

When You Stumble

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[0 : 00] Amen. Alright, we're going to read together from Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 14. And we're going to read verses 27 to 52 and then skip down to verses 66 to 72.

And Jesus said to the disciples in verse 27, you will all fall away. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter said to him, even though they all fall away, I will not. And Jesus said to him, truly I tell you, this very night before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.

But he said emphatically, if I must die with you, I will not deny you. And they all said the same. And they went to a place called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch. And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

[1 : 13] And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. And he came and he found them sleeping and he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep?

Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again, he went away and he prayed saying the same words.

And again, he came and he found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and he said to them, are you still sleeping and taking your rest?

It is enough. The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See my betrayer is at hand.

And immediately while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs and the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. And now the betrayer had given them a sign saying, the one I will kiss is the man.

[2 : 14] Seize him and lead him away under guard. And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, rabbi, and he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

And Jesus said to them, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day, I was with you in the temple teaching. And you did not seize me, but let the scriptures be fulfilled.

And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and he ran away naked.

And then skip over to verse 66. And as Peter was below in the courtyard, this is during Jesus' trial, one of the servant girls of the high priest came and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, you also were with the Nazarene Jesus, but he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean, and he went out into the gateway and the cock crowed.

And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, this man is one of them. But again, he denied it. And after a little while, the bystanders again said to Peter, certainly you were one of them for you are a Galilean.

[3 : 29] But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak. And immediately the cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, before the cock crowed twice, you will deny me three times.

And he broke down and he wept. We're working our way through Mark's gospel, only a few weeks left till we get to Easter time where we'll finish the gospel of Mark.

And we right now are in the wee hours of the morning. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane and it is sometime between midnight and 6 a.m. when he is betrayed and arrested.

And he's going to be crucified just a few hours later on. This is one of the darkest moments in human history and the most glorious at the very same time.

This is the moment of hope for us and the moment of darkness for him. And he's just celebrated the Lord's Supper as we read when he goes out to the garden before he's betrayed.

[4 : 33] And when he celebrates the Lord's Supper, institutes the Lord's Supper with his disciples, he gives three different prophecies, predictions about how the disciples are going to react when he's arrested.

And he says in verse 18, one of you sitting at the table is going to betray me. He didn't say who. Of course that's Judas, the kiss of betrayal is coming.

He was talking about Judas. And that comes true, the kiss of death. And then in verse 27 he says, we read that, we started with that, you will all fall away, every single one of you.

And at the end when he was arrested it says they all ran away. They all fell away from him that night. When the swords and the clubs got pulled out, they ran away. That was fulfilled. And then the third, he says, Peter, you specifically are going to deny me three times before the rooster crows twice.

And Peter says, if you go to death, I'll go to death, and he denies Jesus three times as we read. So three predictions, three prophecies, all three fulfilled in the passage we read in Mark 14, death by a kiss, betrayal, falling away, denying him.

[5 : 46] That's what they did. In the midst of the agony of the garden, they all fell away. And he knew they would. What did we learn? What many things we learn?

We learn the fact of betrayal. We learn about the mystery of falling away. And then we learn where the hope is for us.

So let's think about that. First, the fact of betrayal. Now last week, very quickly, last week, if you were here, we said that when you look closely at Jesus' emotional agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, how, what he really faced in his soul that night, that the way Mark puts it is so surprising and so out of context, out of expectation for first-century people and for modern people that one of the commentators says the grim realism of it is proof of the historicity of this account. Now we have the very same thing this week. The fact of the betrayal and the historians, you'll know, you will know that the historians talk about when they study ancient history, the writers from ancient history, one of the things we see very regularly is that history is written by the winners.

And so in the way ancient history was written, it's pretty consistent in the ancient world in the first century, in the Greco-Roman context, all the way through the Middle Ages, that the accounts of history we have are clearly written quite often by the winners.

[7 : 14] And so the accounts we're given are no simple history. That is modern people we expect to read historical books that are simple history, like the events were recorded on an iPhone.

What happened is what you're getting. But regularly when you look at historical accounts of old, you don't get simple history. Instead, one writer commentator says history was often written as a combination of both remembering an event and inventing facts to create public praise and prestige. So if the emperor is going to write his history, he's going to give you some facts, but he's also going to turn those facts to make it look like he was the greatest thing that's ever lived. That's the way ancient history was often written.

That's why this passage is so surprising. Verse 51 and 52, we get this very strange moment where this young man was following Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He had nothing but his undergarment on, a linen cloth. He must have just gotten out of bed to see what was happening when the mob was coming up the hill. And it says, as they arrested Jesus, this young man ran away and one of the mob grabbed his undergarment and stripped him naked and he ran away naked.

[8 : 28] It doesn't really fit in the narrative. You say, why is this here? Why did Mark put this strange moment in the Garden of Gethsemane story?

The tradition we have from the second century, all these accounts of people like Papias, Eusebius, Irenaeus, these great historians, these great Christian thinkers and non-Christian thinkers that all

told us two things about the Gospel of Mark.

One, that Peter was the main eyewitness that gave to Mark most of the account of Mark's Gospel. So when we read Mark's Gospel, we're reading Peter's account.

And also, the tradition has said that this young man in verse 51 and 52 is very, very likely John Mark himself, the writer of this Gospel. This is Mark.

That's what most people have understood this man to be throughout Christian history. It makes sense. We do know Mark lived in Jerusalem. We know that he was a young man living in Jerusalem during the time of the crucifixion.

[9 : 29] And we know that Mark followed Peter from Jerusalem all the way to Rome. And so we've got two things. One, that Mark was there that night. He's the young man. That's why this very strange little moment of a man running naked through the garden.

That's why it's here. It's because it was him. So he's an eyewitness. He's an eyewitness. I hope this helps you today. He's an eyewitness. And Peter was his main witness for the rest of the Gospel.

Now listen, unlike all of the historical accounts we have in the ancient Near East in the first century, when you are writing your own story, you do not know.

You do not say in an honor and shame culture in which betrayal is unforgivable. I betrayed him.

Peter is telling Mark this. Mark saw it.

And Peter is giving you an account of his own betrayal of Jesus Christ. And that is unlike any history we have in the first century. It's beyond expectation. It's completely surprising.

[10 : 27] It's too real for it to be fake. You would never do it. Nobody would ever write a story like this unless it really happened. The fact of the betrayal is too realistic.

It's too grim for it not to be telling you a true story. I hope that helps you today. Secondly, the details, the mystery of falling away.

All right, what happens here? We learn here that Jesus says, one of you will betray me. At the Last Supper, he says, somebody that's dipping their hand into the bowl with me tonight is going to betray me.

Now, when he says that, he does not tell us who it's going to be. You know we've read it. It's Judas. He's going to bring the kiss of betrayal, the kiss of death to Jesus.

But you don't know that at the Last Supper. Why is it that Jesus leaves it like that? So vague. And I think it's because he's trying to get all 12 of his disciples and every single one of us today to look at our hearts.

[11 : 27] You know, what does he say? He says, one of you will betray me. And they all look around and they say, surely it's not going to be me. And you see what's happening? He's getting them to all look deep down within and ask one very important question.

Am I capable of that? Am I capable of betraying the Son of God? Am I capable of running away and committing apostasy, as we call it, in the face of the one that I followed for so long?

That's why he leaves it open like that. Am I capable of being ashamed of the gospel in moments of great pressure? This is the question that he leaves us with when he leaves it like that.

Now the answer is Judas. And the question I think that marks getting us to ask secondly is how does Judas get to the point where he's willing, where he does what he does, where he betrays Jesus with this kiss of death, this very famous scene in world history?

And one of the things to note is this, how does this happen? And it happens through thousands, thousands of decisions that Judas makes along the way. One of the things that Mark does is he goes out of his way to help us understand that everything Judas does here in this moment is premeditated.

[12 : 42] This is not a spur of the moment thing. This is not instinctive in the moment. Judas has planned this. He's been thinking about this for a very long time. This is premeditated. It's decided. And that means what we're seeing here is a picture where the reason Judas ultimately betrays Jesus is because of thousands of little moments of decisions.

What were those decisions like? There are two great mysteries happening in this betrayal of why this takes place, how this takes place. Let me show them to you. The first is this, the three prophecies.

All right, what did Jesus do? He said, one of you is going to betray me, the kiss of death. The rest of you are going to fall away. And Peter, you're going to betray me. You're going to deny me three times.

And he says in verse 27 that that prophecy comes from Zechariah 3:17. So in verse 27, he appeals to the Old Testament and says, the fact that every single one of you are going to fall away is something that was written about in the Old Testament.

In other words, God said a very, very long time ago that all of this was going to happen. The kiss of death that Judas gives to Jesus. Very sinister.

[13:50] The premeditation, God told us about it in the Old Testament. All right, you see the first great mystery is that this is known from old.

Now, in the New Testament, a mystery, the word mystery that gets used is not like solving a puzzle. It's not like watching a film or reading a book about a crime mystery.

And you're kind of trying to figure it out all the way through. Mystery in the Bible doesn't mean that. Mystery in the Bible is when God opens up to you something that you couldn't have known apart from him. That's what mystery means.

When God reveals something that you couldn't have known unless he told you. That's the meaning of the word mystery. Now here's the mystery of the betrayal. It is that God foretold this event from long before.

He told us about it. He opened us up to it. He told us about it in Zechariah 3 and many other places, Isaiah 53. And then it finally comes to pass. Now listen, this is one of the hardest things for modern people.

[14:50] This is very difficult for us. And because what we learn here is that this happened, this betrayal happened according to God's plan. The kiss of death, the sinister nature of it, it happened.

And God planned it. We learn in Acts chapter two, Peter says, you crucified him, Jerusalem. And this happened according to the definite foreknowledge and plan of God from long before the foundation of the earth.

And that means that what we're reading about here, you know, Isaiah 53, it was the will of the Lord to crush Jesus. He was always meant to be betrayed.

He was always meant to be crucified. This has been the plan from the very beginning of world history. And Judas is completely responsible for his sin. You see, on the one hand, God has been planning this moment for our salvation for all of human history.

And Judas is completely responsible for betraying Jesus Christ. Now, if you've read much, you've probably come across this problem, this question.

[15:51] People have been wrestling with it for centuries. The philosophers, the thinkers, people write about it in the opinion pages of the newspapers. If God really exists, what does it mean for my responsibility?

Am I really free? And what the Bible does is comes and cuts through every single philosophy that's ever existed and gives you two things, holds two things together at the same time.

100% God is absolute and has planned all things from the beginning. God is sovereign. God knows his plan. He's determined his plan. That's what the Bible gives you.

And 100% you're responsible for your actions. And so the Bible never says it's 50, 50, it's 80, 20, it's 90, 10. It doesn't play a zero sum game.

God, it comes and says we are 100% responsible for everything we do, and it's 100% the case that God has planned all things according to His definite foreknowledge. That's the mystery of this betrayal.

[16:49] It was the definite plan and foreknowledge of God that Judas would betray Jesus Christ and Judas is entirely responsible. He betrayed Jesus Christ. God is never the author of sin.

Those two things exist at the very same time. Now, you may come to that and say, I have trouble with that. And all I want to say is, of course you do. Of course you do.

Look, the philosophers, the religions, they've been trying to figure this thing out for centuries. And one of the reasons that it's been so difficult is because we've got to be willing to say if there really is a God who is absolute, then I've got to expect that He can be in control in ways that I'm never going to understand.

If God really is absolute and I'm contingent, I'm secondary, I don't have to exist, He's got to have the ability and power to be in absolute control and me be responsible for my actions in a way that I can never quite fully match up in my human logic.

You see, that actually is what makes sense if God really is absolute. If you don't have a contingent God, a weak God, but you have an absolute God, He can be 100% in control, planning all things,

not the author of sin and I be responsible for everything I do.

[18 : 07] And those things fit together because He is absolute. He knows how it works. I don't. And that's exactly what we have to expect. Now the second mystery that we see here that's unveiled for us, then this takes us to the obvious question, what is it that brought Judas to this point of betraying?

Judas is responsible, how did he get here, this follower of Jesus? What does Mark want us to pay attention to? And I think the simple way and the brief way to give the answer is just by thinking for a moment about the swords and the clubs that the people bring into the garden.

So it says in verse 43, while Jesus was speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with them a great crowd, a great mob, the commentators think that there could have been up to 600 people in this mob.

I'll say more about that next week actually. 600 people came and they all were bearing swords and clubs. Now Judas followed Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ comes in this moment and says, why is it that you came bringing a mob with swords and clubs?

Like I was about to start a revolution. You know, like me and the other eleven were about to fight back. He says, I've been in the temple, I've been all over Jerusalem for days and you could have arrested me at any time and you know I'm a man of peace and yet you come to the garden to defeat me with swords and clubs.

[19 : 37] And you see what's going on here? Judas had followed Jesus for so long yet he did not understand what Jesus was about. He came, you know, what is the greatest symbol of the powers of this world?

How are all the great empires built? They're built with swords and clubs. You know, the great empires of world history, the great leaders of world history, they're built up there following how? By wielding the sword, by carrying the clubs, by making as much money as you possibly can. And Jesus is saying you came with swords and clubs and that means you have no idea what I'm about. You have no idea how otherworldly, how other than the values of this world my kingdom is. Now the kingdom of this world says build up your life, build up your power by swords and clubs and money and prestige, wealth, success, achievement.

And you've brought swords and clubs tonight Judas because you never were able to understand what my kingdom was really about. It's about not winning by power, by sword, by club, by money, but winning by going down, winning by losing, winning by weakness.

[20 : 43] And what that means for us, what that means is that Judas never really, he never actually followed Jesus Christ. He never saw him. He never understood.

He was living according to the values of the kingdom of this world the entire time. The entire time Jesus was following Jesus, he lived, Jesus, Judas I should say, was following Jesus.

He did it hoping for power, success, might, for the sword for money we ultimately learned. Judas lived for money. He never followed Jesus Christ.

Not really, not truly. His heart was never changed. And that means ultimately that the little micro decisions that Judas made along the way that got him to this point were made a thousand little ways, death by a thousand cuts, how?

By ultimately choosing to follow the values of the kingdom of the world rather than seeing the kingdom of God through the Messiah, that it came in weakness, not strength.

[21 : 43] He never saw it. He refused to see it. What does that mean? That means Judas used Jesus Christ the entire time he followed him as a tool.

Jesus was nothing to Judas but an instrument. Judas hoped following Jesus is going to make me money. It's going to get me power.

That's why he comes that night in swords and clubs. He never got it. He never understood. Just think about the difference in Judas and the poor woman we looked at about a month ago who broke the alabaster jar and poured it over Jesus' head and anointed him.

And Judas, what did Judas do in that moment? He said, that's a year's salary. We could have pocketed that money and spent it on the poor. You could have used a 10 pound anointment that night.

Instead, he used a year's wage. And you see the difference between her and Judas. Judas saw Jesus Christ as an instrument for his own well-being. She saw the preciousness of Jesus Christ in himself.

[22 : 47] She saw his beauty. He never followed Jesus. Never did. And that's why he came to this moment of betrayal.

Is Jesus Christ an instrument and a tool in your life to get you the things you want? Or do you see his preciousness, his beauty, his value?

Do you see who he is in himself? That's the question that Mark's asking us here. Do I find Jesus Christ precious or do I find him useful?

Now, thirdly, finally, that's the mystery of the betrayal. That's how it takes place. That's what goes on in Judas' heart. And let's close with this.

What's the hope for us? Now remember, at the Last Supper, Jesus put his hand in the bowl with all 12 disciples and said, every one of you is going to fall away.

[23 : 48] And when he said that, he left every single one of them with a question, they were asking in my heart, is it me? Am I capable of this?

And now we see that to be capable of falling away and ultimately betraying Jesus is nothing but to be capable of idolatry. It's nothing but to be capable of saying, I want money, power, success, wealth, status, reputation, more than I see and want the preciousness and the value and the beauty of Jesus Christ Himself.

That's how he got there. Are we capable? Are we capable? That's the question Jesus is asking. Jesus in that moment gives us such an important distinction as we close.

And to see it, you've got to look at Peter. And here's what happens. In verse 29, he says, every single one of you is going to, quote, fall away.

Now that is an important word in Greek. It's the word, I want to give it to you. It's skandilitzon. That's where we get the word that in our English vocabulary for scandal.

[24 : 54] So there's been all sorts of scandals this week, the scandal of photoshopping a picture in the public, right? That word, scandal, comes straight from the Greek, skandilitzon.

But in the Greek, it doesn't mean scandal in the way we think about a scandal today. Instead, it means to stumble. It means to fall. It actually has the connotation of tripping.

Now Jesus looks at the 12 and says, one of you is going to betray me. He looks at the 11 and says, all of you are going to trip.

You see that distinction he draws? One of you is going to betray and abandon, commit great apostasy against me because you never actually followed me. The 11, you are all going to fall away, but that actually just means you're going to trip.

You're going to stumble. And immediately he says, but then when I rise from the dead, I will re-gather you. The sheep will hear my voice when I rise from the dead and I will re-gather the 11 again.

[25 : 54] There's a big difference. There's a big distinction. And the distinction is played out in this passage between betrayal and stumbling and the difference between Judas and Peter. And so you have to look at Peter to see this distinction, to see exactly what it means to stumble yet never betray.

To stumble yet never commit apostasy, never fall away. That's the difference that he gives us. And we see it here in the two trials. All right, so verse 66 down at the very end of the passage we read.

There are two trials going on at the end of this passage. Jesus is in a home, the home of the chief priest, and he is upstairs underneath trial, investigation by the priest.

We skip that scene. We'll come back to it next week. But downstairs in the courtyard, Peter is also under trial. And he's under the trial and his prosecutor is a young girl.

This young girl comes and says, I recognize you. You followed the Nazarene. You're from Galilee. You have to be one of his followers.

[27 : 00] Now look, this is a trial. Peter's being prosecuted. He's being tested. Jesus is upstairs under trial. He's downstairs under trial.

Peter in verse 29 had already sworn in. He had already given his oath. He had already raised his hand and sworn in for the trial. He says, Jesus says, all of you are going to fall away.

And Peter says, I swear I will not. I will never fall away. Even Jesus, if you have to go to death and I go to death with you, I swear I will not be the one.

He even says, they will fall away. Peter affirms that. I do expect the other 11 to betray you, mock heroics.

But yet he says, I swear I will never do it. You come down to the end of the passage. Now the trial has come. And three different times he completely fails his testimony.

[27 : 56] The prosecution attacks him, comes after him, the little girl and the mob. And it even comes to the point, and you really have to read very carefully to see this. The commentators are torn about whether or not he says, it says that he cursed himself the third time, or he was cursing God the third time.

It's very unclear actually in the Greek text. But whatever he did, it comes to such a climactic moment where he curses himself, he anathematizes, we say.

He actually says, may I be cursed if I ever knew that man? Wow. That's the point that he comes to. And when you read that, the question Mark is asking is, am I, friend, are you capable in a moment of great pressure, follower of Jesus Christ this morning, are you capable in a moment of great pressure with your coworkers, with your neighbors, wherever it may be, to say, I never knew him. I don't know him. I'm going to deny, to be quiet, to be ashamed of the gospel, as Paul puts it, in Romans chapter one. And what is the answer of this passage? Yes.

[29 : 11] Yes, all 12 of you, all 11 of you, one of you will betray me, all 11 of you will trip. The human heart, we're capable. We will, we struggle, we fall away, we trip, we stumble.

That's exactly what Peter is teaching us in this passage. Now where is the hope? And let me give it to you here as we close. Where's the hope? Here's the hope. You've got to be willing to do what Peter did when he fell.

And you've got to lift up your eyes and lift up your heart. Have you ever fallen, have you ever stumbled? Have you ever, listen, have you ever been ashamed of the gospel? What do you do? What do you do? You lift up your eyes and you look at the object of your hope. That's exactly what Peter learned in the rest of the gospel. And let me show you this. Jesus Christ, Peter was on trial in the courtyard and he was utterly failing.

He was saying, I don't even know that guy upstairs. Jesus Christ was in his trial upstairs at the very same time. Peter was completely guilty.

[30 : 20] He was guilty of sin, he was guilty of betrayal, he was guilty of denying, of being ashamed. Jesus Christ was the innocent one. But he was on trial upstairs and he, the innocent man, what happened?

He got condemned. He got condemned to crucifixion. What happened to Peter? Peter got to go free. Peter denied Jesus and he ran away a free man.

Jesus Christ stayed faithful for his friend who betrayed him and he was condemned to crucifixion.

And what do you learn? You learn what's the object of your hope in the midst of the stumble? What's the object of your hope in the midst of falling away? You can come back. You can recover, you can be forgiven. How? Look at the object of your hope. The man who was innocent yet was condemned for you in your place.

You see, it's two trials because the innocent man goes to death so the guilty man may go free. Even more, take one step back into the Garden of Gethsemane.

[31 : 18] Remember young John Mark naked, running away naked in the garden? What is going on in that? It's not just that John Mark was an eyewitness.

There's something else there. And it's that here they are. Remember the beginning of human history? Adam and Eve standing in the garden and then the serpent comes and the serpent- the tempter, the great tempter comes and what happens?

The first Adam, the proto-human, the one who represents us all. He fell away. And what does the text tell us? As soon as Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord, they were what?

Naked and ashamed. And all eleven of them ran away. They were all naked. They were all ashamed. They were uncovered. Deniers, betrayers, stumblers, all of them.

And yet the second Adam, what did he do? He stood in the second garden and the serpent came and kissed him on the cheek and he did not stumble. He stayed committed.

[32 : 20] He said, I'll go all the way to the point of death for those people. The ones who were naked and ashamed and he was uncovered on the cross. He was uncovered for us at the cross for this young man who runs away in verse 51 and 52.

See what do you do when you stumble? What do you do when you fall? You take your failing, you take your shame. Have you ever been ashamed of the gospel? You take it to the object of your hope, Jesus Christ.

You've got to run to Jesus. And that's ultimately what Peter does. What else does Peter do? You know, Peter here, he's writing his own story. He's writing his own story. He's telling us that he did it. He's saying, I'm willing to take responsibility at the very end of the passage. He wept over his sin. What's the difference in Judas and Peter? When Peter stumbled, he wept before the Lord. What we see is the beginning of repentance and the end of repentance happens at the end of the gospel when Jesus forgives him three times. And Peter says, against you, Jesus, against you only have I sinned.

[33 : 24] He came with the heart of repentance. And that's the difference. What do you do when you stumble? You lift up your eyes, you run to Jesus, you look at the object of your hope, and you weep and say, I'm sorry, Lord.

And he says, Zechariah 3.17, because I died and I rose again, I will regather my sheep. That's what he offers to you today.

Well, as you go forward from this place, as we pray in just a moment, this ought to give us strength and courage.

It can give us strength and courage to go forward and not be ashamed of the gospel, to be strengthened up in order to not fall away. And here's how that happens.

This passage gives us the power today to be honest. The quote in the bulletin this morning on the reflection says this, the church, we can be honest about sin, even the sins of an apostle, because we are so convinced of grace.

[34 : 25] This passage gives you the power to say, I am never surprised by sin. I can be honest about sin. I know that we're going to struggle. I know that we're going to be ashamed at times. I know that we're going to fall away.

And yet we're so convinced of grace, we can be open. We can talk about this. We can struggle with this together. We can say no in the light of this passage to mock heroics.

Peter said, I will never fall away. The first thing Mark's telling us is never say that. Instead, be humble. Know the depth of your heart. That's actually the protection we need going into tomorrow to not be ashamed of the gospel.

It tells you that you can put away your guilt this morning. Look, some of us may this morning struggle with guilt for the sins of our past.

Some of us may struggle this morning with the guilt of the sins of this week, the shame. And do you know that when you lift up your eyes and run to Jesus and look at Him, you can say, I have such a faithful advocate before the Father that God is just to forgive me.

[35 : 31] That's what the Bible says. Are you willing to let the forgiveness of God cast away the guilt and shame that you struggle with? You can put away your guilt. Peter did.

Peter was so guilty, and yet he was forgiven. You really do have that power to put away all guilt and shame. Are you afraid, are you struggling in your life right now to be a public Christian?

To own the fact that you're a Christian in the public world, to be a representative and ambassador of the gospel and the places that you live. Look, when you know that God is for you like this, that Jesus Christ is for you, that you have such a faithful advocate, you can look at what God says is true of you and you can go into the world and be okay no matter what the people say.

This gives you the courage. Look what Jesus is willing to do for me. If I'm ashamed in times of my life, Jesus is so willing to forgive me, God is so willing to be for me that that can give you the courage to go into the world and be a public Christian, to have real faith.

The last thing is just this. Some of you, when you read this passage, one of the thoughts that might come to your mind, it probably does, is just to ask the question, you're asking the question in your own heart, what do I do when I've been betrayed?

[36 : 46] Have you been betrayed? Has somebody broken trust with you in a very severe way? A minor way or a major way? Betrayal and breaking of trust happens across a big spectrum in microwaves and macro ways.

How does that happen to you ever in your life? Have you been betrayed? That's another sermon. This would be sermon two if I started down this road. Have you been betrayed?

I just want to simply say this to you. You've got to look at this passage and know Jesus Christ, my Lord, experienced ultimate betrayal. He knows. He knows what it's like.

He walks with me. If you've been betrayed, if somebody's broken trust, if somebody's told your secret, that you thought, if somebody's done something in your life, what do you do?

One of the things you do is you lift up your eyes and you see my Savior knows. He is for me. He walks with me in this hard situation.

[37 : 42] The kingdom of this world never says revenge. They came with swords and clubs and Jesus says, take me. The kingdom of this world never says revenge. It does say forgive, but I want you to know that Jesus Christ knows.

He knows what it's like and He's for you. Let's pray. Lord, we give thanks that in the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, the denial of Jesus, we see ourselves.

We see that we are perpetrators, that sometimes we have been ashamed of you. Lord, we come today with hearts of repentance, we weep over those moments and ask that you would restore us this day.

We lift up the eyes of our heart and long to be renewed and restored. Lord, I pray for those today who may read this passage and think of moments in their lives where they've been abandoned, betrayed, trust has been broken in a big way.

Everybody's experienced that to some degree and some to much higher degree. So I just pray for them and lift them before you and ask, Lord, that you would help all of them, all of us to lift up our eyes and see that in your resurrection, you've promised great victory and great hope and great comfort and great peace that you re-gather your children and that in the family of God, in the family of Jesus Christ, we really can find peace.

[39 : 03] So I pray that for all of us and I pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.