

Crisis of Character

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[0:00] John chapter 18, verses 1 through 11, as we continue our study through this great gospel.

! And if you would stand with me as we all have a reading of God's Word together.! When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the book Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, whom do you seek? And they answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, I am he.

Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

[1:18] Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. So if you seek me, let these men go. This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken of those whom you gave me, I have not lost one. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup that the father has given me? May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated?

Do you remember as a kid when you wanted a toy that your sibling or your classmate or your friend was playing with? They had it first, but you felt like it was your turn to have it. And so you reached out for it, but they rebuffed your effort, spinning away from you and saying, no, I'm playing with it. Rather than finding a new toy to play with, you folded your arms, you contorted your face into a nasty expression. You sat down in a huff and maybe even shed some tears. Because you know life is unfair when you're three, four years old. Then in grade school, you're out playing some sport with your peers, but a call doesn't go your way. You were called out when you knew you were safe. You were fouled, but nobody acknowledged it. Perhaps you grabbed the ball and you threw it or you kicked it or you took it home so that nobody could play anymore. Maybe you were involved in a great game of pretend with your friends. You were totally invested into that game, but they got bored with it and they moved on to play something else. But rather than join them, you moped, thinking you don't have a true friend in the world, complaining to mom and dad that, you know what? Everybody is mean to me. But then you were a teenager, more mature now, right? Your friends are turning 16 and many of them soon after their 16th birthday, maybe even on their 16th birthday, are gifted a new car. But not you. The only wheels you had to get around in were attached to your mom's minivan, which she only sometimes let you borrow. But when she needed it, you were forced to bum rides from your friends who had their own car. Why can't you have a new car? Life is unfair. Adults don't have that problem though, right? One day as you're scrolling through Facebook, you see pictures of friends on vacation posting about their promotions also or a new house that they have or the great health that they are in, sharing also the successes of their children. And suddenly what you have doesn't feel like so much anymore. How unfair.

You see, at all stages of life, we are tempted to adapt a victim mentality. We are tempted to throw pity parties for ourselves. In these days, that temptation has only increased in a culture that empowers victims. There are real victims. There are people who are truly suffering as a result of someone's sin. But right now, I believe we are experiencing a crisis of character in our culture. It's changing people's character in negative ways. We are being convinced that nothing is our fault and that we don't have to accept responsibility for anything that we have done. Our hurt feelings are justified and we are encouraged to express them in unhealthy ways which produce within us a

victim's mentality. A victim mentality refuses to take responsibility for anything. It continually finds fault and always points the finger at others. It's an attitude that takes action by retreating to social media to let everyone know just how bad you've had it. Let everyone know just how bad you've had it, posting cryptic words to gain attention and concern for yourself. Feeding then off of those comments from people who tell you that, yeah, you're right, you've had it hard, or who make you feel great about yourself. But it's an attitude that the Bible does not encourage. You know, if anyone had the right to adopt a victim's mentality, it was Jesus Christ. And if ever there was a time for Jesus to play that victim card, this was the time. This was the moment as he was about to go to the cross and die. As Judas led a group of soldiers to arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane, this would have been an opportunity to play that this is not fair card. But as we see in our text this morning and as we see throughout Scripture, the foremost victim of human history never had a victim mentality. Instead, in this moment of crisis, what we see Jesus is portraying himself not as a victim, but as a volunteer, giving his life as a ransom for many. What we see in these verses that we've read this morning is the character of Jesus. Character that Christians are commanded to imitate and character that we are empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to emulate. And so the main idea for this morning's sermon is that the crisis of Gethsemane reveals the glorious character of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 47] The crisis of Gethsemane reveals the glorious character of Jesus Christ. Again, Jesus was no victim. As God incarnate, Jesus was always in absolute control of all of the events of his life. That control extended to the circumstances surrounding his death, which was the purpose for his first coming, as he said in John chapter 12. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I have come. So this ambush in Gethsemane did not take Jesus by surprise. He had repeatedly predicted it. And when it came, he did not run, he did not hide, he faced it, because he knew what it would lead to, his death, but then his resurrection and the salvation of his people. Unlike the other gospels, John does not mention Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.

If you recall, when he in anguish prayed that if there's any other way to save his people, that the God the Father would reveal that. But that prayer wasn't Jesus expressing a victim's mentality. It wasn't a prayer expressed to evade the will of God, because how does Jesus end that prayer? He doesn't end it by saying, God, it's not fair. He ends it by saying, thy will be done. God does not will for you to have a victim mentality. He wills that you pattern your life after his son, your savior. A victim mentality is unhealthy for you and for your family and for our church and for our culture, because it sucks the joy out of life.

It will blind you to sin. It will make you feel fearful at times, furious at times, and it will make your faith in God flimsy. In a society that is in the midst of a crisis of character, Christians are called, again, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to engage it with Christ-like character. And so our text today reveals four glorious characteristics of Jesus Christ. They are character traits that you and I must seek to have and model in our life that we would be more like Jesus and communicate the gospel more effectively. So the first character trait we see in the crisis of Gethsemane is that the crisis of Gethsemane reveals the courageous character of Christ. Reveals the courageous character of Christ. Look again at verse one. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden which he and his disciples entered. So backtracking a little bit, we know that Jesus has met with his disciples in the upper room. He has given them his final instructions before his death, and now he leads them out of Jerusalem crossing over the brook Kidron, which was a valley through which water flowed during the rainy season. In Hebrew, Kidron means darkness or murkiness. The first mention of the Kidron Valley is recorded in 2 Samuel 15, 23. That passage records another scene of treachery and betrayal as King David was forced to cross through that valley as he fled out of Jerusalem from his son Absalom.

[11 : 56] And so here, Jesus, the heir to David's throne, the true king, crosses through this dark valley to face a betrayal that would lead to his death at the hands of sinful men in the garden of Gethsemane.

Gethsemane means oil press, and that's a fitting name for a place where the Son of God felt the pressure of what he was about to endure, being pressed against a cross to bear the sins of his people and to shed his blood to atone for them. We know from Scripture that Jesus often visited this secluded place with his disciples, and he went there this time because he knew that that was where

Judas would come looking for him. And again, we see that Jesus had sovereignly arranged this time and this place to bring about the hour of his death. And so verse 2 and 3 say, Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place for Jesus, often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Judas came with a band of soldiers. That's how the ESV translated. But in the Greek, band of soldiers is one word, *spira*, and it means cohort. At full strength, a Roman cohort consisted of 600 to 1,000 soldiers. Now, the full cohort was probably not sent to arrest

Jesus. It was probably a much smaller detachment, but still, somewhere around 200 soldiers who went out and followed Judas to this place where Jesus was. Why so many? Well, we know that the Romans did not take chances. In Acts, when the Apostle Paul appealed to Caesar, we're told that 470 soldiers were detailed to deliver him to Rome from Jerusalem. And we also know that Jesus was a prominent figure.

He had just recently been welcomed into Jerusalem with shouts of Hosanna from the people, save us, save us. They were ready to make him king. So there was a real concern that if people saw Jesus arrested, it could touch off a riot. And that they came with lanterns and that they came with torches indicates that this small army anticipated that Jesus and his disciples were going to flee. That they came with weapons indicates that they expected that there would be some kind of resistance. Now, if you were one of those disciples and you saw these men, these 200 plus men coming towards you with torches and weapons, how would you respond? You know, we'd like to think that I'm tough. I'd stick it out.

I know Jesus. It'll be all right. You know, we're often a lot more courageous than we think that we are. In Kansas City, there is an amusement park called Worlds of Fun. And one of the rides there is the Timber Wolf. And the Timber Wolf is an old wooden roller coaster. And it beats you up.

[15:46] Around every turn, it slings you around. And I remember, you know, seeing people that get in line for the Timber Wolf and it's a long line and you're in the back of the line. Everybody's like, yeah, this is going to be so much fun. Can't wait. We're going to sit in the front.

And then you get closer and you hear the screams from the people in the carts who are getting off or on the ride. And the excitement kind of starts to dwindle a little bit, right? And people are shaking a little bit. And you get up to the platform. And over to the right on the platform, there is a staircase leading down. And with a big sign that says, chicken exit.

With a picture of a chicken scared out of its mind. And so what would happen sometimes is you get up there with a group of friends and we're all, you know, talking and we're going to go right on this ride. And then all of a sudden, you look over and one of your buddies is missing. Where did he go? Took the chicken exit. I think a lot of us, when we read this passage, need to realize that we would be shaking in fear. We would be looking for that chicken exit. That's what we do often in times of crisis, isn't it? Our first thought is to try to avoid whatever perilous situation that we might be in.

But not Jesus. He had no intention of hiding. He had no intention of fleeing. He was not looking for any kind of chicken exit. Instead, he calmly and coolly, I love this, went out to them and met them face to face. Look at verse 4. Then Jesus, knowing that all would happen to him, came forward.

Came forward. You know, guilty people flee. Guilty people run and hide to escape punishment. Today's Mother's days, moms, how many times have you caught one of your children or confronted one of your children for being disobedient? And what did they do oftentimes? I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. I take full responsibility. No. Often what they do, what I would do is retreat into my bedroom and cram myself into the back corner of a closet or stuff myself underneath the bed. Guilty people flee and guilty people hide in darkness. When Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3 and God enters the garden looking for them, what did they do? They hid. Sometimes people flee also because not only do they feel guilty, but they flee to escape responsibility. In 1 Samuel 10, that records Israel's desire for a king. They didn't want God to be their king anymore. And so when the lot fell on Saul to be Israel's new king and he very much looked the part of a king, they searched for him and they were unable to find him. Why? Because he took the chicken exit.

[18:50] 1 Samuel 10, 22. So they inquired again of the Lord, is there a man still to come? Where is he, God? And Lord said, behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.

I don't know about you, but I'd have some reservations about that guy being my king. God, where's our new king? Where's this new man who will govern our nation? Where's the man who will represent us in foreign affairs? Where is this individual who will lead us courageously into battle?

Where is he? And God answers, oh, he's over there hiding underneath your stuff. You know, our kings, our rulers, many of them aren't much different from Saul today, are they? Refusing to take responsibility for bad decisions that they've made. Deflecting blame on past administrations, both Republicans and Democrats do that. Attempting to make themselves look like victims also in the process. It's not my fault, I couldn't help it. You know what? We need a king like Jesus. And thank God we have a king like Jesus. A king who is completely innocent of guilt. A king who doesn't hide and refuse to take responsibility for others. A king who meets and vanquishes our enemies by himself, by shedding his own blood, not by shedding ours. A courageous king who is willing and able to fight our battles. A king who has overcome our greatest adversaries, sin, Satan, and death.

You know, we need people like that in our church and in our culture. People who don't fear men, but who fear God. What is the opposite of courage?

[20 : 53] Courage. It isn't fear. It isn't fear. Courage is not the absence of fear. Courageous people sense fear, but they don't allow that sense of fear to consume them and lead them to an action.

Julie said it, the opposite of courage is cowardice. It's remaining silent when you should speak. It's sweeping issues under the rug in order to avoid conflict. It's failing to stand up for those who are truly victims. And you know, also courage isn't flying off the handle either in a rage. It's calm determination to do what is right, to say what is true, no matter what the consequences for that might be. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 1 7, for God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and of love and self-control. Now the Greek word there for fear in that verse describes cowardly character, selfish character. And there Paul was encouraging Timothy, a young pastor, to not be a coward when it came to confronting sin in the church. Because courageous Christians don't sit passively by while their brothers and sisters in Christ are engaging in sinful activities and are harboring sinful attitudes.

Courageous Christians don't whisper in the dark. They don't form factions. They don't criticize their leaders in secret and covet their power. They don't also hide behind the safety of the walls of their church buildings to complain about everything that's bad in our society. Courageous Christians are those who, like Christ, meet these things face to face and head on. They act, they speak, they show up.

When you're experiencing a lack of courage, don't retreat. Look to Christ, your King, and be reminded that He has secured your salvation and that He has given you all the spiritual resources you need to be a courageous person like Him. Don't run from evil. Engage it, expose it, and endure whatever might come as a result of it. Be like Jesus, who endured the cross to accomplish great things for you. Cowardly character contradicts the courageous character of Jesus Christ. Jesus was courageous. The next trait we see, the crisis of Gethsemane reveals, reveals the confident character of Jesus. The confident character of Jesus.

Jesus, the intended victim, took charge of this situation. He went forth to engage His captors, and He's also the one who spoke first. In the rest of verse 4 to verse 6, Now again, the original Greek is helpful here because the word He does not appear in the Greek. This is how it reads, whom do you seek? Jesus asked. They answered Him, Jesus the Nazarene, and Jesus' response is this. Jesus said to them, I am. I am. I am is the name of God.

[24 : 31] Yahweh in Hebrew. This was the true identity of Jesus. He is God. He is the word of God who became flesh. And as He identified Himself to His captors, the response of those 200 or so men was to fall to the ground. Jesus knew who He was. Jesus was confident in who He was. All He had to do was speak, and people toppled over like dominoes. The Bible says that God's word is powerful. He spoke in the heavens and the earth, and all the life that resides in them sprang immediately into existence.

We know when Jesus returns in judgment of His enemies, we see the power of His words in Revelations 19.21, and the rest were slain by the sword that came from His mouth of Him who was sitting on the horse. Hebrews 4.12 portrays God's word as a sword. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. You see, this book and the truths it contains will provide a sure foundation upon which you can build your life confidently. When the storms of life rage against you, it's God's word that sustains you. It's the Holy Spirit who encourages you, strengthens you, emboldens you, consoles you, and gives you confidence. Martin Luther, the great reformer, faced death from many adversaries for his stand for biblical truth and his

desire to translate God's word into languages that common people could read and understand. When commanded to recant his teachings and knowing that refusing to do so could mean his death, he took time to pray, and then he faced his accusers with confidence in Christ, and he said, here I stand, I can do no other, God help me, and God did help him.

He was escorted to safety and protected by those who were emboldened by his confident faith in Christ. Martin Luther wrote many books. He also wrote hymns. One of those hymns we've already sung today, A Mighty Fortress is Our God. It speaks about being confident in God. Here's a man who knew what it meant to be confident in Christ. I want to read a portion of that hymn to you. A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing, our helper he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe. His craft and power are great and armed with cruel hate. On earth is not his equal. Did we in our own strength confide? Our striving would be losing. We're not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing. You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he. Lord Sabbath his name from age to age the same, and he must win the battle. And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him. His rage we can't endure, for lo, his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him. This is not going to be some kind of great cosmic struggle. One little word. What is that word? The name of Jesus Christ. What is the opposite of confidence?

It's doubt. Doubt is the antithesis of confidence and faith. Doubt produces despair, and doubt produces cynicism. It's good to have a critical mind, but a critical spirit crushes people. You know, when I finally gave in to the Lord's call to ministry, I had my own doubts, but I could not deny that I was called. And I ran from that call for a long time, but when I expressed that I had finally surrendered to that call, and I knew that as a part of that call, it meant that I would go to seminary, a lot of people in my church fed into those doubts that I already had about myself. Reminding me, you know, you're not, you weren't a very good student, and seminary is hard. You know, also, you get really nervous when you speak in front of people publicly, and to preach God's Word, you're going to have to do that all the time. You know, you're also shy, and shy people don't make that great of leaders.

Now, I'm thankful that there were people who God surrounded me with to help build my confidence in God's call and His Word, but you know who the chief one among them was? My mother. My mother.

[30 : 05] She made sure that I knew this was God's calling for me, and He would see me through it. And as I went to seminary, and as I started to do good, you know what she did? She made sure that everybody who doubted me knew it. We need confident Christians who are confident not in themselves, but in Christ and His Word, who know Him, who trust Him and His Word, and encourage others to do the same. Jeremiah 17, 7 says, blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water that sets out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit. If you lack confidence, what you need isn't some kind of self-help book that tells you how awesome you are.

What you need to do is be in the Bible that reminds you of how awesome Jesus Christ is. The third character trait that we see here from this passage in the crisis of Gethsemane, it reveals the compassionate character of Jesus. The crisis of Gethsemane reveals the compassionate character of Jesus. Look again at verse 7. So He asked them, who do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And Jesus answered, I told you that I am He. So if you seek Me, let these men go. This was to fulfill the word that He had spoken. Of those whom you gave Me, I have lost not one. And so what we see Jesus doing here is repeating the question in order to receive the same reply, saying, who is it that you seek? And so Jesus makes His captors twice repeat that their orders were only to arrest Him. I love that. Jesus is about to be arrested. He is about to be beaten. He is about to be crucified. This isn't Him playing dumb, but this is Him ensuring that His captors know that they can't touch any of His disciples. You're here for Me. You're not here for them. And so He demanded that they leave them alone. And so here we see that Jesus is the good shepherd who protects His sheep. He is not a hired hand who flees when the wolves approach. He compassionately cared for His disciples.

You know, moms are some of the most compassionate people around, aren't they? Until you mess with one of their kids. Isn't that true? I won't even mess with my own children.

In their compassion, a mom will set aside her safety when it comes to protecting her children. You know, one of the ways that we see this, moms, whenever one of your children sits in the front seat with you and you come to a sudden stop, it's like you have that, you have that just reaction, boom, right here, mom's seatbelt, right? I don't care about me, but I'm making sure that everything, even when your kid is an adult and it's going to be fine, you know, boom, it's just right there.

[33 : 22] It's just their mindset to be compassionate, to protect their children. You know, as much as a good mom loves her child, Jesus loves His children even more. And that's a lot of love, isn't it?

The disciples were always disappointing Jesus. They would soon flee when He was arrested and taken away.

Later, Peter will deny Him three times. But after Jesus' resurrection, He came to them, He forgave them, and He continued to be compassionate towards them.

Now, I'm thankful for a mom who showed such compassion to me because it reminds me of just how compassionate my Savior is. And, you know, maybe you haven't had that, but if you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you've been made the recipient of immense and endless compassion, a compassion that we need to show to one another.

So what's the opposite of compassion? Animosity? Animosity? You know, we don't always see eye to eye in the church. We'll disagree about doctrines that are not foundational to our faith.

[34 : 38] We'll disagree about programs and procedures and money and how to spend it and even the color of our carpet. There will always be things in this life for us to find conflict over.

But if you approach those conflicts without compassion, if you harbor animosity towards your brothers and sisters in Christ, if you see them as your enemies, if animosity characterizes our church, we'll be too busy fighting one another than making disciples.

Ephesians 4.32 says, Jesus has been compassionate towards you.

Jesus has forgiven you who have come to faith in him. We know from the Gospels that Jesus, even when he was on the cross, prayed that God would forgive his enemies.

He was compassionate. And to advance the Gospel, we too must be compassionate people. The fourth characteristic trait that we see from Jesus here, the crisis of Gethsemane, reveals the committed character of Jesus.

[35 : 57] Jesus. The committed character of Jesus. While Jesus is occupied with demonstrating his courage, confidence, and compassion, verse 10 says, then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

The servant's name was Malchus. So you read that, and it made me think, did Peter seriously think that he would hack his way through 200 men?

He saw Jesus drop them with a word. And so I think maybe what Peter was doing here, he was impulsive, but he wasn't stupid.

And so I think what he was doing here is he was trying to start a fight. You know, Jesus, you won't get this thing going. You're not going to do it.

I'm going to do it. I'm going to take out my sword. I'm going to strike this dude. And that's going to force you to act because they're going to retaliate. And that will give us an opportunity to escape or to get retribution on Judas and all these other guys.

[37 : 15] Whatever the case was, Peter was not committed to doing things Jesus' way at this point. He would not let them take Jesus, but Jesus didn't need Peter to fight his battles.

And whether Peter acted in fear or if he acted in anger or both, his emotions got in the way of his doing and understanding God's will, perhaps he suffered from a victim's mentality in this moment, thinking, this just is not fair.

Jesus could have called on a much greater force than Peter. If he wanted to spare himself of what he was about to endure, he could have just spoken as he did and obliterated them.

But he was committed to accomplishing the purpose for which he came, which again was to give his life as a ransom for many. What's the opposite of commitment?

Disloyalty? Irresponsibility? Carelessness? Frivolty? When you are tempted to take matters into your own hands, acting impetuously by a lack of self-control, not exercising patience, people get hurt.

[38 : 35] There's a lack of commitment in many of our churches today. Membership doesn't matter much to people anymore. You know, when a church considers a committed member to be someone who shows up two times a month, that says a lot about the level of commitment in the body of

Christ.

Jesus was committed to God's will. And he wouldn't allow anything to impede in his commitment to accomplish it. In verse 11, so Jesus said to Peter, put away your sword into its sheath.

Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me? In other words, Jesus rebukes Peter and he says, stop it. Knock it off. He had a cross to bear.

He was committed to bearing it. He would not play the victim. He would not feel sorry for himself.

He would drain the cup of God's wrath completely.

Luke records that Jesus then touched Malchus' ear and he healed him instantly. He formed a new ear and he fashioned it to this man's head.

[39 : 47] And it's amazing that in just a few moments, those who came to arrest Jesus saw his divine power. They saw his courage, his confidence, his compassion, his commitment, yet they still hauled him away when they should have knelt down and worshipped him.

They saw the signs. They witnessed the evidence. But they had no faith in him. How about you? Do you lack confidence, courage, compassion, commitment?

Maybe you don't know Christ at all. And my prayer is that through this text, you see how wonderful he is and his call for you to come to him, to believe in him, to trust in him.

As a believer, when we read this passage, what we should come away with is an understanding that we need to cultivate these characteristics in our lives.

Most every day, most every week, there are opportunities where we face situations that would cause us to be fear, that would cause us to doubt, that would cause us to act hatefully of others, you name it.

[41 : 05] Those moments are opportunities for us to look to Christ and his example and pray for his help and he will help us through his indwelling spirit to be people who can exercise courage and confidence and compassion and be committed to Christ.

Feelings can and will mislead you, but God, his truth, his word, never will. So the main point of application for this sermon is the contour of your character is shaped by your faith in Christ.

The contour of your character is shaped by your faith in Christ. If you see someone who says that they're a Christian and they are not courageous and they are not confident, not in themselves, but in Christ, and they're not compassionate and they're not committed, won't you challenge whether or not that person truly knows Jesus?

On the other hand, when we see people, Christians, brothers and sisters who act courageously, confidently, compassionately, and are committed, what do we think?

That person reminds me of Christ and that usually is a person whom Christ has used greatly. And my prayer for myself and my prayer for you is that we would seek to cultivate these characteristics more and more into our life through our increasing faith in Jesus Christ.

[42 : 49] Two questions of application. Question number one, have you noticed a change in your character since you first confessed Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Have you noticed a change in your character? I'm asking for you to go back and think to the day when you were saved and since that time, have you seen a change in your character?

And hopefully you have. It's incremental A lot of times. Most of the time, I think. But you ought to be able to go back and look and say, you know, hey, I'm a sinner, we're sinners, we're never going to be perfect in this life.

But you ought to be able to see a difference. Question number two, what character trait of Jesus in this text do you most need to cultivate in your life?

And then will you pray for God to help form it within you? So think about these character traits.

Which one, what area are you lacking? And there are many other character traits, but when it comes to this text, which one are you lacking?

[43 : 55] And the application is that you take that to the Lord and you pray for His help to develop it, that character. And you know what? If you do that, I have a feeling that not soon afterwards you're going to face a situation that God gives you to begin to cultivate that character in your life.

Let's be like Jesus. Let's pray. Lord God, thank you for this word. Thank you for your example.

Lord, all of us, all of us fall short. God, and we know that so often it's easier for us to not be courageous, but to avoid conflict.

Lord, we know that so often it's easy for us to be cynical and doubtful and see everything that's wrong with ourselves or with others and lack faith.

Lord, so often we have a misplaced confidence. We trust too much in ourselves or we trust too much in someone else, Lord, and we'll always let ourselves down and so will others, but you never will.

[45 : 15] And God, so often we lack commitment. So often our yes does not mean yes and our no does not mean no.

Lord, I pray for each of us that your spirit through this text has convicted us and encouraged us to know that we and you desire for us to be more like you and through your word and your indwelling spirit we can be known as people who are like you, who remind one another of you and who go out and make disciples.

Lord, help us to cultivate these characteristics in our lives for the glory of your great name. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.