

Proud Peter and Loving our Savior

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

Date: 27 November 2016

Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0 : 00] We are making what I think is a safe assumption that you know that your children are dismissed! I do love listening to you sing, but I really like saying, turn in your Bibles.

So I want you to turn to John chapter 13. We're going to look at verse 36 through 38 this morning. Before we do that, I want to say greetings to Rich and Christy and their family. All of you are here. Would you stand up, please? I just have to see you at full length. I was praying for Rich.

Rich, I sent him a text. And he said, oh, I'll be in church on Sunday.

I thought, wow. I wish everybody I prayed for were here today. Well, Rich, would you pray for me as I preach this morning?

[1 : 28] And I drink. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 46] and I put those out for you is so that they'll kind of serve as a compass point, something to kind of focus you and lock your mind in on some essential truth for your benefit and for His glory.

For one, I want to remind you of this fact that all things in Scripture are valuable. We have a tendency, there's some passages that we really lock in and we appreciate, and we, oh man, that's great.

But the Scriptures make it clear that all Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable that the man of God may be completely furnished, completely equipped for every good work.

And so when we hit some of those passages that we're naturally inclined to kind of, yeah, yeah, I got that one, step on, don't do it. Ask the Spirit of God to enable you in your study and your appreciation for the Word that He has given to us to dig in and understand what is this passage here for and how does it apply, what does it do in equipping my heart for godliness and leading me in the path of righteousness.

There's another thing that I think is important for us to remember, and that is that when we're in the Scriptures, it's always important to remember that really the center point, the focal point of Scripture is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5 : 12] I like the fact that John's Gospel tells us over in John 20, verse 31, what the theme and the purpose of the book of John is.

What is it? Does anybody remember offhand? These things are written so that you can feel really good about yourself. Am I right? Now, just check in to see if you've been listening to Dr. Phil this morning.

These things are written that you might know that Jesus is the Christ and believing you might have eternal life. Now, I may have lost a word or so, but the point is the heart of Scripture is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isn't that right? And we're going to see that again this morning as we step into this passage.

Ultimately, all Scripture is there to lift up the supremacy and the glory of the Lord Jesus, and that's why we're here this morning, that we find our supreme satisfaction and our delight in the person and the work of Christ.

And so this morning as we are looking at this text, we are kind of reminded that we're dealing with a rather sordid moment, a very sad moment in the life of Peter.

[6 : 29] How many of you would like everybody to remember perfect things about you, your most glorious moments? And yet the Scriptures record the incessant failures of men that God used for His glory.

And here we are, we're looking at Peter's life, and we're picking up on one of the just abject failures of this individual that leaves us kind of wondering, oh, how could Peter do that?

And a fair question is, so why is it here? And we'll get into that a little bit more. But I do want you to understand that this failure of Peter appears in all four Gospels.

That's interesting. I don't mean to suggest that there's kind of a value structure that anything that appears in only one Gospel is not as valuable as something that appears in all four Gospels.

And the point I would make is that most of what we find in chapter 13 all the way to 17, the upper room discourse and some of the things that happened in the last five hours of Christ's life prior to the cross happens only in the book of John.

[7 : 41] And that doesn't mean to suppose that that must be less valuable than what we find in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But it is noteworthy that here we have this particular incident in the life of Peter the Apostle recorded in all four Gospels.

And for the most part, we're not going to jump back and forth between the other Gospels, but we do want to recognize that we're going to pick up some detail there that will help us understand just the depth of the failure of Peter.

Here we are within hours of the cross, and we find Jesus ministering in a very, very pointed and deliberate way to those that He was going to die for.

We saw earlier in our study in the book of John His affection and His tenderness to Judas, and we think, wow, how could He do that to a person who He knew was going to betray Him?

Now you find Him doing something similar in the life of Peter who was going to deny Him in just a few minutes. So as we step into the text, we begin there in verse 36, Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, where are you going?

[8 : 53] I want you to look first of all at a picture of pride. That's what this is, pride. How many of you have ever been involved in a conversation and you're trying to make a meaningful point to someone that you really care about, and the minute you take a breath, they step in with something that is not related at all?

Have you ever been there? They have been waiting to let you know how important they are. And none of you have ever done that, but you've experienced it, right?

And here's Peter. Jesus has been pouring His heart out. He has broken the bread and He's shared the cup, and He says, this cup is the cup of New Testament in my blood.

This bread is broken for you. He's talking about the cross. He speaks about the fact that He is going to be betrayed. And all through this, you can kind of get the sense in this passage that here is Peter. Just as soon as Jesus finishes talking, Peter starts off in a completely different direction. It's kind of like Jesus is saying, yeah, I'm going to die for you.

[10 : 06] I do want you to really work at loving each other because this business of loving each other, it's not like you've got your hands all around this. You need some help. You need some reminder. And as soon as Peter has an opportunity, yeah, well, I understand what you're saying is important, but let me tell you something else.

I've been listening. Where are you going? What's up? Where are you going? And when you find this little statement made by Peter, it is kind of a very sober reminder to all of us that we would be well served if we would be better listeners to what Jesus has to say rather than thinking about our own agenda all the time.

Here's Peter not picking up the details. Well, I want you to look at another of the gospel accounts, and so keep your finger in John. We're going to come back to it in a minute, but turn, if you will, over to Matthew 26.

As we look at the passage in Matthew as well, we're going to pick up some details that help us understand the circumstances and the setting a little better. Matthew 26, verse 31.

Verse 30 says, And when they'd sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, You will all fall away because of me this night, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

[11 : 29] But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter answered him, Though they all fall away because... I will never fall. Can you hear it? There's a guy that's pretty full of himself, isn't he?

You know, yeah. The rest of these guys, I don't know why you picked them, but yeah, I expect them to fall away.

They're a low life, you know. They're not very well spiritually founded, and they're not where I am. They may fall, but not me. I'm with this one. I'm okay.

Okay. So here you have Peter. How many of you have ever wondered just what a loose cannon Peter really was?

Have you ever kind of... Why did you pick him? I debated back and forth about telling the story, but I will. It's always dangerous when pastors debate stories and then go ahead anyway.

[12:29] Am I right, Pastor Sherris? Like afterwards, you have an opportunity to say, I shouldn't have done it, but here we go. When I think about the Bible picture of Peter, it kind of gives me a great deal of hope that if God can use someone like Peter, he probably...

I've got some hope and encouragement, right? I got to tell you, when I was growing up, my parents went out of their way to see to it that the Kenoyer children had every conceivable opportunity of being enculturated.

I learned how to eat chicken with a fork and knife instead of my fingers. It was a long process and really not one that I keep handy anymore, but I learned how to eat chicken with a fork and a knife, and there are all kinds of things that went well.

My parents, as we were traveling back and forth from India, missionaries in India, they made it a point to take us to every dog and pony show. There were places we went, dog and pony show. You're wondering what that's all about. Were they really into dogs and ponies? No, no, no. We went to all kinds of significant, historic museums. We saw them all. All different kinds of cathedrals through Europe.

[13:40] One place that I remember distinctly was St. Peter's Basilica. Does anybody know where St. Peter's Basilica is? It is in Rome.

It is the center point. I remember St. Peter's Basilica for two particular reasons. One is that there was a central place below grade where Peter was supposedly buried.

And my brother Mark decided that he would stick his head, he couldn't see over top. He was short. So he stuck his head down through. How many of you know how balusters are carved?

You know, they're kind of carved like this. And so he stuck his head down through low and he looked to try to get a better picture of where Peter was buried. And then when he decided it was time to remove his head, he lifted it up, got it stuck.

Now Mark, Mark, at that point, was a little poorly developed in terms of logic. And he thought, if he pulled harder, it would work better.

[14:48] And it just, do you know what it caused? It got stuck worse. And then the thought of being permanently snared in St. Peter's Basilica, staring down at Peter's grave, he thought that it was appropriate to kind of up the ante and really cry loudly.

So that's one thing I remember. I remember my brother bellowing and my father in anguished panic, reaching over, pushing his head down, pushing him out. We are in the holy of holies of some kind of faith.

The other thing that just blew me away, walking through, you know, after we got that one calmed down, we're walking through St. Peter's Basilica and looking at all this artwork.

There was a bronze statue of Peter that had the toe kind of worn off.

Does anybody know why St. Peter's toe is worn off in St. Peter's Basilica? Tell me, Mandy, why? So many people have kissed and rubbed St. Peter's bronze toe that it's kind of dulled off and it's lost some of its, you know, distinct features.

[16:07] I thought, yeah, you've got to be kidding me. This guy was, the one we're looking at is different than the ones in St. Peter's Basilica. Do you follow what I want you to do? I've got to tell you, here is Peter, pretty full of himself, pretty arrogant.

And so, I want you to think with me about several things that we learn about Peter in this passage. For one, he was dismissive of the lesson Jesus taught on loving the brethren. He was dismissive of the lesson Jesus had taught about loving the brethren.

Here he was, Jesus had just finished his lesson about loving one another and instead of saying, you know what, I really appreciate this lesson and I need that because I am one who continues to struggle in my love for everybody else other than myself.

Here's Peter, didn't pay any attention and he says, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I understand. Off he goes. And I want you to understand that when we stop and think about this, if we were to rank issues of importance in body life and effective ministry and mission work and survivability and

godliness, what we would have to say is that loving one another is really high on the food chain. It is essential to our spiritual well-being. And here's Peter, not listening, full of himself, not pondering honestly and with humility what Jesus had to say and he was quite ready to go back to another point that Jesus had made earlier.

[17:50] So I've got to ask you this question. How often do you find yourself sidetracked from important spiritual lessons that God is in the process of teaching you and kind of getting buried on things that are of secondary and almost irrelevant importance like personal preferences, Christian liberty or politics?

I have to tell you there is a part of me that is profoundly thankful that we are past November almost, but we're past elections. I hate to tell you, whatever happens in Washington is not as important as some people make it out to be.

The kingdom of God and the work of Christ is ongoing no matter who is there. And so here I look at Peter and I'm reminded that it's pretty easy to get sidetracked.

And also, have you ever thought that you would step off on a different path than your Lord and loving in structure and not been willing to learn the lessons that he had in front of you?

And so when he says to you, you need to work at loving other people. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But I am all about you need to lock down on things that don't count. Abiding in lasting, faithful love for the brethren and is essential.

[19:19] And so here we see Peter, the apostle, instead of learning the lesson that Jesus was focused on teaching him in the last moments prior to the cross, Peter's off on his own. Second, I find it stunning that here we find Peter disbelieving the prophetic word of God through Christ.

Do you hear me? Peter heard exactly what Jesus said about denying him and yet he was so full of his own wisdom and pride that instead of trembling at the prospect of his own spiritual failure, he turned around and he rebuked Christ and corrected him.

Would you do that? Can you imagine yourself doing that? Jesus announces, you're going to deny me. You're going to walk away from me.

You're going to turn your back on me. And Peter says, not me. Now the rest of them, they may do it. I mean, you know, they're not with it, but I'm going to come through.

And I've got to tell you that Peter's open denial of the authority and the supremacy of the word of Christ was a direct rejection of Christ's infallibility and the word.

[20:42] And so I wonder whether there are times in your life where you know the word. How many of you have ever sinned knowing exactly what the Bible has to say about the consequences of sin and doing it anyway?

Come on, everybody raise your hand. All of us. We're saying, you know what? I don't care what you say, Jesus. This is the way I think anyway. Don't disbelieve the prophetic word of Christ.

There's another thing that I want you to recognize, and here is Peter in very quick, closed attitude, diminishing the danger of sin.

Look at the passage there in Matthew chapter 26 again, and Peter says, though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.

Hey, Jesus warned him. Peter had his last word, and instead of thinking very quickly about, you know what? Here is the Son of God, the Word of God, the incarnate Word of God who's telling me I'm going to fall into sin, and instead of being frightened at the prospect of his own carnality and wickedness, here is Peter having an argument with Christ.

[21:55] Peter's quick self-defense and self-confidence in his flesh tell us so much about Peter's lack of fear for his own sinfulness. Everybody listen.

One of the things that should come with you getting older in the faith, are you listening? Is you have an increased fear of the natural tendency of your heart to drift left of center.

Peter, as a good Jewish boy, should have had Proverbs chapter 16, verse 18, memorized, and at the point of recitation with one hand tied behind his back. Does anybody know Proverbs 16, 18?

Here we go. Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. How many of you, when you find yourself getting a little bristly and a little bit full of yourself, have the Spirit of God whisper that obvious verse in your ear?

Here are a couple little tests to tell whether or not you're convinced of sin's danger.

[23:09] They're important, so I want you to write them down. Here are a couple little tests to help you figure out whether or not you have a serious appreciation for sin.

Number one, a healthy prayer life that reflects a love for Christ and a fear for sin. How do I know that I'm where I need to be spiritually in relationship to the struggle I have with sin?

Number one, a healthy prayer life that reflects a love for Christ and a fear for sin. In Matthew 26, verse 41, Jesus said this to his disciples, pray, can anybody finish the rest, that you enter not into temptation.

Bump into a person that has a prayer life that is kind of a microcosm of what they're really like in their thinking. It's like, God bless me, give me a good day, I'd like to have good weather, I'd like to, you know, it's like, what?

That's just a train wreck in the journey to where it's going to happen. Here's the second thing. If you have a conviction regarding the danger of sin, there will be a cautious distancing of yourself from ungodly influences.

[24 : 23] Over in Psalm 1, verse 1, it says, blessed is the man who does not sit, right? Walk, stand, in the counsel of the ungodly.

And so you ask yourself, how much influence do I expose myself to that which inclines me towards ungodliness? I've got to tell you something.

You don't have to just be around ungodly people. You can be affected by what you listen to, by what you engage in and the entertainment that you enjoy, by the kind of people that you're around. You know what? I hear an awful lot about, oh, I'm all doing this for ministry. Really? Who's poisoning who? Psalm 1. Psalm 1.

Blessed is the man that does not. It's talking about influence. Third, if you're going to have a sensitivity to sin, is there a consistent and affectionate time in the Word of God? But his delight, now let me say it carefully.

[25 : 25] I want you to think about this. His delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law he meditates both day and night. Do you know what it means to delight in something? I'll give you a comparison.

How many of you were looking forward to Thanksgiving dinner? You delight in it. It happens once a year. I read an interesting little blog that said that you ought to spend one day a year just grumbling and 364 years being thankful.

And it's like, okay, today's the day I should be thankful. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, forget it. Yeah. How many of you were looking forward to Thanksgiving dinner because it's like, it's turkey.

Yeah. Brined in case you want a good bird. mashed potatoes, golden Yukons with the skins on. You know, little details you have to know, right?

And it's like, how many of you in advance of Thanksgiving dinner gorged yourself on potato chips? Did you do that? No, it's like, I'm coming to the table hungry.

[26 : 38] And, you know, I'm diabetic, I'm going to dose myself a little extra, but it's okay. Okay. Here we go. One other thing I want you to see about Peter, it strikes me.

That passage in Matthew chapter 26, here he says, though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away. Here we find Peter discrediting other believers. That's significant.

Read the text and ask yourself how often you have thought ill of others and suspicioned their weaknesses and assumed that you knew their hearts.

Yeah, I know what they're thinking. Do you? You're right up there with Jesus. Oh, yeah. Here was Peter, full of himself, accusing and demeaning other people.

And so here we are in the shadow of the cross looking at Peter and discovering that he is far too much like each of us and here is a person who desperately needs the grace of Christ.

[27 : 48] So, here's the part I really like. That's where we get to see Jesus. Isn't that right? So, I want us to think about our gentle and loving Savior. Here he is going back to the passage in John chapter 13.

Jesus warns his disciples of their frailty and one of the precious truths of our God and our Savior is that he is good. And this passage serves as an illustration of his goodness because we see it in his willing announcement to us in advance of what our frailties and our weaknesses are and warning us of the danger to come.

How many of you know that this is a characteristic of God? He always tells you ahead what you need. And he also warns you of the consequences of not following his path.

How many of you have learned that people who are a little hesitant to share full information are really not trustworthy and don't have your best interest in heart?

Right? The nature of Satan is he doesn't tell us what the outcome is. God in his kindness puts it all out in front and gives us all the information we need in order to make a wise decision.

[29 : 08] Here is Jesus saying to his disciples, listen, let me tell you something. Here's what's going to happen. And so I want you to understand that when we think about Jesus, we recognize that his nature and his character is to put it out there in front so we know what's coming.

Jesus guides and teaches his own. And he warns them of sin and encourages them to walk in truth. And this is evident as we look at the disciples here.

We see that they had all the information they needed in order to make a good decision and yet what happened? They didn't. It's quite evident that the disciples over and over again did not listen to Christ's counsel and they suffered because of the hardness and the disobedience of their heart.

So let me ask you this question in practical terms. Are you really listening to hear the voice of God in your ear? Now, when I say that, let me back up just a little bit because there are people that are going to come to me and say, I heard God tell me.

Everybody smile. I heard God tell me. I don't buy that. What I do believe is that the word of God is the way in which we hear the voice of God. Can I say that real, slowly?

[30 : 26] We hear the voice of God through the word of God. Now, if what you mean when you say, I hear God told me is that you had the spirit of God remind you of a passage of scripture and, oh, yeah, yeah, I got that.

I got that. But when a person comes and tells me, I heard God tell me that I should go to China, I say, really? Where is that in the Bible? I mean, China, you know. Should you go next door to your neighbor?

Absolutely. Should you be an evangelist? Should you share the gospel? Should you be interested in the well-being of others? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, do you follow my point? So I want you to recognize here that when you look at this case, we see that Jesus guides.

He gives instruction. There's something else. I want you to recognize that Jesus also lovingly corrected Peter's self-inflated confidence.

Question. How many of you here are so abjectly grieved by your own frailties that you have no self-confidence?

[31 : 39] Don't raise your hands. Here we go. Before Peter fell, I want you to see that we receive in the text further instruction and correction.

Back in that passage in Matthew chapter 26, and I turned away from it so back we go. Matthew chapter 26, verse 33 and 34. Listen to what it says there. Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you that this very night before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

Peter said to him, Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you. And all the disciples said the same. Now if you look back at John chapter 13, you're in Matthew, but go to John chapter 13, verse 38.

Listen to what it says there. John 13, 38. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly. How many of you know what truly, truly is? Truly, truly is like, get this.

This is it. I'm telling you the truth. Don't miss the point. So when Jesus says, truly, truly, what he is saying is, pay attention, Peter. And so I got to tell you that there are some of you here this morning that are receiving the warning signs of God about an issue in your life and heart, and Jesus, knowing what's going on in your thinking, is saying, you need to be really careful.

[33 : 09] There's some of you here that are hearing his warning about the dangers of bitterness, the danger of immorality, the danger of being full of yourself and pride and dealing with unforgiveness.

And I got to tell you how it works out. There's some of you saying no to God. And here are the little indicators. When God is dealing with an issue of sin in my life and an issue of sin in your life, the first thing he does is he used your conscience to prompt you, don't do it.

Don't do that. And by the way, when God says, don't do that, he always has a little parenthetical statement that is, this is not going to glorify me and it is going to hurt you.

It's like when a parent says, do not put that knife in the wall socket, the kid says, yeah. Okay. So God says, don't do it.

The Spirit of God says, don't do it. The friend says, don't do it. The wife, the dad, don't do it. And when you are unwilling to listen to the gentle prompting of God, he will then bring harder voices and harder issues to bear.

[34 : 27] Why? Because he loves you enough, he's not going to let you get away with it. One other thing that I want you to hold on to here about Jesus and look at Luke chapter 22, verse 31, and this is one that just blows me away.

Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Simon, Simon, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

You remember when in the book of Job we find that Satan shows up in heaven and God says, hey, you been thinking about how my sermon Job is doing?

Yeah. Yeah. Pretty good guy, isn't he? Yeah. Yeah. But I'll tell you what, if you let me mess with him, he's out. Here is Satan asking if he can trash Peter's life.

Huh? I want you to listen. There's not a one of you here today that is a believer that does not have the adversary that wants to absolutely ruin your life.

[35 : 55] He is interested in destroying you. Those who are the children of God don't lose their salvation when they trash their lives, but I'll tell you what, they suffer and Satan wants to ruin things.

There's not And so here is Jesus saying this to Peter.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Do you get that?

Peter, you are pretty full of yourself. And you are going to suffer because of your stubborn pride. But it isn't over because I have prayed for you.

And when you come out the other side, I want you to put your energy into helping other people who will be struggling. And so I find great consolation.

[37 : 06] I find great encouragement. In fact, that Jesus bathed the weak and sinful Peter with prayer. If you're a believer this morning, I've got to tell you something.

He's praying for you. Do you need it? Yes. Do you need it? Yes. Hebrews 7, verse 25.

And just mark this down and look at it. It says, He ever liveth to make intercession for you. What's Jesus doing today? He is at the throne praying for Tim Kenoyer.

He's at the throne praying for you. And His present ministry is to hold us up and plead our case and care for our well-being.

So let me close with a few practical words for you to hold on to this morning. For one, The word is settled and sure.

[38 : 12] The word is settled and sure. As you look at this account of Peter, I've got to tell you, what is promised will come about.

And there are some of you here this morning that you're not paying attention to that. The word is settled and sure. What Jesus has to say is absolutely certain and it may be relied upon.

Number two, pride goes before destruction. Isn't it interesting to see this practical illustration of Proverbs 16, 18 in Peter's life, right?

Huh? How many of you need stories and pictures? We all do. And so here is Peter, right? I guarantee you they didn't build that great big basilica because of his real life.

Peter was subject to like passions as I am and you are. But we have this picture that reminds us pride goes before destruction. And I've got to tell you that as I read this story of Peter, it would seem that he did learn.

[39 : 31] Why do I say that? Because over in 1 Peter 5, verse 6, here's what it says. This is Peter. He is close to dying.

And he has a little bit of advice for the believers that are going to be left behind when he packs it out. Do you know what he has to say?

Listen to this. How many of you have found that you get irritated by things like traffic, by other people's lack of God-honoring punctuality, by people's lack of consideration for your personal preferences?

I mean, after all, it should be the way I want. Do you understand? Again, humble yourself beneath the mighty hand of God that in due time, what? He'll exalt you.

As I read the story of Peter, I am so very thankful that I see an example of someone that over time eventually began to learn humility.

[40 : 55] That is one of the benefits of lasting relationships. I was explaining to someone earlier today in the new membership class, I was explaining that one of the blessings of lasting relationships is you get to see the work of God over time.

You know, pastors are there every two or three years and the next guy comes in after and after. You don't get to see what God does over time. You get to see Peter early. You get to see Peter late. And you say, wow, if God can do that in Peter's life, he can do it in mine. Finally, finally, Jesus will not let you go.

I want you to write that down. Jesus will not let you go. Jesus will not let you go. Jesus will not let you go.

If you are here this morning and you are the child of Christ, I got to tell you, the child of God, you don't have to ask the question, am I going to make it home or not?

[41 : 56] And the answer is yes. And he'll get you there. He'll get you there. He will do whatever is necessary to help you grow in grace.

And here's the deal. You can make it easier on yourself or you can just go ahead and test the limits and find out how much he really loves.

Now, can I tell you that from personal experience, it's not a good thing to mess with him when he wants to get you home. How many of you learned as little children that it's a whole lot better to let your daddy lead you where he's going rather than make him drag you?

I was one that was drugged. But I got to tell you, Jesus will not let you go. So let me ask you this question this morning as I close.

Is Jesus really your Savior? Is he your Savior? Is he your Savior? Do you have the relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that Peter had and is here for our sake and edification?

[43 : 20] Does that make sense? There's no reason to tell this story without seeing Jesus in the center of it. Do you know him? Truth of the matter is, there's some of you here this morning that have, you've heard all the stories.

You can sing all the songs. But the fact of the matter is that you've never come to the place where you, in absolute, abject humility, have cried out and said, I am a mess and I need Jesus as my Savior.

The story doesn't end well for those who refuse. The Savior who came into this world to die for our sins and rise again that we might have salvation, not through our own efforts, but by his finished work.

And I want to appeal with you, plead with you, if you need Jesus, I've got to tell you, today's the day. Do not walk out of here in hardness of heart, refusing the sweetness of our Savior. Let's close in prayer. Our Father God, this morning as we lift up the Lord Jesus Christ, we lift him up in absolute confidence that Jesus is the Savior of the world, the Lord in glory.

[44 : 56] And the day is coming that he will return and all those who know him will enjoy heaven forever. And those who willingly refuse the sweetness of the gospel will spend all of eternity in bitter, hard, resentful, angry suffering.

And it is our plea this morning that your spirit would break through the hardness and bring the gospel in its sweetness.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.