

A Great Apostle's Fall and Restoration

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[0:00] The Lord revives us through his word and we pray that he would come and create soul thirst for him and then bring to us that refreshing word and satisfy us once again with our Savior.

! We're reading in Mark chapter 14 and we're going to read the portion that our brother Ben preached on last week and then right on into the section that he will preach on this week. So we begin in Mark 14 and verse 53. They took Jesus to the high priest and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together.

Peter followed him at a distance right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

But they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him.

[1:09] We heard him say, I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days we'll build another not made by man. Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you? But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? I am, said Jesus. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.

The high priest tore his clothes. Why do we need any more witnesses, he asked. You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think? They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Then some began to spit at him. They blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, Prophecy. And the guards took him and beat him.

[2:18] While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

You also were with that Nazarene Jesus, she said. But he denied it. I don't know or understand what you're talking about, he said, and went out into the entryway.

When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, This fellow is one of them. Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.

He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, I don't know this man you're talking about. Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.

Then Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken to him. Before the rooster crows twice, you will disown me three times. And he broke down and wept.

[3:28] Brother Ben, come and preach God's word to us. Well, it's been a wonderful summer here. I'm thankful for my time here. I'm thankful for every opportunity I have to preach the word of God.

And this is kind of a sobering message tonight. We see an apostle fall, a great apostle fall, the prince of apostles fall, by denying Jesus Christ.

But there's hope in his sin, and in his denials. And I hope that we can see the restoring grace of God in Peter's life as well. As we look at this passage this evening.

Have you ever lied to save face? Have you ever lied in order to get yourself out of trouble? We all have before, right?

Have you ever lied to get yourself out of death? Seven young students did this during China's Boxer Rebellion. And one account of the incident reads as follows.

[4:38] During China's Boxer Rebellion of 1900, insurgents captured a mission station, blocked all the gates but one, and in front of that one gate placed a cross flat on the ground.

Then the word was passed to those inside that any who trampled the cross underfoot would be permitted their freedom and life, but that any refusing would be shot.

Terribly frightened, the first seven students trampled the cross under their feet and were allowed to go free. But the eighth student, a young girl, refused to commit the sacrilegious act.

Kneeling beside the cross in prayer for strength, she arose and moved carefully around the cross and went out to face the firing squad. Strengthened by her example, every one of the remaining 92 students followed her to the firing squad.

Now, maybe many of us know that story and we think about the bravery and the courage that it took for those 93 students to confess Jesus Christ unto their death.

[5:50] But what about those first seven students? Sometimes we forget to think about them. They had just denied Jesus Christ openly and they saved their life by doing so.

Have you ever thought about what they were thinking as they walked away from that place that day? And they heard the gunfire and they heard the screams of their fellow classmates as they died for Christ that day?

What would have gone through their minds? That hour, that day, that week, that month, that year. Most assuredly, shame.

Feeling their betrayal of Christ. Their betrayal of their friends. And think about the shame that they would have to live through the rest of their lives for denying Jesus Christ when their friends did not. Now, that sort of temptation doesn't just face little boys and little girls in a faraway country 100 years ago. But that same very temptation to deny Jesus Christ, we face that as well as Christians here in this land.

[7:03] We don't have to go far to see persecution and to feel the temptations and the pressures to deny Jesus Christ. But not only us, but even big A apostles, Peter himself, face that temptation.

And so we'll see tonight his great fall, but as I said, I hope that we can see his great restoration as well. And we can praise the grace and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ bringing him back on his feet and sending him out to be a bold proclaimer of the gospel.

So I have five points this evening as we look at this text. I want us to see Peter's problematic location. Peter's unfavorable confrontation.

Thirdly, Peter's escalating denials. Fourthly, Peter's humbling recollection. And fifthly, Peter's powerful restoration.

So first, let's see Peter's problematic location. Where is Peter in this story right now? Well, verse 54 tells us that Peter had followed at a distance, followed Jesus at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest.

[8:23] And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. Also, verse 66 then picks back up with the story of Peter and says, As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came.

So Peter is in the courtyard right now. He has followed Jesus Christ at a distance. Matthew tells us he has followed Jesus because he wants to see the outcome of the trial.

He wants to see what's going to happen to Jesus Christ. What are the Sanhedrin going to do to him? What will the high priest say? But he's in a problematic location.

Peter is with the enemies of Jesus. He's sitting, warming himself by the fire with the guards of the temple beside him. And these weren't just any ordinary guards.

They were the high priest's personal bodyguards. And they were a bunch of evil thugs. They had just arrested Jesus Christ. And here we have Peter sitting with them.

[9:29] Most likely fellowshiping with these people. Peter is following at a distance as well. He's keeping his distance from Jesus Christ.

And so we see physically he's apart from Jesus. And throughout this account, spiritually, he is separating himself further and further away from his Lord. Remember, the boastful claims that Peter made prior to the arrest of Jesus.

Jesus had just told Peter that he would deny him. And of course, Peter says, no, I will never deny you, Lord. Even if it leads to my very own death, I will not deny you.

And he even says, even if all these other disciples, the other 11, if they fall away, certainly I will not fall away. So Peter's probably coming into this situation very bold, very courageous, thinking that he

would never deny his Lord.

But he's surrounded by the enemies of Christ. He's in the hornet's nest. And he certainly will be tempted, if not stung, by these people.

[10:48] So he's in a problematic location. Secondly, we'll see Peter's unfavorable confrontation. What problems then were presented to Peter?

He's in a bad place right now. He's with the enemies of Jesus Christ. What is one of the main problems that he faces? Well, he's confronted by servants, and he's confronted by bystanders, and they're going to question his allegiance and his commitment to Jesus Christ.

Christ. Verse 66, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, you also were with the Nazarene Jesus.

Peter's confronted immediately whether or not he's a disciple of Jesus Christ. And so here is the perfect opportunity for Peter to put his money where his mouth is.

here's the perfect opportunity for Peter to walk the walk as he has talked the talked already, right? It's time for Peter to stand up.

[11:56] It's time for Peter to act like his Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus is in the palace of the high priest right now, and he's being questioned right now.

And Jesus is standing firm and immovable. He's being the faithful witness. He's speaking the truth. And here's the perfect opportunity for Peter to follow the example of his Savior.

But what happens? Peter crumbles. Peter crumbles. He collapses. He becomes the false witness. He does exactly opposite of what his Lord is doing right beside him.

And he does this by denying his Lord. He denies him three times. And so thirdly, let's look at the escalating repudiations of Jesus Christ.

He's confronted about his allegiance towards Jesus. So what does Peter do? He leans on his own understanding. And he thinks, I've got to save my life. I've got to save my own skin.

[13:04] I've got to get out of this situation any way possible. And so he denies his Lord. Peter was willing to lie in order to save face.

It's almost as if he's got that Pinocchio nose that continues to grow as he lies. Pinocchio, that nose continues to grow and it becomes more noticeable and more noticeable.

And we see this in Peter's denials. He starts off playing the ignorance card and then he blatantly denies and then all of a sudden he's bringing down curses upon himself in order to save face.

So let's see denial number one. Peter pleads ignorance to the servant girl or the maid of the high priest. She says you also were with the Nazarene Jesus.

Now Peter I don't know if Peter would have gone into the courtyard incognito. Maybe he had a hood on. Maybe he was trying to cover his face. Maybe he had a fake beard or a mustache.

[14:19] Probably not that but I would have done something like that but Peter is probably trying to hide his facial appearance but it's a cold night. It's a very cold night and so he's forced to go by the fire.

What happens when you go by a fire? Light is emitted from that fire right? And that light is going to reveal certain facial features about Peter. Well we have this servant girl probably a teenage girl who sees Peter or sees Peter but then she does a double look.

She looks at Peter and then she really looks at Peter. She gazes upon him. As many times we might be walking down the street and we look up and we see somebody and then we really look at them because we think we know who they are and so we'll study what they look like and this is exactly what the servant girl is doing.

She's studying the facial features of Peter and she says I know this man I've seen him before and certainly he is a disciple of Jesus Christ and so she recognizes him.

What does Peter do? He denies the allegations by saying neither do I know nor do I understand what you are saying. Peter plays the ignorance card.

[15:40] He says I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just here trying to warm myself by this fire. I don't know this man named Jesus. I've never spoken to this man. I have no idea who you're talking about.

And of course Peter is acting contrary to the way his Savior's acting. Jesus never denied who he was. Jesus never denied his position before the Father.

He said I am the Christ the Son of the Blessed One. And yet Peter is scared to associate himself with Jesus. Peter is the big elephant apostle who is scared of the little servant girl mouse.

I mean think about Peter. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ. He has just been given authority to cast out demons and to preach the gospel with all power. He knew the power of Jesus Christ. He experienced it first hand for three years of Jesus' ministry. And yet he is scared of this little servant girl. But things get worse as we look at denial two.

[16:53] In this second denial we will see Peter blatantly lying to the servant girl and to the bystanders. So Peter has to leave. He has to flee. He has to find safe cover.

He has to go back into the shadows. He has to go back to the shadows. He has just been confronted. He denies Jesus. And then it says he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. So he flees. He has to find cover. But it is not long until he is confronted again. And it is not long before he denies his Savior again.

In verse 70 or excuse me. Verse 69 So again he is confronted.

What does Peter do? Does he fess up? Does he confess his sin? Does he finally speak the truth? Does he finally act like Jesus Christ and be the faithful witness?

[17:58] No. He continues to deny. One lie begets another lie. And one small sin adds to a larger and bigger sin. Verse 70 says but again he denied it.

So he chooses to lie again. Matthew tells us that this denial is even strengthened with an oath. And so he swears or he makes a solemn promise that he has never known Jesus Christ.

He is not one of his disciples. He has no idea who this person is. And so we see the denial strengthening and getting more and more serious. First he says I don't know what you're talking about.

Now he says with an oath I do not know this man. And we'll see in the third denial how severe his words are. In this third denial Peter falsely swears to the bystanders.

verse 70 and after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter certainly you are one of them for you are a Galilean.

[19:14] Matthew adds the additional remark that they make for even your speech gives you away. So there's something peculiar about the way Peter spoke.

And we know how Peter liked to speak. and it seems the more he spoke the more he got himself into trouble because his accent gave him away. He was a Galilean.

He was from up north and that was certainly where Jesus grew up and ministered. And so they had the keen assumption that Peter was a follower of Christ because he was in the same area that Jesus was in.

Sam, I hate to pick on you but we all know Sam's accent, right? It gives him away when he speaks here. We know where he's from. And it's like it's like Peter.

It's like Peter. These people knew he wasn't from their area. He had to be around Jesus Christ. But there were probably thousands of Galileans in the area at that time.

[20:21] Remember it's Holy Week. Remember the Passover. was just beginning. And so Jews from all over the known world were coming into Jerusalem. And so that couldn't have been the only allegation to uncover Peter's true identity.

There had to be something more. And so John tells us, gives us a particular accusation that another person throws at Peter. And this certain person was a relative of the servant of the high priest who got his ear cut off by Peter himself.

So not only are Peter's words getting him in trouble, but Peter's rash actions in the garden are getting him in trouble as well. And so there's a servant, there's a relative of the servant of the high priest who says to Peter, did I not see you in the garden with him?

And that's in John chapter 18. And so Peter's language and Peter's actions are revealing who he truly is. What is Peter going to do now?

Two denials, that's bad enough. But Peter still has a chance to repent and confess who he truly is. He can reveal his identity and he can stand firm with Jesus Christ even if it leads to his death.

[21:40] And we would still consider him a hero. A man who messes up and finally now he speaks the truth. But what does Peter do? Well, Peter denies Jesus Christ worse than he ever had before in his life.

He does two things. He curses and he swears that he doesn't know Jesus. First, he curses, but he began to invoke a curse on himself.

Now this is a unique word. This means to, he began to anathematize himself. He began to bring down the very wrath of God upon himself if he was going to lie.

This was a serious curse. He wasn't speaking profanity. He was saying, if I lie in the sight of God, I will be cursed from him.

I'm calling down the severest divine penalties upon myself if I'm not speaking the truth. This was serious. Peter was willing to go to hell itself in order to save his face, in order to save his life.

[23:02] This is what Peter is saying here. This is a similar word, the same word that's found in Galatians 1 verses 8 and 9.

We see it in its noun form here when Peter says, but even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Peter is saying, let me be accursed if I am lying to you people. And of course he is lying and he knows it. And so Peter then also swears.

He took another solemn oath before God. He made another serious promise that he did not know Jesus Christ. And so see the intensification of these repudiations.

He says, I don't know the first one, the second one he swears an oath, and the third one, he swears an oath and curses. It's getting very, very serious.

[24:12] Do I have to point out that sin makes you crazy? Look at what Peter was willing to forgo. Eternal life itself in order to save himself from the situation.

That's crazy. Peter, what are you doing? Think about what you're doing. Think about what you're giving up right now. sin and yet sin blinds the eyes and clouds the mind and sin makes you want to get what you want to get no matter what, even if you're willing to forgo eternal life to get it.

And we see this in Peter. And so Peter greatly fell that night. He greatly fell. He fell harder deeper than even Judas Iscariot himself.

Remember who Peter was. Peter was the prince of apostles. Peter had been given special wisdom and revelation and knowledge and understanding that none of the disciples possessed.

He knew much more than Judas knew. In the list of all the apostles in the gospels, Peter has the precedence and is always listed first. Always listed first.

[25:30] In Matthew 16, Peter was the first to confess the true identity of Jesus Christ. Remember what he said in Matthew 16, 16. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Almost the same thing that Jesus confesses to the Sanhedrin. I'm the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One. Peter was in the inner circle of disciples with Jesus along with James and John.

Peter saw the glory of the transfigured Christ. Think of all that that Peter had. Peter was the first to claim that he would never fall away by denying Jesus even if it meant his own death.

Peter was very privileged and he sinned against all that knowledge much more than what Judas knew, much more than what the Sanhedrin knew, much more than the high priest knew.

Peter knew a lot about Jesus Christ and he was willing to give all that up in order to save his life that night. So the questions stop.

[26:39] Temporary peace comes to Peter but it doesn't last for long. The Lord Jesus Christ continues to take notice of Peter. He can't escape the all-seeing eye of Peter.

He can't escape the all-pervading voice of Jesus. Peter's conscience is immediately pricked and he falls.

And so fourthly we see Peter's humbling recollection of Christ. Peter comes under conviction of sin. How does that happen? Well it happens in three ways. First his ears were alerted by the shrill crows of the rooster.

After he says I do not know this man of whom you speak. Verse 72 says and immediately the rooster crowed a second time. Jesus' prophecy was being fulfilled in his very midst.

Immediately after. And I believe Luke says actually when he was speaking those words the rooster crowed. We've heard the shrill crows of a rooster.

[27:44] Does anybody own roosters here? Anybody been awakened by roosters in the morning? Very loud. Those roosters are very confident in their crows.

And Peter most assuredly heard that shrill sound coming out of that rooster. Secondly, Peter's eyes were confronted with the penetrating look of the Savior.

And Luke's gospel tells us this. Luke 22 verse 61 says the Lord turned and looked at Peter. So his ears were assaulted, his eyes were assaulted because he saw the very eyes of Jesus Christ looking at him at that moment in time.

What do you think those eyes were saying to Peter that night? We know that we've all gotten in trouble by our parents before and sometimes they don't have to say a single word to us do they? All they have to do is look at us and their eyes speak enough. What were Jesus' eyes saying to Peter that night? Jesus standing there condemned on Peter's behalf being the faithful witness and Peter denies his Savior three times even calling hell up down upon himself.

[29:01] What did those eyes speak to Peter? What would that have felt like to have that disappointing look of the Savior turn towards you?

Thirdly, Peter's mind was assaulted with the vivid remembrance of prophecy. Verse 72, And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

He remembered what Jesus told him. He saw the look of the Savior. He heard the noise of the rooster. He remembered what Jesus had said to him.

And certainly his conscience was pricked. And as the next sentence says, and he broke down and wept. So fifthly, though, we'll see Peter's powerful restoration.

That's humbling. An apostle fell. But praise be to God that the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't leave his people where they deserve to be.

[30:16] Where they deserve to be. Jesus promises to preserve his people to the very end, and that's what we see in this last point. How did Christ solve Peter's failure?

Peter just miserably failed. He had given up on Jesus Christ. He deserved eternal death and hell. But Christ was not willing to give him up.

First, Christ granted Peter repentance. We see that in verse 72. He broke down and wept. Literally, he threw himself down and wept.

His mind violently grabbed a hold of the prophecy of Jesus Christ. The word of God did its work in his heart and he fell down weeping.

He actually left the courtyard and wept in sorrow over his sin. And this was absolutely necessary. Repentance is absolutely necessary in the Christian life, is it not?

[31:21] We must be sorrowful for our sins. But Jesus was working this in his heart. This was not a sorrow leading to death. This was not a worldly sorrow.

This was repentance unto life. This was true sadness for sinning against his Lord. And so he repents.

He's sorrowful over his sin. He's overwrought with sorrow for what he has just done. So Christ grants him repentance.

But more than that, Christ prays for him. Luke 22, 31, Jesus says to him before he even denies him, he says, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Jesus prays for Peter. Peter deserved exactly what Judas got, but Jesus didn't pray for Judas. He was the son of perdition.

[32:30] He prayed for Peter though, and those prayers upheld Peter. That intercession kept Peter from falling away for all eternity that night.

But third, Jesus was condemned on the behalf of Peter. He had just been condemned by the Sanhedrin. He stood in Peter's place. Peter was the false witness, Peter deserved to go to the cross to die for his sins, but Jesus exchanged himself for Peter.

He substituted himself for his sinful disciple. And then Jesus went to the cross. He went to Calvary for Peter. He died for even the most grievous sins of his people.

But more than that, then Jesus appeared to Peter after the resurrection. that's a wonderful thing. Peter had sinned even greater than any other of the disciples.

But Jesus directly went to Peter after the resurrection. He was the first person, the first disciple that Jesus saw to give him hope, to give him comfort, to give him assurance that he had risen from the dead for him.

[33:53] And then Jesus gives a call to Peter and equips him with what he needs to be a bold proclaimer of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We see this in John chapter 21 verses 15 through 17. Remember, Jesus appears to Peter and the disciples and he asks Peter those three questions. Peter, do you love me?

Peter says, yes, Lord, I love you. Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord, I love you. Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord, I love you. You know this.

The three denials demanded three questions by Jesus. But then Jesus says, feed my sheep. I'm sending you out now as an under shepherd to feed the fold of God. And then Jesus gifts his servant and spurs him on to faithful gospel proclamation. We see this through the book of Acts.

[34 : 57] We see this in Acts chapter 2 when the Spirit of God is sent on the day of Pentecost to the church. Who's the first disciple to preach in Acts chapter 2?

It's Peter. Peter's the one who raises his voice and begins to proclaim the gospel to the Jews. Peter is sent out as a missionary. Peter is the one who ushers in Cornelius, the Gentile, into the church. He has the privilege to bring the first Gentile into the church of Jesus Christ. Peter writes two epistles, 1 and 2 Peter. I mean, look at this.

Look at the restoration of Peter. Look at the grace and the power of Jesus Christ in his life. I think more than that, and lastly, we see Peter's powerful restoration in the fact that Jesus gave him the grace to die well.

Peter died a martyr's death. He was unwilling to die a martyr's death the night that he betrayed Jesus Christ, but church tradition tells us that Peter died on a cross.

[36 : 10] He died upside down because he said he was not worthy to die like his Lord. He died in the hands of one of the most violent Caesars of all time, Nero.

Violent persecution broke out in Rome, and Peter happened to be there in the 60s A.D. And Peter died a martyr's death. He died well.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave him grace not to deny him any longer, and he died as a faithful and a true witness to Jesus. What a turnaround. What a change.

A man who was calling hell down upon himself now dies as a faithful and true witness. See the grace there. See the power of Jesus Christ to restore his disciples.

So what do we learn from this text? Well, first we see the real pressures facing all of Christ's disciples to be ashamed of him and his gospel.

[37 : 12] The world tells us to deny Jesus Christ, does it not? It tells us not to be as committed to Jesus as we really want to be. And we see this all the time in every sector of society.

We see it in the workplace where we're called to not be as committed to Jesus as we should. But we shouldn't speak up. We shouldn't stand for Christ.

Christ. We see this in the classrooms and the things being taught to our young children to deny Jesus Christ. We see this in peer pressure with friends.

I feel it all the time myself. you go out to the restaurant and you pray before your meal. And there's a temptation to be ashamed of Jesus, right?

People are looking at you. What's your waiter or waitress going to think about you if you're a Christian? Christian. It's always there as we go out into the world. There's real pressures facing us every day, chipping away at our faith and telling us not to stand firm.

[38 : 32] Real pressures in this life. And we also see the real problem that the most loyal of Christ's disciples are not faithful and true like their master. We're all weak.

We're all timid. We're all scared. We're all a bunch of Peters. How many times have we denied Jesus Christ? How many times have we sinned against light and revelation and truth that have been given to us by God?

How many times are we in a circle with friends and they're blaspheming the name of Jesus and yet we say nothing? Or we laugh at what they're saying and we shouldn't?

We're weak. The Apostle Peter was weak. The best of Jesus' disciples fell so very greatly that night. What about us?

We've got real problems. We're nowhere close to being like Jesus. We're nowhere close to being a faithful and true witness of speaking the truth even to our very own condemnation and death.

[39 : 40] death. But we also see the real patience and love of Christ even to his backslidden disciples.

Jesus could have casted Peter away from him for all eternity that night. Jesus had every reason to do so. in Matthew chapter 10 you don't have to turn there I'll read it for you.

Matthew chapter 10 starting in verse 32 so everyone who acknowledges me before men I will I also will acknowledge before my father who is in heaven.

But whoever denies me before men I will I also will deny before my father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

[40:42] And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Jesus says if we don't acknowledge him before men he will not acknowledge us before his father in heaven. And Peter heard these words and yet Peter didn't do this.

And Jesus had every reason to cast him out of his presence forever. He had fulfilled what Jesus had just said. And yet we see the patience and the love and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in Peter's life.

Where are you at right now? Are you subtly denying? Are you feeling no hope? Are you feeling as if I'll never be forgiven of my sins?

Well take hope. Be like Peter. If you're going to sin like Peter, repent like Peter. And repent. And be sorrowful and come back to the Lord.

[41:51] He's merciful and gracious. He will take you back in his loving arms. This is a grievous sin made by Peter but there's still mercy being offered to Peter even in the midst of that sin.

So have hope. Look at the grace and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for sinners. Go back to him and find forgiveness for your sins.

Lastly we see the real power of Christ to uphold and restore his wayward disciples. disciples. And I want to end with this. It's a story about a man named Thomas Cranmer.

You know Thomas Cranmer? Thomas Cranmer. Am I saying that correctly? Christ really has power to restore his disciples.

This wasn't just a special act to an apostle of Jesus Christ and that was it. This power is extended to every single one of us even today. And Christ has all power to bring his people back to where they had fallen.

[42:59] We see this in the life of Thomas Cranmer. Who is Thomas Cranmer? Well Thomas Cranmer was a key leader in the English Reformation during the 1500s. 500 years ago.

He's largely responsible for editing the Book of Common Prayer. It's used even in Anglican churches today. And he helped create the 39 Articles of Faith, which is very similar in many respects and in many parts to the Westminster Confession of Faith and even to our very own 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

He was a very important man. And he was the Archbishop of Canterbury at this time. A very powerful and prestigious position. But he was a good reformer.

And as a good reformer, he became sick and tired of what was happening in the Roman Catholic Church. And so he began to speak out against it and write out against it. But that didn't make people very happy.

Soon he was thrown in prison for heresy and for treason. Treason against England and heresy against the Roman Catholic Church.

[44:12] And there he rotted for two to three years. believers. And as he was suffering for his faith, he was remaining faithful. But some people came along and said, Thomas, if you recant and denounce the things that you have said, we will restore you to your former position.

You'll have favor again in the Roman Catholic Church. You'll have favor again in your society. What does Mr. Cranmer do? He denies what he formerly believed.

He wanted to save his life. And so, in six recantations, he takes back everything that he once believed.

Cranmer repudiated and denounced the teachings of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, leaders in the Reformation. He pledged his allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church and to the Queen and King of England.

He embraced Rome's teaching on transubstantiation and purgatory. He acknowledged the universal authority of the Pope over the Christian church and called all Christians who had followed his former teachings to come back to Rome.

[45:26] He had given in because he wanted to save his life. He had denied his Savior. He denied the essential truths that came out of the Reformation, the things that we still believe and hold true today.

And it seemed like all was lost. And it seemed like Cranmer fell so far he couldn't be restored again. And it seemed like the Roman Catholic Church had won. And the Protestant Reformation was going down in the land of England.

But something happened. He thought he was going to get out of prison, but in fact he never would again. Queen Mary was on the throne, bloody Queen Mary, and she wanted his blood.

She didn't care that he recanted. She wanted to kill him. And that's exactly what happened. But the very day of his execution he was given an opportunity to speak one last time before the people, before he was burned at the stake.

And he stands up there and he pleads with God for help. And he takes back everything that he just wrote concerning his new beliefs about the Roman Catholic Church.

[46:35] He throws away all that and he says, I believe in the doctrines of the Reformation. I believe in the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. He stands for the truth.

Even though it was going to kill him. Even though he was condemned. Even though he would face even hotter flames that day. He stood firm.

He stood firm. He repented. And he held true to Christ. And so that day he died.

The first thing he did, he took that right hand of his and he thrust it into the fire. And he said, that unworthy right hand, that right hand that wrote these recantations against my true faith.

And he burned that right hand first. But the entire time this was happening, his eyes were set to heaven. And he saw his unseen Savior sitting at the right hand of God. Jesus had restored him that day.

[47:40] It was almost as if everything was lost. But Jesus had restored him and news of his death went around. And that inspired many, many men to stand firm for the faith of Jesus Christ.

It kept on the English Reformation. And it's a great story of Jesus' restoring grace in a fallen disciple's life. So the Lord Jesus gave him the grace to be a faithful witness again.

He died at the stake that day, but he died a martyr's death. And so do you need that grace? Do you need that restoration? You may be a fallen disciple now, but go back to Jesus Christ.

He will restore you. Thank you all. I appreciate once again my time here.

Let's close with prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you that though we are weak and feeble and timid and in so many ways deny our Savior on a daily basis, even by the things that we do, we thank you for grace and mercy found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[48:53] We thank you for showing mercy upon Peter. We thank you for restoring him. We thank you for the fact that Jesus is the faithful and true witness. He's the one to look to.

He's the one to trust in. Thank you that we do not trust in man, for man will always fail. We thank you we have one who is always true. Help us, Lord, to cast our eyes upon him.

Restore us. Make us faithful and true witnesses! In this dark and sinful world. Help us not to deny you, Lord, in our everyday lives.

Help us to stand firm and immovable. Help us to die well. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.