

# Encouragement Around the Table

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Luke chapter number 22, before I jump back into the passage, I'll start with this question. How many of you spend a lot of time around the family dinner table? You have family dinner, and it just seems you sit there for a long time.

One of our missionaries in India, Rebecca Elrod, talked about her family would spend three or four hours sometimes around the family dinner. I've never done that, all right? Our family with three teenagers, you've got to move quick or there's nothing to eat, all right?

And we enjoy our time around the table, but we never spend that amount of time. Here's a picture, some of you may recognize it. It's a picture by Norman Rockwell, and it's called Freedom From Want is the name of the painting.

Some called it the Thanksgiving picture, or I'll Be Home for Christmas. How many of you have seen this picture before? And it comes from a speech Roosevelt gave where he talks about freedom of speech or freedom of worship, freedom from want or freedom from fear.

And this is supposed to show that freedom from want. And not everybody loved it when they first saw it. I think he made it, and they were going to use it with the military, and they decided it just, it didn't make a good picture.

[ 1 : 0 5 ] And then some of the allies didn't like it, because it showed more than meeting a one. It showed this being extravagant. And so there's a lot of story with this. But I just love that picture, and I like a lot of Norman Rockwell paintings, because it just, it seems to show just the perfect moment, right?

Which is what we want to have. You do all that work around the Thanksgiving meal. It takes a long time to get it. And then you just want for that special moment. I know David spends a couple days preparing his turkey.

He has a whole ritual that he goes through with it. And, but you just want that moment that you want to have happen just like this, where everybody is at the table. They're sitting there, and they're happy about it.

And I enjoy those moments. I work for those moments for that perfect meal. So now we have Jesus and the disciples, and they're reclined at the Passover while in the upper room, the seating, probably U-shaped.

One of the dad jokes I like to make sometimes, I go into a restaurant, and I'll say, well, there's 12 of us, but we're all going to sit on one side of the table, so we need seating for 24, all right? Sometimes if they understand the picture of the Last Supper, they might know what my joke is.

[ 2 : 1 3 ] Typically they don't, all right? And they say, 12 or 24, what's your problem, all right? But I stay consistent. I'm going to keep trying, all right? Someday it will land, and it will just be the perfect moment for me. And so you're picturing Jesus and them reclining at it.

We've learned, there's things that we learn in the Bible that teaches the culture, like somebody's washing the feet of Jesus, but he can't see who it is. And so that gives you a picture of what this reclining looks like. But I just want to imagine Jesus is there with the disciples in the upper room.

The candlelight is flickering, it's lower. The Savior of the world has just shared with them this mystery, this wonder of salvation. This picture of the Passover lamb is now going to be fulfilled in me, and he showed them with the bread, and he showed them with the wine.

And this cup is the New Testament, explaining how it's far superior to the old covenant, and all that's happening. And then what do we get to in verse number 24? And there was strife among them.

Just that moment that had been being prepared for, and there was the disciples. And so I just say we see the dullness, or we just see the commonness, or we just see the disciples as us on display.

[ 3 : 21 ] And the seriousness, and how somber of a moment it began, it began to slip away as these disciples are going to fight over their future, as they're going to be worried about themselves, as if the one that is at the center of the table hasn't taken care of everything that is for them.

This ain't the first time that they have this dispute. If you ever have arguments around the dinner table, if you ever hear one, you know it's probably not the first time it came up, nor is it ever going to be the last time it comes up. They're going to fight.

Like your kids want to fight for the front seat in the car, right? They're always trying to figure out who is going to be the front in the car. It's childish, it's immature, and we all did it, all right?

And now here we are with Jesus, and in Mark chapter number 10, they're arguing. They even pulled their mom into the fight, into the argument, right? They're saying, grant unto us that we may sit on the right hand or on the left hand in glory, not knowing what they're asking, not knowing where it's headed.

They're picturing the kingdom here on earth, and they would see this as a pace of power and prestige. And so not to the same extent as Judas, who betrayed Jesus and said, I'm just going to cash in.

[ 4 : 27 ] And I'm not going to get on earth what I thought I was going to get, so I'm going to betray Jesus, and I'm going to sell it. I'm going to take the silver, not in the same manner, but in the same line of thinking, that selfish ambition.

We have them worrying about where they will sit, and they're disputing among themselves. So we find the disciples, they are disputing and fighting one to another, and there's strife among them at the table.

And not just that. It may be that Jesus addresses Peter specifically because his voice might have been overpowering the others in the argument, which is often what happens at an argument around the dinner table, right?

It isn't the person with the best argument, it's the person who's willing to look like the biggest fool is the one who normally wins the argument. So what we know about Peter, it would not be surprising at all to know that he is the one that is the loudest in the argument, that is raising his voice.

But then look at verse 31, and the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. That desire to have you, same expression that we would see in the book of Job, that he thinks that he is going to pull you away from me.

[ 5 : 35 ] And he says, I prayed for you that your faith will not fail, and when you're converted, strengthen the brothers. And the Lord went on to say, I'm ready to go with thee. He said to the Lord, I'm ready to go with thee in the prison and to death.

Jesus explains to him, that is not what's happening. Every human life, my life and your life, is a commentary upon the presence and power of evil in this world.

Today, we look at Peter, and we see his failure, and we see the pressures that he yielded to. But every one of us, our lives can be a commentary on that, on choosing something other than Jesus in the moment.

His story is a biography. And so, we see kind of, what we see in Peter, we find in our lives. First of all, every time there's a spiritual failure, which is what's happening there with Peter, and Jesus says, I'm going to pray for you, we find that behind every spiritual failure, there is a spiritual enemy.

He says, Simon, Simon says, Satan has desired to have you. There is an enemy in every one of our lives. There's an enemy here in this story, though he is not seated at the table.

[ 6 : 39 ] He is very much present. He desires to pull Peter away, Simon away, from his allegiance to Jesus Christ. And then also, we find that not only is it a spiritual enemy, it's a spiritual failure, but there's a blindness to our own weakness and the Lord's warning of danger.

He said with him, I am ready to go with thee, the prison and death. All right? Every time I use what the young people say today, they all look at me and say, well, we can't say that anymore. If Pastor Trent's now saying it, it's dead now.

All right? But there's an expression. It says either a ride or die friend. All right? If, are you ready to do this with me? They say, I'm ready to ride or die. Meaning, we'll either get it done, or we're going to die trying.

That is the deepest level of friendship that you could have, which is to say, I'm a ride or die friend. Here, Peter, in his confidence, says, I'm ready. Whatever comes my way, I'm going to go with you.

If it's prison, if it's the death, I am there with you. And so, there's a blindness to his weakness that leads to spiritual failure. And then what we see here is there's a dullness where they just lose sight that this battle is a spiritual battle.

[ 7 : 53 ] We see that later on in verse number 50. When the soldiers come up, one of them, Luke says, but we all know who it is, right? We all know who it was. That Peter, he takes the sword and he smotes the servant on the ear and chops his ear off.

And Jesus takes the ear and places it back on. And that's just a vivid picture to say, this is a spiritual battle. There's something way bigger going on here. You're not going to stop what is happening by taking your sword out and chopping this ear off, but they had lost sight of the fact that this battle was not flesh and blood, but it was spiritual.

So, first of all, we see that there's, recognize that there's an enemy when there's a spiritual failure. Recognize that there is a blindness to the fact that we could fail. And then we see a dullness to the fact that we forget that we live in a world that has spiritual battles.

And then, ultimately, all spiritual failure is a failure of faith. Verse 32, but I prayed for thee that faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

He prayed that his faith would not fail. So, when Satan attacks, he always attacks faith, because faith links us to Christ and all the benefits of our salvation. Well, it couldn't be said any more plainly in Hebrews 11, 6.

[ 9 : 08 ] But without faith, it is impossible to please him. So, any spiritual failure is always going to come back at the core, at the beginning of a failure of faith.

So, what was Jesus' prayer here? It had to do with his faith. That's what he prayed for him. So, we see the dispute among the disciples at the table that day.

We're going to see Peter who was sitting there, who was being warned, but in his arrogance. And then, we just see some disciples that are just distraught for all the wrong reasons. Now, the tension moves from just being on Peter back to the whole group.

And he said unto them, verse 35, when I sent you without a purse and a script and shoes, lacked you anything? And they said, and they all answered. And the answer is, lack anything? The answer is? Nothing.

One more time. Lack anything? Nothing. Nothing. And so, all 12 of them could have answered in unison there when he said, I sent you out. I sent you with nothing. I didn't send you with anything.

[10:05] But did you lack anything? What did you lack? And they all answered and they would say, they would say nothing. And then, in verse number 38, he said, behold, there are two swords. He said unto them, it is enough.

In chapter number 9 and then at the beginning of number 10, we saw Jesus send the disciples out to preach the gospel. The things that they had learned of him and they seen, they went out and taught with authority.

The things that they had been learning. As he spoke, he would give the Sermon on the Mount or if he sat with them in the room, whatever they were learning, they would go out and they would share it with others. But now the new reality was the disciples will be regarded as transgressors or as outlaws.

Jesus had been sent out before as Jesus is going around healing. He's going around teaching. But now that their master or as others looking on would have said, your rabbi, your teacher, the one you followed, he's an outlaw.

He died last week upon a cross. He died with criminals. So it changes the way in which the disciples are going to be sent out. Isaiah prophesied, he says, he will be numbered with the transgressors.

[11:13] He is going to be counted as a transgressor among them. And so then we get to the point where the disciples say, it is enough.

What exactly is being said here? That's what we ended with in verse number 38. They said, we have two swords and Jesus says, it is enough.

Let me give you four possible answers that were given there and tell you the one that I believe and why. Jesus simply could be saying, as I said there, that it is enough.

He could be saying that two swords is adequate for 12 people. Two for 12, one out of every six, that's enough. It's simple. That's all that's being expressed there.

The second one could be it's enough to show human inadequacy. That's stopping God's plan from the death of Christ. That swords could not stop God's purpose and plan. And so two is enough because this thing is happening.

[12:08] And so it won't really matter. If you have 12, if you have 24, if you have 36, it doesn't matter because this is God's plan. So I'm looking at Isaiah would understand Jesus to mean that possessing two swords, they would be classified by others as transgressors or criminals.

Remember he just said, I'm going to be numbered among the transgressors. How many swords do you guys have? We have two. Well, that's enough because people are going to consider you also the outlaws of the time. The sword was the revolver, all right, on the side of them, all right.

You have these. They're not licensed. They carry in this place. You have two of them, all right. I'm not sure exactly what would be understood there. But the last one, which is the one that I lean to believe in what's being said here.

Yeah, I believe it's a rebuke to the disciples where Jesus says, enough of this kind of talking. Enough. You guys have missed it. When I told you that you're going to go out, I'm going to be numbered among the transgressors and that you're going to be sent out.

That's what I'm trying to teach you. I'm trying to prepare you for the persecution that's going to come. Listen to me. That's why in verse number 51, when Jesus answered and they chopped the ear off, he said, suffer ye thus far, which is another way of saying it's enough, guys.

[ 13 : 27 ] You're not going to prepare yourself by gathering two swords or 12 swords or 100 swords. Enough talk about the swords that are happening here. So in the context of knowing the rest of the story, it leads me to believe that Jesus, in this conversation, looks at the disciples who are running around and saying, do we have enough swords?

Are we ready for this? And Jesus said, it's enough. Guys, you're just missing it. So they were distraught about the wrong things. There's Peter, a leader of the group, who's boasting, but he is going to fail.

And then we have the disputing about the greatness. And so if there was ever a moment and ever a meal that had just had everything that had been working together, they'd just be absolutely perfect.

But then the immaturity of those around the table became a distraction. And so we listened to that and we could stop at that and we'd say, we're every bit as self-centered and as dense and as utterly sinful as these disciples.

If you're sitting at that table today, God forbid you would not be Judas. You would not be looking to betray Jesus. I pray that you recognize him as our Messiah, as the Savior of the universe, and we trust in him.

[ 14 : 37 ] I probably would find myself among that group that was arguing. I like a good argument, right? I wouldn't have got involved until Peter said he was going to be in charge. And I would have said, well, I wasn't going to say anything.

But now that you say that, let's go ahead and lay some rules. No, you're not going to be in charge, all right? And so I might have found myself among that group or maybe among those that were overconfident that are there.

Or maybe you'd be the planners, all right? There's Miss Wendy in the group, all right? How many swords are we going to need? I'll get them on Amazon by the weekend, all right? And so maybe you planners are in here saying, what do we need to do to get ready for this?

But their response is it's not what it should have been, right? Based on who Jesus is, their response was not what it should have been. And so we see ourselves in them. But they allow as a black velvet backdrop to the shining response of Jesus.

And that's where I want you to look here as his gracious response. As Jesus speaks about them in verse number 28, he says, Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation. Jesus knows that they will scatter here in a little bit.

[ 15 : 43 ] When the shepherd is struck, the sheep will scatter. That's going to be what happens. But not in that moment. He highlights the fact that other people aren't around, but you 12 are here with me right now.

But they will certainly scatter. And then in that moment, Jesus looks at Peter and he tells him, Well, I prayed for you. And when you are converted, strengthen thy brethren.

You know, this is just overwhelming to me. Jesus on the way to the cross, who is going to be betrayed by Peter, who those that are in this room are going to scatter, his concern in his heart is that once Peter realizes the error of his way and that he repents, that he would go back and he would encourage those other people that are discouraged because of how they have failed Jesus.

Isn't that overwhelming? How gracious he is to us that on the way to the cross, he made preparation so that when you fail, that there would be somebody that would come to you and encourage you.

There's no one like our Savior. There's people like those disciples. There's people like Peter. There's people like Judas. There's people like the disciples that are fighting. But there is nobody like Jesus.

[ 16 : 59 ] And so what would Peter and the disciples and now us have to review in this story that would bring us great strength for the day? Some of you in your life, you feel like the Apostle Peter.

You believe that there's a time that you can say in your timeline where you had great failure. And you think about it. And you don't want it to be a defining chapter of your life, but it seems that it is constantly being brought up here to you.

And so you love the fact that you're given a second chance. And those of you like that, you've already embraced this. But I want to tell you that every one of us in here ought to be grateful for the fact that God gives us a second chance.

Because you're either in the room betraying Jesus, or you're like Peter who's saying, I don't know this man. Or you're like the disciples that scatter and you distance yourself from the Lord. But every one of us have failed, and we have needed encouragement from other people in our lives.

And so here are three things I want you to see that can be used in this story when Peter is being strengthening his brothers. He identifies with us so we can find our identity in him.

[ 18 : 01 ] In verse number 27, they're talking and they're arguing. And he says, don't you know that unbelieving people, they act like you. They want to have names like benefactor, and they want the high title.

But the greatest among you is this kid who just helped us bring in the food. He is the greatest. He is the one. Or the youngest among you. This is where it's at. And then he said, don't you know, but I am among you as he that serveth.

You guys are arguing about who's going to be the greatest, but do you recognize that when you came in, I washed your feet? Do you not recognize that I am serving you by heading to a cross?

That you guys are going in the wrong direction, and that Jesus Christ, he identified with us and he serves us. So many times the incarnation is pointed to as a reason for serving.

In Philippians, when there was fighting and strife, he said, you should have one mind. Don't you know that I came here? I emptied myself, made myself of no reputation, took on the fashion myself as a man, humbled myself and became obedient to death, that I took on a servant.

[ 19 : 01 ] And that he identified with us. And it's on the cross that the sinless Son of God became a transgressor, though he himself had broken no law.

What do they write on the top of the cross? Because there's no sins that you can ascribe to him. It's simply king of the Jews. What does Pilate do? He washes his hands because this man is not guilty of anything.

But consequently, we transgressors can find saving identification in him. Because he identified with us, the perfect sinless Savior took our sins.

But not only does he identify with us, and Peter could teach that to them and encourage them, but Jesus fully atones for our sins. Atonement, at one together, or as some would say, at one meant.

Atonement, our means of being reconciled to God. He not only identified with us as being seen and humbled himself and became a servant and went to a cross, but he also provided for all of our sins.

[ 20 : 05 ] Just like he said when he said, When you went out and you didn't have anything, but what did you lack? Did you lack anything? And their answer was nothing. When it comes to your sins, what could you pay for?

What could you do? The answer is nothing. But what is it that he did not pay for upon the cross? And the answer, once again, is he left nothing off. He atoned for your sins.

And so there are things that are going to change here. The response of the world towards them is changing. But he says, I'm going to be reckoned among the transgressors. He is preparing them. And how are these sins atoned for?

1 Peter chapter number 2, verse number 24. I want to show you here. I've highlighted something here on the screen. 1 Peter 2, 24. And it lets you hear what it says. And it says, For who is his own self bear our sins?

Which if you're looking there in front of you, it says self bear our sins. And so that's how Jesus atones for our sins upon the cross. He is going to bear our sins.

[ 21 : 12 ] And in his own body, on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live under righteousness, by whose stripes ye are healed. And so the atonement will take place because he takes all of that.

He doesn't just identify. He takes the sins to the cross. And Hebrews 10, 4 says, For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats shall take away sins.

It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats shall take away sins. So it was necessary that Jesus goes to the cross. So Peter can strengthen the disciples today to say, Jesus identified with us when he came here.

Jesus has atoned for our sins. And then lastly, what Peter could remind them of when he wanted to encourage all those that had scattered, he would say that Jesus makes intercession for us.

Jesus fully identifies with the transgressors. He makes full atonement. And he continues to make intercession for us outlaws. His verse number 32 is where he says it in the story.

[ 22 : 12 ] He says, But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fell not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Jesus says to Peter, I have prayed for thee.

I like how Alexander McLaren says it. He says, Satan had asked to sift Peter as wheat, hoping to dispose of the wheat and harvest the chaff.

But Christ prayed for Peter. And through Peter's failure, the chaff blew away and the wheat remained. Peter's vanity was sifted out. His misplaced self-confidence was sifted away.

His resumption was sifted. His impulsive mouth was winnowed. And he became a great strength to his brothers and sisters in the early church.

So Peter there was prayed for. And that's happening today for you and for I. Hebrews chapter number 7, verse 24 and 25, will tell you that Jesus, he lives to make intercession for them.

[ 23 : 14 ] And who is it that he lives to make intercession for them? It is those that have come unto God by him. If you come today to God by Jesus Christ, if you have allowed his death to be your death, his perfect life to become your perfect life, you have come to the Father through Jesus.

It says that he now liveth to make intercession for them. In the old covenant, it was administered by mortal priests who were sinners themselves. And it was given the death of animals that could never pay fully for sin.

But now Jesus, after the order of Melchizedek, according to an eternal oath of God, he dies in the place. He's the perfect priest, making the perfect sacrifice. And this has untold implications for you and I to know that he prays for you, that he continually lives to make intercession for you and I.

And so that's when it strengthened us. The strengthened will become the strengtheners. Those that have been encouraged will become the encouragers. There was a legend among the early church, and it would say that when Peter heard the cock crow for the rest of his life, he wept.

He wept remembering his denial of the Savior. He also wept remembering the grace of the Savior that changed his heart, to lead him to repentance, and to restore him to ministry.

[ 24 : 34 ] We don't know if that's the case, but we could see very likely how the sound of that crow would bring back so many memories to Peter as he would consider that. So Peter had, first of all, he had a duty to go and strengthen the brothers.

Why did he have a duty? Because Jesus told him to. He says, when you remember, when you repent, and you recognize what has happened, and you're converted, and you're turned back to this, I want you to go and strengthen your brothers.

And so he's given to them of God. Just like God gave an assignment to the children of Israel, and they were to be a light unto the nations, and just like he has saved you, so that you will go forth and show his mercy, it is not supposed to stop with you and I.

But you know this sharing of the gospel is not just for unbelieving people, but the Bible would say that we are to encourage one another, that you and I have a responsibility one to another, that we have a duty and a responsibility to encourage one another with that same encouragement that we have been given.

James chapter number 5, verse 19 and 20 says that, that if you go out, brethren, if you go after somebody that's erred in his way and convert them, one, so brethren, you do not err from the truth, that if you go after somebody like that, you're doing the ministry of the Lord, that you're going after them.

[ 25 : 52 ] And so you have a duty, you have a responsibility in here. Secondly, we see that Peter is qualified. Verse 62 of Luke 22, and it says, and Peter went out and wept bitterly.

I would expect all of you in here to know what it's like to weep, to cry, but some of you in here would know what it's like to weep bitterly. And what is it that would have caused Peter to weep bitterly?

Verse number 61 of this passage, where he would say, and the Lord turned and he looked upon Peter and Peter remembered the word of the Lord and how he had said unto him before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Is that gazing there, and the Lord turned and looked upon Peter? This is the verse that precedes Peter weeping bitterly. Peter knew what it was like when the Lord turned and looked at him and he knew that he did not just break some commandments, that he had not just done something that was wrong morally towards a friend, but he had grieved God, that he looked upon Jesus and realized that he had grieved, that he had hurt a person that loved him and that had been perfect.

So Peter is qualified, isn't he? Peter could go to somebody and he could tell them, he could say, it cost you dearly. To deny the Lord would cost you dearly. Do not trust in yourself would be another lesson that Peter would be able to tell.

[ 27 : 13 ] And he would also say, he makes intercession for us. He prays for us. And then lastly, Peter would say that it is good for him. As Peter would go to those disciples and he would strengthen them, and as we would go to other people and remind them, they would drift.



A saying that you could remember, it says, he fell yesterday, I may fall today, and if I do not fall today, I may tomorrow. Peter would go to them and he would strengthen them and he would know the weakness and the folly that he had once been part of.

And as you go and you help somebody else, it will lead you to throw out another anchor to get a fresh hold as you see how they have yielded to the tide. How else might it help you?

If you pray for somebody, you're praying more than you would have if you just prayed for yourself. If you're quoting Scripture to them, then you're meditating upon the Scripture. Heard a sweet testimony this week.

Stephanie and I went to Pigeon Forge for a couple days and we sat around the campfire on Friday night with a family. And I think I might have shared the story with you before, but a few years ago around Thanksgiving, my father-in-law had got a phone call.

[ 28 : 22 ] He's a pastor in Dalton, Georgia. And he got a phone call and he said, we need to go over and help this family out. And there was strife there and we opened up the door and there's a guy, he's probably 6'2".

He's muscular and he had face tattoos. He just looked tough. All right? Imagine tough. He personified tough. All right? And he's standing there in the doorway and my father-in-law just barges in.

All right? I'm like, oh, here goes something. All right? I didn't know what it was going to be, but I knew something was going to happen. So we just barrel into that room and he tells them to sit down and he opens up the Bible and he begins to share with them.

There's not going to be no peace in your life until Jesus is at the center of your home. You're not going to know peace until you know the gospel. And he just lovingly told them what was happening. I also think he was a little hungry, so he did it quicker than necessary.

All right? And so he just shared with them. All right? And we got back in the car. We went back and had our Thanksgiving meal. On Friday night, Stephanie and I sat beside that couple and they shared how the gospel had changed their life.

[ 29 : 22 ] And that was the very first time they'd ever been on a marriage retreat, first time they'd ever been in the Pigeon Forge. They talked about how the gospel had changed them. And then they get to point around the people in the room and they said, because these people love me too much to allow me to head down a path of destruction.

They strengthened me. They encouraged me. As I spoke to the people around that campfire, think about one man named Chris Petty who was very intramural in his life. And you know what he reminded me of?

The Apostle Peter. Because Chris knew that in a time in his life where he failed the Lord, that the response of Jesus was good and gracious. And so when a family started coming to church and then they weren't following the Lord as they should and they were in and out and they were making all these decisions, Chris could go over to them and say, you know what?

I've been there before. You know what I found about the Lord? He is good and he is gracious and he strengthened his brothers. You and I have that same responsibility. Romans chapter number 15 and verse number 32.

I added it to my notes this morning as I was thinking about the Holt family. We have Josh and Andrew here on the second row and didn't know Jason and Lori would be in here. But you'd say that there's people that need to be encouraged.

[ 30 : 35 ] You have a responsibility. You have a duty to encourage one another. You're qualified to encourage one another and it would be good for you to strengthen other people. I'm going to say that all again.

You have a duty to strengthen other people in this room. You are qualified to do so and it would be good to you because you know what it's like when there's spiritual failure that you went back to the Father and he was good and he was gracious to you.

Romans 15 32 talks about the Apostle Paul and I think the Apostle Paul looks more like that man in the doorway than probably me. That's always how I imagine him but we do know he's weak in the flesh but I just always think that he's tougher than I am, right?

That I wouldn't think that he ever needed much from other people but in Romans 15 number 32 it says that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God and may with you be refreshed.

Refreshed, Travis. That's what he wanted. He wanted when he went to church that day he needed to be refreshed. Refreshed, you know a lot of our men's meetings we don't ever call it refresh, alright?

[ 31 : 38 ] You know, you got renew renew ladies meeting you never have we're going to have a men's meeting first Saturday of the month and we're going to call it refresh, alright? That's not normally a word that we would often take but that's what the Apostle Paul said he said I needed that.

You know what? You need that as well. This world is discouraging. You ever felt like you're not made for this world? Because you haven't you're not. You've been remade for another one. There's a day coming where all this is going to change.

I was at a service the other day and somebody gave a John Pearson quote the guy pastoring Josh Harrington said that John and his family or maybe the Boy Scouts were at the Grand Canyon and somebody was talking about how incredible it is and it is it's just incredible of all things I've ever seen the Grand Canyon is breathtaking and as the Holy Spirit whispered to Brother John and said if you think this is wonderful this is the curse wait until you see the new creation.

What a wonderful thought. Someday we will live in that new creation as it was meant to be as back in the garden but that isn't where we're living right now and it's discouraging. The world in which we live in is very discouraging and the thing that is very discouraging for all of us in here is sometimes I just fail.

Sometimes I'm at the table and it's supposed to be a special moment but it isn't a special moment because I'm sinful and I want my own way and I'm selfish and what I need is I need somebody in life to come to me and to say hey I've been there before and you know what I found?

[ 33 : 06 ] He was gracious and he was good and I need to be strengthened and I think every one of us are in need of that and all of you in here today you would recognize when asked you to answer out loud but you know the time in your life that you've been a spiritual failure.

You thought you were too big to fail, right? You thought you were like one of those companies I will not fail but then you fell on your face and then you got back up and you found that it was good so you're qualified to strengthen some people because you know how he treats you after a failure and so we're qualified and we should remind people Jesus is praying for you he loves you his response to you is going to be gracious.

Isn't it wonderful to serve a Jesus like this? Isn't it wonderful? There's no one like him there's a lot of people like Judas there's a lot of people like those disciples that are bickering there's a lot of people like Peter who are arrogant that are going to fail you someday but there is nobody like Jesus.

We should be so grateful for him. Let's pray together. As you bow your head and close your eyes believer would you find a place piano will play but find a place to pray for you the day you may want to come to an altar that may be the response that you need to have the day where you go to the Lord the day and you would say I want to thank you once again for being a God of second and third and fourth and fifth chances and God has done that in your life and you ought to thank him believers take the moment and thank him for being a God of second chances and then as you do that he's going to provide opportunity for you in here to strengthen other people you need it you know for my sake would you just answer and hear me today how many of you would recognize and say the world in which we live in it's discouraging and I fail so often and I just live life always feeling deficit of encouragement and I could use some encouragement would you raise your hand as you raise your hand let me tell you with heads bowed and every eye closed in here

I can tell you there's hands raised across this room people are in need of encouragement you are not alone in this but God uses you and I as the means of encouraging one another remember that response he gave you when you came back to him with your hat in your hand and you had failed people need to know that's how he is going to accept them as well he is a good and gracious king and we should love him heavenly father I pray right now for the believers in this room Lord Lord we recognize that we were not too big to fail and that we have ruined so many special moments because of our selfishness and Lord you have been so good to us Lord I'm praying that you will use us in here as believers to strengthen one another that those that have scattered Lord that we would go after them and we would say I've been there before Father I thank you for the testimony that I saw this weekend of a couple who had a church that would pursue them they had a church

[ 36 : 11 ] Lord that would go after them without judgment but with understanding pointing back to the way of a gracious Lord Lord I thank you for that with every head bowed and every eye closed I want you to know in here if you've never come to Jesus Christ you've never put your faith and trust in him and you just think that you've made too much mess of your life or maybe you just feel like you're too insignificant and he never has cared for you let me tell you that is not the case this Jesus that we're reading about he heads to a cross and he dies for sins that he never committed and those sins that he dies for are they're your sins and they're my sins and he is ready to set you free he is ready to provide forgiveness and the reconcile so I want to ask you today would you not leave this place would you not leave this room find yourself at the next steps table talking to somebody with an open Bible we'll take you to another room and we will show you that there is grace and forgiveness that is available to us

Heavenly Father I thank you for your word I thank you for what we see in the disciples but Father I thank you more importantly for what we see in Jesus Christ and his gracious response the people that have failed him in Jesus name I pray Amen