

Digging Deeper: The Rebel, the Redeemer, and the Redeemed

northlandchurch.net | Digging Deeper Series

THE MAIN THEME

Pressure and stress do not happen in a vacuum. Much of the crushing pressure we experience can come from the systems, structures, authorities, and expectations around us. These environments can create demands for us to perform according to certain beliefs, values, and expected behaviors.

From the Garden of Eden to the pressure surrounding Jesus before His crucifixion, Scripture shows us that God created people for purpose, responsibility, relationship, and meaningful work—but human systems can turn those good things into demands that crush and control. Jesus experienced intense pressure from religious leaders, political authorities, and cultural expectations, yet He remained faithful to God's purposes.

The question is not whether we will experience pressure. The question is how we will respond to the pressure created around us and whether we will allow it to shape us according to the world or according to God's purposes.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Luke 23:3

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

When Pilate questioned Jesus about whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus did not allow the pressure of the political system, religious leaders, or crowd to determine His identity or His response. He remained grounded in who He was and the mission He came to accomplish.

WHAT NOT TO MISS

1. God Created Us With Purpose

From the beginning, God created humanity in His image and gave people meaningful responsibilities. Adam and Eve were called to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and exercise dominion. They were created to work and care for God's creation.

The original environment was marked by abundance rather than scarcity, freedom rather than constraint, accountability rather than autonomy, relational love rather than transactional demand, and empowerment rather than enslavement.

God's design included responsibility and expectations, but those expectations existed within a relationship of trust and provision.

2. Good Responsibilities Can Become Crushing Demands

Pressure becomes destructive when systems and structures turn responsibility into demands for performance.

The sermon describes pressure as coming from expectations around performance, agency, demands, and outcomes. Stress develops when circumstances, uncertainty, limited control, strain, and coping become overwhelming.

The issue isn't necessarily that expectations exist. The issue is what those expectations are demanding from us and who gets to define our worth, identity, and success.

When our value becomes tied to constantly meeting someone else's expectations, pressure can become crushing.

3. Much of Our Pressure Comes From Systems and Structures

The sermon identifies a major source of crushing pressure: the authorities and systems within our culture.

Systems and structures can create expectations about what we should believe, how we should behave, what success should look like, and how we should perform.

Workplaces, families, institutions, cultures, communities, and other environments can all create pressures that influence how we live.

This means that sometimes our stress is not simply an individual problem. We may be responding to an entire environment that constantly tells us what we need to do, become, achieve, or prove.

4. Jesus Faced an Entire Pressure Ecosystem

Jesus' final hours demonstrate what this pressure ecosystem can look like.

The religious leaders wanted Jesus removed because they were afraid of the people. The Jewish leadership brought Him before the authorities. Pilate represented Rome. Herod became involved. The crowd demanded His crucifixion. Each group had different motivations and expectations, but together they created an interconnected system of pressure surrounding Jesus.

Jesus was pressured politically, religiously, socially, and personally.

Yet none of those pressures changed His identity or His mission.

5. Pressure Can Make People Protect Their Position

The religious leaders were afraid of losing influence and control. Pilate was concerned with maintaining order and satisfying the crowd. The pressure ecosystem was fueled by competing interests, power dynamics, expectations, and the desire to preserve authority.

Pressure doesn't only affect the person being pressured. It can also cause people in positions of authority to make decisions based on fear, reputation, control, or self-preservation.

This challenges us to examine not only the pressure we experience but also the pressure we may place on others.

6. Jesus Shows Us How to Remain Faithful Under Pressure

Jesus did not allow the surrounding systems to define His response.

He was accused, questioned, mocked, ridiculed, and ultimately condemned despite Pilate and Herod finding no basis for the accusations against Him. The crowd's pressure eventually prevailed, but Jesus remained faithful to the Father's purpose.

Jesus demonstrates that faithfulness does not always mean escaping pressure.

Sometimes faithfulness means standing firm when pressure tells us to compromise.

7. Pressure Can Crush Us or Conform Us for God's Commission

The larger message of the *Under Pressure* series is that pressure and stress can either crush us and lead to chaos or be used by God to conform us for His commission.

We cannot always control the systems around us. We cannot eliminate every expectation, difficult authority, cultural pressure, or stressful circumstance.

But we can choose whom we allow to shape us.

Instead of allowing pressure to define our identity, values, and behavior, we can allow God to use difficult circumstances to strengthen our faith, clarify our priorities, and prepare us to live faithfully in His mission.

LIFE APPLICATION

Ask yourself this week:

What systems, structures, or expectations are creating pressure in my life?

Take an honest look at the environments you live and work in. What expectations are constantly being placed on you? Where do you feel the pressure to perform, prove yourself, please others, maintain an image, or meet someone else's definition of success?

Then ask:

Are these pressures shaping me more than God's truth is shaping me?

Not every expectation is wrong. God Himself gives us responsibilities and calls us to faithful work. But we need to recognize when healthy responsibility becomes unhealthy pressure and when the expectations of others begin to determine our identity.

Jesus lived within powerful political, religious, and cultural systems, yet He remained faithful to God's purposes.

This week, identify one pressure that has been controlling your thoughts or decisions. Bring it before God and ask Him to help you remain faithful without allowing that pressure to define who you are.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY — Created for Purpose

Read: Genesis 1:26–29

Reflect: God created humanity in His image and gave us meaningful responsibility. Work, purpose, leadership, and responsibility were part of God's good design from the beginning. Pressure becomes unhealthy when our responsibilities become disconnected from our identity as people created and loved by God.

Pray: “Father, remind me that my identity comes from You. Help me fulfill my responsibilities without allowing performance to determine my worth.”

TUESDAY — When Responsibility Becomes Pressure

Read: Genesis 2:8–17

Reflect: The Garden contained responsibility and boundaries, but it was also marked by abundance, freedom, relationship, and God's provision. God did not create humanity to live under constant fear and scarcity. Ask God to help you recognize the difference between faithful responsibility and crushing pressure.

Pray: “Lord, help me recognize the pressures that are healthy and the ones that are controlling me. Teach me to trust Your provision instead of living from fear.”

WEDNESDAY — When Systems Create Pressure

Read: Luke 22:1–6

Reflect: The religious leaders were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus because they were afraid of the people. Fear, power, expectations, and self-preservation were already creating pressure before Jesus was arrested. Systems can influence people to make decisions they would not make if they were simply following truth.

Pray: “God, give me wisdom to recognize unhealthy pressures around me. Help me choose truth and faithfulness over fear, approval, or control.”

THURSDAY — Faithful Under Pressure

Read: Luke 23:3–6

Reflect: Jesus stood before Pilate while powerful accusations surrounded Him. Even when He was pressured politically and publicly, He did not compromise His identity or mission. His example reminds us that faithfulness sometimes means remaining steady when everything around us is demanding that we give in.

Pray: “Jesus, give me courage to remain faithful when I feel pressured to compromise. Help me remember who I am in You.”

FRIDAY — Conformed for God's Commission

Read: Romans 12:1–2

Reflect: The world constantly pressures us to conform to its patterns, values, and expectations. But God calls us to be transformed instead. Pressure does not have to determine who we become. God can use even difficult environments to shape us into people who live according to His will.

Pray: “Father, transform me rather than allowing the pressures around me to conform me. Use every circumstance to prepare me for Your purposes.”

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Ask: “What systems or structures create the most pressure in our lives today?”
 - Encourage participants to distinguish between healthy responsibility and unhealthy demands for performance.
 - Discuss the difference between pressure created by expectations and stress created by circumstances that are beyond our control.
 - Ask participants how workplace, family, cultural, religious, or social expectations can influence their decisions.
 - Walk through the different authorities surrounding Jesus—Rome, Pilate/Herod, the religious leaders, and the crowd—and discuss how these interconnected systems created pressure around Him.
 - Ask: “How did Jesus remain faithful even when the pressure around Him intensified?”
 - Remind the group that the goal is not simply to escape every source of pressure, but to allow God to shape our response to pressure.
-

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Identify one major source of pressure in your life:

- Name the system, structure, or expectation creating the pressure.
- Identify what it is asking you to perform or prove.
- Ask whether that expectation agrees with God's truth.
- Identify one thing you can control and one thing you need to surrender.

- Pray daily for wisdom to respond faithfully rather than reactively.
- Choose one action that reflects God's values instead of the pressure around you.

Then follow through.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you most from this week's message?
 2. What is the difference between healthy responsibility and unhealthy pressure?
 3. What systems or structures create the most pressure in our culture today?
 4. How can expectations about success, performance, or behavior shape the way we see ourselves?
 5. What do we learn from the different authorities and systems surrounding Jesus in Luke 22–23?
 6. Why do you think people sometimes make decisions based on pressure, fear, or protecting their position?
 7. How did Jesus respond differently from the people around Him?
 8. What pressure in your life do you need to surrender to God, and how can your Life Group help you remain faithful?
-

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT

Thank God for creating us with purpose and for giving us identity and value that do not depend on our performance.

CARE

Pray for people who are overwhelmed by workplace expectations, family pressures, cultural demands, financial concerns, or other systems that are creating stress in their lives.

CULTIVATE

Ask God to give us wisdom to recognize unhealthy pressure, courage to resist unhealthy expectations, and faith to remain grounded in His truth.

COMMISSION

Pray that our response to pressure would reflect Jesus and demonstrate His faithfulness to the people and systems around us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating us in Your image and giving our lives purpose. Help us recognize the systems, structures, expectations, and pressures that influence the way we live. Give us wisdom to know the difference between faithful responsibility and unhealthy demands for performance. When

pressure surrounds us, help us look to Jesus, who remained faithful even when religious, political, and cultural systems turned against Him. Keep us from being controlled by fear, approval, reputation, or the expectations of others. Instead, conform us to Your purposes and use every circumstance to prepare us for Your mission. Help us remain faithful, grounded, and courageous even when the pressure is great. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday 10:15 AM

The Stress Test Week 3.pdf

PDF

Digging Deeper: Under Pressure & Stressed Out — Week 3

create me a digging deeper study for this file

Digging Deeper: Under Pressure & Stressed Out — Week 3

northlandchurch.net | Digging Deeper Series

THE MAIN THEME

Pressure and stress reveal what our faith is really made of. Like a stress test reveals the strength of a structure, difficult moments expose the foundation, formation, and maturity of our faith. The disciples had spent years following Jesus, learning from Him, and witnessing His ministry, yet when pressure came, their responses revealed areas where their faith was still developing.

The good news is that failure under pressure does not have to be final. We may fall to the level of our formation, but Jesus meets us with grace and picks us up. Spiritual maturity is not about never failing; it is about continually being formed by Jesus through deeper belief, discipleship, and spiritual discipline.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Matthew 26:41

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

WHAT NOT TO MISS

1. Pressure and Stress Reveal What Our Faith Is Made Of

A stress test doesn't create the strength or weakness of a structure—it reveals what is already there. In the same way, pressure reveals the foundation of our faith. When life becomes difficult, our reactions can expose what we truly believe, who we are following, and how deeply we have been formed.

The question isn't simply, "How much faith do I have?" but "What is my faith actually built on?"

2. Faith Is More Than What We Say We Believe

The sermon describes five elements of a faith framework: beliefs, worldview, ethics, maturity, and mission, with Jesus at the center. Faith involves what we believe, how we understand the world, how we behave, how we practice our faith, and the purpose for which we live.

A person may have strong beliefs but still struggle to live them out under pressure. True spiritual formation brings our beliefs, behaviors, practices, and purpose increasingly under the Lordship of Jesus.

3. The Disciples' Stress Test Revealed Their Formation

When Jesus entered the final hours before His crucifixion, the disciples responded to pressure in different ways. Some fell asleep, some wanted to fight, some ran away, and Peter eventually denied Jesus.

They wanted to follow Jesus, but their responses showed that desire alone was not enough.

This is why spiritual formation matters. What we repeatedly practice before the crisis helps shape how we respond when the crisis arrives.

4. The Stress Test Isn't Passed by Desire Alone

Jesus warned His disciples to watch and pray because "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We can sincerely desire to do the right thing and still fail under pressure. Wanting to be faithful is important, but spiritual maturity requires deeper doctrine, discipleship, and discipline.

What we believe, who we follow, and what practices are forming us all matter when pressure comes.

5. What We Practice in Ordinary Moments Prepares Us for Difficult Ones

Jesus had repeatedly taught His disciples, but the Garden revealed that they had not yet developed the spiritual maturity necessary for the moment. Instead of praying, they slept. Instead of responding with peace, one reached for a sword. Instead of standing confidently, others ran.

Our everyday spiritual practices matter because formation happens over time.

Prayer, Scripture, obedience, community, worship, and following Jesus in ordinary circumstances prepare us to respond differently when extraordinary pressure arrives.

6. Failure Does Not Have to Be Final

The disciples failed the stress test in significant ways, but their failure was not the end of their story. The sermon reminds us: "You will FALL as you're FORMED." Falling may be failure, but failure doesn't have to be final.

God's forgiveness and patience meet us when we fall and help pick us back up. Our failures can become opportunities for deeper dependence on God's grace and continued transformation.

7. Jesus Meets Our Failure With Grace

The third principle of the sermon is powerful: “We fall to the level of our formation, but Jesus picks us up to the level of His grace.”

Jesus does not excuse sin or failure, but neither does He abandon us because of it. His grace gives us the opportunity to repent, grow, and continue following Him.

The goal is not to become people who never stumble. The goal is to become people who keep allowing Jesus to form us and keep getting back up when we fall.

8. Passing the Stress Test Means Becoming More Like Jesus

The path toward greater faithfulness involves Desire, Doctrine, Discipleship, and Discipline. Desire is what we want to do; doctrine shapes what we believe; discipleship determines whom we follow; and discipline describes the practices through which we are formed.

When these areas are increasingly centered on Jesus, pressure can become an opportunity for growth rather than simply a source of failure.

LIFE APPLICATION

Ask yourself this week:

What is pressure revealing about my faith?

When you are tired, disappointed, afraid, angry, or overwhelmed, how do you respond? Do you withdraw? Fight? Run? Deny? Try to control everything? Or do you turn toward Jesus?

Take an honest look at your spiritual formation. What do you believe about God? Who are you following? What practices are shaping you? What kind of person are you becoming?

Don't allow failure to convince you that you are finished. Your failures can reveal areas where Jesus wants to deepen your faith.

This week, choose one spiritual practice—prayer, Scripture, worship, community, or obedience—and become more intentional about it. The goal isn't simply to survive the next stressful moment. The goal is to allow Jesus to form you now so that when pressure comes, your life increasingly reflects Him.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY — When the Storm Reveals the Foundation

Read: Matthew 7:24–27

Reflect: Jesus describes two houses that look different when the storm comes. The storm doesn't determine the foundation—it reveals it. Pressure and stress can reveal whether our lives are built on Jesus and His words or on something less secure.

Pray: “Jesus, build my life on Your truth. Help me develop a foundation that will remain strong when the storms of life come.”

TUESDAY — Watch and Pray

Read: Matthew 26:36–41

Reflect: Jesus knew His disciples were about to face intense pressure, so He told them to watch and pray. Their spirits were willing, but their flesh was weak. Prayer prepares our hearts to remain faithful when temptation and pressure come.

Pray: “Lord, teach me to watch and pray instead of relying only on my own strength. Prepare me for the pressures I will face.”

WEDNESDAY — When We Fall

Read: Luke 22:54–62

Reflect: Peter confidently believed he would never deny Jesus, yet under pressure he denied knowing Him three times. His failure was real, but it was not the end of his story. God can use our failures to reveal where we need deeper formation and dependence on Him.

Pray: “Father, forgive me for the ways I have failed You. Help me learn from my failures and trust Your grace to keep transforming me.”

THURSDAY — Grace Picks Us Up

Read: John 21:15–19

Reflect: Jesus restored Peter after his failure. Instead of defining Peter by his denial, Jesus called him forward into renewed love, obedience, and mission. Failure does not have to be final when we allow Jesus to restore and form us.

Pray: “Jesus, thank You for meeting my failures with grace. Restore me, strengthen me, and help me continue faithfully in the mission You have given me.”

FRIDAY — Keep Being Formed

Read: Romans 12:1–2

Reflect: Spiritual maturity requires ongoing transformation. We are constantly being shaped by what we believe, what we follow, and what we practice. God calls us not to conform to the patterns around us but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Pray: “Lord, continue forming me into the person You want me to become. Help my beliefs, habits, choices, and purpose increasingly reflect Jesus.”

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Ask: “What does pressure usually reveal about you?”
 - Encourage participants to honestly identify how they tend to respond when they are stressed—fight, run, withdraw, deny, control, or seek God.
 - Discuss the five elements of the faith framework: beliefs, worldview, ethics, maturity, and mission, with Jesus at the center.
 - Ask participants which part of their faith framework they believe needs the most growth.
 - Discuss why good intentions and strong desire are not always enough to remain faithful under pressure.
 - Encourage the group to identify spiritual practices that are forming them before the next major “stress test.”
 - Emphasize that failure is not final. Jesus offers grace, forgiveness, restoration, and another opportunity to follow Him.
-

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose one intentional step toward deeper spiritual formation:

- Spend 10–15 minutes in prayer each day.
- Read Matthew 26 and Luke 22 slowly and reflect on the disciples' responses to pressure.
- Identify one unhealthy response you tend to have under stress.
- Choose one spiritual discipline you want to strengthen.
- Ask someone you trust to pray with you about an area where you are struggling.
- When you fail this week, don't run from God—run toward Him.

Then follow through.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you most from this week's message?
2. How can pressure reveal what our faith is really made of?
3. Which of the five elements of faith—beliefs, worldview, ethics, maturity, or mission—do you think is most important in preparing us for pressure? Why?
4. Why isn't desire alone enough to help us pass the stress test?
5. Which response of the disciples under pressure do you identify with most: falling asleep, fighting, running away, or denying?
6. What spiritual practices are currently forming you?
7. How does knowing that failure doesn't have to be final change the way you respond when you fall?
8. What does it mean that “we fall to the level of our formation, but Jesus picks us up to the level of His grace”?

9. What is one area where Jesus may be inviting you to grow deeper before your next season of pressure?
-

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT

Thank God for being faithful even when our faith is weak and for giving us Jesus as the foundation of our lives.

CARE

Pray for people who are currently under intense pressure, struggling with failure, temptation, fear, or discouragement.

CULTIVATE

Ask God to deepen our doctrine, discipleship, and discipline so that our faith becomes stronger and more deeply rooted in Jesus.

COMMISSION

Pray that our response to pressure and failure would point others toward the grace, forgiveness, and hope found in Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us that pressure reveals what our faith is made of. Forgive us for the times we have fallen, run away, denied You, or tried to handle pressure in our own strength. Help us remember that failure does not have to be final because Your grace continues to meet us where we are. Deepen our beliefs, shape our worldview, transform our character, strengthen our spiritual practices, and keep our lives centered on Jesus. Teach us to watch and pray, to remain faithful when pressure comes, and to keep getting back up when we fall. May our lives become increasingly formed by Christ so that even in difficult seasons, our response reflects His grace, truth, and love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday 7:32 AM

bigyan mo ko preview text para jan. ang subject ko is Digging Deeper: Under Pressure & Stressed Out — Week 3

Preview Text Options

Subject: *Digging Deeper: Under Pressure & Stressed Out — Week 3*

Option 1 — Recommended

Discover what pressure reveals about your faith and how Jesus' grace meets us when we fall.

Option 2

When pressure comes, what does it reveal about the foundation of your faith? Go deeper into this week's message.

Option 3

Explore how spiritual formation prepares us for pressure—and how failure doesn't have to be final.

Option 4

Pressure reveals what our faith is made of. Discover how Jesus can strengthen, restore, and transform us.

Option 5

Learn how doctrine, discipleship, and discipline shape our faith before the next stress test comes.

Option 6

When we fall under pressure, Jesus doesn't leave us there. Discover the power of His grace to pick us back up.

My top pick:

Discover what pressure reveals about your faith and how Jesus' grace meets us when we fall.

Today 3:11 PM

The Rebel, the Redeemer, and the Redeemed.pdf

PDF

Create me a digging deeper study for this

Digging Deeper: The Rebel, the Redeemer, and the Redeemed

northlandchurch.net | Digging Deeper Series

THE MAIN THEME

Pressure and stress can push us toward different responses. We can become rebels who fight against what surrounds us, trying to take control or overthrow what we believe is wrong. Or we can place our trust in Jesus, the Redeemer, who shows us a different way through pressure, suffering, forgiveness, and surrender.

Barabbas represents the pressure to rebel, while Jesus demonstrates what it looks like to remain calm in the midst of chaos and fully trust the sovereign will of the Father. Jesus carried the weight of the world without being crushed by its pressures and stresses. He was crushed for the world, not by it. Through Him, we can experience redemption and become a new creation.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Luke 23:34

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

WHAT NOT TO MISS

1. Pressure Can Push Us Toward Rebellion

Barabbas lived with the pressure to rebel against Rome. His response was to fight, kill, and overthrow. His story represents one way people can respond when they feel crushed by the systems, circumstances, and pressures around them.

When pressure builds, rebellion can feel like the natural answer. We may want to fight back, take control, prove ourselves, or tear down whatever we believe is causing the pressure. But rebellion does not ultimately free us from being crushed by pressure.

2. Jesus Shows Us a Different Way

Jesus experienced incredible pressure leading to the cross. He was questioned, accused, mocked, ridiculed, and challenged to prove Himself. Yet He remained calm in the midst of chaos. He didn't need to prove Himself, defend Himself, or seek the world's approval.

Instead of mirroring the opposition around Him, Jesus peacefully yielded to the broken systems surrounding Him and fully trusted the sovereign will of the Father.

3. Jesus Was Crushed for the World, Not by It

Jesus carried the weight of the world without allowing its pressures and stresses to crush His purpose. His suffering was not meaningless. He willingly endured the cross as part of God's redemptive work.

Isaiah 53 describes the suffering servant who was oppressed and afflicted yet remained silent, ultimately giving His life as an offering for sin. Jesus' response to pressure was rooted in surrender and trust in God's purpose.

4. The Cross Changes Everything

At the cross, Jesus responded to those who crucified Him with forgiveness: “Father, forgive them.”

The cross demonstrates that redemption doesn't always mean that every consequence disappears. Jesus may not remove the nails or every consequence, but He removes guilt and shame. He may not work everything out exactly the way we hope, but He works everything out for our good and His glory.

5. Redemption Gives Us a New Beginning

The two criminals beside Jesus demonstrate two very different responses while under the same crushing circumstances. One continued to insult Jesus, while the other recognized his own guilt, acknowledged Jesus' innocence, and asked Him to remember him in His kingdom.

Jesus responded with a promise: “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

The redeemed life begins when we turn toward Jesus rather than continuing to fight against Him.

6. Forgiveness Has Power

The sermon highlights the power of forgiveness, asking three important questions:

Will you receive God's forgiveness?

Will you forgive yourself?

Will you extend God's forgiveness to those who did and do you wrong?

Forgiveness changes what pressure produces in us. The sermon connects forgiveness with reduced stress, anger, hostility, anxiety, and depression, while increasing hope and well-being.

7. The Redeemed Don't Have to Be Defined by Their Past

Jesus may not remove every consequence or change every circumstance, but He provides redemption, removes guilt and shame, and offers a new beginning.

Our past does not have to determine our future. The Redeemer gives us the opportunity to live differently—not as people controlled by rebellion, guilt, shame, or pressure, but as people who have been redeemed by Christ.

LIFE APPLICATION

Ask yourself this week:

How am I responding to the pressures and stresses of life?

When you feel overwhelmed, do you tend to fight, control, defend yourself, prove yourself, or seek approval? Or are you learning to respond like Jesus—with surrender, trust, forgiveness, and confidence in God's sovereign will?

Think about the three questions from the sermon:

Will you receive God's forgiveness?

Will you forgive yourself?

Will you extend God's forgiveness to those who have wronged you?

This week, identify one area where pressure has produced anger, resentment, guilt, shame, or a desire to fight back. Bring it to Jesus. Ask Him to replace your need to control the situation with trust in His redemption.

You may not be able to change every circumstance, but you can choose who will shape your response to them.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY — When Pressure Makes Us Want to Fight

Read: Luke 23:18–25

Reflect: Barabbas was released while Jesus was condemned. His story represents the pressure to rebel, fight, and overthrow. When we feel trapped by difficult circumstances, our first instinct can be to fight

back. But God invites us to consider whether our response is leading us toward freedom or deeper frustration.

Pray: “Lord, help me recognize when pressure is pushing me toward anger, rebellion, or control. Teach me to respond in a way that honors You.”

TUESDAY — Calm in the Chaos

Read: Luke 23:1–5

Reflect: Jesus faced accusations and intense pressure, yet He did not need to prove Himself or seek the approval of those around Him. His confidence came from knowing who He was and trusting the Father's purposes.

Pray: “Jesus, help me remain calm when pressure surrounds me. Give me the confidence to trust You instead of feeling like I have to prove myself.”

WEDNESDAY — Forgiveness at the Cross

Read: Luke 23:32–34

Reflect: While being crucified, Jesus prayed for the people responsible for His suffering. His response reveals the power of forgiveness even in the middle of tremendous pain. Forgiveness does not erase what happened, but it can keep what happened from continuing to control our hearts.

Pray: “Father, thank You for forgiving me. Give me the strength to release the anger and resentment I carry and teach me to extend the forgiveness You have shown me.”

THURSDAY — Remember Me

Read: Luke 23:39–43

Reflect: Two criminals were experiencing the same circumstances, but they responded to Jesus differently. One rejected Him, while the other recognized his need and trusted Jesus. Even at the end of his life, the second thief discovered that redemption was available through Christ.

Pray: “Jesus, help me turn toward You when I feel hopeless or overwhelmed. Thank You for offering redemption and a new beginning.”

FRIDAY — A New Beginning

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Reflect: The redeemed life is not defined by guilt, shame, or the worst things we have done. In Christ, we are given a new beginning. Jesus may not remove every consequence, but He changes our standing and gives us hope for what comes next.

Pray: “Lord, thank You for making all things new. Help me live from the freedom of Your forgiveness rather than being defined by my past.”

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Ask: “*When you are under pressure, do you tend to fight, withdraw, control, or surrender?*”
- Discuss the contrast between Barabbas' rebellion and Jesus' response to pressure.

- Encourage participants to identify situations where they feel pressure to prove themselves, defend themselves, or seek approval.
 - Discuss how Jesus remained calm even while facing accusations, opposition, suffering, and the cross.
 - Ask participants which of the three forgiveness questions challenges them most: receiving God's forgiveness, forgiving themselves, or extending forgiveness to others.
 - Emphasize that redemption does not necessarily mean every consequence disappears, but Jesus removes guilt and shame and provides a new beginning.
-

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose one intentional step this week:

- Identify one pressure that is making you want to fight or control.
- Bring that pressure honestly to Jesus in prayer.
- Receive God's forgiveness for something you are carrying.
- Choose to forgive someone who has wronged you.
- When pressure rises, pause and ask, “How would Jesus want me to respond?”
- Thank God for the new beginning He provides through Christ.

Then follow through.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you most from this week's message?
 2. Why do you think pressure can make us want to fight, control, or rebel?
 3. What do you learn from the contrast between Barabbas and Jesus?
 4. How did Jesus respond differently to the pressure and opposition surrounding Him?
 5. What does it mean that Jesus was “crushed for the world, not by it”?
 6. Which of the three forgiveness questions is most challenging for you: receiving God's forgiveness, forgiving yourself, or extending forgiveness to others?
 7. How can forgiveness change the way we experience pressure and stress?
 8. What area of your life do you need to surrender to your Redeemer this week?
-

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT

Thank God for sending Jesus, our Redeemer, who carried the weight of the world and willingly gave His life for us.

CARE

Pray for those who are carrying guilt, shame, anger, resentment, or the crushing pressures of life.

CULTIVATE

Ask God to help us receive His forgiveness, forgive ourselves, and extend forgiveness to those who have wronged us.

COMMISSION

Pray that our lives would reflect the forgiveness, peace, and redemption we have received through Christ and point others toward the hope found in Him.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for being our Redeemer. When pressure and stress surround us, help us remember that we do not have to respond with rebellion, anger, or the need to control everything. Teach us to follow Your example—to remain grounded, trust the Father's sovereign will, and respond with grace and forgiveness. Thank You for carrying the weight of the world and being crushed for us, not by the pressures of the world. Help us receive Your forgiveness, release our guilt and shame, forgive ourselves, and extend forgiveness to those who have hurt us. May we live as redeemed people who have been given a new beginning, and may our lives point others to the hope and freedom found in Jesus. Amen.