

My failure, God's faithfulness - 1Kings:11 1-43

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[0 : 00] It's on page 349, if you've got the red church Bibles. We're going to read the first 13 verses, and we'll skip down then to verse 41 after that.

1 Kings chapter 11, starting at verse 1. 1 Kings chapter 11.

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1 Kings chapter 11.

[2 : 25] 1 Kings chapter 11. 1 Kings chapter 11. 1 Kings chapter 11. 1 Kings chapter 11. 1 Kings chapter 11. 2 Kings chapter 11.

2 Kings chapter 11. of Solomon? Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

Thanks very much, Connor. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for this true account of Solomon's life. And we pray that through it, it would teach us much about ourselves. But more importantly, it would show us more about how great you are. And what it is to turn from all our loves of other things and other people that we might love you as we ought. Father, work in our lives today. Build us up and encourage us. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

As we drove out of the driving test centre, my assessor gave me the first instruction. Turn right. I turned left. And then the moment came, he handed me a piece of paper and written clearly in red letters at the bottom of the page. Failed. None of us likes to fail. In fact, we do everything that we can to try and hide our failures. We're embarrassed by it.

[4 : 48] We cover it up in all kinds of different ways. Well, written across chapter 11 of 1 Kings in bold red letters is the word failed.

There is no hiding from the truth. It may come as a surprise to us because up to this point, Solomon has been doing well as king. He's not perfect, but his people who he is king over are safe and secure and the nations are coming to him for blessing. But it seems Solomon has not been listening to the instructions. And it has all ended in disappointing failure. Now we need to be careful how we read this.

Not as just some historical event in the past, but read it as our story. Because we are just like Solomon. But thankfully, as we look at this together, we'll see that it's not all doom, human gloom. Because chapter 11 shows us that we can experience fullness of life when we admit to our failure and rest in God's faithfulness. That's like a summary theme for the whole of chapter 11.

We can experience fullness of life when we admit to our failure and rest in God's faithfulness. Well, let's have a look. First, a portrait of our failure. A portrait of our failure. Reading the first few verses of chapter 11 is like looking at an x-ray of our hearts. It reveals a terrible heart disease.

The heart of failure is always our hearts. Look at verse 4. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God as the heart of David his father had been. Now when the Bible talks about the heart, it's not talking about that big muscle inside our chest that's pumping oxygenated blood around our body.

[7 : 25] The heart is always talking about the real you. It's the control centre of our character. What's in the heart tells us who we really are. Now Solomon's heart is not in good condition.

In fact, we can see the cause of his heart failure. There's three failures we're going to look at. First, the failure to listen. Look at verse 1. King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter. That was his first wife. Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

They were from the nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, you must not intermarry with them because they will surely turn your hearts after other gods.

God had said, but he didn't listen. In fact, there were specific instructions for the king. Keep your finger in 1 Kings 11 and go back to Deuteronomy.

At the beginning of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 17. So specific instructions for the king. Deuteronomy 17 verse 14.

[9:07] When you enter the lands the Lord your God is giving you and you've taken possession of it and has settled in it and you say, let us set a king over us like all the nations around us.

Be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses. Well, what's this king to be like? Look at verse 17.

He must not take many wives or his heart will be led astray. Simple, isn't it?

Back to 1 Kings 11. It's not that Solomon didn't understand God's word. Solomon just chose not to listen. So chapter 11 verse 3.

He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And not surprisingly, his wives led him astray.

[10:06] We can call it disobedience. Now, we mightn't be like Solomon in that we have many, many wives.

But how often do we read God's word and fail to listen and do what it says? We're a little bit like the person James describes in chapter 1 of James.

Let me read it to you. Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in the mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

How many times do I look into God's word? It shows me what to do. It shows me what to do. So clear. And yet I don't do it.

I fail to listen. Second, there's a failure to learn. Solomon not only had God's word, he also had a very good example to follow.

[11:19] Look at the end of verse 4. We're told that his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God as the heart of David his father had been.

Now we know something of David. It's not saying David was perfect. We know that King David messed up big time. David had an affair with somebody called Bathsheba.

Not only that, he murdered her husband in the process. But here's the point. David learned. He confessed. Psalm 51 tells us of his confession.

But Solomon, it seems, never learned. He just kept on going. 700 times of repeated failure. As well as 300 other failures.

So verse 6. Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He did not follow the Lord completely as David his father had done.

[12:24] It's just too close for comfort, isn't it? I mightn't have 700 wives. But sadly, I have to admit that in my 22 years of marriage, I have failed my wife more than 700 times.

A crossword. Selfish thoughts. Unforgiveness. Putting myself first. We disobey, don't we?

In the same way, again and again and again. We just do not learn. So we don't listen.

We don't learn. And we don't love. Despite everything that God had said. Look at the end of verse 2.

Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to his wives in love. He's got a grip. He's not going to let go of his disobedience.

[13:33] He likes it. He enjoys it. His love for his wives turned him to love of other gods.

Verse 5. He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians. And Moloch, the detestable god of the Ammonites.

Now these just weren't kind of little stone figures. These were gods that they sacrificed babies to. I mean, this was serious.

Sacrificing children in the hope that the gods would somehow bring blessing. This is the way in which Solomon went. Now as we read this, we can't sit back with a feeling of pride and go, well that's not me.

I would never do anything as disastrous as that. I don't love other gods. You won't find any idols or anything like that in my house.

[14:36] Well we all replace God with other things and other people all the time. None of us has loved God with all our heart.

And in case we think otherwise, listen to Jesus. He says, what comes out of a person defiles them for it is written out of a person's heart that evil thoughts come, sexual immorality and theft and murder and adultery and greed and malice and deceit and lewdness and envy and slander and arrogance and folly.

Can you recognize any of those? All of these evils come from inside and defile a person. They come from within the heart.

You see, like Solomon, we all have heart failure. We do not listen. We do not learn. And we do not love.

Now it's not as if Solomon suddenly woke up one day with heart failure. It was progressive. We can think of it this way.

[16:00] The person who has a physical heart attack does so, well, it's because of years of unhealthy diet or no exercise or too much stress at work.

It builds and it builds and it builds and hearts go bang due to a lifetime of bad habits and decisions. Well, that's what God is saying about our hearts.

I mean, look at Solomon. Right at the beginning of his reign, we read this. you may remember it from chapter 3. It tells us here what Solomon was like.

Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David. Now, 40 years later, look at chapter 11, verse 1.

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women. it's not that Solomon went from hero to zero in one day. Verse 4, as Solomon grew old, his wives turned his hearts after other gods.

[17:13] Slowly, over time, as he progressed through the years, he had fallen into a habit of failing to listen, failing to learn, failing to love.

and it ended in heart failure. Now, we need to take note, don't we? Failure to deal with our hearts and we will have a serious heart failure.

Continue to hide over and cover our failures, refuse to admit and to seek help. Well, we'll just end up destroying our own lives and destroying of those around us.

But much more than just destroying our own lives, not only is there heart failure, but there is the curse of failure.

And the curse of failure is the curse. Have a look at verse 9, chapter 11. The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

[18:31] So not only had he everything that God had said in his word, but, well, God had come to him specifically twice and showed him how to live. And the Lord became angry with Solomon.

Now, I don't know how you feel about that, but I guess we don't like the idea of God being angry, do we? We don't like that image. Perhaps because of experiences we have faced before an angry person.

Well, let's be clear, this is not an uncontrolled, raging temper. This is God's jealous love. He is angry that we turn our hearts from his love and seek out love from other things and other people.

God doesn't just sit back and watch us ruin our lives and the lives of other people and say, you know what, it doesn't matter. Feel free, just live the way you want to.

We'll just kind of cover it up and sort it all out. It doesn't matter. Well, it does matter. God's anger is his fair and settled response to sin and it will be punished.

[19:52] How can God let his creation and his world go on in cycles of disaster and destruction and just say it doesn't matter? For Solomon, instead of blessing, there was curse.

Have a look at verse 11. So the Lord said to Solomon, Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

And so began the downfall of Solomon and the kingdom. And as we read on through the book, we'll see the kingdom divides, it falls apart, it falls apart and the people end up in exile.

But for Solomon, the curse begins like this. Have a look at verse 14. Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad, the Edomite.

And over at verse 23, And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Razan, son of Eliadah. Now we don't need to worry about who these people are for now, but we just need to see that God does not ignore sinful behaviour.

[21 : 21] He will deal with it and in this case he raises up an adversary. Not just two of them, but look at verse 26, Also Jeroboam, son of Nebat, rebelled against the king.

One of Solomon's closest allies. You see, if we don't face our failure now, if we don't admit to our failure to listen, to learn, and to love as we should, we will face the just and right anger of God. The end of Solomon's life is a great tragedy, isn't it? We read in verse 43 that he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father.

What a sad, sad end to what began so, so well. You see, the portrait of Solomon's life is a portrait of our own lives.

But thankfully and wonderfully this is not the end of the story. We have a portrait of our failure, but we also have the promise of God's faithfulness or the faithfulness of our God.

[22 : 52] You see, while we can write failure over chapter 11, we can stamp an even bigger faithfulness over all of that because God's faithfulness is always greater than our failure.

First, faithful promise. Remember what God had said to Solomon. Have a look back at chapter 9. Just to remind ourselves of what God had been saying to Solomon in his role as king.

Chapter 9, verse 4. It's very clear, he says, as for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever.

As I promised David your father when I said, you shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel. But, if you or your descendants turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you, and go off and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my name.

Very clear, isn't it? Solomon, you obey, you do what you're meant to do, and all will go well for you. But if you fail, well then I will leave you.

[24 : 47] Well, Solomon did fail, that's what we've just looked at, haven't we? And how is God going to respond? Well, go back to chapter 11, verse 11. So the Lord said to Solomon, since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

but, but, look at verse 13, yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.

Look at the end of verse 31. See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hands and give you ten tribes. He's going to pass that on to others.

But, for the sake of my servant David. Verse 33. I will do this because they have forsaken me and because they have worshipped these other gods.

Verse 34. But, I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hands. God will preserve his people.

[26 : 16] He will preserve a people for himself and from that people will be a king. God has not gone back on his promise.

God is keeping his promise. We may fail but God is faithful. Verse 36. I will give him one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my name.

God had always promised that he would have a people who would be faithful to him, who would love him. So, down through time amidst all the darkness of failure, the lamp of God's promise continued to shine like a beacon of hope, a light of faithfulness that God would always keep a people, a people who would be faithful, who would be loyal to him and who would love him.

And that's how God works, you see. Our failure may set us on a collision course of disorder and destruction, but God intervenes by his faithfulness to bring hope.

You see, God's faithfulness is always greater than our failure. So, there's the faithful promise and we have the faithful king because the light of God's promise continued to shine.

[28 : 03] Not even the failure of God's people could ever extinguish the light of God's promise. The flickering lamp would become the light of the world.

As God's king, Jesus Christ would come bringing hope amidst great failure because in Jesus we always find the true and faithful king.

And think about it with me. he is the king who listened to God. The king who learned from God. The king who loved God.

He did not fail. No sin in him was ever found. God's faithfulness is always greater than our failure. You see, this king would come and he would take all our failures and cover us in his faithfulness. That is what we see as Jesus dies on the cross, taking my disobedience and by faith I receive the perfect obedience of Jesus.

[29 : 16] You see, if failure has been written across our hearts, then God has come through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and stamps his faithfulness over our failure.

If you are trusting in Christ today, I want us to grasp how it is that God sees you and views you today. God looks at you right now and he does not see your failures.

He does not see your shame or your guilt, but what he sees is the beauty of Christ's faithfulness that covers you. We have a faithful king in Jesus, but that is not the end of the story, for it is God's desire that he would build and he would create a faithful people to himself.

God has promised that he would keep a faithful people, a people with brand new hearts. Have a look at Hebrews chapter 10.

Hebrews chapter 10. If somebody could give me a page number, that would be great. Hebrews 10.

[30 : 47] 1-2-0-8. Hebrews 10. And we'll pick it up in verse 14.

Follow along with me. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 14. For by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

You see, the sacrifice of the king, who has taken our failures on himself and given us his faithfulness, by that sacrifice, he has made us perfect in God's sight forever.

Verse 15. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says, this is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.

What will he do? I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. God not only deals with our failures of the past, but he gives us a new heart to live for the future.

[32 : 21] Hearts that are so transformed and so changed, filled with the Holy Spirit, so that we now listen to God.

we are now able to learn from God and we have hearts that now love God. By his Holy Spirit he transforms our failed lives, day by day, into lives that are faithful.

Does that mean I'm never ever going to fail anymore? No, it doesn't mean I will never fail again. I will still fail, but, verse 17, then he adds, their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.

And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. You see, God's faithfulness is always greater than my failure.

I may fail, I will fail, but he will remember my failures no more because they have been covered and dealt with by Jesus at the cross.

[33 : 43] Failure may be written on our hearts, but God has stamped his faithfulness over our failure. God now, we might know that is true.

We might say, yes, I agree with that. But how many of us continue to live with the shame of the past? Sitting here today, perhaps avoiding eye contact with people in case they ask.

We don't want to be reminded of the past. keeping busy doing other things so that we don't have to talk to people. You see, we no longer have to hide our failures.

We no longer need to cover it all up because today, in Christ, I am covered in God's faithfulness.

That means I can go with my head held high, humbly before God, forgiven, with a new heart to listen to God and his word, to learn from him and from others, and a heart that loves him and will submit to him.

Chapter 11 shows us that we can experience fullness of life when we admit to our failures and rest in God's faithfulness.

[35 : 17] How are you living today? Are you living in the past of failure or are you rejoicing in God's faithfulness?

Let's pray together. of housing who Video from the game