

Bloody Redemption

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[0 : 0 0] You course. Well, we're going to turn now to our Bible reading.! I'm going to read from the beginning of Luke chapter 22 right to verse 38.

And I think that's page 881 if you pick up one of those church visitors' Bibles. Page 881. Luke 22 then at verse 1.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him, that is, Jesus, to death.

They feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.

And they were glad and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

[1 : 3 1] Then came the day of unleavened bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.

They said to him, Where will you have us prepare it? He said to them, Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters.

And tell the master of the house, The teacher says to you, Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you where a large upper room is furnished.

Prepare it there. And they went and they found it just as he had told them. And they prepared the Passover. And when the hour came, he reclined at table and the apostles with him.

And he said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

[2 : 3 3] And he took a cup. And when he had given thanks, he said, Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

And he took the bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table.

For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined. But woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. And they began to question one another which of them it could be who was going to do this.

A dispute also rose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them.

- [3 : 42] And those in authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves.
- For who is the greater? One who reclines at table or the one who serves? He's not the one who reclines at table. But I am among you as the one who serves.
- You are those who have stayed with me in my trials. And I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom. That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Simon. Simon. Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.
- But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And when you've turned again, strengthen your brothers. Peter said to them, Lord, I'm ready to go with you both to prison and to death.
- [4 : 52] Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day until you deny me three times that you know me.
- And he said to them, when I sent you out with no money bag or knapsacks or sandals, did you lack anything? They said, nothing. He said to them, but now let the one who has a money bag take it, and likewise a knapsack.
- Let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me. And he was numbered with the transgressors.
- But what is written about me has its fulfillment. And they said, look, Lord, here are two swords. And he said to them, it is enough.
- Amen. May God bless his word to us and grant us understanding of its message for us today. We'll do turn again to Luke chapter 22.
- [6 : 04] There is a conflict that is at the heart of our world. Jesus will be king. And his rule will mean wonderful things for those who welcome him, for those who respond to his outstretched hand of grace.
- But there is already someone who rules this world. Satan. And he means to do all that he can to destroy Jesus' rule and kingdom and to do whatever he can to pull people away from Jesus.
- And so we can be left wondering, is it possible to persevere in the Christian life? With all of its obstacles, with evil powers that work, with the corruption of our own sinful hearts, and with a world so set against the ways of the Lord, can we keep clinging to Jesus?
- Or to put it another way, how on earth do we contend with the power and grip of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Well, Luke wants us to have certainty in the face of such questions.
- We've seen already from Luke chapter 19, verse 28, that this book moves towards its climax as Jesus finally arrives at Jerusalem. But it's not just one climax.
- [7 : 24] It's two parts deliberately placed side by side. From chapter 19 to 21, the focus is on Jesus the king. But from chapter 22 onward, the focus shifts to Jesus the Passover lamb preparing to be sacrificed.
- And Luke doesn't want us to see these as two disconnected portraits, but as one unified reality. And he shows us this by framing both moments with parallel scenes.
- So we saw back in Luke 19, Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly, publicly, riding a colt, cheered by crowds. But here in chapter 22, Jesus enters quietly, privately, preparing for Passover with his disciples.
- In both, he gives detailed instructions, first about finding the colt, and now about securing this room. And this is deliberate. Luke wants us to hold these two pictures together.

Jesus is the king, and Jesus is the Passover lamb. And the glory of his reign is revealed in and achieved by the humility of the cross.

[8 : 36] That's the kind of king he is. The lamb who takes away the sins of the world. And so let's be clear, Jesus will triumph over Satan and build his kingdom, and Jesus will be a tower of strength for his people against Satan's attacks.

And so the first thing we see in our passage is a clash of sovereignty in verses 1 to 13. A clash of sovereignty. While Satan is a very real and a very personal adversary who reigns over this world, the Lord Jesus reigns supreme above all.

And his great purposes will never falter. At the heart of this passage is Jesus preparing his disciples for what he is about to do, to offer himself as the Passover lamb.

But it's striking, isn't it, that Luke gives more attention to the scene setting here in verses 1 to 13 than to the institution of the Passover meal itself. Why?

Because Luke wants us to be absolutely clear about the timing and about what's really going on behind the scenes. So notice how often he emphasizes Passover, verse 1, it's the feast of unleavened bread called the Passover.

[9 : 52] Verse 7, the day on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Verse 11, where is the guest room to eat the Passover? Verse 13, they prepared the Passover.

Why all this repetition? Well, as we'll see a little bit later, this is setting the scene for Jesus to speak to his disciples of the supper that would be the fulfillment of Passover, the truer and better Passover with the truer and better lamb himself.

But there's more going on here than just showing us the occasion. We're also to see the orchestration behind it. And so Luke is drawing our attention to two clashing providences, Satan's providence and the Savior's providence.

And so look at verses 1 to 6 first where we see Satan's providence. Passover is drawing near and verse 2, the chief priests are still looking for a way to kill Jesus.

But they face a conundrum. The crowds love Jesus, 21, 38. All the people came early in the morning to hear him. And Jesus leaves the city every night, 21, 37, making him hard to arrest.

[11 : 04] So they have a conundrum. They've wanted to eliminate him for some time, particularly since he arrived in Jerusalem, 1947, chapter 20, verse 19, show us that. But they can't figure out the how.

Well, verse 3, then Satan entered into Judas. Here's their answered prayer. Here's the providence they need. A door opens at just the right moment and it's Satan holding the handle.

Notice how chilling this alliance is. Satan and the chief priests conspiring together to destroy the Son of God. But Luke is doing more than simply reporting Judas' betrayal.

He wants us to see what is going on behind these events. He wants us to grasp the big picture of the spiritual forces that are at play. And so let's take a step back for a moment and see how Luke broadly deals with the evil one.

In the first half of Luke's gospel, which focuses on Jesus arriving onto the world stage, we're given glimpses of what his kingdom is like and will be like. And we see in that first half a conflict in the wilderness where Jesus is shown to be the true Israel, the last Adam, faithful to the uttermost.

[12 : 24] And so he defeats the devil. And generally, in this first half of Luke's gospel, the conflict is the overall clash of kingdoms, of light versus darkness. It's on a big scale, a general scale.

And so in the first half of Luke, this conflict is represented by the generic term, the devil. That's why he's always referred to in the first half. But in the second half of Luke, as Jesus walks the road to Jerusalem and to the cross before being taken up in glory, the enemy, the evil one, is exclusively referred to by his personal name, Satan.

Why? Because the conflict is now up close and personal. And the journey has not just been a geographical one, but a metaphorical one, a picture of what it looks like to walk the path of his kingdom.

And a very real part of that path is a very real battle with Satan, a personal battle. And so as Jesus approaches the very moment of his victory, his glory, Satan's belligerence intensifies.

Here in verse 3 with Judas and then later, as we saw, as we'll see in verse 31 with Peter and the disciples. And Satan is no cartoon villain.

[13 : 43] Satan, just look at who he targets. It is Satan who is behind Judas' grim betrayal. It's worth us seeing this because in Matthew and Mark, in their accounts of these events, they're focused on slightly different details.

In those Gospels, it seems that Judas' heart is turned by money and being at odds with Jesus' approach to it. But here, Luke wants us to see the deeper reality. It's Satan at work.

And Satan's work is always to kill and steal and destroy. And Satan's methods here are the same as they were in Eden. Get humans to side with him, lead them to reject God's rule, twist the desire for autonomy into rebellion, and ultimately seek to destroy what belongs to God.

That's exactly what Jesus described in the parable of the tenants in the vineyard back in chapter 20. They said, this is the heir. Let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.

And so here, the need of the chief priests is met with the providence of Satan to bring about the death of the Son of God. And so, verses 4 to 6, Judas, under the sway of Satan, confers with the chief priests.

[14 : 56] They agree, he accepts the money and the trap is set. This is Satan's providence, a calculated moment of malice. And so there's a reality in here that we need to wrestle with.

Satan is a real foe. And he has real power. The Bible never downplays just what a foe he is. The Bible's clear. He is the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians.

Or in 1 John, the whole world lies in his power. This world is Satan's kingdom and he is not idle. Now, of course, we mustn't sensationalize Satan, but we also mustn't sanitize him.

He prowls. He loves nothing more than to get his hooks into people. And we must be clear-sighted here. He loves nothing more than to get his hooks into believers.

Even believers who've been at the forefront of Jesus' kingdom-building work. Turn back to chapter 9, verses 1 and 2. Judas has been with Jesus the whole time.

[16 : 05] And look what we read here. Chapter 9, verses 1 and 2. And he, Jesus, called the twelve, including Judas, and together gave them, including Judas, power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

And he sent them, including Judas, out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. That is a bracing reality. Behind a young Christian who's in a battle to make good on their profession of faith, but has been having a bumpy journey to do so, there prowls Satan.

Behind a promising young minister or trainee who's become frustrated about how his ministry's going and he wants something more celebrated, there prowls Satan. Behind a young parent being worn down by their children to try and use their Sundays differently or their Friday evenings to not gather with church, there prowls Satan.

Behind a Christian marriage that's increasingly hard work where the kids are drawing all the energies of the parents and there's a growing dissatisfaction, there prowls Satan. He even prowls amongst Jesus' disciples.

Yes, he does. Even the ones who've done mighty things for his kingdom. He prowls, waiting to devour, waiting to use whatever the earthly manifestation is of something that isn't quite to our liking.

[17 : 34] There, Satan prowls seeking to destroy, destroy lives, destroy ministries, destroy churches, and in so doing, seeking to destroy what he can of God and his kingdom. But, Satan isn't the only one at work because we also see in verses 7 to 13 the Savior's providence.

The Savior's providence. Verse 7, the day arrives for the Passover lamb to be sacrificed and notice that Jesus is in control of all that happens here. Until now, he's left the city each night to avoid a rest.

But now, now, it's the time to be in the city. Now, it's time to die. And he's in complete control. Verses 8 to 12, Jesus sends Peter and John ahead to prepare the meal.

And once again, just like with a colt, he gives detailed instructions. You'll meet a man carrying water, follow him, ask him about the guest room, he'll show you a large furnished upper room, prepare the meal there.

And so Luke shows us here a very clear incidence of divine orchestration. This isn't a lucky guest. You're going to bump into someone, I think. No. This isn't a crystal ball that Jesus has.

[18 : 48] But we see a sovereign Lord moving toward his appointed hour. This is the time Jesus had spoken of back in chapter 9, his exodus in Jerusalem.

And so Jesus' death will not be a tragic accident. It was his destiny. It was God's plan from eternity past in order to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. And so while Satan plots and Judah's schemes and the religious establishment colludes, Jesus presses on.

Because behind all their malice is a greater providence, God's providence. You see, this isn't really a clash of providences. For while Satan does rule this world, he does so on a leash.

And the very event Satan meant for evil becomes our means of redemption. Hebrews tells us by death, Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death.

That is the devil. Or listen to James Philip who says, the powers of evil were successful in their efforts, but their victory became their defeat.

[19 : 59] And Jesus' defeat became his triumph. Is it possible for us? Is it possible for you to press on? Perhaps you're sitting here agonizing over that.

Perhaps Satan has his hooks lined up on you right now, tugging hard. perhaps there are temptations that are proving so very enticing to you. Perhaps he's giving you a good gnawing through your addiction.

Well, friends, Luke wants us to see here that even in this very event where Satan sought to do his most calculating of evil, that there is one who's defeated Satan.

That there's one whose power and reign and authority rises far above all that Satan can do. But unless we avail ourselves of Jesus, unless we resist Satan, he may pull us away to disaster as he did with Judas.

But where we press on with Jesus, we are following the one who can turn Satan's works and effects into wondrous good, into glorious salvation.

[21 : 04] However it appears that things are unfolding in this world, the plan of God presses on unhindered. And his plan is glorious redemption paid for by the blood of the true Passover lamb.

And that's what we see. Secondly, we see the Christ's suffering, verses 14 to 23. Jesus is, for his people, the true and final sacrifice, the one who, through his death, brings real deliverance from Satan and lasting, eternal redemption.

redemption. But it is a redemption that can only come through blood. And so Jesus carefully arranges his final meal to take place on the night of Passover so that he might explain to his disciples the meaning of his impending death, that he himself is indeed the true Passover lamb.

But before diving into the rich theology of the Last Supper, notice how Luke deliberately draws our attention into something else. Jesus' affection, his personal love.

Verse 14, Jesus sits down with his disciples and in verse 15 he says something heartwarming. I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

[22 : 23] What wondrous words. What depth of affection lies behind these words. Jesus doesn't just tolerate his disciples. He's not just using them. He loves them truly, deeply.

Even amidst their bumbling and fumbling of which there's been much, Jesus earnestly desired this meal with them. What comfort there is in Jesus' character today for the bumbling and fumbling disciples here in this church.

That's certainly a tear to me. What grace that Jesus doesn't just put up with us but wants us at his table. And I think we see something of that in Jesus talking about not having these meals.

His abstinence verses 16 and 18. Jesus says he will not eat or drink again until the kingdom of God comes. Verse 16 likely refers to the Passover itself.

He won't have that again which he is about to fulfill because he's about to fulfill it. After this Passover will no longer be celebrated because the true Passover has come.

[23 : 32] Similarly verse 18 likely refers to the same thing. So Jesus abstains from this too and the phrase used in verse 18 there from now on that typically signifies a key transition point in salvation history something significant is happening.

There's going to be a new meal now and this one I will share with you as often as you eat it in remembrance of me. But this new meal also shows Jesus' great desire to share a feast a meal with his people.

The new meal points forward to the wedding feast of the Lamb. And so every time we gather around the Lord's table now every time we celebrate communion we are tasting we're getting a foretaste of that great final feast.

Jesus is really with us as we take and eat it. He is present by his spirit inviting people to his table. But still longing for the day when we will feast together with him in full when his kingdom fully arrives.

You see Jesus has great affection for his people. We mustn't ever lose sight of that. Yes his vision is kingdom sized but his affection is people shaped. He earnestly desires to share a meal with his people.

[24 : 52] Well but then through this meal Jesus does begin to explain what his death will achieve. And again the language is rich with Passover. Every year when Passover was celebrated it wasn't just about remembering the great rescue from Egypt that we read about in Exodus.

It also anticipated a greater rescue that was still to come. One from sin, from Satan and from final judgment. And at the center of Passover was a lamb, a substitute, a lamb whose blood had protected God's people from his deathly judgment.

A visible sign that the Israelites spread on the doorposts that said that judgment had already fallen in this household but on the lamb. And now Jesus applies all of that to himself.

You see what he says? Verse 19 This is my body given for you. Verse 20 This cup is my blood poured out for you.

That for you language is substitution language. Jesus says his body and blood are given in place of his followers just like the Passover lamb. And the fruit of his substitution echoes and amplifies that first Passover liberation yes but no longer from Pharaoh but from Satan liberation yes but not from Egypt and slavery but from sin and death's dark power.

[26 : 29] Now some of us might not feel the weight of that slavery maybe you aren't a Christian maybe you don't really know what we're talking about but the reality is that pulsing through this world and through our hearts and our lives is the darkness of sin's power.

And so all the hurt we've suffered and perpetrated all the loss that we've endured and inflicted all the unfulfilled longings that leave us unhappy unsatisfied and bittered that leave us pursuing more and more and more of this world's stuff and indeed the great distance that we do have to God all of that has its source in this slavery being under sin and under Satan's cruel reign and so to deal with that slavery nothing less than a blood sacrifice will do because sin demands judgment and wherever there is sin Satan is there sticking his claws in and so only the blood of a spotless substitute can set us free but listen to Jesus' wondrous words.

This is my body for you. This is my blood for you. But there's even more.

Jesus goes on to say that this is not just a meal of remembrance it's a covenant meal. Verse 20 This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Don't overlook that phrase.

If you can take those words out and nothing changes in your understanding then we haven't understood what Jesus is saying. Luke of the gospel writers is the only one who uses the word new covenant and he wants us to recall then Jeremiah 31.

[28 : 21] There in Jeremiah 31 God promises a new or a renewed covenant not because the covenant given through Moses in the Exodus spot the link not because that covenant lacked warmth or grace but because the people lacked faithfulness.

It wasn't a flawed covenant but a flawed people. And so this renewed covenant will then need to deal with the propensity of the human heart to long for sin to deal with that once for all.

And so in this covenant Jeremiah speaks about he recommits God recommits to writing the law on his people's hearts but that isn't new either. Now what will need to be new as one commentator says is the scope and success of the law keeping so that the relationship between God and man is not broken but is marked instead by mutual fidelity not just for some but for the whole house of Israel.

And so in Jeremiah the climax of the new covenant is God saying I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more. But there's something we need to remember.

Jeremiah is actually speaking not of the age of the church but beyond that he's prophesying to the end of time. And so the fullness of the new covenant is yet to be experienced but says Jesus it has begun in and through my blood.

[29 : 53] You see there's something not mentioned in Jeremiah 31. Something that was typically present. At the cutting of any covenant. Blood. But here with Jesus as the new covenant is being inaugurated we see it come through his blood.

Through his body being cut as it were. Through his blood. And until this new covenant is consummated look at the insurance that he gives us.

Look at what we can keep bringing before God as our plea. What we can call on him to remember. We have the signs that Jesus has just spoken of. The bread and the wine. Covenant signs that call on God to remember.

Calling him to remember that Jesus the substitute the Passover lamb forgives our iniquity. That's our claim. We have that and enjoy that now by faith as we claim and proclaim his body and his blood.

But one day we will have that by sight as we will have been truly cleansed and all the power and presence of sin will be gone forever.

[31 : 05] And so Jesus is here offering the promise of transformation. Life. The full eternal life that was spoken of in the original covenant. The covenant of life.

But notice where transformation is offered that Jesus actually finishes this section with treachery. Verse 21. A betrayer is present. Verse 22. And while such betrayal plays into God's plan, what is determined, nonetheless, Jesus says woo to the betrayer.

Jesus is clear. There is a way out. He is the Passover lamb. There is a body and blood for you. But there will be no excuse.

It won't do to say that well Satan entered into me so I refused it. See, Satan did enter into Judas but Judas didn't do anything that he didn't want to do.

And so it is, if we refuse Jesus, if we betray him ongoing, if we refuse his costly sacrifice, his blood, then that is a betrayal and he says, whoa.

[32 : 22] But in so doing, he's saying, don't go that way. Look at Judas. Don't go that way. Well, finally, with what's left, verses 24 to 38, we see that flowing out of Jesus' sacrifice, we see the call and challenge of service.

The call and challenge of service. You see, the cross of Christ lays upon his people the esteemed call to follow Jesus in the path of service, just as it also promises to us the strengthening and sustaining power of the Savior.

In the remaining verses, we see a focus on what it looks like to carry a cross on the road after Jesus. And so, firstly, we're to grasp that there is honor in service, verses 24 to 30.

The cross demands that we see service as the true glory of this world. It's striking, isn't it? Just after a moment of deep solemnity, Jesus speaking of his death and revealing his betrayal, the disciples fall into an argument about who's the greatest.

Verse 23, they're asking him who the betrayer might be, then very quickly, verse 24, who's the best? That's the human heart, isn't it? Fickle, self-focused, drawn instinctively toward worldly glory, even in the shadow of the cross.

[33 : 49] And we must be honest, this isn't just a problem for immature believers. believers. No, these are the apostles, trained in Jesus' seminary, men who've walked with Jesus, been taught by Jesus, commissioned by Jesus, and yet even here, they are jostling for prominence.

We can't afford to kid ourselves. There is a longing buried deep in each of us to be something in this world, to be seen, respected, listened to, needed. And sometimes we can dress that up in pious ways.

We can serve Jesus even, but secretly hoping that that service will give us a platform, give us something for ourselves. We want to lead, not to bless others, but to be indispensable.

We want our voice to be heard, our opinion valued, our presence recognized. It's very possible for us to serve Jesus and to run things in his church our own way, for our own benefit, all whilst making out it's for others.

But really it's for ourselves and our sense of worth. These are real temptations. But Jesus couldn't be clearer, could he? Verse 25, that's how the world operates.

[35 : 01] That's the way of the Gentiles, the kings of this world. But not so with you, because greatness in God's kingdom isn't about control or recognition. It's not about being up front or in charge.

It's about taking the lowest place. serving, being unseen. Verse 26, let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves.

That's not just a command. It's a gift. Because service is not drudgery, it's glory. It reflects Jesus himself, the one who is truly glorious, yet, verse 27, came as a servant.

I am among you as one who serves. And so the reality is for us, our church family here, if someone in the ministry team, if Agnes or Fraser or someone asks you to get involved in serving, that's not actually a burden.

It's not doing them a favor. According to Jesus, that is a privilege. It's a gift for your own soul. It is a means of you truly becoming more like Jesus in all of his glory.

[36 : 19] More like the one who said it is more blessed to give than to receive. But he didn't just say it, did he? Because he did indeed become the Passover lamb. Yes, the world will tell you the opposite.

Your heart may even resist it. But the cross tells the truth. The highest glory is found in humble service. But Jesus doesn't just issue a challenge.

He gives us a promise here because he also tells us that there are seats at the table that matters. Verses 28 to 30. In this world, greatness is all about where you sit.

You know what it feels like to be stuck at table 27 at a wedding while all the important people are sitting right there up at the front. But look at verse 30. Look at what Jesus says. You will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.

You'll sit on the thrones. Those are the seats that matter. If you stay with Jesus in his trials, verse 28, if you walk the way of the cross, if you choose humble service now, you will reign with him later.

[37 : 27] You'll be assigned a kingdom, verse 29. You'll sit at his table. You'll be honored not by crowds, but by Christ. There is a kind of greatness in this world, but this world is passing away.

If we chase greatness here, being lauded, being known, being powerful, we risk forfeiting greatness there. We risk forfeiting those seats. But if we follow the pattern of Jesus, serving, giving, laying ourselves down, then we will sit at the wedding feast of the lamb, at that wondrous table.

And so yes, our hearts may push back against service, but as we become more like Christ, we'll come to see it differently. We'll see that there's no greater honor than to serve the king and his purposes, and no greater reward than to dine at his table forever.

Well, the second challenge to our ongoing service of Jesus is that we will be hunted by Satan, verses 31 to 34. Be hunted by Satan. We'll have to reckon in this age with our failures and a real relentless foe.

Notice how quickly the scene shifts from the promise of thrones to the threat of being prey to Satan. Now, we knew Satan's future is secured. One of the great implications of the cross is that the serpent's head has been dealt the crushing blow.

[38 : 51] His defeat is certain, but until it is final, he will seek to wreak as much havoc as he possibly can. Notice how he works. Verse 31, Jesus says to his disciples, Satan demanded to have you.

That you there is plural in verse 31. He wants all the disciples. And he did in one way or another wreak havoc, persecution, hardship, martyrdom. But then Jesus' response hones in on Peter from verse 32.

And the sifting comes not through some spectacular demonic attack, but through the everyday pressures of life. You see what happened with Peter?

One person after another approached him on the night that Jesus died and says, you were with him. You're one of them. And so Satan uses fear, pressure, threats to safety.

That's his strategy here with Peter. He uses the very normal pressures of following Jesus to give a foothold. He wants to scatter and sift and pull apart what Jesus has built. And let's be clear, Satan is good at what he does.

[40 : 00] We mustn't underestimate him. Despite Peter's bold words in verse 33, Lord, I'm ready to go with you even to prison and death. I won't abandon you. Well, look at what Jesus says in verse 34.

You will fail before the day is gone. And he does. But here's the hope. Right in the middle of this brutal reality, Jesus says, verse 32, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not feel.

That's the difference. Peter will fall, but he will not be lost because Jesus prays for him. And not only that, Jesus speaks with confidence when you have turned again.

Not if, when you have turned again. You see, latent within Jesus' words here is the promise of repentance and restoration. Not because Peter is strong, but because Jesus is.

This is who our Savior is. Not one who rolls his eyes at our weakness, or despairs at our stumbling, but one who prays, one who intercedes, one who seeks our restoration. redemption.

[41 : 11] Remember how Peter was called back in chapter 5? Peter had said to Jesus, depart from me, for I'm a sinful man. But Jesus didn't say, oh, away with you, yuck, I've misjudged you.

No, even back then, his tender, beautiful, gracious response wasn't to deny that Peter was a sinner, but instead he says, don't be afraid. From now on, you'll be catching men.

I've got work for you to do. Jesus can do wonderful things with and in sinful men, and he means to, and he wants to, and so we can be encouraged.

Jesus is indeed our advocate. John tells us, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Even when we feel, when Satan gets a grip, when sin overtax us, Jesus does not let go.

He prays for us, he intercedes for us, he sustains us. Listen to J.C. Ryle. He says, the continued existence of grace in a believer's heart is a great standing miracle.

[42 : 16] His enemies are so mighty and his strength is so small. This world is so full of snares and his heart is so weak that it seems at first sight impossible for him to reach heaven.

The passage before us explains his safety. He has a mighty friend at the right hand of God. God's love. That's our hope. Yes, we have a fierce enemy, but we have a mighty advocate.

And what is more, Jesus will even use our failure for his purposes. Even our failures can amplify our service. Notice verse 32. When you have turned, strengthen your brothers.

Don't waste your failure. Get back to the work that I have for you. Well, the final challenge to our service will be the hostility of society. Verses 35 to 38.

The death of Jesus unleashes a growing hostility from the world toward Jesus' kingdom, and therefore toward his people. Verse 35, Jesus refers back to when he first sent out the disciples in Luke 9 and 10.

[43 : 21] Back then, they were told not to take provisions with them because their welcome in towns and villages would be evident through hospitality. But now, verse 36 marks a shift.

Things have changed. Jesus is about to be rejected and killed. And when the world pours out its hatred on the Savior, it won't stop there.

It will turn on its followers too. Jesus says, elsewhere, if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. And so now, Jesus speaks of needing to take a money bag, a knapsack, even a sword, with you.

Not because they are to attack. Jesus' people are never called to advance the gospel by violence. But the mention of the sword, I take it, symbolizes the hostility they'll now face. The sword is likely a means of defense.

Where there was once hospitality, now there'll be hostility, resistance, even danger. Why? Well, verse 37, Jesus explains. For Scripture must be fulfilled in me.

[44 : 26] He was numbered with the transgressors. Jesus' death will be the great turning point, just as Jesus was treated as a criminal, as a transgressor, so too will his people.

But even in hostility, there's encouragement. Notice how Jesus frames the whole conversation. Verse 35, before warning them about the hostility that's to come, he reminds them of the past.

When I sent you out, did you lack anything? Nothing, they reply. Why does he begin this way?

Because it's an assurance, isn't it? Even though hostility is coming, his provision remains. They lacked nothing before and they'll lack nothing now. Yes, their ministry will be costly and for many of the apostles it did cost them their lives, but Jesus is not sending them into battle unprepared.

His provision is in part warning them, preparing them for what is to come. But also it is in reminding them that because he was numbered among the transgressors, their ultimate future is secure.

[45 : 36] All that they truly need has been accomplished for them at the cross as Jesus was named as a transgressor, as he substituted for them. And so throughout this chapter, Jesus calls his followers to embrace the cross.

its salvation and its shape, that of sacrifice and service. But he's also clear about the obstacles of our own flesh, pride, greatness in this world, and our great foe, Satan, who schemes to see us fall, and a perpetual feud with the world who will number us with the transgressors just like our Savior.

persevere. But Jesus isn't calling us to something that's beyond us. We can be sure that those he has saved, those he has suffered for, he will sustain.

He promises us a seat at his table. He advocates for us in our sin. He will provide for our needs. Is it possible to persevere in the Christian life, to persevere in service?

Well, Luke's answer is, we follow the one who says with love in his voice, take, eat. This is my body which is for you.

[46 : 48] Take, drink. This is my blood poured out for you. And we follow the one who says, I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail when you have returned.

You see, Jesus in his sovereignty is Lord of the when, not the if. Let's pray. Gracious Lord, amidst the cosmic conflict in this world, grant us utter confidence in Jesus, in his blood, in his providence, salvation, in his sovereignty.

And as you do so, would you be pleased to use us mightily in your service? That with your strengthening, we will be pleased to serve as Jesus served.

Help us, for we can indeed only do these things with your grace, with your enabling. And we ask for that in Jesus' name. Amen.