Failing Flesh Yet Amazing Grace

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

I feel great. My voice is not great. And so, I'm hoping for the Lord's help this morning.
I am beginning a really, really busy couple of months of speaking and some travel as well. And so, praying for God's grace, if the Lord brings that to your mind, pray for me.
I'll be here most every Sunday for the next couple of months, but in between speaking at some different conferences. And so, needing and praying strength for my voice as we embark on this.
So, if the Lord brings that to your mind, pray for me. I'd appreciate that. In Mark 14, Jesus, as we've been looking at the last couple of Sundays, has been sharing a final meal with His apostles.
[1:34] And unbelievably, right in the midst of Jesus teaching them, and spending these final hours with them, and preparing them for what is soon to be His sacrifice on the cross, there is a betrayer among them.

There are so many things happening at one time as we look here at Mark 14. Jesus is preparing for the cross. Judas is preparing to betray Jesus.
Peter is preparing to do whatever it takes to show his loyalty to Christ, though he will soon fail.
And Satan is at work trying with all that he has to defeat the purposes of God.
In fact, in John 13, 2, it says it this explicitly. It says, When we look at our text today, we see Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial.
[3:01] Verses 26 to verse 31. And I think what we see here is not only a historical record of what happened in the life of Peter.

I think you will see this morning there is much warning for us today as well. Verse 26 says, When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
And Jesus said to them, You will all fall away, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.
And Peter said to him, Even though they all fall away, I will not. And Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.
But he said emphatically, If I must die with you, I will not deny you. And they all said the same.
[4:13] As we consider this prophecy of Jesus about Peter, and by extension I think you will see so much application for us today, let me give you a few headings to think through with me on this passage.

Number one, in verses 26 and 27, we see a prophecy of denial. A prophecy of denial. Verse 26 picks up where we left off last week.
They're finishing the Passover meal together. It says they had sung a hymn, and they went out to the Mount of Olives. As the Passover meal would conclude, they would have finished singing.
They would have sung Psalm 116, 117, and Psalm 118. This might be a good time just to stop and remind ourselves of the importance of music, and specifically of singing for God's people.
There are, in many places, music in the church is really missed in one of two extremes.
[5:31] On the one side, music is just kind of seen as filler. It's just something we do. We're not really sure why we do it.

People have done it for a long time, so I guess we'll just keep doing it. And so we just sing, and you can kind of take it or leave it. You can come in late if you want.
It's just this music part. It's not the important stuff. It's not the preaching. It's just something we kind of do to get us warmed up. On the one side, there's missing it that way.
On the other side, it's the missing of the fact that the joy, biblically, is as God's people sing together. That it's, sometimes it becomes a performance.

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Sometimes music in a church service is something that happens up here, while you out there just kind of watch, hum along, critique.
[6:36] And in both of those ways, that's really missing the point of music in the Bible for God's people. It's neither a take it or leave it, it's okay, not that important thing.

Neither is it something that's a performance thing. In the Scripture, music, specifically the people of God singing together, is a very important part of what it means to be God's people.
Notice that our Savior was a singing Savior. Right here, the night before He would be crucified, the last thing He will do with the group of the apostles is share the Passover meal, sing with them, and then go pray with them.
That's how He spent His final hours. Teaching, fellowship, singing, and praying.
You often hear people say things like, what would you do if you knew you had 24 hours to live? Or what would you do if you knew this was your last day before you would die?
[7:54] And the kinds of answers you get are quite scary. But we know what Jesus would do. It tells us. He gathered with His people.

He taught them. He fellowshiped with them. He sang with them. And He prayed with them. Singing is not something that we do as a church because we just need to fill the time.
Singing is not something we do just simply because it's what people have done for years. There's a reason we do it because the Bible commands His people and gives His people with the privilege and the joy of song.
He is a singing Savior. Now, I just want to encourage you to make sure that you have a biblical understanding and a biblical viewpoint of everything we do collectively in our congregational worship.
We sing because the Bible commands us to. We preach because the Bible tells us to. We gather together because the Bible calls us to do that. We read the Scripture because the Bible says to pay attention to the public reading of Scripture.
[9:08] What we do in this place is not a matter of our creativity or ingenuity. It's a matter of faithfulness to God's Word. And part of that is when the body of Christ sings together.

We teach each other through song. We encourage our faith through song. And we encourage the faith of others around us in song.
It is a bit remarkable to me to think that Jesus is here just a few hours before His crucifixion and He is still able to sing.
And that's important because there are times where you come into this place and because we're real people in a real world, sometimes we come to worship on Sunday and our hearts are heavy. Sometimes we gather here for worship and our week has been exceedingly difficult. The challenges and the pressures of family or of job or of school or of friendships that may be struggling or marriages that may be struggling.
[10:18] All kinds of things happen. And if you have this idea that singing is only something we do to celebrate, it's only something we do when we're really happy, understand here is Christ the night before His crucifixion and He will spend it in part in song.

But that's not true only of Jesus. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were in jail and what did they do? They sang. See, singing is not something we do because we can't think of something better.
Singing is a gift that the Lord gives to His people, allowing us to express the same truths at the same time in the same way.
And in so doing, we teach doctrine, we teach theology, but we also encourage each other. This is a very important part of the Christian life.
And if you come to church on a Sunday and you've had a hard week and your heart is burdened and your mind is anxious and you've got all kinds of struggles going on, come anyway and sing anyway.
[11:43] If Jesus sings the night before He's crucified and Paul and Silas sing while in jail, that tells us that one of the ways that we keep our eyes focused on our purpose in life is through song.

And if you have to sing with a broken heart, it's okay. And sometimes you may sing with tears in your eyes, it's okay. It's one of the ways that we teach and encourage and comfort.
But here we are, they've finished this meal. They have sung their song. Jesus has taught what we know of as the upper room discourse.

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And now what's going to happen is Jesus is going to lead His disciples out. They're going to go out through the eastern gate. They're going to go across the Kidron Valley.
The Kidron Valley, because it's spring, is going to have water in it from the spring rains. It's going to be mixed with blood that's been flowing from all the animal sacrifice.
[12:52] And they're going to go out the eastern gate, through the Kidron Valley, up to the Mount of Olives, specifically to the Garden of Gethsemane.

And Jesus in verse 27 gives this prophecy. Jesus said to them, you will all fall away.
The term He uses to fall away, in the term you hear our English word in it, scandalizo. That first part of scandalizo, you hear our English word for scandal.
That's the idea. You're going to be scandalized. But what's going to happen to Jesus is going to so scandalize them, so traumatize them, so rattle them, that He says you're going to fall away.
Now this is, we're so familiar with the story, it doesn't seem shocking, but this is a shocking statement, that here is Jesus with His closest friends.
[14:02] Men who have traveled with Him for three and a half years. Men who have faced persecution. Men who have faced rejection. Men who have been a part of seeing not only crowds chant Jesus' name in praise, but also have seen people go after Him to drive Him away.

And through all of it, whatever you think of the apostles, and whatever weaknesses and failures they've had, to this point, the night before His crucifixion, they're still there.
They're still with Him. Now it's true that they, they do some strange things along the way, and as we looked at last week, even on this night, even during the Passover meal, even during the institution of the Lord's Supper, they're arguing about which of them would be the greatest.
Like, they, they, they get easily distracted. But they're still there. They're still with Him.
And in that context, Jesus says to them that what's about to happen is going to be such a scandal, you're going to fall away.
[15:20] Now, this is actually the third time Jesus has made this prophecy. It's not the first. It's the first time in this setting in Mark, but it's actually the third time that Jesus has made this prophecy.

John 13, verse 38, recording from just a bit earlier, says, will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.
That's John 13. John 16 says, behold, the hour is coming. Indeed, it has come when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone.
And now a third time in Mark 14. Jesus has made this prophecy of denial now three times.
And as Joey read for us, he's going to use the words of Zechariah 13, verse 7 that we've already read. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.
[16:29] These words written centuries before Jesus walks the earth. Jesus says, he will be the shepherd, he will be struck, and his own followers will be scattered.

That's the prophecy of denial that Jesus makes. In verse 28, we see a second thing. In verse 28, we see a promise of resurrection. But, after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.
He's just told them, you're going to deny me, you're going to scatter, you're going to be scandalized as it were, but here's the promise, I will be raised up.
And just as he has three times made the prophecy that they will deny him. So, in Mark's gospel, he has three times given this promise of resurrection.
Let me just remind you of it. Turn back to Mark chapter 8. I just want to show you a few things we've looked at in the preceding months. Mark 8, 31.
[17:48] He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again.

Chapter 9, verse 31. He was teaching his disciples, saying to them, the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him.
And when he is killed, after three days, he will rise. chapter 10, verse 34.
And they will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him and after three days, he will rise.
So, Jesus has made this promise to them that yes, he is going to have his life laid down, but he will rise again.
This promise of resurrection, we would think, should negate the prophecy of denial.
[19:01] That if Jesus has told them, I'm going to lay down my life, I'm going to be beaten, I'm going to be scourged, I'm going to be mocked, I'm going to be hated, I'm going to be crucified, I'm going to die, and then I'm going to rise again.

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We might tend to think that that promise of resurrection would do away with the prophecy of denial because the men know what's going to take place.
But let me just remind you that you and I also have promises. You and I also know the truthfulness from God's word, and yet we still fall over and over and over.
He says, I'm going to be raised up, but I'm going to go before you to Galilee. Matthew 28 records the fulfillment of that promise. And then, after he makes this promise of resurrection, in verse 29, we see a third element of the story, and that is a pledge of loyalty.
The pledge of loyalty comes from two places. First, it comes from Peter. Verse 29, Peter said to him, even though they all fall away, I will not.
[20:40] Here is Jesus addressing the eleven. Remember, Judas has left to go betray. So, it's Jesus and the eleven. And Jesus says of the eleven, you're going to all fall away.

You're going to all stumble over what's about to take place. And Peter hears the words of Jesus and gives what I take to be a sincere expression of intended devotion.
And Peter says, oh Lord, these other ten, they may fall away. Judas may fall away.
but I never will. And what we see in this moment of, again, what I take to be this sincere expression of the devotion that Peter intends to give to Jesus, we see two significant errors he makes.
number one, is the sin of unbelief. Because what he is saying to Jesus is, Jesus, I love you, I'm with you, and let me also tell you, you are wrong.
[22:17] You've said, I'll fall away. Let me just help you and correct you a bit. no, I won't. It's the sin of unbelief.

It's the sin of having so much confidence in his own flesh that he disbelieves the very word of God.
And the second mistake he makes is the sin of pride, thinking that he is stronger than the others.
they may all do it. I may be the last man standing, but I will not fall away.
And even though I take Peter's motives here to be right, I take his heart in the sense of his reasoning to be pure, he still falls prey to the two oldest temptations known to humanity, the sin of unbelief and the sin of pride.
And let me just remind you that Peter commits these sins of unbelief and the sin of pride face to face with Jesus. He's just spent hours with him, he's just heard Jesus lead them through the Passover meal, he's just heard Jesus walk them through the story of God's faithfulness to his people as you would do at Passover, he's just heard Jesus inaugurate the Lord's Supper and talk about the bread representing his body and the cup representing his blood that would be shed, he's just worshipped with Jesus, he's just sung with Jesus, he's just prayed with Jesus, and yet the sin of unbelief and the sin of pride is right there.
[24:15] prayer. And I want to encourage you brothers and sisters to know that you can't come to church enough to where you will no longer have to fight against pride and unbelief.

I don't mean unbelief so much in the sense that you don't believe that there is a God or you don't believe the Bible is true. By unbelief I mean that you know what God's word says and yet in the moment of weakness and temptation tend to trust yourself rather than the words of God.
For most of us, for most of us, the sins we commit on a daily basis are not sins we commit because we didn't know better.
it sins because in that moment we tend either to give into pride or to think that what our flesh craves in the moment is the path to joy rather than obedience to Christ.
Christ. I mean I would imagine with just nearly all of you if we sat down together one-on-one me and you and we sat down and we watched a replay of the last week of your life and we just watched a video of every sin you committed, everything you said that you shouldn't have said, every motive that was wrong, everything that you didn't do that you should have done, everything you said in pride, everything you did that was selfish, anything you did out of sinful anger, if we just sat down and watched the replay of your week, every sin you committed, and if I stopped at every single sin you committed and I said to you, did you not know what to do?
[26:18] My guess would be at just nearly every single example your answer would be what mine would be and that is, no, I knew better. And yet, when the temptation strikes, the temptation to act out in pride or to think that our way is the better path to joy than his way is simply the temptation of unbelief in the moment.

And if Peter can give in to that face to face with Jesus, you and I must be on guard. Verse 30, Jesus said to him, truly I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three

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times.
Now this is a bit fascinating to me because Jesus has made this prediction that you're going to fall away. To Peter, you're going to deny me. What he does now is he's going to narrow the scope and he's going to get very, very specific.
Not only, Peter, are you going to deny me, he says you're going to deny me this very night. We're a little bit before midnight on this Thursday, chronologically in Mark 14, and so Jesus says you're not only going to deny me, you're going to do it before the sun rises.
So now Jesus has said to Peter, you're going to deny me, and I'm going to get more specific. You're going to do it sometime in the next six to eight hours.
[28:01] He gets more specific. He said you will do it before the rooster crows twice. Probably a reference to a time period between three and four a.m.

the way they would have spoken in that day. You're not only going to deny me, you're going to do it in the next six to eight hours. I'll get more specific, he says. You're going to do it in the next four to five.
And this seems impossible because Peter has just come out of this high moment of worship and fellowship and singing and prayer and instruction from the Lord.
Peter has just said, look, I hear you. I know what you're saying. I know what you're predicting and prophesying, but he says, I'm telling you with my mind clear, knowing the threat that is out there, even knowing everybody else may fade away, everybody else may falter, I'm telling you I will not.
Peter is at his most confident and Jesus says, you will deny me. It feels impossible. But this pledge of loyalty doesn't only come from Peter, secondly, it comes from the rest of the apostles.
[29:29] Look at the very end of verse 31. After Peter says, if I must die with you, I will not deny you, it says, and they all said the same.

They're all confident they will not deny him, which tells us self-confidence is a poor indicator of true strength.
Self-confidence is a poor indicator of true strength. about two weeks ago at the gym where I go, there was this guy, and he was, I mean, if gear made you strong, this guy was there.
Like, he had all the gear. And he was getting ready to the bench press, and he's huffing and puffing, and he's stretching and swinging his arms, and drawing all this attention to himself. He's got quite a bit of weight on the bar.
And he did to me what every guy hates when you're at the gym. He comes to me and says, hey, can you come spot me? Okay. So, I go over, and I'm looking at this guy thinking, I see you, and I see the bar, and there ain't no way this is gonna go well.
[30:56] Now, I don't mind spotting somebody in the bench press if they can lift it. What everybody hates doing is being forced to do curls with weight that's too heavy because the guy is trying to lift too much.

So, he's on the bench. He's swinging his arms. He's got his headphones in. He's singing. He's rocking and rolling. I mean, this guy is filled with self-confidence. There is no one I've ever been around in my life more confident in themselves than this dude was in that moment.
And then he said the dreaded words, will you unrack it for me? Now, just a little note. You want me to spot you, unrack your own weight, all right?
I'm not there to do the work for you. I lift it off for him and he takes it down and the bar did not budge.
An inch. And I'm down there pulling on it as hard as I can, looking to see if Chad Mills is around to come bail me out because this dude's put on way too much weight on his bar.
[32:05] And I'm telling you, this guy was so confident and so weak. Self-confidence is a poor indicator of true strength.

That's true in the gym and that's true in your spiritual walk too. true. The moment you become impressed with yourself, confident in yourself, reliant on yourself, take heed because the fall is right around the corner.
Peter was sincere. When Peter says, Jesus, I'm not going to do it. Peter says, everybody else may fall away, Jesus.
I will not fall away. He was sincere. He was just wrong. And being sincerely wrong is no safety at all.
Here's the good news. As we have sung about today, the Lord protects his own. That's the fourth thing I want you to notice.

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[33:23] There's a prayer of protection. A prayer of protection. We don't see it in Mark 14, but when you put the Gospels together, when you go to Luke 22, we do see it.

Jesus says, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he may sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.
That even though you're going to fall away, I've prayed for you that you return. I've prayed for you that you endure. That even though in a moment you may struggle and do what your flesh thought you would never do, I've prayed for your safety and your security.
Hebrews 7.25 says, consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.
Jesus prays for you. There's a prayer of protection. salvation. And here we are faced with this very awkward reality that one of the chief leaders in the work of the kingdom, Peter, who is confident, who is secure, who is bold, and let's at least give Peter his due.
[35:04] In just about an hour's time, Peter's going to take out his sword and swing to cut off the head of Malchus. I mean, he is bold.

He put his sword where his mouth is. But he will soon after deny that he even knew Jesus.
When we read this text, there should be two things that hit close to home. One is how weak we are. And two, how comforting it is that Christ keeps his own. Or as we've sung today, he will hold us fast. What we see here is a picture of tremendous failure, but amazing grace. if you are in Christ, you are saved by God, you are secured by God, you are preserved by God, and will one day be brought home to be with him.
[36:32] But the security we have as Christians is not because of our strength, it's because of his preserving grace.

I want you to understand, believer, that if you are a Christian today, it is because God has saved you. It is not because of your work, or your wisdom, or your strength, or your inherent goodness. It is only because of the grace of God. And the fact that you are preserved and kept secure in your salvation is only because of the grace of God.
And one day, at your glorification, it will only be because of the grace of God. And that part of us that wants to fight and say, yes, it is mostly of God, but a little bit of me is just the sin of pride and unbelief that we've already seen is rampant.
Your salvation is 100% God. Your security is 100% God. Your glorification one day, 100% God.
[37:53] Which is really good because if it were 99% God and 1% us, we would be lost. Christ. So, I just want to close just four or five minutes with some words on eternal security, some words from scripture of the hope that we have that Christ holds us.

Let me just walk you very quickly through a chain of truths here. Number one, not everyone who claims to be a believer truly is. Matthew 7, 21, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom.
1 John 2, 19, they went out from us because they were not of us. Not everyone who claims to be a believer truly is. Number two, all true believers are raised up by Jesus.
John 6, this is the will of him who has sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.
For this is the will of my father, that everyone who looks on the son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.
[39:18] The promise that Jesus makes is that if you truly belong to him, he will raise you up. How would we know if he's able to keep that promise?

We've just seen it. Because three times in Mark, Jesus promised that after he lays down his life, he will be raised up.
Did that promise come true? if Christ has promised to be raised and he wasn't raised, then the fact he promises to raise you up really gives us no hope.
But if the promise of his resurrection came true by the power of God, then you have every reason to believe in his promise of your resurrection.
all true believers are raised up by Jesus. Number three, all true believers are given that which is eternal. John 3, 16, God sold the world, whoever gave his only son, whoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.
[40:36] John 6, 47, truly I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. You cannot lose that which is eternal.

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If you could lose something that's eternal, it was never eternal to begin with. Four, all true believers are held by Jesus. John 10, 28, I give them eternal life and they will never perish.
No one will snatch them out of my hand. What is our promise of security? It's that you are held by Christ. I'm not comforted in eternal security in my ability to stay saved.
I'm comforted in my security by Christ's inability to lose his own. And besides that, we just looked at this summer, go back to chapter 13.
Let me just give you the very words, the very language of Jesus himself. Verse 20, speaking of a future event in the end times, says, if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved, but for the sake of the elect whom he chose, he shortened the days.
[41:59] You are held by Jesus in his hand, and he says nothing and no one can take you out of my hand. And Jesus' own words in chapter 13 were that you are his people, his elect, whom he chose, and if you are his and he holds you secure, this is his words, his promise, that because you are his own, he will not let you go.

The fifth truth is that all true believers have had their penalty paid. Romans 8, 1, 8, 33 to 34, there's no charge against us because our penalty has been paid by Christ on the cross.
And then finally, a sixth truth, all true believers can never be separated from God. Romans 8, 29 to 30, 37 to 39, no height, no depth, nor angel, nor demon, nor anything thing in creation can separate you from the love that is yours in Christ Jesus.
Can Christians fall? They do. And sometimes they fall very hard and they fall very far. But those who are truly his own are held secure forever and are his forever.
What we don't want to do is go through life making people wonder, including our own heart, who we belong to.
[43:51] Let it be clear that you're his. Let it be clear that you trust in him. but for those who are believers, understand your salvation is 100% God's work.

Your security, 100% God's grace. And one day when you're home in heaven, 100% his gift.
through the ages, people have debated these things, including security of the believer, including how much is the work of God, the work of man.
I'll tell you what you won't read in the scripture. You won't read any picture of heaven, description of heaven, or prophecy of heaven. where a redeemed sinner is impressed with himself.
What you will see is a picture of the redeemed giving praise to Jesus and worship to the one who laid down his life so that sinners deserving of judgment, would be saved and set free.
[45:28] The purpose of our text today is to humble us, to caution us, and to strengthen us. Humble because we too are sinners like Peter.

We can become very secure in ourselves and then prove once again just how frail we are. It humbles us. but it strengthens us because even at your weakest, you are held secure as a Christian in the hand of Christ.
And if you say to me, I'm not sure I can hold on, I'll say to you, I've got good news. Christ won't let you go. Lord, for your word today, we give you thanks and pray that it would bring humbling, bring conviction, bring repentance, and bring assurance.
May we trust you and follow you all the days of our life. In Christ's name, amen. Before you exit, if we can help you, if you have a question of how to know Christ, a question of how to grow in your walk with the Lord, would you take that connection card and just let us know your need, your question, your prayer request, drop that off in one of the giving boxes on your way out.
We would love to sit down with you with an open Bible and take time to walk you through the scripture and try to help you to understand better what it means to know the Lord, to trust in Him.
[47:09] And if you're here this morning and there's never been a time in your life where you have confessed your sin, would you even now, would you even now acknowledge in your heart to the Lord in prayer that as a sinner you know you've fallen short, believing that Christ died, was buried, and raised to life, and confess in your heart that He is the Son of God.

And the Bible says you will be saved. God bless you.
Love you, church. You're dismissed. God bless you.

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God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. true God bless you. fathers you.ructures you to support you. Thank you.

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