

# Strong—But not *that* Strong

Mark 14:27-31

15 November 2020, 10:30 AM

## **Introduction:**

I have been preaching through the gospel of Mark in our regular sermon series. Currently we are in the middle of chapter 14—a very long chapter.

- In Mark 14, we have Mark's account of the final days of Jesus' life and ministry before He was crucified.

One of the things that Mark makes very clear all along is the fact that Jesus knew that He was going to the cross.

- In fact, Mark shows us that Jesus began talking to His disciples about His betrayal, death, and resurrection all the way back in Mark 8:31.
- Mark 14 begins with Jesus preparing Himself and His disciples for the cross.
  - The chapter opens with a woman anointing Jesus with precious oil.
    - She is criticised for her extravagance by Jesus' disciples until He silences them.
    - He declares that she has done a good work, anointing Him for His burial.
  - Next, Jesus arranges to eat the Passover with His disciples. This Passover proves to be a very extraordinary Passover.
    - First, we have Him announcing to His disciples that one of them will betray Him, and that this will be exactly according to what is decreed by God.
    - This causes them all to examine themselves and say "Is it I?"
  - But then He does something of monumental significance.
    - By His divine authority, He declares that the blood of the old covenant will be replaced by His own blood that will be shed for the remission of His people's sins.
    - He announces this change by taking bread, breaking it, and giving it to them to eat, declaring that it is His body; and by taking the cup of wine, giving it to them to drink, and declaring that it is His blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of the sins of many! He is the sacrifice of the New Covenant!
    - From now on, instead of coming to God by the blood of bulls and goats offered by ritual sacrifices at God's appointed place (as Israel had done for 1500 years), all nations are called to come to God by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sin. It is by Him that we are reconciled to God and live.
  - With what simplicity the New Covenant was inaugurated, with only twelve men and the Lord Jesus in this very simple service.
    - Yet, now, life by faith in Him crucified for the remission of sins has spread to nations all over the world including our own.
    - Thanks be to God.
  - This momentous Passover concludes with the singing of a hymn, perhaps Psalm 116-118 which were typically sung at the end of the Passover meal.
    - We are told that Jesus heads out with His disciples to the Mount of Olives and that brings us to the next discourse that Jesus has with His disciples—one in which He announces to them that they are all going to desert Him that very night,
      - an announcement that they refuse to accept. Let's take a look.

Please listen now as I read this passage to you beginning in Mark 14:27 and concluding with verse 31.

- This will be our text today. Mark 14:27-31. This is the word of God.

**Mark 14:27-31: Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.’<sup>28</sup> But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”<sup>29</sup> Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be.*”<sup>30</sup> Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even this night*, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”<sup>31</sup> But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all said likewise.**

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our Lord endures forever.

It is, of course, very easy for us to criticise the disciples of Jesus.

- They deserve to be criticised for their confusion, blundering, bluster, pride, unfaithfulness, selfishness, and all the rest.
- Mark has been pointing out these things to us and we are meant to see them.
  - The Bible is not given to flattery—it consistently shows that all men but Jesus are sinners and deserving of criticism.

But we must be careful in looking at a passage like this that we do not set ourselves up over the disciples as if we are superior to them.

- I don’t mean to suggest that we may not have grown to a greater maturity than they had at this time.
  - In fact, I would say that we should have grown to a greater maturity than they had when this conversation took place. They certainly grew far beyond this!
- The truth is that many of us are not even where they were at this time, but if we are, as we should be, then we know that it is only by the grace of God that we are.
  - It is by His grace that we stand in the time of testing.
  - There is no place for boasting because if we are able to stand, it is only because we have learned to trust in Him and not in ourselves—the very thing that Jesus’ disciples needed to learn—and did learn in part through this whole ordeal of the cross.
- I dare say that if we look at the actual temptation that they had to face at this time and understand it, we will be humbled to see how strong they actually were—even though they needed to become much stronger (and *did* become much stronger).

We will begin by looking at the high level of commitment that they had at this time.

- Then we will look at how Jesus told them that they would desert Him.
- Then at how they all denied it.
- Then we will consider how they were strong, but not strong enough to deal with the shame of their Master submitting to the cross.
- And then we will see how we must live by faith if we are to bear the cross.

Let’s proceed with our first observation.

**I. Jesus’ disciples were men who already had a very high level of commitment to Him.**

- A. To support this assertion, I will first look outside of our text to what we have learned about them so far in Mark.

1. Remember that they had left all to follow Jesus.
  - In Mark 1:16-20 we have Jesus calling the four fishermen, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to follow Him, and we have them leaving their nets.
    - This was a big deal.
    - They had prosperous family fishing businesses in which they owned boats and all the equipment of their trade—they had a market.
    - But they left it all to follow Jesus.
  - Later on in Mark 10, Jesus affirmed that this was so when the rich young ruler had refused to leave all and follow Him.
    - Mark 10:28-30 says: **Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.”** <sup>29</sup> **So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s,** <sup>30</sup> **who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.”**
- As they spent time with Him, we were shown that they were often confused and weak, but despite all their blundering slowness to believe, they grew a lot.
2. They finally came to fully confess Him as the Christ in Mark chapter 8.
  - You may remember how He confronted them in chapter 8, telling them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Herodians who were demanding a sign from Him before they would believe—even though Jesus had been healing people, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, and multiplying bread to feed the multitude.
    - Jesus confronted His disciples with having hardened hearts because they still did not understand who He was...
    - Shortly after this, He asked them who He was and it was then that they finally confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God.
      - They had made great progress in their faith.
3. As we followed in in Mark’s account, we also noted how they learned to trust their Master.
  - a. We noted that when they got to Jerusalem and Jesus told them to go into the city where they would see a colt tied that had not been ridden on,
    - to loose it and bring it to Him and to tell anyone that asked them that the Master needs it, they went without question (Mark 11:2-7).
    - If He had told them to do something like that in prior days, they would have had all the typical questions about how they would find it and what they should do if the owner still wouldn’t let them have it...and that they might be accused of stealing.
      - Now they had learned that if Jesus told them something like that, there was no need to question it.
      - They had learned to trust Him.
  - b. We saw evidence of this again when He sent them to prepare for the Passover meal.

- He said: **Mark 14:13-14: “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. <sup>14</sup> Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?” ’ ”**
- They go without question and find it just as He had told them.

TRANS> The commitment and growth of the disciples has been evident.

- It is a wonderful thing to see in those who come to Christ—and even to look at our own lives and see the progress we have made.
  - Can you see how God has worked in your life?
- B. We can also see evidence of their commitment in our text...even in this account which prophesies of their failure...
  1. We can see it in how strong their desire was to follow Him.
    - “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” said Peter.
    - This shows clearly that he was no longer unsure about Jesus. He was fully committed to following Him, at least in his own mind.
  2. There are many who dabble around with Christ, but who are not at the point Peter was.
    - They have not left all to follow Christ.
      - They are struggling with basic discipleship—with repentance, with living a life that is about pleasing Him instead pleasing themselves.
      - They are not sure about tithing, about devoting the Sabbath to the Lord, about devoting themselves to prayer and the word, about telling the truth.
      - Perhaps they haven’t even given up cursing and swearing, don’t repent of their anger or their lying—maybe there is drunkenness or drugs—
        - Maybe gossip is still a big part of their lives—without repentance...
        - Perhaps there is indulgence in pornography, or even fornication.
    - The disciples of Jesus were far beyond that, even at this stage of their growth where they are on the brink of forsaking their Master.
      - They were true followers of Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
      - They were fully committed to doing the will of their Master.

TRANS> It is important to understand that there is a great difference between failing to live up to your commitment and not having a commitment at all.

- When you have a commitment, you truly want to follow through.
- Jesus wants us to make a commitment, to enter into covenant with Him, and then repent when we fail instead always putting off our profession.
- C. What about you? Are you at least resolved to follow Jesus at this point in your life? Have you professed Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and joined His church?
  1. Though you may fall, are you at least devoted to doing the will of God?
    - Are you someone who is following Jesus so that when you sin, you repent instead of just going on in your sin?
  2. If you are not at that point, you have no basis to be sure that you are even saved.
    - You may have professed your faith, but if you are not following Christ by dealing with you sin when it happens, you have no grounds for assurance.

- It is not that we are saved by our works—not at all—we all sin...
  - But when we are Christians, we repent of our sins and look to Jesus for forgiveness.
  - If we cherish our sins and cling to them, it calls our profession of faith into question.
- A Christian is someone who looks to Jesus to save them from their sins.
  - You look to Him not only for forgiveness, but also for deliverance from your sin so that you do not go on living in it.

TRANS> Jesus' disciples had that basic level of commitment at the time when Jesus had this conversation with them.

- But now let's look at what He said to these devoted followers of His:

## II. Jesus told them that they would all desert Him that very night.

- You can see that He declares it to them as a certainty:
  - In Mark 14:27 of our text, it says: **Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'"**

A. There are two parts to this.

1. First, He tells them that they will be made to stumble because of Him.
  - The word *stumble* is the word *σκανδαλίζω* (*skan-dal-id'-zo*) in the original from which we get the word *scandalize*.
  - This means that they are going to be offended by Jesus—He is going to do something that will bring about their strong disapproval.
  - When He is arrested, they will be thinking, "What's wrong with You? Why don't You do something? You are the Christ, but You are like a lamb going off to be slaughtered—putting up no resistance. What's wrong with You?"
2. The second thing He says is that they will be scattered... that is, they will desert Him.
  - This comes out in the scripture text He quotes from Zechariah 13:7 that was written about this very night... where God declares that He will strike the shepherd of His people with the result that they will be scattered.
  - This scattering is the desertion.
    - They will be so offended or disturbed by Jesus and what He does that they will abandon Him.

B. Jesus speaks of this as an absolute certainty.

1. Not only does He declare it and then defend it as we will see in a minute, but He also backs up His statement with the scripture from Zechariah.
  - It was the Lord's will for Jesus to suffer alone—it had been written in the Word.
  - He was to be abandoned by all His followers—none of them would be worthy of Him—He stands as the only one who is righteous.
2. There was no warrant for anyone to doubt this.
  - It was written in Holy Scripture and it could not be otherwise.
  - To question it was to question the Holy Scripture which cannot err.

3. We need to believe what the scripture says.
  - If it declares that all have sinned, we cannot say that we have not sinned.
  - If it declares that we will not come to God unless He draws us, we must accept that also.
  - If it tells us that homosexuality is sinful, we must believe that.
  - If it tells us that God works all things after the counsel of His will—that He is the one who gave us our leaders, we must believe that.
  - If it says that unless we repent of our sins, we will perish, we must believe it.

C. But notice that Jesus also says something encouraging to His disciples.

1. He tells them that though they will all desert Him, He will also restore all of them.
  - all of them except Judas who was not now with them and of whom Jesus had already said that it would have been better for him if he had not been born.
  - But His promise is that when He is raised from the dead, He will regather them in Galilee—where He had gathered them to start with.
    - Look at verse 28: **“But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”**
    - This is beautiful.
    - The words “go before” are the words of a shepherd leading his sheep.
      - Though Jesus appeared to His disciples on several occasions after He had risen while they were still at Jerusalem, He told them to go to Galilee and it was there that He restored Peter who had denied Him and so brought them all back together to serve Him.
2. This is the way of our Lord with us if we are His true disciples—if we are devoted to Him even as these men were.
  - Even though we stumble and deny Him, He will not forsake us.
    - If we are truly His, He will always be faithful to restore us.
  - Like Peter, we may fall into very great sins in which we even deny Him; but if we are His, He will maintain the seed of faith in us and bring us to repentance.
    - Until we repent, He will see that we are miserable like David was until he confessed his sin... as he says in Psalm 32:3-6: **When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**
3. Take heart that though you may be like Hosea’s wife and desert Jesus your husband, He will not abandon you.
  - He will come to lead you again.

TRANS> But as you can see, these words of promise were of little comfort to Jesus’ disciples.

- They hardly even seem to notice them.
  - They were so horrified in being told that they would deny Him that very night that they were not ready to hear this promise of restoration.
    - “What do you mean, we will all desert You? What kind of disciples do You think we are?”

- They were like a devoted wife who is told that she will desert her beloved husband... that very night.
  - To be told that when she has no intention of doing so... when she has been devoted to him for years and has no inclination to leave him...
    - Yet, the words are, **“All of you will be made to stumble because of Me.”**

### III. Jesus’ disciples refuse to accept this pronouncement.

#### A. Peter speaks for them all.

- He was usually the first to speak and his words were typically extreme.
- But as is often the case, you can see how we are told at the end of verse 31 that when he protested that even if he had to die, he would not deny Jesus,
  - we are told that **“they all said likewise.”**
  - His protest to what Jesus said was the protest of them all.

#### B. Let’s take a closer look at Peter’s opposition to what Jesus has said.

1. First, he boasts that even if all the others are made to stumble, he will not.
  - Verse 29: **Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.”**
  - It hurt him to be told that he would.
    - He knew his heart.
    - He knew that he was committed to Jesus and had no intention of deserting Him.
    - Hopefully, you also have no intention of deserting your Lord.
      - If you are thinking of doing so the way Judas was, it is a dreadful state that you are in and you need to repent at once!
  - It is offensive, perhaps, for Peter to put himself above his brethren and to say that even if they do, I won’t,
    - but it is not as offensive as it might seem.
    - We cannot know the hearts of others, but Peter knew what was in his own heart.
      - It is not pride to say, “I love you and I will never leave you.”
      - As mentioned before, it is in fact a commitment that we are asked to make when we profess our faith—we are to confess that Jesus is Lord—our Lord—and that we will follow Him.
      - Jesus asks us to make this commitment when we come to Him.
  - The problem is that Peter, in his zeal, contradicts what Jesus had told him and shown him from scripture.
    - That is where sinful pride has come to play.
    - We all need to be wary of our weakness and never think that we can stand by our own power—only with the help of the Lord.
    - Yet, we should be as zealous as Peter to desire to stand.
2. Jesus tells Peter specifically that he in particular will not only desert Him, but will even deny Him, and not just once, but three times.
  - He tells him this with an oath (v. 30): **Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”**
  - Peter will not just run away—he will testify three times that he is not a disciple of Jesus.

- The other gospels tell us that Peter will do this before the cock crows.
    - Mark gives us even more detail and tells us that he will do this before the rooster crows twice.
    - This probably reflects the fact that the third watch was called the cock-crowing watch because it began with the cock-crowing that happened in the middle of the night and ended with the second cock-crowing in the morning.
    - When the other gospels say that Jesus told Peter that he would deny Jesus before the cock crows, they refer to the cock crowing in the morning, but when Mark says before the cock crows twice, it gives us the further detail that Peter would deny Christ over the course of the night. His denials would begin before the first crowing at midnight and be complete before the morning crowing.
      - This showed that his denial was even worse because he had time between his denials to repent and did not.
3. But Peter makes a very strong assertion that he will not deny Jesus even if he must die with Him.
- Verse 31: **But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”**
    - And as mentioned before, all the disciples said likewise.
  - It is noteworthy that Peter mentions not only that he will die for Jesus, but also that he will even die *with* Him.
    - Does this mean that he has now accepted the fact that Jesus is going to die?
    - Probably it is more a manner of speaking.
      - If he had come to accept that Jesus was going to die, he would have readily accepted that He was to be raised the third day and taken comfort.
      - Probably this is just a case of Peter declaring that even if they were to get crushed by their enemies, he would stand with Jesus unto death.
- C. What often goes unnoticed here is the fact that Peter actually spoke the truth.
- He was indeed willing to give his life for Jesus.
1. This is clearly shown by what he actually did.
- As is well known, at Jesus’ arrest, he drew his sword to fight, cutting off the right ear of one of the officers that came to arrest Jesus.
  - Peter did this even though he and his companions were vastly outnumbered and under-armed (with only two swords).
  - Peter was ready to die.
    - If Jesus hadn’t stopped him, Peter would have fought to the point of death.
    - He truly was that committed.
2. It is important to see this. Peter’s commitment was very strong.
- In a way, it was truly as strong as he thought it was.
    - It is a high commitment to be willing to die for the cause of Christ.
  - But he did not anticipate the strength of commitment he would need to be able to stand with his Master that night and not deny Him.
    - A greater commitment was needed than a willingness to die fighting at His side.
    - So it was with all the disciples—and that brings us to our next point.



**IV. Jesus' disciples were ready to stand up with Him against His enemies, but they were not ready give in to His enemies and to submit to the cross.**

A. It is one thing to go out and fight to the death; it is quite another to let your enemies take you—especially when you know that you have the power to resist them.

1. And Jesus did have power to stand up to His enemies and to overcome them all.
  - Peter and his fellow disciples certainly knew that by now.
  - The one who can command the wind and wave and who can raise the dead can certainly call fire down from heaven and to swallow up His adversaries.
2. But Peter and his companions were not prepared to go off with their enemies without resistance, with their Master acting like a lamb going to be slaughtered when He was the King of Israel!
  - They stumbled, not for lack of courage to fight, but the lack of a willingness to not fight—to submit to the cross.

B. This is what we call the offence of the cross.

1. The disciples are here reflecting the offence that their whole nation had with Jesus their Messiah and that they themselves continued to struggle with.
  - We saw it when Jesus first announced his death to them in chapter 8, right after they had confessed Him to be the Christ.
    - Peter immediately took Him aside and began to rebuke Him—to tell Him that it was wrong for Him to go to the cross.
  - In their minds, the Messiah was supposed to deliver them from their enemies.
    - He was not supposed to stand down and die the shameful death of the cross.
    - He was to lead them to victory over the Romans and all the nations.
  - This is the offence that many who are in the church (whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament) have with Christ.
    - In their minds, we are the church and we are serving God and God ought to prosper us and give us mastery over all those who do evil—
    - But instead, God Himself seems to strike us and our shepherd (as Zechariah said) so that we are scattered.
      - We struggle that God doesn't bring us together and make us a praise in the earth—and that should disturb us, but not so that we are offended.
      - It should stir us to repent.
        - The cross that brings us (and that brought Jesus) to shame is meant to humble us so that we will repent.
    - And the most offensive thing of all about the cross is that God struck down the Messiah Himself who was righteous.
      - Those who are unbelievers in the church are so offended about this that they will not accept that the lowly Jesus can be the Messiah.
      - They don't think the Jesus who dies on the cross can be their Messiah. He cannot be struck by God like that if He is righteous.
  - 2. The problem is that they do not accept the fact that their sins call for God to strike their Messiah.
    - Atonement cannot be made unless the Son of God is stricken, crucified.
      - He who represents us as our head must be punished in our place.

- He must be God in human flesh and He must die for us.
  - If He were less than God, His death could never be sufficient to cover the sins of His people—we would be left under condemnation forever.
  - In short, we might say that it is offensive to the human race and most of all to those in the church to see that God is that offended with us.
3. I would submit to you that this is still the offense that unbelieving Jews as well as unbelieving Christians have to this day.
- By “unbelieving Christians” I mean those who are part of the church, who profess the name of Christ and profess to follow Him, but who deny His cross.
    - They believe that He died on the cross, but they do not believe that He went there to be punished in our place—and that without faith in Him, we would all be condemned to hell forever without remedy.
    - As I have explained to you before, they see Him as an example of one rejected for serving God, but not as one making an atonement for sin.
- Even after we have accepted the cross, we still struggle with the offense of the cross at a certain level. But let me be clear.
- C. The disciples of Jesus were not so offended with the cross that once they understood why Jesus went there they continued to reject Him.
1. Just the opposite.
- Once they understood that He willingly submitted to the cross because He went there to die for their sins, they were delighted with Him!
    - During the days that they had walked with Him, they had learned that they were sinners.
    - You couldn’t walk with Jesus and not be greatly exposed—we have seen that with them.
      - So in many ways, that prepared them to welcome Him as crucified.
  - But it was not until after He had actually died and been raised from the dead that they were finally able to come to terms with the whole thing.
2. They should have been prepared for it with all of Jesus’ teaching.
- But they were blinded and saw the cross, at the time of it, as the failure of His mission rather than the accomplishment of it.
  - Their faith was strong in that they were ready to follow Him to the point of death in battle for God’s kingdom...
    - But it was not strong enough to support Him in willingly going to be slaughtered before they had come to understand why He needed to be slaughtered.
3. We actually face the same temptation as believers today—to be offended when we are called to bear the cross.
- There are times in the life of the church when it is God’s will for the church to be brought down very low in the world.
    - Our temptation is to say, “Why doesn’t God do something? Look at all the sin in the church! Look at all the weakness. Look at the success that our adversaries are having both within and outside of the church.”
    - We don’t realise that God IS doing something.

- He is the one who is striking us so that we will repent and become stronger.
- It is not that we atone for our sin in this way, but it is that He humbles us so that we will return to Him.
- But there are nominal believers in the church who get offended when they see the enemies gaining ground both inside and outside the church.
  - Some of them are unbelievers and they are so offended that they reject the Lord—complaining that God is not among us when in fact He is working mightily.
  - I talk to those who have left Christ because of the weakness of the church in the world today.
- What is sometimes the hardest thing to bear is that God often strikes those who are the most diligent and the most faithful of His church.
  - Judgment begins with the household of faith.
  - He gives us the cross to bear—shame, weakness, wolves in sheep’s clothing among us, in order to refine us and to humble us and keep before us our need of Jesus Christ.
  - Instead of making us dominant in the world, He makes us the offscouring of the world. That can be offensive to us.
    - But we who are Christ’s true disciples need to bear His reproach lest we become numb to our sins and cease to grow.
      - Worse than that, lest we deny our need for Christ crucified and join the ranks of nominal Christians who are not converted.

**V. We see in all of this what scripture asserts: that the just shall live by faith.**

**A. We must trust God who strikes us for our good.**

1. Yes, as individuals and as churches, He lays the cross on us to humble us.
  - When we see the congregation that we are a part of torn apart by division or riddled with compromise, we must not be offended with God.
  - Rather, we must see that He is bringing us down because of our sins—we in the church who truly believe are being humbled.
    - He is not chastening those hypocrites that have come among us so much as He is chastening us.
    - That’s the reason that we are often left as a lowly remnant, without honour in the world.
2. But even more, we must see that it was necessary for God to strike Jesus our Messiah because of our sins—the sins of the elect.
  - God did not strike Him for the sins of the unbelievers in the church.
    - He struck Him for our sins if we are among the elect.
    - Even after we are regenerate, our sins call for atonement, else we could not be forgiven.
  - Our Master is the One who was cursed on the cross by God on our account.
    - There is no place for pride—only deep shame and humility.
    - Yes, we should be ashamed of ourselves—the shame of the cross is on account of us.

- We must trust God who struck us most of all when He struck our Head to deal with our sin and who continues to strike us to keep us mindful of the cross.
  - That is the first way we must trust God. The second way is related to the first.
- B. Second, we must trust the Lord for grace to keep us from being offended by the cross—from deserting Jesus when He and His church are brought low in our society.
  1. It is hard to accept and the temptation will be for us to be offended—to go away and walk no more with Him.
    - We want honour, not shame and reproach—and we struggle when God does not give Him (and us with Him) honour in the world.
    - But God is able to sustain us and keep us from turning away from Him by His grace.
  2. The disciples did not realise that they could not stand without God’s grace (or help).
    - They did not realise that they would be called to do more than die for their Lord.
    - They would be called to willingly bear shame and reproach with Him.
    - They could not do this without His help and neither can you.
  3. You may have a strong commitment to the Lord.
    - I hope you do.
    - But always know that apart from His grace, you will never be able to stand in the evil day when the world is looking down on you and your Master.
      - Do not make the mistake of the disciples who did not look to Him for grace and strength to stand.
- So there are two ways we must trust the Lord...
  - As the One who strikes us and who struck our Master for our good.
  - As the One who gives us grace to stand when He strikes us and brings us low.
- C. And thirdly, we must learn to trust Him to restore us when we actually have stumbled—when we have been offended at Him and turned away like Jesus’ disciples did when He went to the cross.
  1. What a grand thing it is to see the promise of Jesus to His disciples that though they would be scattered, He would restore them after He was raised.
    - Jesus knew that He would be raised and He knew that they would return to Him.
    - In fact, it was He who kept their faith from failing by His intercession.
      - Luke tells us how He told Peter, “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.”
      - Peter denied Him—his faith failed in that way—but he could not utterly abandon Jesus.
        - Instead, he had to return to Him because God had given him true faith.
  2. Perhaps you need to be restored right now.
    - Perhaps your service to your Lord is empty and half-hearted.
    - Perhaps you don’t even have a basic commitment to be His disciple.
      - Perhaps there is sin in your life that you have not dealt with—things that you know you need to deal with.

- Could it be that you are offended because the church and her Saviour do not make a very good showing in the world?
  - Are you offended that your Lord and His true followers are not in a prominent place in our society?
  - That is the offense of the cross.
- You need to be restored by Jesus the crucified one.
  - You need to bring to Jesus those sins you are clinging to because of your offense with the cross.
  - He told His disciples that after He was risen, He would go before them once again as their shepherd—and so He did.
- He is risen and you need to see the glory of the cross—a glory that the world does not see—and you need to believe and follow the crucified one as your Master.
  - Though you have rejected Him, He will not reject you.
  - Come to Him and you will see.

**Conclusion:** My brothers and sisters, the way of the cross is not easy, but it is good.

- You need God's help to bear the offense of the cross and to restore you when you have failed.
- He is risen and will go before you again as your shepherd who was crucified.