

Genesis 49: Unstable as Water - The Tragedy of Reuben's Spiritual Instability | Bible Study 2025

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Date: 31 March 2025

[0:00] Genesis 49, unstable as water. I meant to bring a big bucket here and slosh it around, but I forgot to bring the object! lesson but you can imagine I've got a great big bucket here and I'm going like this and the water's just splashing out of the bucket all over the place.

Unstable as water. Here is Jacob to set the scene and he is nearing death.

He gathers his sons to bless them, to prophesy their futures, revealing their character and their destiny. And Jacob starts with high praise for Reuben, his firstborn son.

And he says, Genesis 49 verse 3, Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.

Reuben is firstborn. He's blessed. He's the apple of his father's eye, the firstborn status. He had might, abilities. He had excellency of dignity, superior character.

[1:20] He had excellency of power, strength. But it reads on. Verse 4. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.

Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then deviledst thou it. He went up to my couch. For Reuben, his firstborn, Jacob had words of praise but then a strong rebuke.

Verse 4. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. Everything that was going for Reuben, he lost it. He blew it all. He had slept with his father's concubine, Bilhar. Reuben was a man driven by uncontrolled desires. Reuben's life shows the mess of spiritual instability.

That's our theme. Spiritual instability. What a shame, a tragedy. So much potential. Wasted. Think about water. If you can imagine this sloshing bucket in my arms and it flows, it shifts, it sloshes about, it moves in all kinds of directions and it takes the shape of whatever contains it.

[2:39] And one moment it might be calm, the next a raging torrent, frothing and boiling over. The Bible often uses water as a metaphor. Sometimes of life, of refreshment.

But here it tells of instability. It's a symbol of unpredictability. Instability. God gives us this powerful image to describe a spiritual condition.

Reuben is wavering. He's unreliable. He's lacking commitment. Reuben, blessed with so much potential. Might, dignity, power. But we see his failure.

His failure. His instability cost him dearly. He would not excel. Let's consider this truth. Spiritual instability and its dread consequences.

And praise God, he can provide us a way to find steadfastness and strength in Christ so that we don't miss God's best for our life.

[3:40] So we're going to consider it on three points. Spiritual instability, what it is. The fruit of instability, what it brings. And then the way to stability, how to counteract.

So firstly, spiritual instability. Reuben, unstable as water. Wavering without self-control. He's easily swayed by external influences and even internal desires.

Spiritual instability. It's undermining our God-given potential. Think of what he could have been. But he was not. Jacob rebukes Reuben as unstable as water.

Without firmness or consistency. The term could refer to boiling or agitation. Recklessness even. A lack of firmness. Webster's Dictionary, 1828, defines it as wishy-washy.

Sounds like a modern term, doesn't it? Not fixed. Wavering. Tossed. Inconsistent. Reuben's like this boiling over bucket. With his sinful lusts.

[4:45] Water went unrestrained. It just flows wherever it wants. It's shapeless. It's shifting. It's unsteady. And so it is with the soul that

is disconnected with God.

Spiritual instability. What is it? It's wavering. And double-mindedness. We see the unstable soul. They lack firm conviction. It's like this unsettled heart.

Like this bucket sloshing around. It's this heart that's unsettled. Like water that's easily disturbed. It's like restless waves. Swayed by circumstances, emotions or the opinions of others.

James talks about water and wind. He says, he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. The water and the wind. Water moves at the slightest touch.

It's unpredictable. It's weak. We think of water and heat. It boils and evaporates under pressure. We think of water and cold. It freezes and hardens under influence.

[5:45] Conforming to its surroundings. Better that we would stay solid in faith and purity rather than melting under temptation. Water.

It has no shape. No power. No direction. No boundaries. No temperature. No taste of its own. Water. Think of it. It adapts to its own container.

It follows the path of least resistance. It compromises, doesn't it? It shifts with the conditions. Water. It flows around obstacles rather than confronting them.

Like some people who shift their behavior based on their environment to fit in. It's a trap, isn't it? It's like that with unstable people.

They're shaped by circumstances rather than God. Unstable as water. Some will just compromise and conform to the world. Like the water in the bucket.

[6:42] Conforming to the world. The unstable person tries to serve two masters rather than one. Caught between the desires of the flesh and the spirit. Between the world and God.

This war that's going on. This internal conflict. The flesh and the spirit. The flesh seeks sin. And the spirit seeks obedience to God. This man is torn in two.

Wavering. No man can serve two masters. Our Lord says. For either he will hate the one and love the other. Or else he will halt the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Elijah challenges the people that are torn between two. He says, how long halt you between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Think of the divided will. And he's torn between flesh and spirit. Like James says, draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners. Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

[7:42] There's many scriptures that talk of this being torn between two. Double-minded. A divided will. Look at the life of Reuben.

He was born into chaos from the get-go. In Genesis 29, 32. He was from an unstable home. Marked by polygamy, deception, jealousy, hatred, division between Rachel and Leah.

Spiritual instability. It had that foundation with Reuben. He was tossed by winds, as it were. Not grounded. And we see that in Ephesians 4. Another example of an unstable one.

Tossed about. Tossed to and fro. Carried about. Carried here. Carried there. With every wind of doctrine. By the slight of men and cunning craftiness. Whereby they lie awake to deceit.

It's got a picture of how some they're just blown around. Oh, they tune into the latest preacher. And they get this teaching. And then they tune into this one. And they get that teaching. You know, they're at the Seventh-day Adventist church on a Saturday.

[8:45] And they go to another church on a Sunday. No wonder they're getting torn around. Torn about by every wind of doctrine. They don't know what to believe. Falling for every new teaching and philosophy that comes along.

Jumping on the latest bandwagon. And the latest new fad craze. The latest revival, so-called. And that's the unstable world of today, isn't it? Of Christendom today.

Many are like that. They're like these ones on the shifting sands. Like the foolish man that we read of. Where he built his house upon the sand. Rather than the stable foundation of the rock.

Reflecting the word of God. But rather shifting sands of man's opinion. Of worldly approval. And he's like the seed that's fallen in the stony places. When the sower goes out to sow.

It endures for a while. But when tribulation or persecution arises. Because of the word. By and by he's offended. So he's got no roots in himself.

[9:47] That's the problem. Not grounded. Not planted. Spiritual instability. Think of it. What it looks like. And we see it in, for

example. All these different characteristics of spiritual instability. We see the lust of the flesh. We see the act of Reuben. He lacked self-control. He gave into sin. With Bilhar. And Reuben would find out. You reap what you sow. There's consequences there. We see wavering faith. James 1. It talks about this wavering. This doubting. We see an unstable one is easily deceived. 2 Peter 2.14. Talks about unstable souls. Swayed around by false teachers. Lacking that grounding in the truth. And then 2 Peter 3. Talks about other unstable ones. Resting the scriptures. Twisting God's word. To suit their own ideas. Water. It conforms to its surroundings. Doesn't it? It cooperates with its container. And some are like that. [10:46] They just shift their behaviour. To go along with whatever the circumstance is. Not stable. Spiritual instability. This was Reuben's great failure.

What do we see in Reuben's life? We see that Reuben had a failure to lead. He had a failure to lead or stand firm. Reuben, the firstborn.

The firstborn. He was the one who was meant to be the leader. To be the leading example. To be the model. To be the protector. The firstborn. Reuben.

But he failed to lead. And we see, for example, in his actions with Joseph. When his brothers plotted to kill Joseph in Genesis 37. From 19 through 30.

Reuben says, let us not kill him. He made this weak attempt to save Joseph. But he lacked the strength to stop what was happening. And Reuben, he could have been a good example.

[11:44] He should have been a good example to his brothers. But no. He lacked resolve. He failed the test. His weak plan failed. And then he concealed the truth for 22 years.

Watching Jacob's heartache. Reuben. He had this pattern. Taking the path of least resistance. You know, when you have a bucket of water.

And you throw it on the ground. It finds its channel, doesn't it? It goes that path of least resistance.

And that's how some people are. They just go along with what's the easy way. No conviction.

No stand. No direction. He let sin define him and his future. Look at the potential that he had.

Excellency of dignity.

Excellency of power. But lust took over and he lost out on his birthright blessing. Reuben, he missed his potential. Because of unfaithfulness.

[12:39] How tragic. If only he'd kept doing right. If only he'd been faithful, God would have honoured him. But Reuben did not. We see his impulsive sin.

With Bilhah, his father's concubine. It wasn't just a gross sin. It was a lack of restraint. It was rebellion. It was poor judgment. And water flows where resistance is least.

Reuben yielded to temptation. He showed a lack of spiritual discipline when he should have shown leadership. And it's a picture here. Proverbs 25, verse 28.

It tells us, He that hath no rule over his own spirit, it's like a city that is broken down and without walls. We've got to have a rule over our spirit. We're going to say, Hey, no. Salt, that's not a good way to go.

I'm not going to go that way. Salt, don't do that. I'm going to speak to my spirit. I'm going to say, No, I'm not going to take that path. I'm going to choose God's way. And water spills wherever it goes without a vessel too.

[13:39] And it's like that with a life that's not got God's boundaries. It drifts into chaos. And some are so unstable, they'll take the shape of any vessel they're poured into. No strength of character.

So consider then also the fruit of spiritual instability. What happens when we have instability? We see that with Reuben. He lost out. He lost his birthright.

He lost his potential. He lost his credibility. He lost his testimony. He lost divine blessings. And his life failed to glorify God. What a shameful thing. Thou shalt not excel.

Thou shalt not excel. He had all of these things going for him. Strength, dignity, power. But it tells us thou shalt not excel.

What a warning it is for us. Despite the huge potential and privilege that he had. As firstborn, Reuben was set to receive so much.

[14:38] He was in line for double portion. For leadership over his brothers. For a connection to the messianic seed. Excellency. What a privilege. What an honour that he had.

But he gave up God's best. Excellency. It tells of an elevated rank. Of authority. Of abundance. But privilege brings responsibility, doesn't it?

Privilege brings responsibility. We need to be wise stewards of what we have. But by violating Jacob's bed. Reuben disqualified himself. From all the privileges that could have been his.

His great potential became a lost potential. And Reuben lost his birthright. His inheritance was given to Joseph's sons. Ephraim and Manasseh. What did he leave? Instead of the legacy of the Messiah coming from his line.

He left a legacy of shame. There was to be no ruler. No priest. No judge. No king. From Reuben. What loss. He was expected to excel.

[15:38] But he did not expect the consequences of sin. And the unstable. They remain spiritual babes as well. We see in Hebrews it talks about some.

You should be teachers by now. But you're still on milk. You're still one of the babes. As the context of Hebrews 5. You ought to be teachers. But you're just babes still.

Spiritual babies. When you ought to be such that you excel. It's a blot isn't it? It's a lack. It's a failure. And spiritual instability.

It brings great shame. We see the one who is not stable in their faith. Their prayer life is hindered. James says let not him think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

The double minded. Spiritual instability. It's a poor testimony. Look at Proverbs 25 verse 26. A righteous man falling down before the wicked. Is as a troubled fountain.

[16:36] And a corrupt spring. You know the media love to get hold of stories. About pastors. Or church leaders. Or you know professing Christians.

We've seen that lately in the news haven't we? A righteous man falling down before the wicked. It's a shameful thing. It's a sad thing. But the media love it. The devil loves it. He wants to see the righteous man falling down.

And it's like this man is building on sand. Like the man of Matthew 7. The rains descended. The floods came. The winds blew.

And beat upon that house. And it fell. And great was the fall of it. Spiritual instability. It's a big warning. Through the word of God. It talks about the unstable.

Are an easy target for the devil. If you're going to be like Reuben. You're going to be an easy target. Rather take heed of the word. It says be sober. Be vigilant. Because your adversary the devil.

[17:33] As a roaring lion's seeker. Whom he may devour. It's like a ship without an anchor. That drifts into storm. Instability will lead to ruin.

Notice the lessons we can learn from Reuben's life. Look at what we can learn. Some of the truths that we can see from his failure. A lack of self-control.

Giving into temptation rather than yielding to God. A wasted potential. Despite the strength and privilege. He wasted it. He squandered what he had.

A shameful legacy. Reproach and ruin. His descendants never produced anyone of significance. And then defilement too. Reuben defiled.

His honour. He desecrated something sacred. A shameful thing. 1 Corinthians 5.1 Deuteronomy 27.20 Talks about the shame of what Reuben did.

[18:29] And when we think of Reuben today. What do we think of? Reuben. His name is mud. Isn't it? Reuben. He's just got this blot. The record of Reuben is a shameful record.

Spiritual instability. We don't want that. We don't want that. None of us should want that. Or let it happen. Alright. God helping us. We see the hindered walk. Some have this rollercoaster Christianity.

They're up one minute and down the next. They lack that consistent victory. Because there's an instability. Reuben. Reuben. Basically Jacob's saying to him. Reuben.

You're never going to amount to anything. It's a wasted life. A poor testimony. It hurts the church. When the world sees that. We see the New Testament example.

We see Ananias and Sapphira. Their names are mud too. The world sees it. And it hurts the church. And it's bigger than just Reuben. And this is right through the word of God.

[19:32] We see examples like David. Like Job. Even Paul. They had moments of instability. And it's a universal struggle. Hey. It's not just Reuben. We're all in the same boat. We're all in the same bucket. If we don't watch it. We're going to end up with that instability. Unstable as water. But thank God. Brother. Sister. Here tonight. I can tell you tonight. By the authority of God's word. There is hope for us. There is hope. For you. Who are in spiritual instability. Thankfully. Yes. There's hope. The Lord shows us the way to victory. And so we think about. The way to spiritual stability. Rather than to be like Reuben. Let's see. How can we be. Not like Reuben. We don't have to be like Reuben. Unstable. And wavering. But we can rather have this trust. This faith. That is sure. Standing firm.

[20:27] In the word of God. With steadfast faith. With a trust that stands the test. And our life can excel. For the glory of God.

Think of people like Daniel. He had an excellent spirit. He was one who excelled. It talks about how you should excel. In spiritual gifts. There's a way we can excel. We can actually aim for that. Which is the highest. And the best. God's best. For our life. Our life can excel. For the glory of God. And the answer to. Our instability. It's not in our own strength. That's the shifting sand. It's about the word. Isn't it? The rock. We know. There's many scriptures that talk. Of our Lord. He only is my rock. And my salvation. He is my defence. I shall not. Be moved. Victory is possible. Brother. Sister. As we put. Our trust in the solid rock. We're anchored in Christ.

[21:21] We're building a life on him. And he is the only foundation. For other foundation. Can no man lay than that is laid. Which is Jesus Christ. He's the foundation. The unshakable foundation.

We've seen the news lately. I don't know if anyone's seen some of the video footage. Of these skyscrapers. Waving in the wind. And you think. Wow. You have to hope. Yeah. Yeah. You have to hope that they've got a good foundation. But we know. We've got a foundation. That's not going to shake. Amen. Our foundation is sure. And Matthew 7. We know. Again of the man. Who built his house on the sand. Contrary to that. We have the man who built his house on the rock. And he built his house. Where it was going to be standing firm. And the rains descended. And the floods came. And the winds blew. And beat upon that house. And it fell not. For it was founded upon a rock.

[22:18] See the stability here. Comes from the word. Doesn't it? And we think of the stability that comes. As we look unto Jesus. As we in faith look upon him.

We fix our eyes upon him. We know the word tells us. The Lord is my rock. And my fortress. We can be grounded. In that assurance of Christ. Our rock. Our certain foundation. We are in a changing world. But our God is unchanging. Isn't he? He's the same yesterday. Today. And forever. And his unchanging word too. We have the scriptures that stand strong. They've stood the test of time. And they're just as relevant. And real. And presently sustainable. As they ever were. The word of God. Is a sure foundation. We know it tells us that. Thy word is a lamp unto my thee. And a light unto my path. The Lord Jesus says. If a man love me. He will keep my words. Guard the word of God.

[23:17] Keep it. Hide it in your heart. That's a wonderful scripture there. Isn't it? If a man love me. He will keep my words. Keep the word of God close to your heart.

Put it into your mind. Your heart. Your memory. Your memory banks. Practice daily disciplines. Whether it be of consistency. Of keeping the routine. I know Julie and I were just talking about that. Just lately. Have a good godly routine. It's a good thing isn't it? We're seeing of Daniel. He had a routine of prayer. Didn't he? And we're seeing a time. Where we go to Bible study. Rather than being tossed by every wind. We can be rather steady. And sure. We've got an anchor. We've got the word of God. Is that sure truth. To hold steady. And keep doing what's right. Keep being faithful. Don't let unfaithfulness rob you. Reuben's momentary indulgence.

[24:11] His unfaithfulness. Was such a blot. That robbed him. Of so much. Rather let's be steady. Let's be fruitful. And steadfast. Nourished like a well watered tree.

Think of Psalm 1. You could read the whole psalm really. But think of these words. Where it tells us of the blessed man. His delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his law.

Doth he meditate. Day and night. And he shall be like a tree. Planted. By the rivers of water. That bringeth forth his fruit. In his season. His leaf also shall not wither.

And whatsoever he doeth. Shall prosper. There's a blessed fruitfulness here. And why? Because this tree is planted. By the rivers of water. Speaking of the word of God.

We can be like a firmly planted tree. Brother, sister. As you think about the tree by the river bank. It's there where the roots can drink deep. We think of the word of God as that sustaining power.

[25:09] We think of the fruit coming forth. And we think how we can thrive in Christ. Grounded in Christ. In his word. Dwelling upon it. And it talks again. Rooted and built up in him.

Established in the faith. There's a sense where we like a tree. That's firmly planted. A well watered tree. That's nourished. And think about how can we be like that stable tree.

How can we be like that tree. That's got the roots down deep. It's built up in Christ. It's established in the faith. Think of some ways. Hey.

Fellowship is very good. To help us flourish. Look at the words of this one. Psalm 92.13. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

That's a wonderful scripture, isn't it? By serving and gathering with believers we can flourish. We can be used of God. We can be blessed of God. We can bless others as we fellowship.

[26:08] We can flourish. And consistency yields spiritual fruitfulness too. We can know God's spirit working in us. We'll walk in the spirit. And then we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

We can have that spiritual fruitfulness as God's spirit works in us. And we think also of the fruit of the spirit. Of all those characteristics. Of godly character traits.

Love, joy, peace. Long-suffering. Gentleness, goodness, faith. Meekness, temperance. Think of those things. And we can rely upon the strength of God. By his spirit.

It tells how we can be fortified in trials. That God would grant us according to the riches of his glory. To be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man.

So we see rather than the flip-flopping wishy-washy Reuben. We can be rather on this side of the equation. One who's strengthened by the spirit of God.

[27:03] Strengthened with might in the inner man. One who's granted God's blessing by the riches of his glory. We see the fruit of steadfastness. We see the cultivating of that strength.

Of that power. That spiritual power. That steadfast faith. And we know the Bible says, Trust in the Lord. Need not on your own understanding. We know that we've got a blessing there of consistency.

As we seek God. And keep being faithful. Brother, sister. Keep being faithful. Day after day.

Moment by moment. Just say, I'm going to be faithful.

God helping me. I'm going to be faithful. I'm going to be stable. I'm going to have spiritual stability. Not instability. Keep being faithful.

Day after day. Decision after decision. Do what's right. And of course we see prayer as a great resource too. As we commit everything. By prayer.

[28:01] And supplication. With thanksgiving. We let our requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God. Is going to prevail. It's going to pass our understanding. It's going to keep our hearts and minds.

Through Christ Jesus. And we're told, pray without ceasing. Make it your pattern. Make it your routine. And we can endure those trials. Sure, we're going to have moments like Reuben had.

It's going to stare us in the face. Temptation. And Reuben, he just was unstable as water. Sloshing in the bucket. And just going with the flow. And ended up in a big mess.

Or we can be rather like Joseph. As the opposite of Reuben. Who had the same temptation. But he said, no. I'm not going to go near that woman.

Okay. And so rather have that heart. And think, brother, sister. How can we grow that kind of stability? How can I stay accountable? Fellowship will strengthen you too.

[29:02] It's not about just receiving. But you're giving too. It's that assembling together. It's that exhorting one another. And also it talks about a renewing of our mind.

That we not be conformed to this world. But that would be rather transformed. And we've seen that again of the blessing. Of the mind that is settled upon God.

We've seen whatsoever things to think about. Think about these things. Whatever is true. Honest. Just. Pure. Lovely. Of good report. Any virtue.

Any praise. Think on these things. Determine that. And you shall be stable. So there's lots of practical things we can do. Here's a good scripture too. When you're tested.

And you're tempted to be unstable. Ponder the path of thy feet. And let all thy ways be established. Think about. How can I think about the ways of my feet.

[29:59] The paths of my feet. That I'm going to determine. The right way to go. I'm going to walk with God. God. I'm going to have that consistency. God helping me.

Of that daily walk. And it's going to affect my family life too. That I'm going to determine. God helping me to teach my children God's ways. I'm going to determine.

To be. Of good work ethic. I'm going to work hard. And I'm going to. Be a diligent worker. And I'm going to establish routines. That are godly routines. Fixed habits.

That are godly habits. Good habits. Of fellowship. Of ministry. Of within the family. Within our living. That we'll have that.

The godly way is my routine. That's the stable. Stability that we need isn't it. And as a result. God helping us. We'll see a life that honours God.

[30:57] We'll see spiritual fruitfulness. We see the blessed man. The fruit. It was in. Every season. It had that. Spiritual fruit.

Fruitfulness. That. Happened as a result. Of his life. That honoured God. Blessed is the man. The godly man.

The godly woman. And there'll be a godly legacy too. God helping you. That. Your name won't be mud. There'll be times when they'll say. Hey. My father. My grandfather.

They had a legacy. They'll remember you when you're gone. That there'll be a godly legacy. They won't say. Oh. Remember Reuben. Your name won't be mud.

There'll be a godly legacy. And we think of the eternal security that we have. We're anchored in Christ. So think of it as we wrap it up here. Of Reuben's life.

[31:55] It's a call to action. It's a challenge for us. His life. His life began with great prospect. There was great prospect there. But his instability cost him so dearly.

It cost him God's best. Are we missing out on God's best? Because of some whim. Some flash in the pan. Some instability. Some weakness of the flesh. His instability cost him God's best.

Brother, sister, don't miss this. Of instability. Rather than being like reckless Reuben. May we be like faithful Joseph. May we be like Joseph.

He refused temptation. How can I do this great wickedness before God? How can I sin against God? His love for God was more than any love of his own pleasing.

Joseph stood firm in the faith against temptation. Where Reuben faltered. Who are you going to be? Reuben or Joseph? Who will you be? God calls us to an unwavering faith.

[33:00] We think of Abraham. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. But was strong in the faith. Giving glory to God. Think of it. Friends. He was fully persuaded.

Of God's promises. Think of the faith. The father of the faith. Abraham. Are we like him? Are we like Reuben?

Unsteady. Sloshing around like water in a bucket. Unstable as water. Or are we planted like a strong firm tree in Christ? Standing firm. Now, you might say, preacher, I feel a bit like Reuben.

Look, there is hope even if you've been a Reuben. Believe it or not. There's hope even if you've been a Reuben. Reuben's name is on the new Jerusalem. Revelation 21.12. Because God's amazing grace didn't give up on him.

And he's still got a name. Even though his name's mud, humanly. But God's put his name on the new Jerusalem. That's something, isn't it? So there's hope even for those who have failed and fallen.

[34:03] But friends, while we can, don't waver. Stand firm. Don't be like Reuben. Stand firm. Like Joseph stood. With resolute faith.

Repent of double-mindedness. If you have it. Repent of wavering faith. Build your life on Christ. Build your life on those routines of godly disciplines.

Of prayer. Of fellowship. Of scripture. Stay rooted and grounded. Firmly planted. Don't be a flip-flopper. But have that strength.

That accountability. Of godly walk. And know that God's taken us out of the horrible pit. Out of that stinking rotten bog. That miry clay.

And he's set my feet upon a rock. And he's established my goings. That's the picture of the saved, isn't it? That's where I used to be. I'm not going to play in that mud pit anymore.

[34:59] It stinks. It's foul. I'm going to drown in it. I don't want that. That bog. That horrible pit. That miry clay. I want to set my feet. On the rock.

And he's going to establish my goings. And God's going to do that for you. If you'll trust him. And so, friends, tonight. Be single-minded. Not double-minded. Have that single-mindedness.

That focus. Looking unto Jesus. Not flip-flopping around. Not wavering. Not meandering. But like this building that's strong and firm. With strong foundations.

With pillars. And strength. Like the church of God is meant to be. And be single-minded. Hold your course. Hold your course. We're almost there.

The finishing line is in sight. Almost. As it were. That we've really only got moments of time left. Just hold your course, brother. Hold your course, sister.

[35:52] Be steady. Keep steady. And choose today to be stable. To be steadfast. And fruitful in the Lord. We look at scriptures like this one. It says it all, doesn't it?

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast. Unmovable. Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

There's a blessing here. Beloved brethren. There's a blessing for being steadfast.

For being one of those unmovable ones. Hey, don't budge. Rather be a stick in the mud for Jesus. All right? Let's be a stickler in a good way. For that which is right.

For that which is good. For that which is wholesome. For that which is godly. That we'll be steadfast. We're not going to be shifting sands. And flip-flopping and sloshing in a bucket. Like the Reuben. Unstable as water.

But we're going to be steadfast. Unmovable. Always abounding. In the work of the Lord. It's your choice today. Who are you going to be? Reuben? Or Joseph? Let us pray.

[36:50] Lord, we thank you that you are the one who makes us a Joseph. Even though we're inclined to be a Reuben. Lord, we thank you that you give us stability in an unstable world where really everything's tested and challenged.

And it seems like Aussie culture is just go with the flow and do what appeals to the self and the flesh. Lord, help us not to be like that.

Help us, Lord, not to be like Reuben. Just sloshing around like water in a bucket. Unstable as water. Lord, give us stability and strength. Lord, we pray that we're going to be in steadfastness. That our faith would be steadfast, rock solid, grounded upon the rock.

That we'd be rooted, planted, firmly grounded, as it were, as a tree flourishing by the river. Lord, in your word, in fellowship, in your walk with you, in your spirit.

Lord, we pray if there's any here present, they've yet to trust you. They're still in that mess of sin, of confusion, of self, of flesh. Lord, help us to get victory too, if any might be straying or struggling, as we all can from time to time.

[37:56] Lord, help us to have rather that eye to you, to focus upon you, to have our eyes fixed. Looking unto you, Jesus, the author, the finisher of our faith. Lord, we thank you that it took you there to the cross.

That joy set before you was really pain and suffering for you, but it was joy to you. As we know, it brought our salvation in prospect. Lord, we thank you for that.

For each one here tonight, that they'll put their trust squarely in you. That we'll have that firm foundation. That we'll have that sure faith that's grounded, not in our own fickle feelings, our own fancies and our own instability, but rather in that secure knowledge of a sure foundation, of a sure salvation, of an eternal life that's guaranteed, paid for by your blood, entirely by faith, by your grace, as a gift, undeserved, yet received because you've granted it to those who will call upon your name. Lord, we pray we'll all have that trust here tonight. Help us, Lord, to learn to grow, to be more stable, to be stronger, to get godly routines and godly stability and make godly choices that every day, moment by moment, day by day, decision by decision, we'll choose to be stable and we'll choose the right path, we'll choose faithfulness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.