

The Grace of God and the Flaws of Man

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading today comes from Matthew chapter 26. Please follow along on the screen, on your bulletin, or in your own Bible. Starting in verse 30, we read, And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter answered him, Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.

Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. Peter said to him, Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you. And all the disciples said the same. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, Sit here, while I will go over there and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with me. And going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, saying, My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, So could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, My father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. And again, he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, now let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand. Well, while he was speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priest and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him. And he came up to Jesus at once and said, Greetings, Rabbi. And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, Friend, do what you came to do.

Then they came up and lay hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father, that he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scripture be fulfilled, that it must be so? At that hour, Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day, I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.

[3 : 51] But all this has taken place, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him and fled. This is the word of God.

Father, we as a church want to be deeply rooted and centered on the person of the Lord Jesus. God, as we come to this amazing passage in the build-up to the cross and Easter, we pray that you will speak to us. We pray that you open our eyes to see more of Jesus, to see the depth of our own brokenness and the wonder of your love. God, I pray that those of us here are anxious and worried, fearful and fretful. God, those of us that have looked for hope and peace and all sorts of things apart from you. God, won't you show us where peace is found? Won't you give us the peace that transcends understanding because it comes from the throne room of heaven itself? God, we pray for our church. We pray for every church in Hong Kong. We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will be lifted up and exalted, that we as a city will love Jesus. We pray for our city. We pray for our world. God, come and have your way. In your wonderful name. Amen. I'm not sure if you ever feel disappointed in yourself.

Don't know if maybe you sometimes feel discouraged by your own struggles, to live up to your own expectations that you have for yourself. I know that's not a very culturally appropriate thing to say. We are meant to tell ourselves that we are a special, you know, snowflake and we're all unique and we're all wonderful and there's no one in the world like us. But I wonder if you, like me, ever face the reality that sometimes I'm not all that I think I am. Maybe you, like me, see patterns or habits in your life that you resolve to change, only to find yourself back in those same habits and patterns again.

[5 : 57] Maybe like you, like me, see weaknesses in yourself and you resolve that you will get better, only to find that those things get the better of you.

Friends, you sometimes find yourself weak and feeble in life or faith. I know I certainly do. Well, we're in Matthew 26 and in this passage we are making our way towards the cross. We are following Jesus as he heads towards Mount Calvary. And in our passage today we see three examples of men, followers of Jesus, people who had seen Christ, heard his teachings, seen his majesty, seen the miracles, seen his glory, and yet stumble and stammer in their faith and their religious walk, their walk of faith. And today we see who Jesus is and how his death on the cross speaks to or relates to these men in their walk of faith. In this passage today I suspect we're going to see more of ourselves than we maybe first like to admit, and yet I hope we also see more of the wonder and the grace of Jesus as well. So let's look at the first example we have. Exhibit A, we have the self-confidence. Look at verse 31 with me. Last week Jesus at the Passover meal and he kind of signals out

Judas Iscariot and he says, you know, talks of Judas' betrayal. Well here Jesus talks of all the disciples. Verse 31 he says, you will all fall away because of me this very night. For it is written, Zechariah 13, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. Now the disciples, they are not so convinced. Peter says, verse 33, not I captain, though they all fall away, I will never fall away.

Peter says what my daughters say to Claire and I, when one of them have created a mess in the house and we kind of just speak to them both generally and say, will you girls please clean up the mess, one of them invariably is going to say, why are you talking to me? I didn't make this mess, right? Don't pick on me. Well Peter says the same thing, right? Though they all fall away, I will never fall away. And even though Jesus, after he says what's going to happen, and Jesus has proved quite reliable being able to foretell the future, verse 34, I tell you this very night, Peter, before the rooster crows, you will deny me. Peter dabbles down, even if I must die with you, I will never deny you. Now, not only is Peter very self-assured, self-confident, as many of us will know, his self-assurance is not very well placed. We're going to find out next week what happens to his self-assurance. Peter's going to find himself mired in unfaithfulness and in failure. Friends, just one of the reasons, if you might have noticed or not noticed, at Watermark, we don't sing a lot of songs in our worship songs that are full of bold declarations. I will stand for you. I will change the world. I see a rising generation like me, and we're going to make a difference. No, we don't sing those songs too much. Because though they may be sung with the best of intentions, the reality is good intentions are not always a good barometer of the condition of our hearts, right?

But I'm not sure about you, but I feel a certain sympathy for Peter here. I mean, it's easy to point the finger at Peter and scoff at him, what a loser, and scoff at his self-assurance. I see a lot of Peter's self-assurance in myself. I remember about 13 years ago or so, Claire and I were living in Cape Town. I was on staff of quite a big church in Cape Town, many different campuses and sites. I was about 25 years old. I'd been in ministry for about one or two years, and the music ministry at this church was kind of going through a difficult time.

[10 : 02] It was led by one of the lay elders, and he was very busy with his business, and the music ministry was kind of struggling. And so I said to somebody, what they really need is some strong leadership, right? They need someone who can get in there and give some leadership this ministry. Someone should give it to me. I'll take it forward. Now, just remember, I'm 25 years old. I know almost nothing about music, and I'd been in ministry for about two years, right? And yet there I am. They don't know what they're doing. I'll sort it out. I see a lot of Peter in me, the self-assured, the self-confident. Friends, it's good to be confident in our abilities, not wrapped with insecurity and fear. But the danger with self-assurance here is how it blinds us to our own failings and our own weaknesses. I mean, look at Peter here. He's not duplicitous. He's not two-faced. He's not lying. He's not pretending to be something that he's not. He's very sincere, but he's blind. He can't see his own failings, his own weaknesses. I will never deny you. I will stand firm for you. On a couple of

hours, he's going to be denying Jesus himself.

Look at verse 51. If you go down at the bottom, the soldiers come to arrest Jesus, and Matthew tells us, verse 51, behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servants of the high priest and cut off his ear. Well, Matthew's being very kind. He doesn't give Peter away, but John's gospel tells us this is Peter who does this. And here he is, sensing the danger. And what does he do? He does what self-assured people do. He jumps to action.

He grabs his sword. And even though he's on his own, he's going to take on the whole crowd of those bearing clubs and swords, and he starts hacking away to save Jesus. But what does Jesus do?

Verse 52, Peter, put your sword away. For those who take the sword, the sword of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-assurance, those who take the sword will perish by the sword.

The danger of self-confidence, self-assurance. Let's look at exhibit B, the weak and the feeble. Jesus comes for the self-assured, but Jesus also comes for the weak and the feeble.

[12 : 26] Look at verses 36 to 46, the second section with me. Jesus takes his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane. And again, he takes all the disciples, but he speaks specifically to Peter and James and John. He takes them. And here Jesus wrestles with God in prayer as he begins to face the horror of Calvary. Verse 37 says he began to be sorrowful and troubled, which is a profound understatement. Jesus was more than just a little sorrowful and troubled. Verse 38, Jesus says, my soul is sorrowful even unto death. And so what does Jesus do? He asks his closest friends to watch and to pray with him, to stand with him in prayer. And yet what do they do? Well, they are weak and feeble. They cannot do it. Verse 40, he came to the disciples and he found them sleeping. He says to Peter, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

Verse 42, again, the second time he went away and prayed. Verse 43, he came again and he found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy. Jesus is staring the most horrific event in the history of the world square in the eyes as the horror of Calvary comes hurtling towards him. And where are his friends? They're fast asleep. They cannot even stay with him. And the problem is they have good intentions, but good intentions aren't enough. Despite Peter's bold pronouncements, I will stand with you to the end. Peter cannot even keep his eyes open and he falls asleep. Overcome with weakness.

Friends, do you ever find yourself overcome with weakness? Do you ever come to your own limitations and find I cannot do what I wished I had done or what I'd hoped to do? I had one of those days this week.

Earlier this week, I had a fairly demanding day at work. I felt I'd given it my all. I came home a little exhausted and tired. And I came home to children that were exhausted and tired. And they needed something from me that I didn't have within me to give them. And so coming home, they needed a father who was patient and kind and could bring gentle leadership to the home. And yet I was absolutely worn out. And so what did I bring instead? Not gentleness, not patience. And the evening ended in tears.

As I had the best of intentions, I wanted to be the best father I could. But instead, I got to my limitations and weakness. And I couldn't give them what they needed. It wasn't a very fun evening in the Murphy household. I can just let you know.

[15 : 21] Jesus comes for the weak and for the feeble. Those who come to their limitations and don't have what it takes. Now, on the one hand, the Bible says this is part of what it means to be human. As human beings, we are finite. We are limited. Christopher Ashe says that unlike God, we need sleep.

We need rest. We need friends. We need the Holy Spirit's renewal to revitalize us. We are not God. We are creatures. We are not infinite. But on the other hand, the Bible also says that part of the consequences of sin entering the world is that we are finite. We are limited. The world groans and longs for its liberation. The world is not all that it's meant to be. And often life feels like an uphill battle that wears us out. Our relationships, our work, our dreams, our hobbies, our aspirations, parenthood and marriage sometimes feel like an uphill battle because the world is broken.

And we are often shot through with challenges and difficulty. And what we see in this passage is that God's people are not all sufficient. They are beset with weaknesses, limitations.

Peter here has the best of intentions and yet he falls asleep. Jesus came for the weak and for the feeble. Feeble. Not the fable. The feeble. Exhibit C. Jesus comes for the false and the deceptive.

Look at the third section or pericope with me. Judas must have known where Jesus and his disciples were going to go. And so he concludes negotiations with the chief priests and the Pharisees and the leaders. He assembles a band of soldiers and he makes his way to the garden of Gethsemane.

[17:04] And he comes with a crowd carrying swords and clubs. And Judas gives the most ironic of signs. Verse 48. Judas says, the one I kiss is the man. Sees him. Verse 49. Coming up to Jesus, he says, greetings, Rabbi, and kisses him. Now, in the first world, in the first century, to greet somebody with a kiss is a way of showing that you're trustworthy and sincere.

You're coming so close to them that you're making yourself vulnerable to them. It's kind of like these days we shake people's hands. The reason you shake hands is to show, look, I'm not carrying anything in my hand. I'm open. Look, if I was carrying a weapon, you would see it, right? So you shake someone's hand as a sign of saying, I'm real. I'm sincere. I'm not hiding any weapons on me. In the first century, to go in and give somebody a kiss, you're almost offering your neck to them. You're saying, listen, I'm vulnerable. I'm sincere. I'm not hiding anything. If you want to take me out, here I am. I'm in your presence. Judas comes to Jesus with this act of sincerity and kindness, this act of intimacy, of saying, this is who I am. And yet all the while, just 50 feet behind him is a crowd carrying swords and clubs. The one I curse is the man, seize him. Friends, I've often wondered how Judas felt as he approached Jesus that night. How did Jesus feel? And I guess we don't need to wonder so much. Our world is full of duplicity, insincerity. How many of us here have had somebody lying to your face? They promise you one thing, maybe a boss, a colleague, a family member, and yet they have no intentions of keeping that. I wonder how Judas felt as he approached Jesus that night.

But actually, if we're honest, we probably don't need to wonder that far because there's probably a little bit of Judas inside all of us, right? I mean, how many of us here have gone up to somebody and you greet them with a big smile, lovely to see you, while knowing that that very week we've been speaking about that person behind their back? How many of us here have come to church? You don't need to raise your hands, okay? This is just come to church and we sing the songs of grace and mercy.

How lavish is your love while on the way we've had a fight with our kids and our spouse, right? I've done that once or twice. Friends, how many of us have deliberately rejected Jesus' lordship in the area of our lives saying no to Christ and while all the other time acting like all is real?

[19:46] There's a little bit of Judas in all of us, if we're honest. Six months ago, I was at a leaders gathering, not in Hong Kong, outside of Hong Kong, and there's a whole bunch of pastors there and we are all giving report backs on what's happening in our area and our ministry. And one of my friends gives this report back and he says, oh, this is what's happening in my area of ministry and, you know, we strategically made this decision to go this way, not this way. And I went to him afterwards and I said, you know, there's a good report back, but that wasn't the whole truth, was it? I mean, you and I know there's actually a whole lot of drama that's going on. That's why you went this way, not that way, right? You weren't completely honest with everyone in the room, were you? And he gave a good answer. He said, listen, there's some relational tension, but it's other people's problem. It's not my job to expose their challenges, you know? Okay, honest answer. That's fine. Well, friends, two months later, I, there's a pastor's gathering and they, I committed to going to some event and I didn't want to go to it. And so I try to think, how can I get out of it? And so I tell them, oh, you know, it's one of my children's birthdays that weekend. And, you know, I've got to be at home for my kids and

I'm so sorry. I would love to be there, but I've, you know, family duty. Friends, that wasn't the honest answer. I actually just didn't really want to go. And there was a convenient excuse. And so here's me challenging my friend. Oh, you weren't really that honest. Oh, but here I am the same doing the same thing. Friends, I know what it feels like to be like Judas. Do you? Jesus came for the false and the deceptive. And so in this passage, we have three examples of men that lived extremely closely to Jesus. It's seen the miracles, it's seen the teachings, that experienced his glory, and yet we see them full of flaws and failure. And what this passage shows us is that ultimately no one can save themselves. No one is sufficient in and of themselves. That all of us, like the Bible tells us, have fallen short. All of us have gone astray. Not the most self-confident, self-assured, not the most religious people in the world, the most devoted and devout. All of us are shot through with weakness, flaws, and failure. And where does this come from? I mean, why is it that we like this?

Why are we blind to our own foolishness and hypocrisy? Why is the world so full of these things? Why are we the way that we are? Well, the answer that the Bible gives is because there's another scene that happened many, many hundreds of years before this in another garden. It wasn't the garden of Gethsemane. It was the garden of Eden.

In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, the heads of humanity, as it were, make a disastrous decision. A decision full of self-assurance and self-confidence. A decision shot through with betrayal.

They sowed the seeds for the pain and the misery and the destruction that we experience and witness in the world. And the Bible says that because of humanity's rejection of God, our rebellion, our desire to live independent of God, our desire to be our own God, what the Bible calls the fall, all creation is broken. And that brokenness extends into every area of our lives. And so our relationship with ourselves is broken. That's why we oscillate between self-confidence and self-doubt, between self-love and self-loathing. Our relationship with one another is broken. It's why we're dishonest and not real, why we put up a facade, why we fight and argue. Our relationship with creation is broken, but ultimately our relationship with God is broken. And this broken relationship has led to the breakdown in every other relationship. The theological phrase of this is that we are objects of total depravity.

It means the brokenness of the world extends to the totality of our lives. Not just with us and God, but every area of our lives. And yet the message of Christianity is that Jesus Christ, the perfect one, God himself has come into our broken world and to come to rescue us and to save us.

[24 : 05] Jesus Christ, who sees with perfect perspective, who is not blind to anything of what's going on, who knows the thoughts and the intentions and the reality of every heart, who knows us better than we know ourselves. Jesus came for those who suffer with self-assurance and blind confidence, for people like Peter, people like me, people like us. Friends, Jesus Christ, your powerful one, the sovereign one, the one who hanged the galaxies and stars in space. Jesus entered into our weakness and took on our humanity and made himself weak by dying on the cross so that our weakness doesn't need to be the final story in our lives. Jesus made himself weak in order to come for weak and feeble people like Peter, people like me, people like us. Friends, Jesus Christ is the one true being in the universe who is constant and unchanging. James says in him, there is no variation due to shadow or change. Jesus is not one thing today and something else tomorrow. He's not faithful and gracious today, but impatient and frustrated tomorrow. With Jesus, you'll never discover an ugly underbelly, a dark side to him that you'd never known before. The book of Hebrews says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Jesus came for those that are deceptive and false like Judas, like me, like us.

But what does it mean that Jesus came? I mean, how did Jesus come? What does it mean? Did he come just to show us how to live? Did Jesus come just to give us some new wisdom, some technique to self-improvement?

No, friends. Our passage tells us. Look at verse 39 with me. If you've got your bulletin, this is the key. Verse 39. And going a little farther, he fell on his face and he prayed, saying, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.

What does this mean? What is Jesus talking about? What is the cup that Jesus is talking about? In the Old Testament, the prophets constantly speak about the cup of suffering and the cup of God's wrath.

The prophets talk again and again about how Israel and the nations around Israel will drink the cup of God's judgment because of their sin and their wickedness. Amazingly, the nations are going to drink the cup of God's judgment because of the way that they've treated God's people. Friends, here Jesus Christ enters into the garden of Gethsemane his soul deeply, deeply troubled, anxious and fraught to sorrow because he knows that very day he is going to drink to the very bottom the cup of sorrow and the cup of suffering and the cup of judgment for the nations and the sins of the world, the cup that we ought to drink.

[26 : 58] Ironically, in the Old Testament, it's the nations that drink the cup because of the way they've treated God's people. Here, the very perfect picture of God himself is going to drink the cup of judgment for the nations so that people like you and I can come in.

Many people have pointed out that if Jesus was just sorrowful because of the nails and the horror of the cross, he handled death far worse than many of his faithful followers.

Many men died and women died as faithful martyrs, far braver than Jesus if that's all the case was. No, friends, the agony of Jesus' soul was not just the nails and the Roman cross. It was that on that moment, the righteous wrath of God, the judgment of God was going to be poured onto his shoulders. That Jesus would be utterly God-forsaken on the cross, experiencing not his favor, but his total silence.

You can always trust Charles Spurgeon for a great quote.

[28 : 03] Friends, this scene here in the garden tells us of the magnitude of the cross, how utterly massive it was, how significant it was. What a great thing that Jesus was doing.

Jesus was doing nothing less than going back into the Garden of Eden and taking the curse for all humanity, all those who would hope in him and trust in him, upon himself.

Jesus was the true and better Adam, doing what Adam did not do and failed to do. Jesus drank to the bottom the cup of suffering and judgment for the fail and the feeble, for the false and the unfaithful, for sinners like us.

Jesus became on our behalf the object of God's judgment so that we can become the object of his love. Isaiah 53 says, We all like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned every one of us to his own way. But the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all. Friends, the magnitude of the cross.

[29 : 02] Jesus wasn't just showing us how to be selfless, how to be humble. He was taking the judgment that we deserved upon himself. But can't you see also the necessity of the cross?

Neil's helped me see this this week. That there's no other way. I think it's verse 39. Jesus prays again and he says, Father, if there's any other way, if it's possible for this cup to pass from me, let it be so.

Friends, the necessity of the cross. That Jesus knew there was one way and one way only. For the sins of humanity not to be counted against him. Jesus goes to the cross because it's the only way for God to destroy sin in the hearts of his people without destroying his people.

And so Jesus says, Here am I. Choose me. Friends, Jesus goes to the cross for us. Ruined sinners to reclaim. What this passage tells us is the flaws of man, but the astounding grace of God.

That though our sins are many, his mercy is more. As we're going to sing a little bit later. We sang the song earlier, Man of sorrows, now my debt is paid, it is paid in full.

[30 : 13] By the precious blood that my Jesus built. The curse of sin, it has no hold on me. Whom the Son sets free, is free indeed. Friends, this passage tells us, as I said, the flaws of man, but the grace of God.

So what should we do? So what? What does Matthew want us to see and what should we do in response? Well, let me give us three very brief responses. The first one is rejoice in Christ's lavish grace.

Look at verse 30 with me. If you've got your bulletin, look at verse 30. There's an amazing little verse here. It says, When they'd sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Do you know what hymn they sung?

They didn't sing Man of Sorrows, even though that would have been appropriate. Or, yet not I, but Christ and me. They sung one of the psalms. One of the Hillel songs, which is Psalm 113 to 118. It's the psalms that they always sung at Passover time. Well, let me read a couple of verses from Psalm 118. They probably would have ended with this. Look at how it goes. Or verse 5.

[31 : 29] It's not on the slide. Pretty astounding words for Jesus to be singing on the way to Gethsemane.

The Lord is on my side. What can man do to me? Jesus knows what man's about to do to him. They're about to nail him to the cross. Friends, yet we can sing these words, glad songs of salvation.

Because Jesus had his cries not answered on the cross. So that we can have our cries for mercy and salvation answered. Friends, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cried out, If there's any other way for this cup to pass from me, let it be so.

And he was answered with silence. On the cross, Jesus cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And the answer was silence. Jesus was not answered on the cross.

Because he took our sins that when we cry out, God, save me, our cries will be answered. Friends, and so if you're a Christian this morning, this passage calls us to rejoice.

[32 : 40] That though our sins are many, his mercy is more. Friends, what happens if you're here this morning, you're not a Christian? Today you've been told, I've tried my best to tell you as clearly as I can the good news of the gospel.

That all of us here are flawed and shot through with sin and failure. And that only Jesus can save you. Friends, God made you in order to know him and love him and to know his love for you. And Jesus went to the cross for you, to die for you, to take your sins so that you can be reconciled with him. So that you can, like grace, know the peace of God because you can be at peace with God.

Friends, if you're not a Christian this morning, come to Jesus. Bow your knee down before him. Admit your need for him. There's no other way to be saved but to come to Jesus. Come and do that this morning.

Friends, how should we respond? Rejoice in Christ and his lavish grace. Secondly, watch and pray. I forgot to put it on the slide. Watch and pray. Jesus says this in the Garden of Gethsemane.

[33 : 40] He says to Peter, Watch and pray with me. Friends, in our world, we'll be marred with weakness and failure. We'll come to our own limitations. What should we do? Not just say, Well, I'm weak.

That's the way it is. I'm not God, so what must I do? No, friends, watch and pray. Set your eyes on Jesus. Look to Jesus. Trust in Jesus. Wake up a little earlier and get in God's Word and read the Bible and pray.

As you're on the MTR, as you're in the boardroom, as you're in the courtroom or the classroom, pray and ask God to be with you. As you come to the end of yourself, say, Jesus, I need you. Watch and pray.

And then thirdly this week, rely on His unfailing love. Psalm 33 says this, The best equipped army can't save a king, nor can great strength be enough to save a warrior.

Don't count on your war horse or Peter's sword to give you victory. For all that strength, it cannot save you. But the Lord watches over those who fear Him, those who rely on His unfailing love.

[34 : 40] Friends, this week, all of us are going to go through trials, temptations, and struggles and storms. And when that happens, we may be tempted to rely on ourselves. Don't rely on yourself.

A great war horse can't save you. A great argument can't save you. A great excuse can't save you. Rely on Jesus and His unfailing love. Friends, whether you're in the boardroom or the negotiating table, whether your client has failed to pay you and you're in fear of default, whether you're at the bedside of a loved one in hospital, whether you're in the courtroom or the classroom, look to Jesus and His unfailing love for you.

Friends, do you ever feel disappointed in yourself, discouraged by your own failings, your struggles to live after your own expectations? Do you find yourself weak and feeble in life and faith?

I know I do. But thank God Almighty that Jesus Christ came for people like Peter, people like me, people like us. Let's pray now.

Will you join me? Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we come before you this morning and this passage reminds us of the flaws and failings of all of us. Father, when we read this passage, it's very easy to point the finger at Peter and the other disciples to point out their weaknesses, their flaws, their frailty, their failings.

[36 : 06] Father, if we're honest, there's far more of Peter and Judas in us than we like to admit. Jesus, this morning we come before you and we take no confidence in ourselves. We fall on our knees, God.

We lift our hands. We say, Jesus, we need you. Thank you, God, that there are sins, there are many. Your mercy is more. Your grace is more. God, your patience with us, your kindness towards us is simply astounding.

God, I pray by the power of the Spirit, won't you come and fill our hearts with the wonder of Jesus. Jesus, draw us to yourself and help us, God, this week to trust, not in our own great efforts, but in the great unfailing love of Jesus.

Help us, God, to fear you and to look to you. We pray this in your good and your wonderful name. Amen. Amen.