

# Jesus' Last Day and Our New Year: Failure and Forgiveness

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 12 January 2014

Preacher: Tobin Miller

[ 0 : 00 ] Do you love me? Do you love me? Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep.

We're all on a journey. God is meeting us at different places on that journey. Some of us are doing really well. Some of us kind of wonder what we're doing.

I have to tell you that for me, part of the journey, the hardest part of the journey sometimes is being a dad and a father. I feel like, especially in these last couple weeks, I've been learning over and over and over what it means to fail.

I know we don't like talking about failure in Hong Kong, but I've been learning that. You know, it's easier when you're a single person, if you're honest. Now, you singles are going to hate me for saying this, but it was easier when I was a single person than when I failed.

Because when I failed as a single person, it was my roommate. We just kind of looked at each other and went, okay, let's grab a beer. You want TV? Yeah, okay. Now, I know it's different with girls because guys can do that, but girls, there's something inside of girls, and they kind of, my girls are telling me, you know, they X each other out, and they're no longer friends and things like that.

[ 1 : 21 ] But that's not true with guys. Guys, you can just, you can just, you can be a jerk, and you can be selfish, and you can fail, and the next minute you're good friends with each other. But you know, when you're a dad, and you're a husband, sometimes failures are a lot harder.

Because you don't just see it in yourself as a single person, but you see it in the mirror of your spouse. You see it in the mirror of your children.

You see the failure. You see the brokenness. You see the depth of what you do and how it affects other people. Man, last, yesterday, I failed big time.

And this is a fear. Sometimes we get up to preach because we worry that, I grew up in a church where I looked at the pastor. I thought, well, he's perfect. There's nothing wrong with that guy. He's perfect, and I can never be like him.

And you know, that's my greatest fear that you would think about that, like, for any of us here. Because we're not perfect. Because when you're perfect, and then you do make mistakes, you never forgive that person.

[ 2 : 31 ] And so yesterday, I was trying to be a good dad, and I went to my kid's basketball game. And in their basketball games, there was a tournament all day long. And I was part of that tournament, and I was watching, and I wanted to encourage them in their games.

Because they had just lost, both of them, Becca and Kip had just lost a game. And in the middle of this, I went to them, and I said, well, how are you doing, and what's going on? And within 20 minutes, both of them were crying.

By how I asked them questions, and what I expected of them. And I was just passionate. Okay, you got to do this, and you got to block the ball more, and you got to get in there. When that guy comes in there, you step in there. And what I saw as good and wanting to encourage them, they saw as criticism.

And I walked away just saying, man, I'm a loser. I failed. You know, you worry about that sometimes.

And one of the things I continue to learn in this journey that we're on is that God, for his children, God is doing everything he can to get us to take our eyes off of ourselves and to put our eyes on him.

[ 3 : 41 ] One of the things I'm learning in my journey is that God is doing everything. He's taking everything. He's taking the failures. He's taking the success. Sometimes he has to take the failures because they're more powerful than the success. But he's taking everything that he can to take our eyes off of ourselves and to put our eyes on him.

And that's what this passage is all about, putting our eyes on him. If you've been with us for three weeks now, we've been looking at this series called Jesus' Last Day and Our New Year.

And we've been talking about these things that are happening in Jesus' Last Day and how we can apply them to our new year. We said two weeks ago that we need to, as we go on our journey, make sure that we live our lives in light of eternity.

That the now is not our home. That now is not our final destination. That the present is temporary. And that if we don't live in light of eternity, we will always have unrealistic expectations of people.

People will always be failing us. And we will always be failing ourselves. That we will lose perspective if we live for the here and now and think that this is our home.

[ 4 : 58 ] We said last week that as we go on this journey this year, that success, that we're going to be challenged to produce success in our work and in our homes and in our environments. But we said that there's two types of success.

There's a worldly success and there's a kingdom of God success. And we said that the kingdom of God success is measured in serving. In serving other people.

We said that our pride and our ambition are going to prevent us from doing that. But we will ultimately find success in God's eyes if we serve people.

Not if they serve us. I challenge you to think about how are we equipping our children? How are we educating our children? Are we educating our children so that a lot of people will serve them? In God's word that says they would be a failure.

Are we educating our children so that they will serve other people? In God's word that says that's greatness. That's success.

[ 5 : 58 ] And today we come to this passage and we're just walking through the book of Luke like we've been doing for three years now. So we've been in Luke for three years. We're at Luke 22. We're finishing it off. And we come to this passage in Jesus' life.

And we think about this new year. And this passage is all about failure. If you look at it, really. I mean, if you go deeper, it's about something greater than failure.

But it's about failure. And I realize that in Hong Kong, we don't like to talk about failure. I mean, we live in a culture and a world that doesn't accept failure.

I mean, sometimes I walk down the streets and I think of that Top Gun movie. You know, and they're in Top Gun and Welcome to Top Gun. And oh, yeah, by the way, there's no points for second best. And I think that's what Hong Kong is kind of like. There are no points for second best.

But you have to succeed. I mean, we don't want to talk about failure unless it's somebody else's failure. And we only want to talk about our failure if it wasn't fully our fault that somebody else caused us to fail.

[ 7 : 03 ] But what we don't realize is that the Bible is a book of failures. Did you realize that? That the Bible is a book about people who are failures.

Men and women who go on these journeys, and on these journeys, they make these massive, horrendous mistakes. They do things that destroy people's lives. They destroy history.

I mean, they're just failing. And all amongst that, we have this God who's passionately and unrelentlessly pursuing us.

Because he loves us so much. His mercy's poured out. His grace is poured out. And we come to this passage today, which is probably the greatest failure in the New Testament.

You probably didn't know that. But it is probably the greatest failure you're going to see in the New Testament. We put together about four or five different verses from different Gospels. Because this is a very complex story in this telling this failure story.

[ 8 : 04 ] But it's the last night of Jesus' life. It's Good Friday. Jesus has had the ceremony. He's washed your feet. And we talked about it last week because everybody was arguing about who's the greatest. They've gone to the east of Jerusalem from the upper room.

They've gone, and they're in the garden of Gethsemane. And they're worshipping. And Jesus comes to his disciples and says, hey, you guys, you need to pray. Make sure you're praying. Because something bad is going to happen.

Make sure you're praying. Make sure that you're praying and you're trusting the Lord. Make sure that you're praying and taking your eyes off of yourself and you're putting your eyes on God. Because something big is going to happen. Something major is going to happen.

The soldiers show up with Judas and they take Jesus and they pull him away. And as you read in this story, they go to the southern part of the gates of the city where there's this house.

And you could go there if you go back with us to Jerusalem and Israel in two years. It's Caiaphas' and Ananias' house. And in this house is this elaborate structure. And then there's this courtyard that's spread out there.

[ 9 : 03 ] And we're told that Jesus is taken to the second room and he's questioned by the government officials and by the religious officials. And as he's being questioned there, we're told that he's being asked, are you the Messiah?

He's being beaten. He's being spit upon. He's being mocked. He's being hit over his head. They're doing everything to humiliate him. And in the courtyard down below, we're told in this passage that Peter comes in.

It's really cold. They start a fire. And he sits down there and he starts to warm himself. He starts to warm himself. And as he's listening to these things, he realizes what's going on in the upper room.

He realizes that Jesus is being tortured and beat. And he's thinking about that. And I wonder what he's thinking about. And the passage says to us, this is what happens.

This is what happens on Peter's greatest night. This is Peter's greatest failure. And there's three things I think we can look at and learn from this. And we're just going to talk about them.

[ 10 : 04 ] I know this is the beginning. We've said that we're on a journey. And Watermark's purpose is to help everybody take the next step. Not to get to the goal. Not to get it all in your head. But the next step.

And so as you look at this passage, the next step, what I want us to talk about, think about, are three things. About failure. The first thing is this passage says really clearly that we're all going to fail.

That we're all going to make mistakes. That we're going to fail in massive ways this new year. And you know what? The passage says that God knows it. And not only does God know it, but he expects it.

The second thing we're going to learn from this passage is that God doesn't allow us to stay in our failures. But God does something amazing with our failures.

He takes our failures and he covers them in his grace. He takes our mistakes and he covers them in his blood.

[ 11 : 09 ] And the third thing we're going to learn here is that even though that we today, this year, the rest of our life, we're going to fail God.

We're going to see in this passage that God never fails us. God never fails you.

So let's look at the passage. First we see in this passage in verses, we see this idea that Jesus knows that Peter is going to fail. We see it in verse 31 of Luke 22.

Jesus predicts to him, he says, this is what's going to happen. And we see it happen in verse 60. I mean, the passage says several times that you're going to fail, you're going to fail. And he says there's several things involved in that failure.

Did you read the passage? Would they listen to it when they read it out loud? He says first that there's going to be this demonic component. That as you and I walk through our days today, the devil is trying to slip us up.

[ 12 : 14 ] The devil is actively involved in throwing things against us. The Greek words to sift actually means to tear apart. And so he says here that as we go through our day, there's this demonic component.

And the devil is active in God's people. Now, I don't know what you think about that. I know that there are a lot of people who don't believe in the devil. And there are a lot of people in church who don't believe in the devil. But you know, Jesus believes in the devil.

The Bible talks a lot about satanic and demonic activity. And in this passage, we see that often our failures happen because of these things.

It's important to note that the devil has to go to Jesus and ask permission. As God's people, the devil never comes into our life and just starts tearing it up. But God is in control.

I mean, the Bible basically says that everybody works for God. Even the devil. So there's this demonic component that we need to be praying about and thinking about and realizing that there's things in our lives that are going to try to trip us up.

[ 13 : 25 ] The second thing we see is that there's this Tobin or Peter component. And it's called pride. And we see in this passage over and over in verse 33 and Mark 14, 31, that Peter continually denies it.

He says, there's no way. I'm not going to fail you. This is not going to happen. I'm stronger than this. I'm going to die for you. I mean, Peter is basically, in the Greek, he's basically swearing an oath. He's swearing an oath to Jesus.

And he's saying in this oath, I am with you until the end. I'm never going to let you down. I'm never going to fail you. I'm totally confident. I mean, what you see in this passage is that Peter is totally confident in his strength.

He's totally confident in his ability. He's totally confident in his education. He's totally confident in his loyalty, like a lot of us are. He's totally confident in that he's going to be able to do it. Remember, Peter was a strong one.

Remember when Jesus walked to them on the water? Peter was the one who said, hey, I want to get out there with you. Can I go with you? And Peter says, bid me come and I'm going to come. And so he had courage. He had strength.

- [ 14 : 26 ] He knew and understood that he could do this. But what we see in this passage is something really interesting. That often when we fail, we're going to fail in our strength.
- Often when we fail and we make bad choices, we're going to make bad choices and we're going to fail in our competence.
- I mean, it's true of Peter. He said, no way. I'm going to be there. I'm strong. I'm going to be confident. I'm going to be there to the end. And in that strength, he fails. The Bible says a lot about people failing.
- I mean, Moses was told that he was the meekest man among men. Meekness meant strength under control. But when we read Moses' life, he loses his control.
- He kills the Egyptian and he goes on the run. He loses it at his greatest strength. Abraham was the father of faith. He left everything to go to the new land.
- [ 15 : 31 ] But then we're told he gets to this new land and the Pharaoh really likes his wife. And he's worried about, is he going to live or is he not going to live? And so he tells the Pharaoh that the wife is his daughter, his sister.
- And he fails. He fails at his greatest strength, which is faith. David does the same thing. David is a man after God's own heart. What does David do? A man after God's own heart.
- David doesn't follow God's heart. He's up in his building, in his house, when kings should go to war. He looks down and he sees a woman. He lusts after her. He commits adultery. They have a child. And he ends up killing the lady's husband.
- His strength was his heart for the Lord. And in his strength, he fails God. They all fail in their strengths, not their weaknesses.
- I mean, we think that we're going to fail in our weaknesses. We think, well, I've got to watch out for this because I'm not very good at this. I've got to watch out for this because I've got to be reading the Bible more. I've got to be praying more. These are some weaknesses I have. I've got to do these things. But the scripture says that where we're going to fail this week, where we're going to fail this year, where we're going to fail in our lives are in our greatest strengths.
- [ 16 : 45 ] Because sometimes in our greatest strengths, we just don't think about those things. I mean, they're unguarded. We don't worry about those things. And so we see this passage of Peter talking about his strength and talking about his strength, but he doesn't realize how weak he really is.
- He doesn't realize how weak he really is. So the question we have to ask ourselves today as we go into this new year is, what is our strength?
- What are we competent in? What are we good in? I mean, what are we sure that there's no chance of anything bad happening in this area? What are we saying that I got this handled?
- Don't worry about that because I'm really good in this area. And the passage says, and the Bible says it, in that area is where we're going to fail. And we need to be very careful of that.
- Luke 22, 54 through 62 tells this amazing story. And in this story, Peter is in the courtyard, and they've set up this charcoal fire, and they're burning this. And Peter is surrounded by people.
- [ 17 : 57 ] I mean, we know that Jesus is upstairs. We don't know exactly what the upstairs looks like. There's probably a window or some podium up there that he can see them. But he's downstairs, and in the middle of this time, he's warming himself up there.
- And we're told in the passage in verse 56, this little girl comes to him, and she says, aren't you one of them? Strength. Peter says, no way.

In fact, in the Greek, he says, I do not know him. I know him not. Sam, I am. I know him not. A little time goes. It's interesting because some of the transcripts say, the minute he said that, a rooster crowed one time.

Kind of like a kick countdown. We're told he goes on a little while longer, and all of a sudden, another person, another girl, comes to him, and she asks him the same question. She says, hey, aren't you one of them also?

No, no, no, no, no. I'm not. No, not me. I'm not that. I don't even know him. And then an hour later, we're told, in verse 58 and in verse 60, someone comes to Peter and says, don't you know him?

[ 19 : 07 ] And you're dressed like him. You sound just like him. You got this big hat on. You're slopped up with suntan lotion. You're saying good day in water. Surely you're an Australian.

No, I'm not an Australian. Australian. The passage says, they look at him, and they say, I had to put that in there for my Australian friends. But you see the irony?

Because the people look at him, they see how he's dressed, they see his accent, they know what he's saying, and they say, surely you're one of those people. And then in verse 60, the Bible, the Bible says something that it doesn't want us to hear.

I mean, in Mark, the words are so harsh that when they translated it, they were worried that we would be offended by it. And it says that when Peter denies Jesus the third time, he actually calls down curses on Jesus.

He starts cussing Jesus out. The language is very specific. It means he amathetizes him. He says, may Jesus be cursed.

[ 20 : 17 ] Basically, the wording says that he's doing this so that he is in fear of his life. He doesn't want to be associated with him. He wants to show everybody that he's not one of the disciples.

It's a massive and public display that I'm not with him. No, I don't know him. Pliny, who is a Roman historian, one day was talking to the Emperor Trajan.

The Trajan came to him and said, we're having this trouble with all these Christians. And the problem is we can't tell if people are really Christians or not. How do we tell if a person is really a Christian? In Pliny and his writings, you can go back and read it.

He says, this is what you do. You stand them before you, and you ask them three times, do you know Jesus? Do you know Jesus? Do you know Jesus?

And he says, if they say no, the final thing you need to do is you ask them to curse Jesus. Because a Christian, a follower of Christ, will never, ever curse Jesus. And if they can curse Jesus, you know that they are not a follower of Christ.

[ 21 : 20 ] Peter curses Jesus, and we're told in the passage immediately, a rooster crows. I think about this often. Can you imagine being there in the courtyard?

Can you imagine what Jesus looked like? Beat up, bruised, face swollen, blood coming out. And the passage says that somehow, immediately after Peter said, no, I do not know him, somehow, Jesus' face met Peter's face.

Whether Peter looked up, and he saw Jesus up there, and he saw this, or Jesus walked by the courtyard being carried off to somebody else. But it says somehow, Peter met Jesus' face.

And in those wordings, it says Peter said, failure. failure. What it says in the Greek is that Jesus looked at him, and loved him.

He had concern for him. He had compassion on him. He worried about him. One commentator says this in his whole story. He says this, and I think it's very interesting.

[ 22 : 34 ] He says that Mark wrote this way, because he wanted us to see that every day, and in every setting of our lives, we're on trial.

And the question is, will we be a witness for Jesus? He says every day we give an oath. Every day we give an oath, and we show people, and tell people who we are following.

We give an oath at home, by our actions, in our words. We give an oath in our family, by how we care, and love, and serve.

We give an oath at work, by what kind of workers we are. We give an oath at lunch. We give an oath on the computer, when we're trying to decide, should we look at things, or not look at things.

And the passage says, and the question is, will we be identified with Jesus? Will we speak up for the truth, no matter what the cost?

[ 23 : 53 ] Will we say, yeah, I follow him? or will we swear an oath to somebody else?

The passage says here, that Jesus saw Peter, Peter failed. And the passage says, that you and I will also fail.

You and I will also fail. The next thing we see in this story is that, the passage shows us that God wants us to do something, he wants to do something amazing in our failures. I mean, I've been thinking about this for a long time, it's taken me about 30 years to get my head around this.

I'm still trying to think about it, I was worried about how I was going to share this, would it make any sense? But it seems to me, in this passage, in all the Bibles, that God wants to do something incredible with our failures.

I mean, in verse 32, he says, Peter, once you have turned, then go strengthen your brothers and sisters. In verse 15 and 16 and 17 of John 22, he says, feed my sheep, feed my lambs, tend my sheep.

[ 25 : 11 ] And what I think this passage is teaching us, and what the Bible continually teaches us, and what I think is so hard for most of us in Hong Kong in this day and age to understand, is that every time we fail, every time we sin, every time we stumble, I mean, everything that we do in our lives, God takes that and he does something amazing for his purpose and plan for our lives.

I mean, the passage says that God uses even our failures, even our sin. He uses all of these things to show his glory and his grace and he continually comes to us as his children and he does amazing things when we're at our worst.

Have you ever thought that before? I didn't. I mean, I came to Christ and his gospel and that's great and the rest of my life I kept living my life to earn favor and earn points with God.

And if you were to ask me what my life was like, it would be this big bucket. And I kept filling stuff in this bucket with good deeds and good things I did and things I accomplished and hoping that I'd get this bucket high enough that God could use me. But then I make a mistake.

Then I treat somebody poorly. Then I look at something I shouldn't look at. Then I do something I shouldn't do. Then I date somebody that I shouldn't date. Then I just am mean to people and things get poured out of that bucket.

[ 26 : 52 ] And I feel gross. And I feel worthless. And I feel useless. And I think that's the way most of us feel. I think most of us, if we're really honest, we feel like we have to produce and do and be add to what Christ has already done in our life.

And if we don't do that, if we fail, if we make a mistake, then we're not useful anymore. But the passage says that Jesus takes our failures and he covers them with his grace.

and he does something amazing in our lives. The passage says that our failures are never for our destruction.

As God's children, our failures are never meant for our destruction. I mean, it might feel like that sometimes. It might feel like when we make mistakes that God has his hand against us, that nothing's going on, that we're in trouble, that we have no hope.

that these trials and temptations are hitting us and they're unnecessary. But the scripture says that all of these things God is using in your life.

[ 28 : 15 ] And what he wants to do is he wants to take those mistakes. He wants to take your failure. He wants to take your sin. And he wants to wrap them in his grace. And he wants to develop something incredible in us.

How do you feel about that? When you hear that, is that good news? That's making you kind of uncomfortable.

Because you feel like, well, I got to do something. I got to perform. I mean, if I don't, if I don't do the right thing, God's not going to love me. God's not going to use me. God's not going to be happy with me.

God's not going to bless me. I think often so many people in Hong Kong walk around with this massive fear that they don't do the right thing. God's not going to bless them. And if they're being blessed and it's proof that they're doing the right thing, this passage says, no way.

No way. No way. The passage says that God takes our failures and he does something incredible in our life.

[ 29 : 28 ] The psalmist says it this way. The psalmist said that even when I fall down, even when I fall down, it's not for my destruction because God has a hold of my hand and he wants to do something amazing in my life.

Seven times a righteous man falls down and seven times he's picked up. How is he picked up? By his own strength? He's picked up by God because God comes amongst him.

I mean, think about it in this passage. If Peter hadn't failed, what would have happened? I mean, because Peter failed, he knows now that he can't trust himself.

He knows now that he can't trust his strength. He knows now he can't trust his pride. Because Peter failed, he has this massive understanding of the depth and breadth of God's grace.

He understands forgiveness. He understands restoration. He understands redemption. If he hadn't failed, he would probably not understand those in the same way. Now, I'm not telling you to go fail so that you get more of God's grace.

[ 30 : 37 ] I mean, Romans says that, right? He says, how can we continue to sin? May it never be because we understand God's grace and mercy. But what we need to understand is that God takes our failures.

He takes our mistakes and he wants to do something amazing in our lives. But often when we fail and we make mistakes, we just kind of walk away and we give up. And we don't realize that God is working and that his grace is being poured out in our life.

Because Peter failed, he's different. The passage says, because he failed, he's different. And now, God says to him in John 21, because you failed, because you've experienced change, because you've experienced grace, because you've experienced mercy, now I want you to lead my people.



Because all these things have happened to you, now I want you to go do it. Because now I know, Peter, you're not going to be prideful. I mean, you're going to continue to struggle with that, but every time you do, you're going to hear this rooster crow in your ear and you're going to look up to this upper room and you're going to see Jesus' face swollen.

You're not going to be perfect, but you're going to continue to struggle. But every time you struggle, now you're going to hear that rooster. Because Jesus came to Peter in his favor, God used Peter in mighty ways.

[ 31 : 56 ] So the question I have for us is this. How do we respond to God's grace and forgiveness when we fail?

When you fail today, this week, one month from now, how do you respond to this passage?

Maybe another question is this. how do you respond when other people fail you? When people who love you the most fail you?

When people who love you the most betray you? When people who you expect a lot out of because they are the rock and they're going to lead everybody.

What do you do with grace and mercy when other people in your life fail you? The passage says that Jesus wants to show us that he will take our failures.

[ 33 : 13 ] He will take our sins. He's going to cover them up with his grace and mercy and he's going to do something amazing in our life. The question is will we let him do that?

Will we let him do that? Finally, the passage says that even though we fail Jesus, Jesus never fails us.

In Luke 22, 54 through 61 we see this story of Peter after he fails in the courtyard and Jesus is on the second floor and he's being beaten. he looks to him and in that look we see love, we see compassion, we see concern.

In Luke 22 at the very beginning in verse 32 we see this statement that says Peter, I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

Do you realize right now that Jesus is praying for you? Do you realize right now that the passage says, the scripture says that Christ is in heaven and the word is intercede.

[ 34 : 26 ] He represents you. He is a law term. He steps in front of you. Jesus is here. God is here and you're here. And when God looks at us to see our sin and our mistakes and our failures, Jesus basically says he steps in front.

God. And so when God looks at us he sees his son. And the passage says in Luke 22 that Jesus continually, continually, 1 John says Jesus continually, continually.

Jesus is before God. He speaks about us to God. He represents us to God and no matter how much we make mistakes, no matter how much we fail, no matter how much we disappoint those around us that we will never disappoint him because he just shows his scars and his blood.

And God says forgiven. Forgiven. C.S. Lewis said it this way. He said a really interesting quote.

He said that though our feelings come and go, Jesus' love for us does not. Jesus' love for us isn't worried or wearied by our sins.

[ 35 : 43 ] His love for us isn't indifferent because we're indifferent. But Jesus' love for us is relentless and is determined. He is determined that he will remove the curse of sin from our lives no matter what it takes in our lives and no matter what it takes in his life.

He is determined to remove the curse of sin in our lives no matter what it takes in our lives no matter what it takes in his life.

Finally, we see in John 21 at the charcoal fire. It's at this charcoal fire that Jesus meets Peter. Remember, Peter's failed him three times and he's wandered off.

And it's in this charcoal fire that we see forgiveness, we see repentance, we see renewal, we see forgiveness.

And the question is because the passage is really clearly and the rest of the text is really clear that God has a charcoal fire for us.

[ 37 : 01 ] and he's asking us to join him there. He's asking us to come before him and to receive forgiveness.

He's asking us to come before him and to repent. He's asking us to come before him and to confess. He's asking us to come before him and be renewed in our lives. In the passage he says no matter how badly we've failed, no matter how much we've messed up, if we've messed up like Peter's pride in cursing Jesus or we've messed up at the workplace by not speaking up when we should have or maybe we've messed up as a dad who's been a little too passionate at a basketball game.

The passage says that no matter how bad we've failed God, that God will not fail us. and the question is will we meet him there and experience his forgiveness?

Will we experience his redemption? Or will we walk through life oh man, I made a mistake, God can never use me. There's two ways you do it, right?

Either you go oh I made a mistake, God can never use me, I'm going to go hide in my hole for a while and then there's the other way like some of us do, I made a mistake, so what, God's going to forgive me. Both of those are wrong, right?

[ 38 : 30 ] There's a third way and that third way is out of charcoal fire where we see a Savior who shed his blood for us. The passage says that this year you're going to fail a lot.

The passage says that God takes our failures and more often than not he does something amazing in those failures. Even when we cannot believe it and we want to run and hide.

It's in the failures of our life that God changes us. The passage says that even if we make mistakes over and over and even if we forsake God, God will never forsake his children.

the big component of failure is forgiveness. In your chair, I put a little three by five card and I think on this card because I don't have one with me, it says something like this.

How do you need to ask God for forgiveness in your life this year, today? I think the second question says something like, who do you need to ask for forgiveness for in your life?

[ 39 : 54 ] The third question says, who do you need to forgive? My experience in Hong Kong with Tobin who grew up in a shame-based family and culture that often the hardest question for me to answer is the third one.

Who am I going to forgive? Because when people let me down, I want them to know it. The passage says we have a Savior who's not like that.

He pours out grace in our lives. I'd like for you to sit down in your chair and just think about those three questions and I'll come back up in a minute or two and I'll close this off.

The passage says in the house there's two trials going on. It's a trial of an innocent man on the second floor. He's being accused of things that he's not guilty of.

There's a trial of a guilty man on the courtyard. He's being accused of things that he is guilty of. One of the men denies everything.

[ 41 : 18 ] It's not me. It's not my fault. It's not my fault. The innocent man says yes. One of the men denies the innocent man.

The innocent man will never deny you. He will never deny you. As his children he will never give up on you.

You're going to fail this year. God knows that. God wants to take that failure and do something amazing in you and all the people around you.

and he loves you so much that he's not going to let you stay where you're at. He's doing amazing work in your life.

It's called grace. It's called mercy. It's called love. The question is will we accept that or will we say no?

[ 42 : 29 ] Father we know that there are people in here who on their journey they haven't taken a step with you and they're wondering maybe what some of these things are about and they don't feel like they need forgiveness and they're not that bad of a person and they're really not that bad but when we compare ourselves to a holy God we're all really guilty and failures and I pray for my brothers and sisters who are on that part of their journey.

They would ask somebody around them what it means to experience grace. What does it mean to forgive? What does it mean to be forgiven? What does it mean to love?

And to know that we have a God who never gives up on us. He never fails us. He never lets us down. Father for the rest of us who are on this journey that we've come to the fire for the first time and we've invited you into our life but we've just we've grown cold.

We've grown distant. We've forgotten the look. We've forgotten the rooster. We've forgotten mercy. We've forgotten grace.

We've forgotten love. And we just wander. Lord we need you. We just come before you and just ask your forgiveness.

[ 43 : 55 ] We beg your forgiveness. We repent of our selfishness and our self-servingness and our pride and our self-reliance and all those strengths that we count on to make it through our day every day in Hong Kong.

We repent that we have our focus on ourselves and we don't have our focus on you. And Lord we just ask that we would that you would use all these things to help us put our focus back on you.

Father we pray for our church that we would be a church that's not focused on ourselves that we're focused on others that we're focused on your son. Help us to love the people well that we come in contact with today and at our work tomorrow.

Help us to realize even amongst the failures and the backstabbing and the things that they've done to us that you've done and you've taken all of those things and you've poured mercy and grace and forgiveness on us.

show us what it means to forgive them like you forgive us. Show us what it means to give grace to those who offend us as you've given grace to us over and over and over.

[ 45 : 09 ] And as we do that Lord we know that your spirit will move. That Hong Kong will be changed. People will fall in love. They'll fall in love with your son Jesus.

So pray Lord for us that this year going into this new year that we would be different people. We need you. We pray all these things in your son Jesus holy name.

Amen.