Mercy on Disciples

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] Well, this is a first for me. I'm taking out my cell phone, and any of you who know me know my cell phone is, should I! say this?

It's possessed. And I say this because it sometimes rings at the most inopportune times, and I'm trusting that it won't do that. I have misplaced my watch, and I'm not relying on any of you to tell me what time it is.
So, I'm going to rely on my cell phone to give me hints of, you know, how much beyond 10 after 12 I go. You think I'm joking.
So, for me to say that I need your prayer would be something you've not heard before, and it's desperately true.
Any and every time a man stands to preach the Word of God, it is right.
[1:23] It is biblical in that it fits the frame and instruction of Scripture that people should pray, both that their hearts are receptive to the Word of God, because I'm certain there are going to be things that are said today, as is in every case where the Word is taught, that there are things that affect your heart and life, and God intends for you to respond to them.

And so there is a part of your responsibility of praying that the Word of God would have free course. And then it's appropriate also to pray for me that what I say is governed and controlled by the Spirit, is faithful to the text, and lifts up the Lord Jesus Christ.
That's a burden that you have. Do you understand that? You have an obligation, a responsibility, and I'll say this carefully. Average people praying for average pastors enable exceptional preaching. Don't ever forget that. Don't ever forget that. So, let's turn in our Bibles to John chapter 7, verse 53.
Actually, I'm going to begin in my text, and this is not an original manuscript. They're gone. Nobody knows where they are.
[3:00] But I'm going to be reading in the English Standard Version, and some of you may also have a little parenthetical comment. I'm going to read that this morning, and it has bearing on the lesson.

The earliest manuscripts do not include 753 through 811. They went each to his own house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
Early in the morning, he came again to the temple, and all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and placed her in the midst.
They said to him, Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now, in the law of Moses, in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such woman.
What do you say? This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.
[4:04] And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her. And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

And when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones. And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.
Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, sin no more.
Let's pray. Our Father, this morning as we take this passage of Scripture in hand, we're mindful of the clear instruction and the explanation in the text, not just here, but what you tell us is that we are

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dependent upon you working in us for us to comprehend and apply the sweetness and beauty of this passage.
And we confess that it's fairly easy for us this morning as we are gathered together to allow our minds to kind of slip over into autopilot and just kind of bear with the time that lies between now and our departure.
[5:31] Some of us perhaps speculating upon what we'll do after the service is over. Others of us actually scrolling through and thinking of things that we would be tempted to consider important, such as things we may want to buy or what we're trying to do on the holidays and all different kinds of little thoughts that have nothing to do with eternity.

And so we're mindful this morning that we need your help to bring every thought into captivity to the glory of Christ. We need your help to hear the Word of God and apply it directly to our own lives. We need your help to grow to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ, that He who abides supreme would be glorified in our frail lives.
And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, this morning I can't think of another time where I read you a little parenthetical statement at the very opening that really addressed the issue of a textual variant, and there's a reason for that.
My general pattern of beginning a sermon is to read the passage, give you a little comment, an overview, and then pray, and then off we go to the work. Today, my complete confidence in the inerrancy and the preservation of Scripture prompts me to spend a little extra time this morning presenting a defense for my complete confidence in the authority and the reliability of the Word of God.
[7:20] And I have no hesitation in saying to you that what 2 Timothy 3, verse 16 says is entirely true. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it's reliable, it's profitable, that the man of God may be completely furnished for every good work.

And this passage is no exception. I think many of you, and I'm just curious, raise your hand, if you have a Bible that notes the fact that this is one of those passages that is a little atypical.
How many? Wave that so I see. Okay? Most of you have some indication that this passage is one that doesn't appear in the earliest manuscripts.
And that little announcement actually tells us something important. For one, it tells you that the translators of Scripture are painfully honest in mentioning what this text is and how it relates to the rest of the Scriptures, and they let you know the information that has governed most of the gathering and the including in the canon of the Scriptures.
I appreciate their honesty, and I respect it a great deal. And for another, the note alerts you to one of two passages in the New Testament that are not as well documented in ancient Greek texts.
[8:44] The other one, does anybody know without looking? Does anybody know what the other one is? You know what it is? It is in what gospel? Stephen? Pardon?

No, the woman at the well is there. I'm thinking about Mark chapter 16, the last couple verses. And so, any of you want to speed over there and kind of take a look?
There's another indication of an extended passage that doesn't have documentation in the earliest texts. Now, that being said, I could take time here to give you a lengthy overview of the way in which our Bible was put together and the rules that governed the verses and parts that have been included that you hold in your hand.
And the fact of the matter is, is that our Bible that we actually have did not come, has not come to us from an original manuscript. Now, what do I mean by original? Case in point.
Paul sat down and wrote a passage, Scripture, Ephesians or whatever it is, he used in Emanuensis in many cases, but that was sent directly to the… No copy of Paul's… I shouldn't say no copy.
[9:57] No original of Paul's letter exists. But there are countless, countless texts that are copies of the original, and those recopied portions are the things from which the Scriptures have been gathered that you and I hold in hand.

And translators, eventually, when they got together to translate the Bible, whether it was from Greek or from Hebrew into English or whatever language that they relied upon, what they did was they

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relied upon copies and they paid very careful attention to each word.
Let's take, for example, they had 10 copies of Isaiah chapter 50. Use that as an illustration. One of the things they wanted to check was to see that each word was the same in the 10 copies, so that there was a reliable accuracy across the… How many of you played telephone by any chance? You ever played telephone? I remember when I was… Steve, you're the guilty party on telephone. In the Steve Rice small group, we played telephone, and by the time it got… We were only six or seven people around the room, and by the time it got to the end of the… It's just a mess.
Well, relying upon the complete accuracy of the translations, one of the things that the people who put together the Scriptures have done is they've very carefully matched up the different copies to see, are these words exactly the same in each one of the various copies?
[11:39] And that's one of the things they rely upon to guarantee the accuracy of the text. And where there are wording variations, and there are a couple of them, there are several, one of the things that the translators have always done is, for one, they give preference to the wording that comes from an earlier copy.

If the copy was actually made in, let's say, 100 years after the apostle wrote it, it tends to be viewed as more reliable than a copy that was made 300 years later, by virtue of that common expression or expectation that the further down the food chain you go in playing telephone, probably the further you get from the real pieces.
And so, preference is generally given to those that are earlier copies. Second thing that is given preference is when the wording appears to be the same in most copies.
It only is a variant in maybe one of 100 copies. Another preference is given in matching what the verse says against all of the rest of the record of Scripture.
And that's one of the things that I'm going to rely on this morning as we work our way through to understand this passage. We're going to discover that what this passage teaches us about Jesus is absolutely consistent with the rest of the record of Scripture.
[13:13] I want to tell you something. One of the real tests of the authenticity of a translation is the doctrinal clarity with which it puts things out in front of you.

Whether you're reading the Scriptures in English or Hindi or Spanish or Latin, whatever it is, if it is the Scripture, it's going to present the same doctrine across the spectrum.
Does that make sense? In fact, people come to me, they kind of get wigged out, and, Pastor, you're not using the King James Version, and it is the one version that has God's absolute reliable stamp on, and my rebuttal is this.
Okay, so tell me, which doctrine does ESV get wrong? No, it doesn't. And so when people are weighing, well, this John 8 passage, it doesn't appear in some of the manuscripts, but is it consistent with the record of Scripture and the picture we have of the Lord Jesus Christ?
So since our passage doesn't appear in the earliest manuscripts, allow me to pose several questions that I gathered this week in reading one of the comments that John MacArthur made.
[14:28] He said this, Do these verses teach truth that violates any other passage of Scripture? And the answer is no. No. Second, do they, in fact, corroborate other passages in Scripture and substantiate it?

The answer is yes. And keep your finger there in John and turn back to John 3, verse 17. We have a very interesting picture here.
It's not going to appear on the screen. Sometimes I'll say something and people look, and is that going to come up? This time it's, how many of you notice that I sit down here and make notes? I make notes in the morning, Sunday morning as I'm praying and preparing.
What I have in hard copy and what happens at the pulpit always gets kind of amended a little bit. John 3, 17. Listen to it. It says this, For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.
That passage gives us a picture of Jesus behaving in John 8 in complete consistency to what we read in John 3, verse 17.
[15:38] So the question, the second question was, does what happens in this passage corroborate other Scripture and substantiate? And we see that to be true. And the third question is this, is there definite and conclusive evidence that this passage should be left out?

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And the answer is no. So with that said, we want to dig into this passage with complete confidence, believing that it tells us the truth about the Lord Jesus and teaches us lessons that you and I, sitting here this morning, need to learn.
Let's look first of all, if you will, going back to John 8, that this passage gives us a very interesting little picture of our Lord Jesus, the flesh, the part, the word incarnate part.
Okay? And so you look here in John 8, and it says there in verse 53 of 7, actually it says, they went each to his own house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
Let me have you turn back to a passage that I do mark for you, and I want you to look at Isaiah chapter 42, Isaiah chapter 42, verse 1 through 4.
[16:52] Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights, I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry aloud, or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint, or be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his law. What we find in this passage, going back to Isaiah, is a picture of the Lord Jesus that was contrary to the popular expectation of what the Messiah would be like.
You know, they expected Jesus, when he came into Jerusalem, if he was doing it according to their plan, he would have been riding on a white charger, he would have been strong, and mighty, and powerful, and he would have absolutely stomped out those nasty Romans, and dealt with all the sin in the world.
You know, bang! By the way, when he comes back the second time, guess what's going to happen? It will happen, right? When Jesus comes back to bring his kingdom and reign, it is going to be glorious, and there will be no relaxed kind of, he is going to come with authority and power.
[18:19] But this time, he came, how? On a donkey. Slow, easy, gentle. And as we open up this passage, we find that after that grand and glorious announcement in John chapter 7, I am the one that you can rely on to give you salvation, and also to make you a satisfier of other people, everybody's heard the message and they go off to go to bed.

Maybe sit around the small little living room that they had in those ancient homes, and it was a pretty impressive day that we had today, and Jesus was in top form.
Did you notice how he made that wonderful announcement and blah, blah, blah, and eventually, well, good night, see you tomorrow, I love you, blah, blah, and off they went to sleep. What did we learn about Jesus?
Look there at Romans 8, at John chapter 8, verse 1, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. The throng went home.
What did Jesus do? It says that he went out to the Mount of Olives. We know from Luke that Jesus often went to the Mount of Olives. It was his custom, is what Luke tells us.
[19:34] And we know that it was a place of prayer, and I think it is fair for us to anticipate that, or to at least speculate, that one of the things that Jesus did when he retired to that quiet place is he spent time in prayer.

But I want you to understand also that when Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, he also went there to rest because he was very human. And so just imagine that instead of demanding to be housed in a spectacular fashion because he was, after all, the Messiah and the Lord of hosts, he goes up, and as would happen in that ancient culture, he took the heavy coat that he had, and he laid down on the ground and he rested there alone.
That's a profoundly humbling picture of our Savior, isn't it? Remember what he said to his disciples when they said, well, I'm going to follow you. He says, let me tell you, foxes have holes, birds have nests, and the Son of Man has what?
Nowhere to lay his head. Profoundly humble in his ministry. The next morning as Jesus got up, it tells us that he came into the temple.
Look at verse 2. Early in the morning, he came again to the temple. All the people came to him. So I want you to imagine this scene as well. Here is Jesus. He's rested for the night. He gets up early, and he goes to the temple.

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[21:00] What does he go to the temple to do? He goes to the temple to do that which was in his heart and was for the well-being of God's people. He said he came there to teach the word.

By the way, I want you to understand that it must have been very unnerving for the scribes and Pharisees to see Jesus arriving at the temple again because what they knew is that people flocked to be around him to hear his teaching.
Remember in John chapter 7 that when the police officers came back to the Sanhedrin and said, Did you bring him? No. Nobody ever spoke like he did.
And here's Jesus in humility coming back into the temple just quietly, unassuming spirit, and he sits down and he begins to teach.
Isn't that a little different than a lot of what we see today in those who are the heavy lifters in public, even Christian venues? So and so will be out on stage in five minutes.
[22:10] And here's Jesus kind of wanders in and sits down at the temple and just begins to teach. You see, you look there at John chapter 8 verse 2 and what you see is Jesus doing what he loved to do.

He was always invested in gospel ministry. Everything was tied back to his ministry, to the hearts of people. That was his primary interest.
And I've got to say something to you this morning. At the heart of what we are gathered together this morning to do, listen to me, is not kind of endure sitting here temporarily thinking that you're going to get points for showing up.
We are here this morning to hear and learn about the character of our Savior so that our hearts could grow in our affection for him and that we, as a result in growing in our affection for him, may be growing to be more like him.
Does that make sense? Everybody smile. Look at me for just a second. Please, please, look up, look up. The teaching of the word of God aims at helping you grow to be more like Jesus.
[23:30] Isn't that right? What does real growth look like? Let me make this point. You should be different spiritually tomorrow than you were today.

Now, there's some of you that actually, if you were to put your finger on it, you're really just as grumpy and as unhappy today as you were five years ago. That's not the problem of the word of God.
No reason for that. Jesus came and he taught the word and in his teaching, his intent was to see people's hearts touched by the hope and the sweetness of the gospel.
So in this stage of Christ's affection for people, in come the scribes and Pharisees.
You can keep them, see, they're dressed well. How many of you remember how the scribes and Pharisees dressed? You know what I mean? You can kind of pick their rank by their dress.
[24:36] Stomping in there. Here they come. Look at the scene there in verse 3. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in a dolpring.

Ah, this next little piece is going to help us see Jesus resisting. Here he was, teaching, unpretentious, unassuming, simple in his affection, and in come these arrogant self-confidence, full of them.
How many of you don't like people who are overly impressed with themselves? There's something in us that resists arrogance. I mean, would you agree? We struggle with it every day. We look at it in the mirror, but when we really see it front and center, it's like, I can't take it, right?
And so here come the scribes and Pharisees. Example A of how not to be. And they walk right there in front of Jesus. And, by the way, I thought about this.
How many of you think they were leading her gently by the hand? One Pharisee on one side and another Pharisee on the other side. Why don't you come with us? We're going to take you to Jesus now. I don't think that's what happened.
[25:46] In fact, kind of, now there's no reason for actually saying anything definitively here, but I can't imagine that they probably weren't even holding on to her. You know, I mean, who, who of a Pharisee would hold the hand of a known adulterer?

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By the way, so that there's some textual support for my cautionary thought here, you'll remember over in Luke chapter 7, I think that's where it is, 739.
Remember, the Pharisee invites Jesus to dinner, and in comes a woman, and what? She puts her hands on the teacher. And what does, what does that Pharisee think to himself?
How many remember? if he, if he were a prophet, he would know what kind of girl this is, right? Don't be touching me, you low life.
I don't know for sure, but they probably had her roped up and dragged in there because, you know, they weren't putting hands on her, but then they bring her in front of Jesus, and they dump her there in front of Jesus, and here's what they have to say.
[26:50] Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now, in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such a woman, so, what do you say?

I can just imagine the committee meeting they had. I'm truthfully, you know. I can just imagine the committee meeting they had planning this particular little trap.
So, what can we do with Jesus? Well, we've obviously got to catch him some kind of difficult predicament that is going to compromise the respect he has in our culture, and so, well, how can we do that?
Oh, well, why don't we? And we do know, verse 6, they said this to test him.
Now, by the way, test is not, how many of you have taken tests in which you really know that the teacher is interested in you passing? I suspicioned that that was never the case in my case, but the truth of the matter is that sometimes I got softballs and still missed them.
[28:09] But, you know, they were not interested in Jesus passing this test. I know that went right over top of some of you. It never went over top of me.

But, here we go. They were trying to trap Jesus. And we know that from the passage. There are a couple things that are really giveaways on this.
For one, we do know that they did not bring the man. Now, I'm not going to go into the biological issues of this, but I got to tell you that adultery is a two-party sport or a two-party sin.
Let me rephrase that. We delete that sport word there, okay? It's a two-party sin. It's something that you can't do by yourself by definition.
Now, for another, these scribes and Pharisees knew that stoning for adultery had not generally been practiced in Israel for over a thousand years.
[29:17] Now, I can't say that definitively, but scholars indicate that adultery was a fairly common problem in Israel. Israel. And if you were to read back through the kings and the prophets, et cetera, you will know that the record indicates that Israel was just about as wicked as other groups.

there was another little piece that we have to recognize. The laws of Rome, which at this time were actually governing Israel, particularly in relationship to capital crime, did not prescribe execution for adultery.
adultery. And so here they were, they were stepping into the setting and they were saying, oh, by the way, Jesus, in the law of Moses, it says that those who commit adultery should be stoned.
Oh, what do you have to say? They knew that if Jesus said, well, stoned a girl, that he would have been charged with being the perpetrator of the crime.
And if he'd said, not in your life, they would have said, you don't buy Moses? The dilemma is interesting because here, obey Moses or do what Jewish culture had been good doing for a thousand years or overstep Rome and go ahead.
[30:44] It's interesting how Jesus responded, right? In the face of these pompous, self-righteous, inflated egos, you can kind of hear them snorting, go ahead.

tell us what you think. They're full of themselves. What does Jesus do? Did you get it? The most disrespectful thing, he doesn't pay attention.
In fact, he gets down and writes on the ground. I mean, do you understand that writing in the dust and not even looking at the accuser is a supremely offensive thing?

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thing. It's like, I don't even have the time of day to pay attention to your super silly idea. Now, here's a little cautionary note.
We don't know what Jesus wrote in the dirt. Do you follow that? I think it was Cecil B. DeMills and someone can text me later and let me know. I do have my phone.
[31:47] But, stop. Okay. I got a text here that says, it's currently 25. You go, pastor. Okay, got it. That's good. All right.

I'm ready. Go. Okay. Stop. Here's the deal. You listening? We don't know what Jesus wrote in the dirt.
All God's people said, amen. Let that be an instruction to you. If it isn't clear, don't go there. And, determine not to add to scripture.
I don't know if it was Cecil B. DeMills or whoever it is, but I remember seeing the movie and the guy, the director, decided that it would help me understand who Jesus was or at least what was going on.
Remember, if he kind of wrote in the dirt and he put the sins that they were committing and they were convicted by that. I'm not convinced at all that's what happened. In fact, I'm pretty certain that didn't happen.
[32:48] And I'll argue the case in just a moment. But my caution to you is this, is that where scripture isn't clear, be careful, be cautious, be disciplined even in what you imagine.

So, now, notice what he did. He wrote in the dirt, and then, as they continued, we find him exposing sin. As they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.
The English translation, which says let, kind of misses the thrust of this passage, because what Jesus is actually saying is, all right, all right, why don't we allow, that's kind of the idea of let, is why don't we allow the one who is without sin to throw the first stone.
Instead of falling into the trap that these scribes and Pharisees had so carefully put together, we find that he turns the tables on these men two ways. One, he challenges them to actually follow the law of Moses and have the direct witnesses!
That's what he said. He was saying, hey, listen, the law demands that the witnesses to the crime be directly involved in the execution.
[34:24] And so here, these Pharisees and scribes had brought this woman caught in the act, and they're standing there saying, well, yeah, should we stone her? And Jesus said, hey, why don't we allow the person who's without sin to throw the first stone?

You do it. And in the course of the argument, what Moses' law clearly said is that it's not just the woman who is guilty of adultery and deserves the penalty.
So the obvious question to all those who are sitting around, where's the man? Like I said, adultery is not a solo sin. Well, they had to pass on that one.
But there's another thing that he challenged them to do, and that was to violate Roman law and put themselves at risk. I've got to tell you, Rome was not very passive. They were, they were, listen to me very carefully so you understand this.
We live in a day where politicians are all good about talking about things and not doing much that really is of substance. Do you follow that? I mean, hey, why don't we have another conference about what to do about terrorism, right?
[35:43] Let's talk about it. Rome was really not good about talking more than single sentence statements. They would come up to a city and say, hey guys, would you like us to take over your government and allow you to be subjects of Rome?

Question. Answer was yes, no. If the answer was no, guess what happened to the city? It was, the polite word was invested.
They built a moat around it and they kind of just starved it into submission and when they were absolutely close to absolute disaster, Rome would go in there and slaughter them. And those that they didn't slaughter would be turned into slaves.
And the rumor would get out that it wasn't good to mess with Rome. And so these Jewish leaders knew that anybody who picked up the first stone and threw it at this woman would be on Rome's hit

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list.
I'll pass. I'll pass. So how did this thing conclude? You look there and it says this, he once more bent down and wrote in the dust.
[36:57] Was that a zinger or not? Hey, I'm done. Go for it. And so here's what happens. Nine, and when they heard it, they went away one by one beginning with the older ones.

Joe Halsey can perfectly appreciate this verse. Joe has been one of our younger deacons. And one of the things that goes with the younger deacon is that he gets asked first many times.
Isn't that right, Joe? How many of you know that the Sanhedrin, when they made decisions, they always started with the youngest. Now, what was the logic of that? Does anybody have an idea? When the gray heads weighed in first, it kind of influenced what?
The younger guys. And so they would work up the ladder according to age. In this case, who got the memo first that they probably ought not be throwing stones?
It was the old guys. This is not a winning proposition. And they also probably, and this is speculation, but they probably figured out if they had relied upon normal Sanhedrin protocol and let the rookies go first who were full of vinegar at that moment, they'd been picking up stones and the whole mess would have gone through, right?
[38:20] So the old guys say, I got that one. Bye. I'm gone. I'm done. And out they walked. So, I want to close with this.

I want you to recognize Jesus in something about second chances. How did Jesus deal with this woman? For one, he didn't minimize her sin.
Nor does he overlook our sin. How do we know that to be true? There in verse 11, after Jesus says, hey, where are they? Has no one condemned you? She says, no one, Lord. He says, neither do I condemn you.
Go, and from now on, what? Don't be a repeat offender. Don't be a repeat offender. And I can't help but think of that passage that I recited earlier in John chapter 3, verse 17, where it says, the Son of Man did not come to condemn, but that through him the world might be saved.
Jesus is in the business, listen to me carefully, of offering you an opportunity to repent for your sins. But offering you that opportunity to repent is not the same as overlooking your sin.
[39:37] Secondly, I want you to understand that Jesus extended mercy to this woman, and he still extends mercy. He's in the business of giving you an opportunity. I love what it says in Romans chapter 2, verse 4, and I'm just going to recite the passage just for a moment.

Here is the apostle talking about God's patience and gentleness, and there's some of you sitting here this morning. The truth of the matter is that you are continuing to draw breath even though you openly resist the sweetness of the gospel.
And do you know why you're still drawing breath? I'll tell you. Not because I know, but because the Bible says he is giving you an opportunity to repent. And by the way, the longer and more patient he is in that opportunity, the more firm will be your eventual dealings.
And so let me say this clearly. Christ's mercy, and that's what we see here, calls the sinner to repent into a new life.
God's love. I don't know what the heart is that you have. I don't know if you're sitting here this morning and you know Christ as your Savior, or it may be that you're a person who grew up with all the vocabulary.
[41:05] Do you know what I mean by the vocabulary? You got it down pat. But the truth of the matter is, if you were to die today and God were to say, why should I let you into heaven? You'd say, well, I've been a pretty good person.

Can I tell you something? It would have been squandering for the life of Christ to die on the cross if you and I could get there by being pretty good. What does the Bible say?
It says that there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that seeketh after God. And God seeing the moral bankruptcy and the darkness of our heart and the ease with which we deceive ourselves sent Christ into the world to convict us of our sin.
and to bring us to the point like the woman at the well, like Zacchaeus, like the thief on the cross, like the woman taken in adultery, we stand exposed for the sinners that we really are.

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And in the face of that reality, we cry out and say, I recognize my sin and my offense against a holy God.
[42:21] And I believe Jesus died in my place and satisfied my debt and I believe in what he did for me. And I claim his promise and his salvation and his power to live a different life.

Let's close in prayer. Father God, this morning as we lift up the sweetness of our Savior who came into the world to save sinners, we are here this morning in one of two conditions.
There are some here this morning that may have had all the vocabulary, pounded home and grown up in that just the perfect environment and the truth of matter is they've never come to trust Christ, break through the deception of the enemy and help them see their desperate need and call upon the name of the Lord in whom alone is salvation.
There are others of us here that know Christ, whose hearts have found that freedom and that forgiveness and whose hearts have been lifted out of the miry pit for the purpose of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Savior of the world.
Given His mercy, given His kindness, given the abundance of His love, there is nothing that we should live for apart from Him.
[43:58] We ask that You would work in us to make that true. And where there is a need for repentance, and for a change of direction and affection, we ask that You would do that to Your glory.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's stand together as we close.

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