

Forgiving Yourself Does Not Work

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[0 : 00] For a moment, let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we ask that you would gently but powerfully pour out the Holy Spirit upon us this morning.

Father, once again, we ask that as you make us more aware of who Jesus is and what he did for us, that, Father, gripped by that, more and more gripped by that, you would help us to understand who we are, who each of us are, and how it is that you desire to shape us and form us and prepare us, Father, for an eternity in the new heaven and the new earth.

And, Father, that is a work that only your Holy Spirit can do. And so we ask that you would be the one who would do that wonderful work in our hearts and our minds this morning. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, you know, we've all had situations, and maybe we've been guilty of ourselves, where, you know, we say to somebody, you know, go ahead and tell me what you really think.

Like, I won't be upset. Like, I won't be mad. I won't hold it against you. And sometimes when people say that to us, they really mean it. They will accept it. They will hear it. They won't hold it against us.

[1 : 13] But as we all know, sometimes that's not true. We mistakenly or erroneously go ahead and tell them what we actually think about something or what we've done, and they do hold against us.

A hundred million years ago, when I was... In the old Diocese of Ottawa that I was part of, there was a discernment process, a big process that you went through to discern whether or not you were called to be an Anglican minister, an Anglican presbyter.

And sort of the culmination of that discernment on one level was going away for these two days, three days. You'd go off to... We went to a motel, and there was, you know, people from a variety of all over the province.

And basically, from the time you arrived until lunchtime on Saturday, and you had to arrive on Thursday, you were assessed by all of these different people. But you also had specific times of assessment.

And in my specific time of assessment, the guy was... He was an Anglican minister, and he just was... It was just odd. He kept asking me things like, What do you feel good about?

[2 : 22] I don't... Like, I don't know. How do you answer a question like that? I don't know. Like, I feel good that it's sunny outside? I don't know. I like... You know, what do you feel bad about? Like, what makes you happy? What makes you...

He's asking me all these vague questions. And then he... And I'm sort of giving him some type of lame answer, probably. Because, yeah, I mean, the fact of the matter is, everybody at it, including me, are unbelievably tense, right?

You're under whatever that is, like 48 hours, not counting sleep, of intensive scrutiny that helps to determine your future. So, yeah, there's no stress here amongst me or any of the other people.

It was really dumb questions. Anyway, finally, after about 10 minutes, he said to me, Well, tell me, what is it you really don't like about the Anglican Church? Well, I'm not going to answer that question.

And then he presses me and presses me and presses me. And he kept saying, Listen, I'm not going to hold it against you. I'm just curious. Like, you know, I'm just curious. So, kid you not, at that time at a university that I was still connected with, which will go nameless in case you can trace back who I'm referring to, there was an Anglican minister who was a chaplain.

[3 : 32] And I'd heard him speak several times. And that Anglican minister didn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, didn't believe in the incarnation or the virgin birth, didn't believe most things in the New Testament actually happened.

Like, you just name any core doctrine. He didn't even hide that he didn't believe it. He boasted and tried to encourage everybody else to stop believing in these things.

So, I just said, You know, there's this Anglican minister there, and he says all of these things. And as far as I'm concerned, if he believes those things, he shouldn't be an Anglican minister. Well, that's when I discovered he was going to hold it against me, and he was going to make a big deal of it.

And rather than assessing me for the next 30 minutes, he gave me a 30-minute lecture about how maybe I was just not well-read enough. Maybe this other minister is more spiritually and intellectually and academically advanced, and on and on and on.

And then in my third assessment, it turned out that I had to answer the question. I was narrow-minded and prejudiced because there were some concerns about it.

[4 : 45] Now, just as an aside, how on earth did I pass that, you're wondering? In those days, I had hair down to my belt and a beard, and I think that's the only reason I passed.

Because they wanted younger people, and I just didn't look like somebody would hold those views. So, I think they gave me a pass, and they probably have been regretting it ever since, but that's a separate story.

But the problem is, as we all know, that sometimes, you know, people say that, they say they're not going to hold it against you, they say certain things, but they just don't mean it.

They just don't mean what we say. And this very, very, very sad text that we're looking at today, and for some of these sermons I've been saying, imagine that they were taking the Gospel of Mark, and they were turning it into like a Netflix series, or something like that, or an Amazon Prime series, or Crave, or whatever, HBO.

And, you know, every week there was a bit of an episode. And this would be an episode that is just frankly sad. It ends in sorrow. It ends in almost inconsolable, heartbreaking sorrow.

[6 : 00] And the question arises from the text, it's like, why is it that there would be such a sad story? Like, why would this be in the Bible?

Why would this be in the Gospel? A story which is so sad, a story about failure, a story about guilt, a story about doing wrong.

But it really enters into a very, very profound topic in terms of whether or not, well, the older you are, the more that you understand, I think wise people understand, that what we need is not, we need justice always, of course.

I'm not denying that we need justice. But more than justice, we need forgiveness. And is Jesus serious when he talks about forgiveness? Like, is the Bible serious about it?

Does it have some wise things to say about one of the deepest needs that human beings have, which is a need for forgiveness? So let's look. If you have your Bibles, it's Mark chapter 14, verses 66 to 72.

[7 : 10] And just in terms of, you know, if this was Netflix or Amazon Prime or whatever, there'd be a little recap at the beginning. And rather than just pushing the skip recap button, just sort of just before that, there's been lots of very sad things.

We're sort of almost halfway through the 24 hours that changed the world. It's all the first day of the Passover because Jewish people at that time, still actually, the day begins at sunset and ends the next sunset.

That's how the day works. So there's 24 hours that changed the world. Jesus has predicted to his disciples and his other friends he's going to be betrayed. Judas has, in fact, betrayed him.

Jesus has been just throwing himself on the ground in sorrow, calling out to the Father to answer a prayer with yes, and the Father says no. And Jesus is seized, and Judas, Jesus has just been through a kangaroo court, a show trial, and at the end of it, like on, given that his life depends upon how he answers it, he goes in, he gives the honest answer that he is the Messiah, he is God, the Son of God, and his enemies have got what they need to put him to death.

And so while that's going on, this story happens. Okay? And here's how it begins, verse 66. And as Peter was below in the courtyard, 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.

[8 : 56] But he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. And he went out, Peter went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. Now just a couple of things about this.

First of all, it's very interesting. We talked about this last week to show that the whole, that his enemies attacking Jesus is the examination of Jesus doesn't take place in any official place like where the Sanhedrin meets or the official court, but in a high priest's house where there's guards in the courtyard.

And here we see that while Peter is speaking below, Jesus, we now know, is on the second floor. That's where his enemies are going after him on the second floor and Peter is outside below him. And he has a, Jesus is put down by a servant girl. You know, here it is. Jesus, as we looked at last week, you can go back and read it later, he makes, in the presence of his enemies on trial for his life, he makes this momentous declaration that he, in fact, is the Messiah, that he is, in fact, God, the Son of God.

He actually confesses to this in the presence of his enemies in a capital trial where he knows they want to have him put to death. And while he's making these momentous claims, and if you're here as a seeker or you're not quite sure what you think of, that's, we'll talk about that, not necessarily today, but why that's a good thing to believe, but later on, we will talk about why those, why it is, it's reasonable to believe that, and we'll say something in a moment, but while this is going on, the woman has just a casual put down of Jesus, the Nazarene Jesus.

[10:38] Some of you have heard me explain it before. If I was to bring somebody up front and I was to introduce the person as, you know, this is, this is an Oxford guy, Oxford gal, or Cambridge, MIT, you know, it's, that's who this person is, or if I was to say this, you know, John here is from Apple headquarters, you'd all go, oh, this person's a somebody, you know, this person here has just come, he's, he or she is with the Prime Minister's office, the Chief of Staff, they're here to address you, I'm trying to impress you with their credentials, but Nazarene is nowhere, it would be as if and today, if I was to invite Steve up to speak and said, this is Steve from Brudenell, and Brudenell, as I've said to you before, if you look in a big empty spot of eastern Ontario and you're trying to go from one empty spot to another empty spot, you pass through Brudenell, it's nowhere, and, and so this is just a casual put down of Jesus, the Nazarene, the guy from nowhere, the guy from unimportantville, like we're no, like we're only hicks live and nothing is ever of great value, but then Peter gives this really weird answer, look, look at it again, and by the way, verse 68 says, but he denied it, saying,

I neither know nor understand what you mean, although then he goes out farther from the light, like farther off into the darkness, but here's the thing, it's weird, in the original language, he says, there are two separate words for knowledge, the first knowledge, type of knowledge, is theoretical or abstract knowledge, it's E equals MC squared type of knowledge, okay, it's like going to university and taking a, you know, a theory of numbers, or, you know, the theory, the high level, and the other one is practical knowledge, and this is just like a weird answer, like she just says, hey, you're with the Nazarene Jesus, and he said, I neither have the theoretical knowledge or the practical knowledge to understand what that means, like what?

Like privately, she probably said to later, there's this jerk over there, like he gave me this really stupid answer, and I bet that Peter at the time didn't think he denied Jesus, I thought, I think he thought he was being clever, what exactly do you mean by Jesus, it's a common name, like I, you know, what about Nazarene, what does from mean, like, I don't know, like it's just, here, if you could put up the first point, just a little off the side point, but important, beware of using cleverness to try and cover up your unfaithfulness, beware of using cleverness to try to cover up your unfaithfulness, actually, the book of common prayer has a really, if you use morning and evening prayer, it's called dissembling and cloaking your sin, it's a beautiful phrase, dissembling means you try to confuse people with what you've actually said or you try to hide it and that's what Peter's trying to do and I bet you actually that at the time,

Peter probably thought that he, I didn't deny her, he sort of got out of it somehow with, I mean, the servant girl probably thought he was a jerk, he probably thought he hadn't denied it because technically, technically, it might not sound like to him that it's a denial, but it was, it was a denial. In fact, actually, you'll notice that the text nails it, but he denied it saying, I neither know, so that the text, just one of the things you need to know about the text here, which is really interesting at this point, so first of all, how would anybody know about this encounter unless Peter told them about it, unless afterwards Peter told them what had happened and that Peter actually shared with people that I thought I was being clever, but I was really just being a jerk and I, you know, for that brief moment, I thought I'd avoided it, but in hindsight, what it was is actually, it was a denial.

[14 : 49] It's not just, and one of the, and one of the things in particular is that most modern scholars and following the testimony of the early church believe that Peter, this is ultimately Peter's gospel, even though it has Mark's name on it.

In other words, that Mark wrote down how Peter remembered Jesus and what Peter saw and did with Jesus and Mark wrote it down. And, and so it's very interesting that not only later on for posterity does Peter label it a denial, but as we'll see in a moment, by the end of the story, Peter has had a change of heart, a deep sorrow that he now understands that this first thing that he did wasn't clever, but was in fact a denial.

We'll see that. Look at verse, look at verse 69. And the servant girl saw Peter and he goes off into the darkness.

She saw Peter and began again to say to the bystanders, this man is, is one of them. But again, Peter denied it. And, and actually just sort of pause here.

You can't know this unless you know the original language, but in the original language, what it really is saying is Peter not just denied, he didn't just say no, he went on and on and on and on and on about it.

[16 : 14] Right? You know how sometimes, so if one thing what we try to do sometimes to cover up when we've been unfaithful, we, we think we're being clever with fine distinctions or something like that. The other way that we do, we try to get out of taking responsibility for a certain thing or denying something is we, we talk a lot about it.

Right? You know, I'm not picking sides in part, but one of the things politicians do when somebody tries to, to pin them on whether they've done something, they give a long convoluted answer, hoping that by the end of the answer, which isn't an answer, you've forgotten what you've asked. Right? And, and so that's what Peter does. He goes on and on and on and on about it. But it actually ends up backfiring on him. Look again at verse 70. But again, he denied it. And after a little while, the bystanders again said to Peter, certainly you're one of them, for you are a Galilean. In other words, the more he talked, his Galilean accent came out. His Galileanisms came out. But he, Peter, began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak.

Now, just sort of pause here for a second. Some of you, especially if you're looking in your own Bibles, you might see that it's worded a little bit differently. Some of the, the versions of the Bible says, he began to invoke a curse on them and, and to swear.

[17 : 42] So, what's happening there, it's, one of the things about this, the language of the time, in the original language, you can't actually tell. The way the words are, it could mean either one.

It could either mean that he curses himself or curses another person. And it might even just be that he did both, by the way. And I'll explain what he means when I, what this is.

So, here's what it is. And we all, maybe none of us do this. Maybe we know people who talk this way, but it's definitely a thing of books and movies. You know, the first thing is, he said, may God, in a sense, okay, just, may God strike me dead.

I swear to you on my mother's grave, I'm telling you the truth. That's invoking a curse on himself and taking an oath that he's telling the truth. Right?

The, the other way is, you know, to be mad at the other person and, and just pardon my language to say in a sense to somebody who's challenging, you know, God damn you. I swear, I swear on my children's lives when I'm telling you the truth.

[18 : 51] And you can see that, in a sense, it might even be that he did both and it's just interesting because, you know, nowadays when we, you know, we can type on the computer and you just type and type and type and type and it just goes on forever.

But back then, things to write on were very precious and expensive and you just had a certain number of words that you could do and that just one of the things that in the original language it could be that he did both.

But it's more likely, but people, translators, because of English, you can't do it. Translators have to figure out which one's most likely and it's probably more likely that he's not trying to intimidate people because he's, he's frightened and so he does the first thing, you know, like, you know, God, strike me dead.

You know, may God curse me forever. Strike me dead. I swear on my mother's grave or I swear by the temple that I am telling you the truth.

I am telling you the truth. I do not know this man of whom you speak. If you could put up just the second point. Some of you might be familiar with the Bible and in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus warns us against taking oaths and that's because it is far too common to invoke a curse or make an oath to try and cover up wrongdoing.

[20 : 10] Right? Like, if you see in a movie somebody saying like that, like, I swear on my mother's grave or whatever, they're lying usually, right? When they say something like that, it usually means they're lying and they're trying to get out of it and it's not, not that every time it happens, but often that's what happens.

You try to up everything, you know, to cover up the fact that what you're doing is shady at the best, but often just downright despicable.

And it's a human problem and Jesus nails it. And actually, you know, by the way, one of the arguments for why this is so trustworthy, like, like, occasionally you'll come across skeptics who'll say, you know, that most of these things in the New Testament, like, in these ancient eyewitness biographies aren't ancient eyewitness biographies.

They were written much later and they were sort of written in secret and they're really trying to serve the power of the church and the church's agenda or some community's agenda.

And one of the arguments as to why that isn't true is the fact that Peter records his despicableness.

[21 : 26] Like, how does this serve propping up the power structures of the church if in, you know, James and John and Peter all are shown to be failures and doubters and deniers and fleers and cowards and liars?

Like, that's why the text has the, has the feel and the shape of integrity. Because this isn't something you'd make up if you're trying to make the Peter party or the, the more and more strong and why everybody should listen to him by having Peter make sure that it's written down just how, how much of a sinner he was and is.

Well, remember I said that it's very interesting that Peter has to be the source of this and the first denial he might have at the time thought it wasn't really a denial but now when we're reading about it it's nailed that it's a denial.

Look how we, we see that even in that time that Peter understood that what that first instant was was actually a denial. Look at verse 72. And immediately the rooster crowed a second time and Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him before the rooster crows twice you will deny me three times and Peter broke down and wept.

And in the original language that broke down that means broke down like that means that means convulsive sobbing. that means hardly able to stand sorrow.

[23 : 10] Barely able to stand heart-wrenching sobs of sorrow. And it's really interesting I, you know it's really interesting that it's a rooster it's a rooster that serves as the sign because what is it about roosters?

Roosters are an image of strutting pride. And so an image of strutting pride is what brings Peter to understand that he has nothing to be proud about and break him down in sobs.

So why such a sad story in the Bible in the gospel? It's here I think because it's going to say something to us very profound and important about forgiveness about patience about prayer and about personal change.

Actually it's interesting and if by the way one of the people that I talked to yesterday in the coffee shop or here shout out to you you guys do a great job it's a wonderful coffee shop to go to so a shout out to you if you're watching one of the baristas asked me as I'm getting my refill what I was going to like first of all she said anyway she asked me what I was going to talk about tomorrow which is now today and she said asked me if I was ready yet and I said no that's what I'm working on right now and she said what are you going to talk about and I said um I didn't have the deer in the headlight moment but I said um I'm going to talk about why forgiving yourself doesn't work and in fact only makes things worse and she goes whoa you talk about things like that like that sounds deep and then we had this like there's nobody else and then like the four of them

I have this brief talk a little bit about why it is that self forgiveness doesn't work so here just here's the thing we could all think of stories in our own lives where we feel bound by guilt where we've done things which are terribly wrong maybe at the time we didn't think they were very wrong but afterwards we realized just how wrong they were and the feeling of guilt can be very very powerful it can bind us and sometimes even after a person has forgiven us for the wrong that they've done we've done to them we still feel bound and trapped by that guilt but often in life people don't forgive

us and sometimes as you know even those who don't forgive us they move away or they die and they died not forgiving us at all and so sometimes we can be even doubly bound by it we don't really know where to go with our guilt and so the culture increasingly what Canadian culture [26 : 30] North American culture increasingly recommends you see it in books you see it in movies is that we need to learn to forgive ourselves and on one hand it's a very very it's responding to this existential need that not all of us feel all of the time everybody will feel at some point in time in their life and many of us can feel it for many years and many seasons of our lives this sense of guilt and with it this sense of shame and a sense of type of powerlessness in the face of it and it sort of beats us up it takes the oomph out of our sails it makes it hard for us to look another person in the eye it makes it hard for us to enter into a relationship or a friendship it can make it hard for us to see other people it's very isolating and so in response to that our culture does the best it can it says you need to forgive yourself but here's the problem

I use this example with them imagine this you know you manage to talk these other three into lending you \$5,000 and you didn't tell any of the three of them that you were doing it to all of them and then after you got the \$5,000 you left and you never came back you never paid them and I can tell you for each of those three young women \$5,000 is a lot of money I mean even for some of us who have a lot of money who could write a check for \$5,000 we'd be pretty upset if somebody stole \$5,000 on us and even worse if we found out that we were just one of three and that in fact it was \$15,000 and then later on in Facebook or Instagram like a year or two or three years later you see their picture and you read this little testimony that they've had in Facebook about how they did these wrong things to their three friends and it involved money and it's really caused this person grief and sadness but and then they write but now

I've forgiven myself and I said you wouldn't accept that you say you dirty rat what do you mean you forgave yourself like for those of us who've been victims of abuse and then you find out later two years later that the person who abused you says I now forgive myself for it like what that doesn't make who made who died and made you God how dare you absolve yourself how dare you forgive yourself you see that just doesn't work it's it's a type of self flattery and delusion it's it's taking like to forgive yourself it's actually taking two or three more steps into narcissism and the more narcissistic and proud and self centered you are the more damage you're going to make to others in your own life but then people might say what do you do George like there's no hope well no but that's actually what the gospel is all about you see because what's happening in that moment even when there's the two situations because sometimes we can be overcome with sorrow and guilt and feel bound and all of that when a person has forgiven us and sometimes we feel that when a person hasn't forgiven us and we don't know where to go to it and what this experience is opening the door to is that in the real world in the real world the world of when we walk out the door of streets and cars and sunsets and bank balances and math and in the real world you have been created by God and God still exists and God has made you for himself and your heart is restless until it rests in him and every offense against another person is also an offense against God there's this really wonderful thing I think it's in Acts 9 where Paul before he becomes a Christian has been persecuting Christians and Jesus appears to him and Jesus says to him why have you been persecuting me because every act of violence and abuse against another person is also an act of abuse against God and so on one hand what we're longing for is to know God is to know that our creator has forgiven us and has forgiven us in a way that is just that it's not just forgetting it's not just giving me a pass that it's an actual absorbing into himself the consequences of what I've done there's that there must be some way that God can forgive me if you could put up the point it's very interesting that Peter probably calls down a curse upon himself and here's the gospel the curse that you deserved fell on him and the blessing he deserved he put on you and in you the curse that I deserved fell on

Jesus and the blessing he deserved in fact he is blessing he put on me and in me when I come to him and acknowledge my guilt and my separation from him and my inability to save myself and I call out to him for mercy and grace that Jesus would have mercy on me and Jesus hears that prayer and he has mercy on me and in that moment as I call out to him for mercy then what happened on the cross 2000 years ago is applied to me and in the Bible the Bible is very wise if you trace through blessings and curses and in a sense a blessing and a curse are opposite a blessing when we bless something we're asking that they will be fulfilled that it will be fulfilled that they'll be fulfilled that not just that they'll be fulfilled but that there's a telos an end to their life a good end to

their life a meaning to their life a purpose to their life a place in God's universe and with [33 : 23] God and we're asking that they would be fulfilled that they would come to that final resting place and move towards that end that they would thrive that they would connect to creation and to God himself that there would be restored relationships with God and with others and that they in a sense would walk in beauty and that beauty would characterize their life and what is a curse a curse is that you will not find fulfillment but that you will find frustration that you will not find that end and purpose for which you were made but that you would be lost from it that you will not thrive in terms of your end but that you will wither it will not be that you connect with God and his creation but that you will be alienated further alienated it is not that you enter into relationship but that you become more lonely and it's not that you walk in beauty but that you are bound by boring ugliness and that's what we wish when we say you know that person they said they forgave themselves and this is the wrong thing they did for me and this is what

I hope I hope they wither I hope everybody knows how bad they are I hope that God and others have nothing to do with them I hope that their life will be completely and utterly miserable that's what we do we curse and the wonder of the gospel is the curse that I deserved fell on him and that's why he died on the cross and the blessing that he is is offered to me and it's offered to you we receive it by faith and as as you can see with this image of the curse and the blessing it's deep we desire a deep disorder in those who've done wrong and we desire for ourselves a deep blessing and that's what we see is happening in the cross if you could put up the next point it is real and true he does not weigh your merits he pardons your offenses we see that actually in the text not just in this story you don't have if you have your it's not going to be on the screen because I forgot to ask Claire to put it on the screen but if you back when Jesus in Mark chapter 14 verse 48

Mark chapter four sorry 28 Mark chapter 14 verse 28 when Jesus has predicted that they're all going to flee and leave him alone he says this is before the cross he knows what he's going to do on the cross he knows they're going to all mess up and all deny him and all flee from him but in verse 28 he has this promise for them but after I am raised up in other words after I have died on the cross all alone I will be raised up and I will go before you to Galilee in other words I'm looking forward to seeing you there and in Mark chapter 16 verse 7 after Jesus has died and the grave is empty and he's risen from the dead Jesus says or that the message comes but go tell his disciples and Peter and

Peter that he it's the angel says go tell the disciples and Peter Jesus is going to Galilee and he doesn't say that so that Peter can stay away from Galilee but so that Peter can go to Galilee and see Jesus curse that I deserve fell on him the curse that Peter deserved fell on him the blessing that Peter did not deserve the blessing that Jesus deserved as a gift of grace is offered to Peter just a couple of moments so why is it by the way why is there such a sad oh yeah one other thing do you know how strong tradition says that Peter died Peter died depending on how you date this 31 to 34 years after this account Peter died he died because he refused to deny that the grave was empty and that

Jesus had risen from the dead and therefore that he is Messiah and Lord and because he refused to deny that Jesus had conquered death he died by crucifixion under Nero in Rome in 64 why is there a sad story in the gospel it's because the need for the forgiveness and these other few things I'll just say in closing we need this in the real world and the gospel is about the real world just very briefly first if you could put up the thing as this story and as the gospel grips you it forms you to be patient with each other if Peter the apostle fell so will you so will I so will your brother and sister in Christ and if the Lord's grace was greater than

[38 : 53] Peter's fall his grace will be greater for you and for your brother and sister in Christ as the gospel becomes real to us it should make us less judgmental and anal and hard I know it's hard to believe that this is actually what's supposed to happen if you ever look on Twitter and see how unbelievably nasty Christians can be to each other but I have to be patient with them because I fall too and if you could put up the oh sorry there's no just by this point doesn't have it's not up in the shade it also this story helps us in prayer as I've said before part of what people outside the Christian faith don't understand is that once the gospel becomes real to your heart it becomes more real to your heart there's a profound beauty and emotional resonance to it

I was talking to a fellow in a coffee shop the other day because he said that karma is better than whatever Christianity has to say I said no karma has no mercy and when you screw up there's nothing you can do you are helpless and all alone because karma is pitiless but I believe I have a

savior who knows my frailty and stories like this means that when you have been betrayed when people have been wronged you you can pour your heart out to Jesus who's experienced that himself and he knows your heart Allah is indifferent and many of the eastern religions just tell you that you have to just get over it and learn to be separate from it and just observe yourself but that doesn't answer the deep sorrow of our hearts and we can pour out our hearts to a savior who knows our sorrows who experienced sorrow himself and knows the cursedness of us and became our curse for us and finally if you could put up the last point the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ grounds draws and I can't read my writing what was the last one and fuels that's the word honest self examination repentance and amendment of life like the the irony the paradox the mystery of the gospel is that as this story as we hear of Peter in light of what Jesus does for us on the cross and as we understand what Jesus has done for us on the cross and who he is and we look at these stories rather than making us complacent about the wrong things we do in our life it actually grounds us looking at ourselves and the wrong that we do it actually draws us the story in a sense draws us and pulls us the way a light in a dark if you're stuck in a dark place and you need to see a light in the distance and it draws you to know you can go that way to safety and it propels you it provides this propelling and it infuels you to actually look at yourself because you see no matter how bad

I have been and when I realize some of the things I've done that are very very bad and I can understand how people would want to curse me that curse fell on him there's no aspect of how cursed I am that he does not know that he didn't drink in his cup and so for the first time in your life you can begin to have the emotional and identity security to take responsibility for your own crap and call out to Jesus to help you to move forward and live a good life live a life of beauty invite you to stand I hope you've gathered from this and from my talk that you're invited for those of you who are really struggling with guilt you're you're invited to know the gospel even more deeply and you are invited there's no better time now than in your prayers to call out to Jesus and ask forgiveness and ask that he would help you amend your life and if you've never come to

Christ and you start to see the beauty and the power of who he is and the truth of who he is there's no better time now than to call out to him and ask him to be your savior and for those of you who are just struggling with sorrow there's no better time now than to pour out your heart and one of the things you can pray for us is that we as a congregation will not just share the gospel and proclaim the gospel but also that we will be a community that's shaped by the gospel that we will be a community where where it's that people can become more godly more christ-like and that through spiritual and and practical friendships and through small groups and and and through men's and women's ministry that that we can do life together that we can be learn how to be patient with each other that we can we can cry together that we can celebrate together we can do everything in between together all because of the gospel and please pray that that becomes us more and more and more that christ will truly rule in the gospel sense in our midst let's bow our heads in prayer father we thank you that jesus would do such an act of love and grace and mercy and justice for us and we ask lord that the holy spirit would bring this story and bring the gospel and uh deeply and deeply into our hearts that it would form us that it would form us father to stop flattering ourselves and and look at ourselves with with with moral clarity so that we might repent and and you would give us help to amend our lives and we thank you that you are so patient with us and and that our end father in christ our end in christ is glory is welcome from you not weighing our merits but pardoning our offenses that the end of our story in christ is you smiling at us and saying welcome welcome my son welcome my daughter father make christ more real to our hearts we ask this in the name of jesus your son and our savior amen thank you okay