

# Stricken Shepherd; Scattered Sheep

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[ 0 : 00 ] Have you ever been guilty of the kind of overconfidence that actually blinds you to your own weakness? I know I have. You know, it's the kind of self-assurance that will lead you to reject sincere counsel from someone who can spot your deficiencies, but you're unwilling to acknowledge.

You ever been there? I have more often probably than I would be willing to admit. Julie and I have been watching this show. It's produced by the History Channel.

It's called Alone. Anybody seen that? Seen Alone? Here's basically the premise of the show. They take 10 survival experts. They go to a remote area.

I think most recently where we've been watching, they've been in British Columbia up in Canada. Canada, and they drop these 10 contestants off by themselves in the remotest possible places with very few supplies.

In fact, they're only allowed to take 10 things with them. Some of them are guaranteed, and they have to video themselves in the process of doing this thing. And here's the point. Go as long as you can. And the one who stays out there the longest without giving in wins half a million dollars, I think, is the prize.

[ 1 : 21 ] Now, the most anyone has ever done is 100 days. The shortest anyone has ever done is just a few hours. Like within the first day, they've already tapped out. It's really interesting to watch them do this.

Because inevitably, in every season, there is a handful of contestants, and they all have a tremendous amount of skill. There is no doubting that. But there's always a handful of contestants that in the beginning are so confident in themselves that it's almost as if they don't expect this to really be as hard as it's been for others.

They blind themselves to their own weaknesses. They convince themselves that the dynamic of being absolutely alone is not going to faze them. Or that they can handle the big grizzly bears in the wild better than most people.

They're not afraid. Or whatever it is. And they have just this air about them, this overconfidence, this pride, that blinds them to their weaknesses. And inevitably, the people who go into the show like that, they don't make it very long.

They may make it two or three weeks into it. But ultimately, they fall off. And they do it embarrassingly, making lots of excuses along the way. Because the things that they said they would be confident in doing at the very beginning are actually the things that they were the weakest in, that they failed in, in the process.

[ 2 : 43 ] So the ones who do the best on the show are not the ones who deny their weaknesses. They're actually the ones who acknowledge what weaknesses they have. They see these are the things that I anticipate are going to be a problem for me.

And they acknowledge them. And then they do their best to persevere despite those weaknesses. Okay? There's a little bit of that happening here in this section of verses that we just read.

It exposes a self-assurance in the disciples that quite dramatically sets up their inevitable failure. And the focus here is on Jesus' announcement that all of them will soon forsake him. And rather than receive the Lord's words and accept them and pray for strength and for grace in temptation, instead of doing that, they automatically, overconfidently dismiss the entire idea.

Now, can you imagine? Jesus, the one whom you have professed at this point, is the Messiah. He's the one that's going to rule the world. You've seen what he can do.

[ 3 : 57 ] You've heard his teaching. You've seen him foretell things and immediately fulfill them. You've seen everything that he can do. Now he comes to you and he says, you're going to fail me. You're going to fail me.

Can you imagine your first response being, you're wrong? That's exactly what their response is. They look at the Lord Jesus and essentially say, no, you're wrong.

How could I ever fail you? How could I ever forsake you or fall away? There's a spiritual pride. Ultimately, it led them to deny the truth of the Bible.

They reject Jesus's words, their Lord. And then in the process of all of that, they miss a really amazing promise. And in this way, they are the prototypical followers of Jesus.

There's a lot about them that we can both relate to and that we can learn from. And what we find happening in the end is that the Son of Man goes as it has been written of him.

[ 5 : 12 ] And so do his disciples. And so there's three headings that I think will help guide us along. These headings are not original to me. I think they're original to Alistair Begg.

They may not even be original to him, to be honest. But why improve on something that's adequate, okay? There's the three headings I'll give you. A prediction, a promise, and a protest.

A prediction, a promise, and a protest. Let's look at the prediction in verse 26. When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, you will all fall away.

So the narrative picks up here after this monumental Passover meal. Jesus has instituted the Lord's Supper. It's late at night now.

Remember, the supper would have gone up until midnight, perhaps. So this is the middle of the night. Eleven disciples are with Jesus at this moment.

[ 6 : 10 ] John tells us that Jesus had already dismissed Judas in the middle of the meal. Well, he has gone to do what it is that he had planned to do. So it's just Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples now.

In the middle of the night, they're headed to the Mount of Olives. And it's hard to know exactly when this conversation takes place. When you lay all four Gospels beside each other and try to examine this particular event, it's kind of hard to determine whether Jesus has this conversation at the conclusion of the meal in the upper room, or is he saying these things as they are walking to the Mount of Olives on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

But either way, we find Jesus making really another astonishing revelation. During the meal, he says, one of you will betray me.

Now he's going to say, all of you will forsake me. But what is it that Jesus actually means? When he says, all of you are going to fall away, you will all fall away.

What does he mean by that? And I think there's an important distinction that we need to make here between Judas' betrayal and the falling away of the other disciples.

[ 7 : 27 ] And here's really the significance of what Judas did. Judas' betrayal was a willful act of rebellion against the person and work of Jesus.

Do you understand that? Judas' betrayal is a willful act of rebellion against who Jesus said he was and what he claimed to be and what he came to do.

So at some point along the way, Judas has come to the conclusion that Jesus is not the Messiah. He is not who he says he is. Therefore, he cannot do what he claims to be able to do.

And he consciously rejects Jesus in unbelief and instead pursues otherworldly things. And in his particular circumstance, it seems to have been wealth was really his distraction.

And he betrays the Lord for 30 pieces of silver. That's not the same as what Jesus is now saying these other disciples will do. In fact, the language that Jesus used in the Greek tense here is actually in a future passive tense.

[ 8 : 36 ] Suggesting that the falling away would be a fearful lapse in faith rather than an egregious act of rebellion.

So theirs would be a failure in commitment to Christ rather than a willful rejection of Christ. Do you see the distinction there?

Maybe sometimes we would wonder, well, what really makes Judas any different than the rest of the disciples? And that's really the distinction. Judas is saying Jesus is not who he says he is. He cannot do what he claims to be able to do or what we need for him to do.

Therefore, he betrays Jesus. That's not what the others are doing. They're having a fearful lapse of faith in a moment when they are severely tested in faith.

Severely tested in their commitment to the Lord. James Edwards says this. I found this so helpful this week. Jesus warns the disciples to guard against the kind of sinfulness of which most of us are most guilty.

[ 9 : 46 ] Sins of weakness and irresoluteness rather than sins of intention. We do not plan on sinning, but neither do we hold the fort when we ought to.

This is an area that we can certainly relate to these disciples, isn't it? A true disciple of Christ will never reject Jesus and his gospel in the way that Judas did.

A true disciple would never do that. Neither is it likely that many of our sins will be conscious acts of rebellion against God's moral law.

1 John chapter 3 makes that clear. That those who know Christ do not make a practice of sinning. That's not to say we never make a conscious act. It's to say that that's not the characteristic of our life.

Especially as it relates to the person and work of Christ. Our failures generally are related to a lack of resolute faith in God's plan and commitment to God's purposes.

[ 10 : 57 ] Jesus. So think about it in the context of what's going on with these disciples. Eventually, when Jesus is arrested, the disciples flee.

Not because they doubt who Jesus is. But because they fear what will happen to them if they remain firmly and unashamedly committed to him.

So when the soldiers, along with Judas and the servants of the high priest, when they come to get Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and ultimately all of the disciples run away, they're not doing that because they've suddenly decided Jesus isn't the Messiah, and Jesus can't forgive my sin, and Jesus isn't going to rule the world.

That's not why they're running. They're running because in that moment, not a conscious act of rebellion, but an irresolute lapse in faith. They're saying, I'm worried for my life.

I'm fearful for my life. I'm in this moment choosing to save my life rather than to stand by the side of my Savior. Do you see the difference? How often are the sins that we commit not necessarily sins of commission, where we have a moral evil that we willingly choose in rejection of God's law.

[ 12 : 08 ] That's not typically the sins that we falter in. Our sins are typically sins of omission, where God has said, believe me, trust me, follow me, obey me, and instead of moving forward in faith despite the circumstances around us, we falter in our faith, and we choose rather our own path than the path that the Lord has decided, or instead of trusting the Lord, we rely on other means, and we neglect prayer, and we neglect other things in our lives.

In the same way as these disciples, we often fear what will happen to us if we unashamedly remain committed to Christ. What will happen to me if I remain unashamedly committed to Christ in my home?

What will I do when my kids really don't like the decisions that I'm making because they're based on what God wants for us and not exactly what they want to do or what they want for their life? Will I remain resolutely steadfast, committed as a disciple of Christ in leading my home?

What will I do in those moments when, in the context of my work, I am presented with an ethical decision on whether or not I'm going to stand up for what's right because God said it's right, or will I falter into the background, hopefully no one paying much attention to the decision that I make?

What about in relation to our communities? What about this issue that ultimately will fall to perhaps the hands of the voters in regards to the right to life for the unborn?

[ 13 : 47 ] Will we remain resolutely committed to the truth of God? Will we remain faithful in commitment to Him even when the cost is steep?

Do you remember what Jesus said was a part of His call to discipleship in chapter 8? Whoever will save his life will lose it.

But whoever will lose his life for my sake and the gospel will find it. For what good is it if you gain the whole world, but you lose your soul?

Well, this is consistent teaching. Now the disciples are actually being faced with a decision. Really, they're going to have to determine. They're going to have to show, am I serious about following Christ?

And they all failed. Just like there are many times where we all fail as well. Verse 27, Jesus says, Notice that Jesus' statement is not based on His frustration with them.

[ 14 : 57 ] This is not an assumption on His part that because they had failed before, they're undoubtedly going to fail again. He speaks of their failure rather as a fulfilling of Scripture.

As a reality that's based on the truth of God's Word, not on His expectation that they're just terrible men, therefore they probably are going to forsake me in this moment.

He names and quotes Zechariah 13, 7. So He points them directly to the prophecy of the Old Testament that says, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

So Jesus' purpose here is not to reveal their future to them, but to assert that even their abandonment was a part of God's plan to provide salvation for sinners.

Do you see that? You say, why is He even mentioning this to them? Like how many other times have they failed along the way and He didn't bother to tell them beforehand? Why now is Jesus bothering to tell them beforehand why that they're going to fail?

[16:09] And the answer to that is to point them back to Him. He quotes Zechariah and He says, this is what the Scripture says. The shepherd's going to be stricken and then the sheep are going to scatter.

That's you. He wasn't saying that so that they would just know what their future is or so that they could really feel really, really guilty, even more guilty perhaps because they say that they're not. That's not why Jesus is saying this. He's saying this so they will look back to Him and say, no, He really is Messiah. He really is the Savior. He even said what I would do was the fulfillment of the Scripture.

This wasn't about them. This was about Him. Was God pleased by their falling away? Of course not. Was God pleased to use it to display His love and grace through Jesus?

Yes, absolutely He was. And He was so pleased to use it that He proclaimed through Zechariah hundreds of years before that it's exactly what would happen.

[17:10] But they push against the Scripture here. I don't think they do it, but they're not recognizing that's what they're doing, but that's what they do. And they say, no, we would never do that. You know, there's another dynamic of this in the Scripture that speaks to us.

Zechariah wasn't writing about you and me. He was writing about those 11 disciples. That's what Jesus said. But do you know that the Bible also says that each of us have sin, and each of us will continue in sin, not in the bondage of it in regards to judgment, but we will struggle with the presence of sin in our lives until the day that we reach heaven, and all sin is then banished, and we are made new in the resurrection.

The Scripture says that. Why does it tell us that? Is it just to remind us over and over how bad we are? No.

It's to remind us over and over how good He is, that He is the only one that could perfectly fulfill this law. He is the only one that we could possibly look to for salvation.

He is the only one that we could possibly go to for forgiveness, and He provides it to us in abundance. This wasn't about them. This was about Jesus.

[18:31] It's another reminder. All of the Bible, all of history, tells the story of God's redemption of His people, namely through the crucifixion and resurrection of His perfect Son, Jesus.

Notice who's striking the shepherd. God is. I will strike the shepherd, God says. It was always His plan to do this.

Is that not Jesus' purpose in drawing their minds to it again? It wasn't about them. It's about Him. Isaiah 53 was the will of the Lord to crush Him.

He has put Him to grief. If you're doing your Romans readings ahead of Lakeside Connect next week, you will have read Romans chapter 8 when Paul says, what shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. It was His plan.

[19:35] That's the point. It was the plan of God for Jesus to die for our sins. It always was. And as a part of that process, His disciples would fearfully, but temporarily, scatter.

His revelation to them was meant to show them once again the reality of who He was and what He had come to do. Well, that's the prediction. Let's look next at the promise.

Would you look with me at verse 28? After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Of all of these verses, this is the most significant one.

After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. This is the most significant statement that Jesus makes here, and it's the statement that they all missed.

Every one of them missed it. So intent on defending themselves. They've made a statement about them rather than about Him.

[20:39] And so intent on defending themselves, they didn't comprehend the magnitude of this. And it's this dynamic of the disciples that makes this verse almost invisible even to us as the

readers.

Here's what I mean. When I read through this section of verses a while ago, how many of you were impacted by the significance of verse 28? I will rise again, and I will go before you to Galilee.

If you're like me, you didn't even notice it. Because on one hand, you've got this unbelievable revelation that all of His closest disciples are gonna forsake Him.

And we sit back and we think, how could they even do that? After everything that they've said and seen, after everything they've heard, how could they possibly leave Him? And we forget that we do the same thing.

We do the same thing. But we look at this, and we see the drama of it, and we think, wow. And then we see how Peter is so emphatically going against Jesus again in this moment. And we get so distracted by these other things that even we miss this short little statement in verse 28 that brings us all the hope in the world.

[ 21 : 50 ] And they completely missed it. It's another way that we can relate to these men. Have you ever been so overwhelmed by the reality of your circumstance that you failed to recognize the promises of God meant to get you through that circumstance?

Isn't that one of our massive failures? It's not always that we doubt God. It's that we don't listen to Him when He gives us reasons not to doubt.

When He gives us hope and promises and assurance, and we just let it go by unnoticed. It's no wonder that so many of us can tend to wallow in defeat and discouragement.

If we would but take our eyes off of our circumstance and fix them on Jesus and His promises, we would undoubtedly live with joy amid the heartaches and the failures.

And look at the promise itself. It's twofold. First, He promises He would rise from the dead. Now, this has been their problem up to this point, hasn't it?

[ 23 : 02 ] Every time Jesus mentions His suffering and His death to the disciples in Mark's gospel, every time, He also mentions His resurrection, and every time, they completely miss it.

Do you know why? Because they're so focused on what they didn't like about Jesus' death that they totally missed the promise of His life, of His resurrection.

Is that not exactly how we live? So caught up in the circumstances that God brings us in, so frustrated that He would allow us to deal with this, or so frustrated that things aren't going the way that we want them to go.

That's where the disciples were with Jesus on that. They didn't want Jesus to have to do that. They wanted to skip that part. They just wanted to get to the new heavens and the new earth. And how often do we go through life?

This is not how I planned. This is not what I wanted. I don't know why God is doing this. And in the process of that, we completely miss the promises that He gives to carry us through those moments in His goodness and in His grace.

[ 24 : 06 ] And here He's telling them, yes, I'm going to die, but I'm going to raise. I'm going to raise. I'm going to come back to life. I'm not going to stay dead. And they totally miss it. The second part, first part's resurrection.

Second part is restoration. Restoration. That's just so helpful. Not only would Jesus rise from the dead, but He would fellowship with them in spite of their failure.

Do you see the significance in this promise? He never tells Judas, go do what you're going to do quickly. And when it's finished, I'm going to meet you in Jerusalem and we're going to work it out. He never says that to Judas because Judas' failure was different than these men. But what is it that He tells them? You're all going to fall away.

Every one of you are going to fail me. But I'm going to rise up and I'm going to meet you. Go to Galilee. I'm going to be there. We're going to fellowship again.

[ 25 : 16 ] We're going to be together again. This is a promise of restoration. Now can you imagine had these men just listened to the promise? They could have in that moment recognized, yes, I do have weakness.

Yes, I probably will fail Him. He said it is so. But He's going to meet me after. And He's going to be with me after.

And He's going to forgive me after. Now listen, how many times will you go through your Christian life and fail the Lord in the same way that these men did?

Sometimes in ways that no one will see. Maybe internal ways in your own mind and in your own heart. Maybe sometimes in dramatic ways that everybody sees and it's just utterly embarrassing or whatever it may be.

If you belong to Christ, He will always meet you. He will always meet you. He will always forgive you. He will always restore you.

[ 26 : 23 ] Do you realize that's the gospel as it moves on from our conversion? That the same Jesus that enters into our brokenness to save us remains with us in that brokenness to sanctify us and to continue in that forgiveness and to continue in that grace and in that love.

If they would have only listened. Are you hearing Jesus here? He will meet you. He will restore you. The disciples never did grasp this. Not until after Jesus rose from the dead. But would you flip over just a, maybe it's just a page in your Bible to chapter 16.

Just a spoiler alert here. Jesus does rise from the dead. And I want you to see what happens at the tomb. Verse number six.

This is the angel that has appeared to Mary and the other women at the tomb. And he said to them, Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

[ 27 : 37 ] He has risen. He's not here. See the place where they laid him. And then look what the angel says. But go tell his disciples and Peter.

I think that's significant. Peter speaks up in a dramatic way here. The angel speaks up to Peter in a dramatic way at the tomb. Go and tell the disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. And look at the last phrase. You'll see him just as he told you. This was Jesus' promise. And on the moment, the morning of his resurrection, he fulfills the promise.

He did rise from the dead. And then he sends words to the disciples. Go to Galilee. I'm going to see you there. And we're going to talk about this there. And we're going to get through it together there. Do you see what Jesus is doing now? Back in chapter 14. He wasn't mad at them. He's not picking up a fight with them. His words here, even his words of revelation of their failure, are there to assure them.

[ 28 : 46 ] It's to show them that his abandonment was necessary to fulfill the scripture. And knowing their inevitable distress because of that, here's these amazing promises of resurrection and restoration.

Let me say one more thing and we're going to move on. Jesus is not a brow-beating, iron-fisted Lord. He is a compassionate, caring, sympathetic, assuring Lord.

Matthew 11. Come to me, he says. All who labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. Take my yoke.

Learn from me. I'm gentle and lowly in heart. And you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Jesus isn't giving them a hard time. He's giving them hope. He's assuring them. But they missed it. Don't miss it. Don't miss it.

[ 29 : 56 ] Don't miss it. Thirdly and finally, we see a protest. Verse 29, Peter said to him, even though they all fall away, I will not.

It's not a surprise to us that Peter is the one to speak up, is it? He's always the one to speak up. But in case we're tempted to come down so hard on him, let's acknowledge why he's saying this.

He's saying this first because he loves Jesus. And he's committed to Jesus. He's not trying to mask something here.

This is coming from a place where he doesn't want to think about betraying the Lord or falling away from the Lord. He wants to remain committed to the Lord. That's where this is sourced first.

And remember, Jesus had just told them that someone among them was going to betray him. And Peter, the loyalist, is surely disgusted by that notion.

[ 31 : 03 ] He's probably hypersensitive to any kind of thought of betrayal or forsaking that any of them would have. His earnest desire, truly believe, his earnest desire is to love and to be faithful to and to please Jesus.

But Peter was also foolishly arrogant here because he rebukes Jesus again. He did it in chapter 8 too. He rebukes Jesus.

And then he takes it even further than that. And he diminishes the love that others had for Jesus.

Do you see that? In his words, there is a hint of expectation that the other 10 might indeed forsake the Lord.

But an act for him would just be impossible to think of. He's too committed to the Lord. Jesus, though they all do that, I would never do that.

boy, it sounds a lot like us, doesn't it? You know, for a group of people that follow a Lord who is so forgiving and gracious and merciful and kind, we can be a group, speaking as Christians as a whole, we can be a group that is just unbelievably judgmental.

[ 32 : 22 ] And we look to others and assume their sin. Or we would highlight their sin. I would never go that far.

I would never do that thing. I would never fall in that way. And we would castigate others while trying to pump ourselves up before others.

Don't we do that? Is that what Peter is doing here? Lord, they'll all do it. I won't do it. Which, by the way, this is an attitude that Peter, that Jesus corrected in Peter later.

Do you remember the story in John 21? This is while they finally get to Galilee. Jesus has risen. They are fishing and they fish all night and they catch nothing and Jesus is on the shore.

They don't realize that it's him, but he's on the shore and he says, have you tried the other side of the boat? I was fishing a couple weeks ago when we were on vacation on Emerald Isle.

[ 33 : 25 ] We were doing red drum fishing and that morning was just super slow and Andy and I were texting and he had asked me if we caught anything. We hadn't caught anything. He said, you tried the other side of the boat. You know, we could have done that and it wouldn't have made a difference.

So can you imagine they're on the boat. They've been out there all night. They're tired and Jesus says, they don't know it's Jesus, but he says, throw it on the other side of the boat and they throw it on the other side of the boat and they bring in the catch of their lives and they bring it in and there's Jesus and he's already got breakfast ready for them and you remember how it goes.

There's the pile of fish on the beach or perhaps in the boat wherever it was and then the disciples are there quietly. They're all ashamed over what they've done. Every one of them are.

They don't know how to react. They don't know how to respond to Jesus and here's Jesus. He's cooking for them and he's showing such love to them and remember what he asked Peter. Peter or Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?

Now I've heard people say that this had to have been a notion towards the fish that he had just caught as if Peter had quit on Jesus altogether and had gone back to a former life and maybe there's some truth in that but I don't think Jesus is looking over at the fish and saying, Peter, do you love me more than you love fishing?

[ 34 : 43 ] He already knows that Peter has demonstrated that plenty of times before. No, here's what, he's referring back to Peter's statement here. He's looking at the rest of the disciples and he's saying, Peter, do you really love me more than them?

Because that's what you said. Do you love me more than them? Do you see the arrogance that Jesus corrects firmly, lovingly? He corrects it in Peter there.

We're guilty of that same arrogance. Look at verse 30. How is it that Jesus responds? Jesus said, truly I tell you, Peter, this very night before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

In other words, Peter, it's not that you're going to fall away, you're going to outright deny me on three different occasions. Tonight, everybody else is just going to run away. You're actually going to tell people you don't know me.

You're going to invoke a curse on yourself in the process of doing that to others. That's how far you're going to go, Peter. Peter, look at verse 31. But he said emphatically, if I must die with you, I will not deny you.

[ 35 : 52 ] And they all said the same. Declares his loyalty to Jesus even to death. And it's not that Peter didn't mean it. I think he did.

He truly believed he was willing to follow Christ to the point of death. The problem wasn't in his passion. The problem was in his pride. He knew better than to doubt Jesus' words.

But in his pride, he sinned greatly against the Lord. And don't miss the fact that the rest of them affirmed it. Yeah, Jesus, we agree with Peter. We would never do that. We will follow you to the death.

And within a couple of hours, every single one of them have fallen away. The truth is that each one of us is capable of committing the most egregious sins. we have to avoid the pride that fools us into thinking we are safer than others.

Because we're really not. Remember what Solomon said in Proverbs 16? Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

[ 37 : 00 ] Remember Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10, 12. This was in the context of discipline and restoring other believers in the process of their sin.

He says, therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. In other words, you're just as capable of the same sins as Israel was in the Old Testament, Paul says. And you're just as capable of committing the sins that others in the church have committed as well. Don't think too much of yourself. you'll surely fall. But it brings up an important question. What should Peter have done? Should he have just listened to the Lord and then just allowed himself carelessly to sin?

Well, that doesn't seem like it would be right. Of course not. It's neither right to deny our capacity to sin nor is it right to give ourselves over to it.

[ 38 : 06 ] I don't want to get too far ahead. We're going to get there next week. But Jesus actually answers this in the very next section. Look at verse 38. Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. Do you know what's going on with Peter? He has a willing spirit but he's not recognizing the weakness of his flesh. You know what our only course of action is?

Our only course of action is to acknowledge the reality of our sinfulness and continue in prayer for God's grace and God's strength to avoid sin and his mercy when we don't avoid sin.

That's our only course of action. The word tells us we will sin. So stay faithful to prayer. Engage in prayer for God's help for God's grace and then for God's mercy.

Because we all know that we will sin though we don't know the when and how but we can't give into it. Now I'll close this way. Sinclair Ferguson said the marvel of all of this is that Jesus did not love Peter any less.

[ 39 : 20 ] He didn't love Peter any less. Isn't that amazing? Because if somebody does me the way that Peter does Jesus I'm not going to love them at all. And here's Jesus the perfect one who is forsaken by the one who claims that he would go all the way to the cross with him and then not only does he not does he continue to love him but he loves him just the same.

He loves him just the same. He's so full of love. He's so abundant in patience. He won't tolerate our sin but neither will he refuse to forgive us when we seek his mercy.

Remember 1 John 2. My little children John writes I am writing these things to you so that you will not sin but if anyone does sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. He's the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but the sins of the whole world and by this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments. In other words strive to do right realize you're going to mess up but strive to do right and when you do sin remember Jesus is a loving forgiving Savior.

You do not fall out of love with him. He continues to love you and he will meet you. He will meet you in Galilee. It reminds me of that song we sing so often he'll not let my soul be lost his promises shall last bought by him at such a cost he will hold me fast.

[ 40 : 56 ] So what do we do with this? Well perhaps perhaps what you need to do this morning is just solidify your resolve. Remain steadfastly faithful and committed to the Lord and his ways.

Maybe you need to get your eyes adjusted. Adjusted in the sense where I'm not going to make every circumstance in life about me.

I'm not just going to focus on what's happening to me. I'm going to fix my eyes on Jesus and his promises. I'm not going to deny the reality of hardship but I'm going to let Jesus carry me through the hardship.

Look to his promises. Maybe you have some pride like me that you need to abandon. Not think so much of yourself and be vigilant.

Sober for your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Do you know who wrote that?

[ 42 : 03 ] Peter. You know why Peter wrote that? Because Jesus told him in the context of this conversation Luke tells us this Satan has demanded to sift you as wheat Peter but I prayed for you and after you are returned I want you to strengthen all the other men.

Peter missed it. He didn't listen to Jesus' words and he failed. But what Jesus said was true. He did pray for him as he prays for us.

He forgave him. Peter was used tremendously in the lives of those other men. And later on in his life he pens a letter to other Christians who are struggling and he says be sober.

Be vigilant. The devil is after you. So stay faithful. Don't think too much of yourself. That's what I did. Can you imagine Mark taking this gospel to the people in Rome who had requested for it apparently.

He was a companion of Peter and he's writing for the most part Peter's account of all of these things and then maybe as he hands this over maybe perhaps as he reads it to the church in Rome or wherever he may have been at that particular moment when he gets to a passage like this he remembers the fact that it was also John Mark who in the midst of ministry got scared.

[ 43 : 28 ] He didn't have the resolute faithfulness that he should have had and he leaves Paul and Barnabas and he goes back home to mom but then Peter comes to Mark and he takes him as a mentor and then it's Mark who God uses to produce this gospel for us today.

Do you see the reminders of all of this? We all fail. We're going to fail but Jesus is loving and he's faithful and he's forgiving and he's kind.

He's kind.