset at me, because I'm not doing either one of those kinds of sermons. So today, we're staying at the very highest level we can stay at, because we're going to be going into First and Second Peter more in depth as we go through this series. And I don't want to do that now and ruin what's coming. So we're just staying at a high level. And what I'm trying to do is provide you some backstory, what was Peter thinking? What was going on? Why did he write this stuff? And you may want to keep these notes with you in your small groups, because it has kind of the structure of what he's talking about and why. And as we're going through that, maybe that'll be somewhat helpful.

All right, so you've got your sermon notes with you. Open your Bibles, the First Peter, we're kind of just be looking around through here in various places. And before we get to all that, right, we know that Peter was one of the apostles, right? Actually one of the inner circle of Jesus's apostles, and in fact, so much so remember that he was born with a name Simon. And when he confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus says, upon this what rock, I'm going to build my church. And when he says that word rock, sometimes we think of rock, the Rock of Gibraltar, right? No, that's a rock, this kind of rock, kind of rock, you could pick up and throw. Okay. But the word that Jesus probably used would have been Kephas this in the Aramaic. And that would have meant rock. And that word becomes Petros, in the Greek. We've heard that, which becomes Peter in the English. And sometimes we see him even referred to as Simon Peter. So when I just kind of want to bring this up, because sometimes if you're looking through doing these studies, and you're looking at different translations, and different Commentaries, you might see these different words used. It's all the same, dude. Okay. I mean, some of us maybe are confusing, because, you know, we've got a name and short name and a family name, and, you know, whatever. But you know, Peter had all kinds of names. I don't I don't know how he ever answered anything. But just keeping that in mind as we go through it.

Now, Peter starts out his ministry in Jerusalem, and he's helping getting the church going in Jerusalem. James is there some of the other disciples that are there to get the church going in Jerusalem, and at some time, Peter leaves Jerusalem and goes to Rome and begins working with the church in Rome. And that's where he is when he writes, First Peter, is written in Rome, which he metaphorically calls Babylon. Okay, because in the Old Testament form, any evil empire was Babylon. And so Rome is Babylon. He's not physically in Babylon, which would have been clear the other direction, but he is in Rome. It's written around 60 AD, maybe some of 30 years after Jesus's death. And it's written with the help of

Silvanus or Silas. Do you recognize the name Paul and Silas? Widely believed to probably be the same guy here. We don't know 100% For sure, but we think that that's probably true. Okay, so just again, giving you some background. Now remember, Peter is kind of an uneducated fisherman. His grammar is not so good. His spelling's not so good. I went to college my spelling still isn't so good. it. But you know, he didn't have you know, spellcheck and Grammarly and whatever else we use to get everything right. And so it was very common to dictate your letter and have somebody else write it for you and get proper dictation proper grammar, proper words, all this kind of stuff. So this would have been very, very popular to do.

And now Peter has written this letter to some gentile Christians, these were not Jews, these were Gentiles who become Christians in Asia Minor. Anybody know where Asia Minor is? Turkey. Okay. So if you think of the Mediterranean Sea, let's see if I can do this backwards. Atlantic Oceans out here, Mediterranean Sea comes across, we have what's first Spain, then the Boot, Italy. And then Turkey is kind of up here in the corner, but kind of go around the corner, Middle East, and then upper Africa is along the bottom. So Turkey is way over here at the end of the Mediterranean Sea. Peter is in Rome, okay. And he writes this letter, it's a circuit letters go into several different groups there. And we know that because he talks about and we'll get to that in a minute. But these people were facing persecution, because they were Christians. Now, they were facing real persecution. Okay, sometimes, and today we feel persecuted. And what that means is somebody who doesn't like us, right? I feel so persecuted, Alberto doesn't like me. Right no... the kind of persecution they faced was - you die. Okay, that's like, it's a whole different level of persecution. Right. And so he's writing this letter to these people that are facing this persecution. And, and this applies to us. Now, we may not deal with that type of persecution here in the US for being a Christian. But we've all deal with suffering, right? There's illnesses and people get cancer and people die, and we lose jobs and relationships fail, and on and on and on. And on the list goes, we know suffering. Okay, so this is going to be very practical for us as we look through this, and see how we deal with with the practical part of the suffering, okay.

And so first Peter, he kind of starts with the greeting, and then verses 3 through 12, or a song or a praise. And then the following three movements are, because it's, this is like, this is how 90% of churches do worship. We start with a greeting, we have some songs, and we get a three point sermon. This is where it comes from right here, okay, this is this is how you do it. All right. So, again, I'm going to be pointing this structure out, so you can kind of follow along as we go through the series later on. So starting out in verses 1:13 through 2:20. in First Peter, Peter wants these folks to see themselves as part of God's family. Because you are part of God's family, for going through the suffering. Now. Don't take this the wrong way. Okay. Be positive. But sometimes when you see families that merge, you know, maybe there were some divorces and then somebody else gets married and families merge. They don't always get together so well, right. We hear about the evil stepmom or the evil stepdad or the step kids that were mean to the other step kids or what, right? It's not a perfect marriage. Okay, not that's not that anybody in here, everybody here, we've all had it perfect. But sometimes you hear about other folks where this happens, right? And so Peter's gonna say, No, you're not the second hand step child. You are part of the family. It's the same. You are brought into this family. And he uses a lot of language to show that. In the intro up there. I think in verse one or two, he says to God's elect, exile scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithenia, I had to look that up, that's the Bithynia who have been chosen according to the knowledge of God the Father. Okay. So these are the groups that this is going to this letter is gonna go through the circuit through. And he said, You're God's

chosen, you're part of it. And he goes on to talk about the Exodus and being like the Exodus and being part of this being like Abraham and wandering trying to find a place. Okay? You are just like us, you're not some second class stepchild, you are part of the family makes sense. This was very important to him, okay.

Then going on in verses 2:11 through 4:11, he talks about suffering as a witness to Jesus, and others suffering can bring clarity, almost to their mission. Right, we got to bear witness among the nations. And in this time and place where this is written, everybody kind of had to do what the household male did, right? If you were married, you worship the gods, your husband worshipped. If you were a slave or a servant in the household, you worship the gods that the father worshipped, right. And if you're a Christian, and you don't want to worship them, now there's problems. And this is where some of the persecutions have come from, in this why he's writing this letter. And Peter saying, Listen, this is a witness to Jesus, you should be able to do that. And you should resist the evil that's been put upon you. Not with violence, but with generosity and love. Now, no, right? If somebody's going to be mean to you, how often do you want to be like generous to them and love them? You know, very time you see somebody they punch in the nose next time is him. Oh, I love you so much. Whack, you know, no! I, we don't like to do that. So I mean, this was hard stuff. This was not easy. But you can see how practical this is going to be for us. Because we probably all have at least one person in our lives. It's difficult to get along with. Neighbor, co worker, family member, I know. Okay. But there's gonna be very, very, very apropos for us very much.

All right, then finishing up here and kind of 4:12 through 5:9. He talks about suffering and the future hope. Because we know that Jesus says in Matthew 5, he says, Rejoice when people persecute you because of why? Because of me. Write, rejoice when people persecute you because of me. And Peter, encourages them. And First Peter 5:9, he says, resist evil with firm faithfulness. Resist evil with firm faithfulness. Not usually my first choice.

Okay. And so what we have here and First Peter, is that Peter offers hope, in the midst of suffering. Okay. And again, very real suffering, the kind of suffering that costs you your life. Okay, this is not just, oh, I have a headache today. They don't feel good. I'm suffering so badly. You know, I want to because we have not dealt with this. We don't know what this is like. Right. But I mean, every day to fear for your life. That's, that's real persecution. Okay. And God's people are kind of a misunderstood minority here, because they have chosen to live under the rule of a different king. And persecution, offers the chance to show their sincerity and the love of Jesus. Have you ever thought about persecution that way? I haven't. Persecution is just icky. We don't like it, right. But this is what Peter's telling them. All right.

So that's kind of a high overview. First, Peter, I'm taking way too long. We're going to speed it up here. Second, Peter, again, is written to the same group of Christians a couple of years later, About 65 AD. This is very, very late in Peter's life. We know that Nero kills Peter, right around 65, maybe early 66 ad. And Peter apparently knew it was coming. He knows that he's late in his life, and he is writing this and this kind of becomes a almost a farewell speech, and it has a very different tone than First Peter does. Okay, we aren't sure Silas helps him here, the language is a little bit different, which leads some people to think maybe it wasn't. But we don't know, he doesn't say very much. And by the way, the book of Jude is also dealing with the same topic to the same people. And it's kind of similar in a lot of ways. And so maybe Peter and Jude, were talking about the situation that's going on and, and working together. We don't know, but it's a possibility. All right.

So Second, Peter opens, with a final challenge for Jesus's followers to be a group of people who never stopped growing, it doesn't matter how much persecution you're facing, doesn't matter what's going on your life continue to grow, both spiritually as an individual and as a group, continue to add people to the group continue to keep developing your spirituality, and never, never let that stop. And then he kind of spends the rest of it answering some objections from false teachers who have popped up. Okay. And there's three objections from these false teachers. Now that we have false teachers today that are trying to lead us astray. Yes. Right, very clearly. And so I mean, this couldn't be more applicable. And you're going to be amazed at what these three objections are from these false teachers and how much it sounds like somebody today.

All right. So objection number one, in second, Peter 1:16, through 20, is that Peter and the other disciples made this whole thing up this whole business of Jesus and the resurrection and the miracles, what a great story. You should publish that. You know, that that make a great book fantasy section, right? Because it's just made up. buncha fishermen and shepherds and goat herders, they don't they don't know what they're talking about. But it's a great story. Right? Have you ever heard anybody say something like that? Yeah. A still an objection. And Peter answers this, with his eyewitness testimony of Jesus' ascension into heaven. And Mark 9. And he says, I saw, I saw it. And then he says, and by the way, we've got 1000s of years of prophets of Isaiah, and Zachariah, and Haggi, and on and on and on. And they all pointed to Jesus. And I'm telling you, he's the one. We didn't make this up. This has been going on for 1000s of years. And it happened, right while you were standing here watching it. Peter gets a little bit up on his soapbox here, as well, he should as well, he should but he gets a little excited here. He's a little bit worked up, okay.

Now, the second objection, is that there will not be a final reckoning this whole business about Jesus coming in again and some of us dying and you know, hell.... Ppphhhttt... hogwash. You ever heard anybody say that? Yeah. People still claim this, right? And this was an excuse, because some of these false teachers were avoiding Jesus's teaching about money, and sex. And they were making tons of money off the people. And they were engaged in sexual relationships that they shouldn't have been engaged. They still are. Right. And so you know, he points to this and the teachers have missed strewn Paul's teaching about being free in Christ. Oh, I'm free, while then howdie dudie let's go have some fun. And Peter said, that's not what it says. Right. And in fact, you're not even really free because now you're slaves to your own bodies and your own impulses, and you can't even deal with that. Okay, there's a lot of good stuff here.

Objection number three. It's been such a long time and Jesus hasn't come yet. Right? You guys have been saying Jesus has come in. And like what gives? Right? Now, don't raise your hand. Anybody been on a maybe a blind date? You're gonna go meet somebody, and let's meet at the coffee house, we'll have a little coffee or something. And you wait, and the other person doesn't show up? How long do you wait? You know, wait a few minutes when they got stuck in traffic? It is LA, you know, half hour, hour, hour and a half? I mean, how long are you going to wait? Some of you are shaking your head.... too many, like five minutes, man, I'm out. Right? And people are saying, Listen, why is it taking so long? God hasn't come. And Peter says, the fact that you exist, proves that God at some point in the past, intervened in our world and made something happen. And he's going to do it again. It's going to happen again, he's already done it once. And he's going to do it again. So be ready for that. Right? And Peter talks about the day of the Lord and from Zephaniah and some of the Isaiah some of the other, the priests and how are the prophets sorry, and how the skies will be peeled back. And he's not talking

about the destruction of the universe. He's talking about how things are going to be peeled back. And we're going to be able to see how everything was. God is going to expose evil for what it is, and he is going to deal with it. Okay. And see, the kind of the truth is here. And it kind of wraps this up is that God loves this world. And he's determined to rescue it through Jesus. And that means he has to confront and deal with evil to open away to a new future. And that's what hope is, amen.

So this is what Peter is trying to tell us here as we get through this. And like I said, I know you're all upset at me now, because we just weren't super high level. We didn't delve into anything deep. But that's coming starting next week. Okay, so this is the hook, to get you all to come back next week. Amen. This is like, you know, when you're watching your TV show, let's just be continued Next week. All right, got to come back next week.

And our challenge this week is to join a small group, it's for only six weeks, six weeks, you can put on your big boy pants or your big girl pants and do six weeks, right? I mean, it's just six weeks. I mean, I've had colds that lasted longer than that.. we can deal with this, right? Okay. And if you just can't, your schedule just just doesn't let you just can't do this. Keep up with the reading. So I put the reading there on the bottom of your notes. That's the readings that we'll be doing for next week, find some time during the week to read. It's like a chapter and a couple of verses. It's very, very short, to find some time to read that think about it a little bit come ready next week, as we begin talking about this in greater detail. All right. And I'm really looking forward to this because this is going to be super, super practical for us of how to deal with the situations in our lives. Because we've all faced this stuff. We've all had somebody that told us one of these objections that Peter deals with or we've dealt with suffering and pain. And it happens and we don't know how to answer it.

I was Von, I'm going to tell the story you told me yesterday. Okay, she shook her head yes. I'm gonna look at that as permission. Like she could say no now, right? But she was talking to a friend. They're like, you know, what's this whole evil thing? Why does God allow evil? Right? This is a question that happens. People ask this, we have to have an answer for and be able to say, this is why this has happened. This is what's going to happen. All right. I'm really looking forward to this. I hope you guys are too. This is gonna be a lot of fun.

Let's bow our heads for prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for allowing us the opportunity to look at these books first. And second. Peter, thank you so much for preserving these books and having them for us, to give us hope to help us understand some of the things that's happening, some of the suffering and what we can do about it and why it happens. Thank you so much for the hope that we have, that someday you will come back and reveal evil for what it is and make everything right. Be with us this week. keep us safe in Jesus name. Amen.