

2 Peter 2
Why Some Christians Are So Naive
J.D. Farag

KAPONO: Praise the Lord. Amen. Amen. Yes, Lord, that is true. Every day, every hour, Lord, as the song says. We thank You so much for this time that we can gather together. And as Pastor JD said in the first service, we need to stay connected, Lord. Help us not to disconnect.

So we need Your Holy Spirit, Lord, to speak to us. Maybe this message may be hard to hear, Lord, so the only way we can accept it, Lord, is for You to work on our hearts, Lord.

Would You just humble us this morning? Because what you have for us is good and perfect. We ask this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good morning. Welcome. You can be seated. So glad you're here. Want to welcome those of you that are joining us online as well.

Before we get started, I want to take a moment and pray for the people of Turkey and Syria. Doubtless you're aware of the absolute, I mean, horrific devastation. The death toll continues to climb. I checked again this morning. It's already over 30,000. And some are saying that it will go even higher, not just higher, but much higher potentially.

So you know when you hear those numbers, they're not just statistics or numbers. Those are people. They are sons, daughters, mothers, fathers and brothers and sisters. And they're real people. And they leave behind people that are just grieving in sorrow and severe pain. And like never before, they need Jesus. And so I would like to pray. If you would please join with me.

Father in heaven, we're so thankful to You at times like this for prayer. What would we do if we couldn't pray at a time like this, Lord, and not just pray, but pray specifically for the people in Turkey and the people there in Syria. Just, Lord, the devastation, the unthinkable horror of what's happened.

Lord, I just pray that You, by the Holy Spirit, as only You can, would comfort those who mourn, who are suffering. Lord, I pray for the people there in Turkey and Syria, that You, again, as only You can, would use this to bring them to You. That they would see You as their only hope.

And Lord, I pray for the people that are working tirelessly. Though the rescue efforts are no longer possible, You can do a miracle and have and there's so many miracles that have come out of this. So, Lord, I just want to – I want to pray for supernatural strength for them, for supernatural peace.

And Lord, that You would just be merciful, God. This is so bad, but You're good. And no matter how bad this is, it cannot change how good You are. So, Lord, would You do that, please? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

All right. We continue our verse-by-verse study through *2 Peter*. Today, Lord willing, we're going to finish *Chapter 2*.

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And I appreciated Kaponó's prayer. This is tough. I'll just – right out of the chute. So we can bow our heads and close our eyes if you'd like to slip out. Of course we'll have the parking lot guys take note of you. So too late, you can't now.

If you're able to stand, I'll ask you to stand. You can follow along as I read. If not, where you're seated is fine.

So the Apostle Peter now is continuing in the context of his warning about false teachers, false prophets, false teachings, and even false believers for that matter. And he's going to get very graphic in his description as we pick it up now in *verse 17*.

“These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words, and by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.

They promise them freedom, [Verse 19] while they themselves are slaves of depravity. For a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing [And I want you to notice this word] OUR Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Of them [Verse 22] the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”

I hope you didn't have breakfast. Well, let's pray.

Lord, we need the Holy Spirit now because we have quite a passage before us that's going to require the Holy Spirit; open it to our understanding. It's here for a reason and You want us to know what that reason is because You want to protect us.

You want to warn us. You love us and You care so much for us that You inspired Peter to write this so that we would take heed to this. So that's our prayer, Lord. We want to take heed to Your word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

You can be seated. Thank you.

So I want to talk with you today about something that is more pronounced in our day, living in this the last days as it relates to being naive, specifically why it is that some Christians today are seemingly so naive and so gullible when it comes to false teachers, false teachings, and again, even false believers.

I'm not talking about, and this is a maybe a preface of sorts. Please hear me on this. I'm not talking about the new believer who's young in the Lord and hasn't grown in the Lord. I'm talking about the Christian who should know better. But they don't. And they're so trusting.

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So here comes somebody and they say, Oh yeah, I'm a Christian. You're like, Oh, praise the Lord!

They're not a Christian. You've been duped. You're so gullible and so naive. You need to be discerning. This person is false. And you're just so trusting and naive and – another preface of sorts, please.

I don't want to sound mean. That's not the spirit of the text before us today. We have a text like this in our Bibles because God loves us so much. If He didn't love us, He wouldn't bother. He would not have inspired Peter to write such tough stuff. And this is tough stuff. There's a much-needed rebuke, like what we saw in the prophecy teaching today concerning the church in Thyatira.

You know, all Scripture is God-breathed, right? Sometimes it's for our instruction, exhortation, encouragement. But sometimes it's to rebuke. It's to correct. It's to redirect and protect. And such is the case with the passage here at the end of *2 Peter*.

Thankfully in today's text, Peter by the Holy Spirit is going to provide us with what I'll call a template, a template of sorts, a grid, a test, whatever you want to call it, something by which we can use as a tool equipped with to sort of test the spirits, discern the spirits so that we're not duped, fooled, tricked, deceived by these false teachers, false teachings, and perhaps even more dangerous, the false believer who's not a Christian, a false Christian.

So I think I've got nine of these. We'll have you out of here before — you know what?

[Laughter]

That's all I'm going to say about that. You know, I'm competing with another religion here, you know? I just want you to know. They hold their services on Sundays too. Anyway.

[Laughter]

Yes, Lord. That was a word for somebody, right?

Okay. The first one in the first part of verse 17: Their promises are empty.

Peter's description of these men, these false teachers, is rather picturesque, such that what's in their bucket comes out of their well. Nothing. There's nothing there.

Oh, they, you know, come off as being deep. But you put the bucket into the well, and you pull it out and there's nothing there because well, there's nothing there.

And that actually ties in with the second one in the second part of verse 17, which is that their content is false. Not only are their promises empty, their content is false. Because like with a well without water, so too are they like clouds without rain.

Let me say it like this. They're all puff and fluff, but no real stuff. How about that? That was pretty good actually, wasn't it? That's what my notes – I had it in my notes. I worked on that quite a bit. Splash and flash.

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So here you are. You're parched, you're thirsty, you're dying of thirst. You know how it is when you're thirsty and oh, that cold glass of water. And you see a cloud.

All right! Come on, let it rain. Let it rain! And there's no rain in it. It has no content. It's false. You fake cloud, you.

The Proverbs even speak to that. They're like clouds without rain. There's nothing there. And that's how we're going to identify these false teachers, these false teachings. There's no water in their well. There is no rain in their clouds. You, upon closer examination, you look into their lives and what are you going to find? Nothing. Because there's nothing there.

Jude verses 12-13. When we get to — by the way, check this out.

One more *Chapter 2 Peter*, Lord willing, we'll start *Chapter 3* next week. Then 1, 2 and 3 John; very short. Then Jude, one chapter, then the Book of Revelation. [Cheering] Yeah. You know what's going to happen, right? We're going to get done with Jude and then the rapture is going to happen. Which is fine, right? We're not complaining, so we'll take it. Okay. Back to the sermon already in progress. Listen to Jude.

Now, let me set this up a little bit because this is important and germane to our understanding. So *2 Peter* was written, some believe, about six years prior to Jude.

Now Jude, actually get this; his name was actually Judas. He was the half-brother of Jesus, born to Joseph and Mary. So they didn't want to — who's going to want to read Judas? I ain't reading that book.

So Jude. Okay, we can take Jude. This is the half-brother of Jesus, some six years after Peter writes his last letter, *2 Peter*. And it's like Peter's saying, these false teachers are coming. Fast forward six years, Jude says they're here.

Listen to this. *Verse 12*, **“These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm— shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted— twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.”**

Well, that's what Peter says next in the third part of *verse 17*. Their destiny is the blackest darkness. Not just darkness. The blackest darkness.

You know, sometimes it's a little dark and sometimes it's so dark you cannot see right in front of you. That's what this dark is.

Now we're going to see this again at the conclusion. But here, Peter makes it clear that they are not born-again believers. It will never be said of a believer that their destiny is the blackest darkness that's reserved for them forever.

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In other words, Peter is reinforcing and emphasizing Christians, dear, dear Christians, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, these are not your brothers and sisters in Christ. They are not saved.

They might say they're Christians. Oh, yeah. I'm a Christian. You're not a Christian. We're going to talk about that at the conclusion.

Number 4. I need to expound on this one in particular. I think you'll see why here in the first part of *verse 18*. Their boasting is appealing.

So here Peter is describing them as having ulterior motives and agendas. They're seeking after popularity, power, and prestige all in their pride. And if this weren't bad enough, their prideful boasting can actually be very appealing to the lustful desires of our sinful human nature.

So they come into our midst – and by the way, this would probably be as good of a time as any to reiterate a commitment I reiterated and recommitted first service. And some of you, I realize, are relatively new to this church.

And by the way, we are just thrilled that you are, and we want to love on you and welcome you. And please make yourself at home in this your church. We're so glad that you're here.

But I want to commit and recommit to you that the leadership of this church is ferociously protective of you because we're going to give an account, as the writer of Hebrews says, for your souls. We have to give an account to God for protecting the flock of God as overseers. This is a profound privilege that we have been entrusted with.

And so if a Balaam, or as we talked about first service of the church in Thyatira, if a Jezebel gets in here, well, actually she won't make it very far. Because if she's in here, that spirit, and she's misleading Christians – it's so interesting because the rebuke is not on the Christian so much that we're misled, not that they're excused, they have an excuse, but it was actually on the leadership for allowing it.

You allowed this in the church. That is not okay! You tolerate. Oh because we want to be tolerant. We want to be accepting of everyone.

Oh, really? So let me see if I got this straight. You mean to tell me that you would let someone or something in your home, misleading your children, causing damage to your family all under the banner of 'Well, we're tolerant'?

No, you wouldn't. How much more in the Church of Jesus Christ?

So the onus is on the leadership of the church. And they have to make the hard decision. But it's the right decision. Because if anybody is in a church and they're causing harm or pose a threat to that church, we have to get them out. We have to get them out to protect you from them because they spread, like Paul says, like gangrene, like cancer. And if you don't kill it, it'll kill you.

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Okay. I'm sorry. I went way off on that.

So why is this so appealing? Because like a magnet, our human nature, our sin nature, the adamic nature, it's attracted to it. There's a pull. There's a draw.

So somebody comes in and they're talking a big talk. And there's something innate within our sin nature that it appeals to, that's attracted to it. And they know that, by the way.

And this actually ties in to the fifth one in the second part of *verse 18*, which I also want to expound on because they kind of go together. Their targets are vulnerable.

This is why it is, by the way, that these false teachers, these cults, they'll never try to pull it off with somebody they know is solid because they know they're not going to get away with it.

So what do they do? They go after the low-hanging fruit. This is why they're hanging out in parking lots of evangelistic events. You got a new believer. Oh, man, they're just – those are who they try to pick off. They have this huge target on their back. Naive! Gullible! Innocent! New believer! We can get them.

And that's what Peter is describing here. He's actually reiterating what he had written prior concerning these false teachers. They prey on the weak, the vulnerable, the naive, the gullible. That's their target, their target audience, if you prefer. That's who they're looking for, and that's who they're trying to mislead. Because they know that Christian will fall for it.

And by the way, make no mistake about it, this is deliberate. I wish it wasn't. They know what they're doing. They're boasting in their pride. They have an agenda. They have an agenda.

Paul in the Book of Acts, *Chapter 20*, three years, day and night wept, cried, knowing that after he left, they were going to come into the flock that he loved so much, wolves not sparing the flock.

And I can almost imagine that he pictured in his mind that subsequent to his departure, all of these wolves and false teachers were going to come in and they were just going to do so much damage to the church, untold harm.

They're a threat, and the ones they're after are the gullible, the naive. I'll only use it one time, only because the Apostle Paul uses it several times. But they're ignorant. They're ignorant and they're sitting ducks.

And the reason why they're targets is because the enemy can smell a Christian who doesn't know the word from a mile away. And conversely, he will, he won't touch the Christian who knows the word with a ten-foot pole. That's a saying, right?

In other words, he comes in, and he knows, hey I can get them. He looks over here at this guy, this brother, this sister in Christ, this Christian, and he goes, Delete their address. Don't go anywhere near them.

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In fact, make sure they're not around when we go after this one. Because these guys, they're like sheepdog.

You know what sheepdogs are, right? They're out there to protect the flock from wolves. And we got these sheepdogs and they're watching, and they see this and go, Oh, I know what you're doing. So then it's kind of like this, right? I'm on to you, buckaroo! Not okay. I'm watching you. By the way, you won't make it very long. Like to the end of the service if there is an end at some point.

Number 6, verse 19, their depravity is enslaving.

This is very interesting because it's actually another reference to Gnosticism, which basically separates the physical world from the spiritual world. So if there's this disconnect, you do this because that's the physical body, but it doesn't cross over to the spiritual. So licentiousness ensues.

Now, licentiousness is kind of a big word that makes me sound like I went to, you know, a seminary or a cemetery or whatever they call them nowadays.

[Laughter]

It's actually – here's a way to simplify it. I hope it's not an oversimplification, but here's how I define and understand licentiousness. I mean, just that word alone, just, you know, it's bad, just by the way it sounds, right? That's because it is. Here's how I see it and say it.

It's like you've been given a license to sin. Licentiousness = Permission to sin. So because the Gnostics, the false teaching of Gnosticism promised, yeah, you can sin. That's part of the physical body. There's no accountability in the spiritual because there's a disconnect there. So go ahead! Go ahead.

You can tell... Let me see if I can bring this into the context of a local church like this. When somebody says something that goes against the Word of God or worse yet, supersedes the Word of God, this is what it will usually sound like. 'God showed me such and thus.'

Wait. God showed you?

Or God told me thus and such.

Wow. He didn't tell me that. Where's that?

In fact, not only would God not tell you that or show you that, He's actually in His written word, which apparently you don't know, He's actually said the exact opposite of that.

I'll just try one example. Why not?

God showed me that it's okay for us to live together before marriage.

Really? No, I am sorry. God will never contradict His Word.

It's God's will that I do this.

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No, it's not. Because God would never contradict His Word.

You know, there was a movement back in the – of course, they come around, don't they, these winds of doctrine? Just, you know how we've had the high winds. They're back. I hate them winds.

But it's like doctrines, they're winds of doctrine, right? Everybody tossing everybody to and fro, back and forth.

The effect – you can't see the wind, but you can see the effects of the wind, right? The palm trees are, you know, bending, bowing, which is a good posture, by the way, during a storm. But you see the effects of the wind, but you don't see the wind.

Well, these winds of doctrine, you see the effects of them. And there was one where the 'rhema' word superseded the 'logos.'

That's all Greek to me.

That's because it is Greek actually.

Rhema is the spoken word. Logos, the written word. So there was... [foreign sound in background] Yes, Lord, speak.

[Laughing]

There's the rhema right there. Yes, Lord. Wow! Great effects, right?

Okay. Anyway, whatever. Did I do something? I don't know. Great example, though.

It's like, wait. I'm hearing something.

That's not the Lord. That was not the Lord.

Now, that does not mean that God may not speak to your heart, but you'll know it's the Lord if it's compatible with His written word. It will be compatible with the Word of God.

So here's the problem. You look at their lives, and here they're talking this big talk and you know, yeah, I'm under grace and all things are lawful, not all things are...

Oh, by the way, these people quote Scripture very well. In fact, I would argue in some cases they know Scripture better than the Christian knows Scripture because the enemy knows Scripture better than the Christian knows Scripture.

But the enemy, nothing's changed, in the garden, he quotes God's word, but he just twists it just a little bit. Emphasis added.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness after fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, he comes to him and misquotes the Word of God. And how does Jesus respond and overcome? Aren't you glad He didn't do it in His divinity, but in His humanity?

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Because if He did it in His divinity, we'd be like, Well, He's God. You know, what hope do I have?

So Satan comes to tempt Him, and no, He did it in His humanity to set for us a precedent that we too in our humanity full of the Holy Spirit can stand in the face of that temptation. It's not a sin to be tempted.

But what did Jesus do? He requoted the word of God. There's one where Satan misquotes the Psalm, you know, Certainly He will not let You dash Your foot against a stone.

Jesus is like – this is a very loose paraphrase. You'll forgive me. It's like, nice try. I wrote that, by the way. And you're misquoting that, by the way. **“Thou shalt not test the Lord thy God.”** And three times He quotes the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, the only offensive weapon we have in our spiritual warfare.

Now, in order to use it, you got to know it. You got to have it at the ready. And that's the problem. And that's why they go after the Christian...

I better be careful here. I'm not going to look up when I say this. You'll know why. Please bring your Bibles to church. There's something about...

Okay, you've got it on your device, fine. Just leave the screen on – don't put it on... There's something about just having physically the sword of the Spirit at the ready, man.

(Unsheathing sound)

Pull that thing out. Don't have too much fun with that.

But you've got to, you've got to have it written on the tablet of your heart. It's got to be at the ready because when you're in the heat of a spiritual battle, it's too late. You can't go, okay, where was that now?

He's already got you. You've got to be at the ready.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not God. That's false. This is the truth. That's false. This is the measure. This is the gauge. This is the template. If that goes against this, guess who's wrong?

But you got to know it. The biblical illiteracy, sadly, has led to the downfall of many a Christian who has fallen prey to this. And what's even sadder is that they end up getting enslaved in the very thing that they were promised freedom from.

I would just encourage you as we go through the remainder of this list, this template, ask yourself the question. Look at their lives. Are they living a victorious life? I mean, you're enslaved by that which is your master.

And if their lives are not marked with holiness, you can be rest assured that they're a false Christian. They are not a true believer or the teaching - let's not personify it. It's a false teaching.

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See, for me, and this has served me well over the years, one of those things that I wish I would have known earlier on. You know, you know it's good when your only regret is that you didn't know it sooner. It's really, it's such a good test. If it draws me closer to Jesus or does it draw me further away from Jesus? That's my litmus test.

So if I've got somebody coming along saying, Hey! And it has this effect of pulling me further away from the Lord, that's not the Lord. And conversely, if it draws me closer to the Lord, then I know that's the Lord.

See, the truth will set you free, right? And **“Whom the Son has set free is free indeed.”**

John says it like this. **“The commands of the Lord are not burdensome.”** They're not a heavy trip. His calling is His enabling. God will never command you to do anything that He will not also empower you to do.

In fact, in some ways you almost want it to be a command because it comes packaged with the empowering to obey that command. And God's never going to command us to do something that He's not also going to enable us to do otherwise He'd be party to our disobedience to that command.

So when somebody comes to me and lays a heavy trip on me, I'm walking out of there going, Oh, oh! Because it's a local guy that laid the heavy trip by me. I mean, oh! Wait a minute. Jesus said, “My yoke is easy. My burden is light. Come unto Me, all you that are heavy laden.”

You're just being crushed under the weight of the works. “Come to Me. I'll give you rest for your souls.”

My yoke – you know, the yoke is something we don't understand in our day and age. But they would take two animals, yolk them together, and that would pull the weight. Jesus said, Yoke with Me. My yoke is easy.

Why?

Because I'll do all the work. All the work.

No, you got to pull your weight.

No! See if they had a mismatched yoke, unequally yoked. You've got this weak animal and the strong animal; it'll kill that weak animal.

And what Jesus is saying is you yoke with Me, and your burden will be light. The yoke will be easy.

So if somebody lays a heavy trip on me, I know it's not truth. I know it's not the Lord. Because the commands of Lord are not burdensome. If somebody lays a burden on me, and I'm like, Man, I need to pray more. Oh, really, that's how it's going to be?

Can you imagine, you go to the Lord in prayer, God, I got to pray now.

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The Lord's like, that's okay. Don't bother.

[Laughter]

Really, it's going to be like that? You got to pray. How about you get to pray?

Imagine if your children came to you. I need to have devotions with you. I need to spend time with you; get this over with.

Yeah, it's okay. I don't want it like that. I want you to want to.

And that's the truth. That's the Lord. **“The wisdom from above,” James says, “is first pure then peaceable then gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without hypocrisy or partiality bearing fruit unto righteousness.”**

Look at the fruit of their lives, man. Does the walk match the talk? Now, listen, I'm not – (Sigh) now I'm convicted.

So *verse 20*, I really need you to think through this with me because now we kind of turn this corner. Their knowledge is useless. And you'll know that they don't know the Lord.

Now, here's what Peter is saying. He's saying it's worse to have a knowledge of the Lord because it keeps them from ever coming to a saving knowledge of the Lord.

Example: Judas. The other Judas, not the half-brother. This is Judas Iscariot, the one that betrayed Jesus. Oh, he knew the Lord. He had a knowledge of the Lord. But He did not have a saving knowledge of the Lord.

Now let's bring that back into the context of our study today.

Somebody will say, yeah, I'm a Christian. I know the Lord. They might even go as far as say, I love the Lord.

Oh, you do, do you? I'm sure Judas would have said that. Probably did. It's outward.

See, our problem is – which is why we have to rely on the Lord and the discernment of spirits because, see, we only see the outward appearance, which, by the way, you all look marvelous today. But I don't see your heart. See, man looks at the outward appearance, but God sees and knows the heart.

Now, they have a knowledge of the Lord, but not a saving knowledge of the Lord. And it's evidenced by how Peter says, **“Our Lord,”** not their Lord.

That's why I wanted to emphasize that word, that usage. That's not by accident. That's deliberate because they don't know our Lord the way we know our Lord. They don't know the Lord in a saving way, which is why they're entangled in, overcome by that which they were never delivered from or saved from in the first place.

These are nonbelievers. They're not born-again. And now we're going to see this even more so in *verse 21*.

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Please hear my heart on this. Their decision is irreversible. Let me explain.

Their mind's already made up, their fate's already sealed, their heart's already hardened. And God's not going to force Himself on them. So He's going to give them over to the decision they've already made.

This is *Romans 1*. He gives them over. I mean, the Spirit of God is not going to strive with man forever. Oh, He'll try. He'll strive. He'll convict. He'll do everything and stop at nothing. But there does come a point where God just says, okay. Apparently, you've already made the decision.

And what Peter's saying here in *verse 21* is that they would've been better off had they never known in the first place or never heard of the way of righteousness to begin with because they've heard it and they know it, but they're still turning their backs on it and rejecting it. And the result of that is that they will incur the greater judgment.

Do you know why Jesus taught in parables? It was to keep the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, the Jews whom He already foreknew would reject Him — that's grace and mercy — He didn't want their judgment to be greater, so He kept it from them, teaching in parables. Because if they would have known and still rejected Jesus, they would have then incurred the greater judgment, again, the mercy of God.

He already knew what their decision was going to be. He already knew that their mind was made up, that their heart was hardened, that their fate was sealed, and so He's protecting them from, as Luke records when Jesus says, “**more stripes.**”

You understand that just like in heaven, there's going to be greater rewards.

Not that – please don't think that anybody's going to be in heaven going, well, I got ripped off. They got a bigger mansion than me, or the other way around.

Look at my mansion. What do you got there?

An outhouse.

Oh well.

It's not like that, okay?

But in heaven, there's different – that was too much. I'm sorry.

But in heaven, there's going to be greater rewards. Just like in hell, there's going to be greater punishments. And God in His mercy, who never sends anyone to hell, by the way. Hell was never created for man. It was created for the devil and his demons.

I like how one said it. I think it's so apropos. It's just — this is the heart of God. If anybody goes to hell, it's over Jesus' dead and resurrected body. He died and rose again so that no one would have to go. It's not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and everlasting life. He doesn't want anyone –

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If someone ends up in hell for all eternity, it's because they made up their minds. They chose.

And again, God is not going to force Himself. He's given us all free will. And their decision –

And what Peter is saying is they would have been better off if they never knew to begin with. But because they know and they know and have heard of the way of righteousness, and they still reject the Lord, they're going to incur the greater judgment.

Well, this brings us to the last one in *verse 22*, and this is where we need to really focus now because, Peter, you got to love this, he quotes *Proverbs 26:11*.

We quote this. We've seen this, right? When you see a dog do this, do you ever think to yourself, wow, I wonder if that dog has read *Proverbs 26:11* because they just did that. That's disgusting.

And then the sow, you know, the pig. You clean them up, put lipstick on them if you want, they're going to go right back into that unregenerated folly.

What do you mean, under regenerated?

Well, they're not regenerated. Get it? Unegenerated. They're not regenerated. They don't have the regeneration of the Holy Spirit indwelling them.

When you come to Christ, He indwells you by the Holy Spirit. And now your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit in you, lives the Holy life through you and for you. Holy Spirit = Holy life.

And that regeneration, that process of sanctification is from the inside out. And you can know when somebody has been regenerated. You see the regeneration, which I want to talk about and close with.

But the imagery here, and I know it's graphic, but it needs to be. I mean, here's this pig. I don't want to use dogs because I picked on dogs last week. Was that last week I picked on dogs? Oh, no, that was two weeks ago.

You can't reason with dogs. You can't talk to the dog. You know, you just can't. They don't understand. You can't reason with them.

Well, let's pick on pigs. Is that okay? I know it's not kosher, but let's just – we'll pick on pigs for just a moment, okay?

So you clean them up and get them all ready for the fair, right? Because don't they, don't they have those, you know, pig...

Man, I remember growing up in a small farm town. 4-H, right? Are we okay here? 4-H. They get the pigs for the show, get them ready for the show, and they clean them up. You know, when you see them when they first get there, you're looking at them going, Oh! There's no way that pig is going to win.

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And then they clean them up, and they make them all foofy, you know, they smell nice even. And, you know, they put little bows on them, and then they show them.

And then here's the judges going, Oh, that's a good-looking pig. Now that's a clean pig. So first prize. And so you're like, wow, congratulations!

Next thing you know, the pig is running back into the...

I won't be graphic, but you get the picture. You're going, why would you do that? You just got cleaned. Well, it's because it's not the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. It's outward only; it's not inward.

Will you just kindly allow me in closing to address this question of how can we know whether someone is born-again or not? Yeah. Maybe it's more in the context of how can you say somebody is not a Christian?

Well, we default to, our go-to is well, by their fruits you shall know them. And you know, if they say they're, you know, mango tree and there's no mangos on the tree, they're probably not a mango tree because what's at the root will show up in the fruit.

And if it's a good tree, it'll be good fruit. If it's a bad tree it will not be good fruit, it will be bad fruit. So by their fruit you shall know them. You should be able to tell by the fruit of their lives.

Well, what I want to address is how is it that – because you know, the argument is, well, you don't judge the heart. Only God knows. You can't judge whether or not someone's a Christian.

Oh, wait a minute. Not so fast. Not so fast. You mean you're telling me that I've got to be susceptible to, subjected to people who say they're Christians, and they're not, and they pose a threat to me? Don't you think God would give me discernment to know if they were a born-again Christian or not?

And by the way, talking about licentiousness, how many licenses have been permitted and issued to Christians under that banner? Hear me out.

No, you can't say they're not a Christian. And then we start making excuses for their lives. You know what I'm talking about, don't ya? Do I need to say the name? I'm not going to.

We start making excuses. Oh, well, you know, they're new believers.

No, they're not.

Oh, well, you know, they, you know, just probably in that situation, I mean, you've probably done the same.

Wait. No!

You can't judge others.

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That's not what Jesus said. We can have good judgement. He's not going to leave us vulnerable. Would you do that with your children? Would you let that be subjected to someone who could pose a threat to them, harm, and danger to them?

No. You're going to equip them and give them whatever they need to be able to know. We do it all the time, parents. Watch out, you know, with the company you keep, the friends you have, the influence they have over you. You need to be on guard.

Don't... Okay, I'll say this word only one time because it's in Proverbs 12:1. Don't be stupid. There. That felt really good, by the way, actually.

Don't be ignorant, please. Don't be so naive. Don't be so trusting. Man, we just let our guard down.

Somebody says, I'm a Christian. Look at my Bible.

Cool. Looks like it's never been opened. Good prop. Good show. It's a cloud without rain in your life. It's a well without water. It's an unread book. It doesn't represent the reality of your life.

You don't think God's going to give us what we need to be able to discern? He absolutely is.

Now, when someone asks the question of how can you make the statement that someone is not a Christian? The answer to that question is vis-à-vis another question. How can one make the statement that someone is a Christian?

The answer to the latter question is the answer to the original question. Moreover, by virtue of the fact that the original question is even asked, is an answer unto itself, as there should be no question about whether or not someone is a Christian.

When someone is born, there's no question that they've been born. So too, is this true when someone is born-again. There's no question that they've been born-again. If there's any question as to whether or not one is born-again, then the answer to that question is they're not born-again. This because if they were born-again, there would be no question.

Remember that song as kids? ♪ If you're saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it ♪

Listen, you're going to know, and if there's a question mark, pretty good chance they're not. If you're looking and you're going, are they born-again? I can assure you, and I know this is a, you know, interesting illustration and comparison, and if you got a better one, let me know, but when our children were born, I did not sit there and go, I wonder if they're really born.

No, they're – no. Yeah, they're screaming for milk.

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And when you're born-again, you're craving the milk of God's word. And when you're born-again, you begin to grow. You start crawling in the Lord, then walking with the Lord. Then as you mature, you're running the race, as you mature in Christ and grow in grace.

But there's going to be a craving. We never had to tell our newborns, hey, you need to nurse. That was never a problem. Now, it is a problem if someone says, well, I'm a Christian and they have no desire for the Word of God. They have no desire for the things of God. They have no desire to be with the people of God except to cause problems.

They're not born-again because there's no birth marks, as one said. There's no evidence of a birth here.

(Indistinguishable sounds)

If they were born-again, they would want and crave milk and the word of God and the bread of life and the people of God and the things of God because of the new nature now in them. All things that passed away.

So I mean, I know it might be a little bit crass, but. Yes. You can know if someone is born-again or not. There shouldn't be a big question mark. And if there is a big question mark, then there's a pretty good chance that they're not.

One last thing I – how do I say this? I'm just going to say it. You're not excused. Yes, the onus is on us as the leadership, but you're not off the hook. We can only do so much. I can only from this pulpit as it is my privilege to teach and preach from, I can only stay true to the word. Feed the sheep, preach the gospel, teach the word. But I can – and the whole counsel of God. So like Paul, I can say I don't have the blood of anyone on my hands.

But then it's on you. You've got to have discernment. If somebody comes into this church and they start doing this, listen, if you don't want to do it, you just let me know. I'll take care of it. Let Pastor Mac know. Let Pastor Leitu know.

We know what to do. We can take care of it, and we will because we love you and we're going to protect you.

And there – you know, true story. Okay, last, last thing. True story. This is on the mainland. We had to do the hard thing. We had to remove somebody that was a threat to that precious body of believers and causing a lot of damage, a lot of problems, a lot of division, a lot of strife. And so we removed them.

And of course, there's always the, you know, pushback and backlash. You guys are so unloving. Actually we're loving. We did the loving thing. It would not have been loving to let that continue and tolerate a Jezebel in this church. No, that was love, by the way.

Ask the Corinthians about that. You know, they thought they were being so loving and accepting. And Paul's like, You think that's love? That's not love. Love is this... 1 Corinthians 10:13.

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By the way, that passage we call the 'love chapter,' that's a rebuke to a church that thought they were being so loving and accepting and tolerating of open sin in the church. And Paul's like, get him out and over to the destruction of his flesh by Satan.

Well, where's the love? That's mean.

No, it's not. That's love. Because he's going to come to his senses and repent. And he does. In the second letter to the Corinthians, the guy comes back.

And then they're – this – extreme. They're like they wouldn't restore him. Paul's got to say, you guys, he repented, let him back. They're like, no, you told us to kick him out. No. But he repented. It worked. Let him come back. He came to his senses.

Okay. Anyway, so what's the point? Do I have a point? Yes, I have a point. Here's the point.

You guys, it's up to you now. Okay, this is on you. Somebody comes in here, and you smell a rat. You better do something about it. If you don't say something about it, if you don't say it to them, you need to bring it to our attention.

Because that's not going to happen in here. That's not going to happen in here. We are protective of this flock of God, and we're going to have to give an account to God for it.

Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews, said, Don't be a burden on your leadership. Now that'll preach right there, that verse. That's a pastor's favorite verse in all of the Bible.

Be a joy. Don't you realize that they're going to have to give an account for your soul? And by the way, you're being a burden on them, that's of no benefit to you. That benefits you in no way. Be a joy.

Be the kind of person when you – they see you coming, they're like, Oh! And not the kind of person when they see you come coming, they're like, Oh! (Running away) and they go the other way. That's on you. That's on you. Okay. And you're going to be tested on this, too, by the way.

Kapono, come on up. Stand up. Thank you for your patience. See, that wasn't too bad.

Father in heaven, I, just – again, tough stuff, but (Sighing) man.

This person on the mainland coming up to us and thanking us for removing that person because now they can come back to the church, which they wouldn't come to as long as that person was here before they were removed.

Lord, I pray that this church would be safe pasture for Your sheep. That we would be faithful shepherds and pastors of Your flock. That this would be a safe place to come with no threat from anything like this.

And Lord, lastly, that there would just be keen spiritual discernment, that we would be shrewd as serpents, harmless as doves, but shrewd, prudent, discerning.

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Lord, thank You. Thank You for this passage. As tough as it is, it's so good and so needed. And it's for our own good and protection. And we thank You for it. In Jesus' name, amen.