

For the One Who Failed

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[0 : 0 0] to Luke chapter I'm sorry John chapter 21 John chapter 21 will be our passage this evening let me just again say what what what an awesome time it is when we're all together like the singing the fellowship the the energy in this place when you're here so I want you to know again we all miss from time to time but it really is important when you're here it's encouraging to so many people so thank you for being here and being a part of tonight's worship well we've been in a series called for the one now for several weeks and what we've been unpacking Jesus actually tells a parable in Luke chapter 15 about a shepherd that's willing to leave the 99 and go after the what the one and we've been talking about that's the heart of Jesus's ministry that that's the kind of shepherd that Jesus is he's the kind of a father like in the the prodigal son that receives the son that has made a complete wreck of his life that Jesus is the type of savior that calls someone like Matthew the tax collector with his first round draft pick who does that like no one would pick Levi and yet that's exactly who

Jesus goes after or last week how Jesus is the the one that will receive the one everybody else has rejected the one no one else wants like the prostitute that appears in the Pharisees home we're seeing over and over and I'm bringing back to the surface these familiar stories to you because I want you to see listen this is not an isolated event this is not just how Jesus acts on one occasion this is consistent throughout his entire ministry namely he'll leave the 99 who don't think they're sick to go after the one who needs a physician that's the kind of shepherd he is and this faith family is the kingdom of God and tonight I want to show you how Jesus is for the one who's made a total mess of things and is an absolute incomplete failure John chapter 21 if you're able to stand please do so as we honor the reading of God's word John 21 and verse 1 the apostle John is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and he says after this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias and he revealed himself in this way Simon Peter Thomas called the twin Nathaniel of Cana and Galilee the sons of Zebedee the two others of his disciples were together Simon Peter said to them I'm going fishing which by the way I think is a great idea anyways they said to him well we'll go with you and they went out and they got in the boat and and but that night they caught nothing just as day was breaking Jesus stood on the shore yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus and Jesus said to them children do you have any fish and they answered him no and he said to them we'll cast the net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some and so they cast it and and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish the disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter it's the Lord and when Simon

Peter heard that it was the Lord he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work and threw himself into the sea the other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish for their work for they were not far from the land about a hundred yards off and when they got on the land they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread and Jesus said to them bring some of the fish that you've just caught and Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore full of large fish a hundred and fifty three of them and although there were so many the net was not torn and Jesus said to them come and have breakfast now one of the disciples dared ask him who are you they knew it was the Lord and Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and so with the fish this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead and when they had finished breakfast Jesus said to Peter Simon son of John do you love me more than these and he said to him yes Lord you know that I love you then feed my lambs then he said to him a second time Simon son of John do you love me and he said yes Lord you know that I love you you know that I love you and Jesus said to him then feed my sheep truly truly I say to you when you were young you used to dress yourselves and walk wherever you wanted but when you were old you stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go this he said to show of what kind of death he was to glorify God and after saying this he said to him follow me let's pray Lord help me tonight to teach this sometimes when we enter into a story that we are familiar with we sometimes forget the impact I pray tonight that this would truly help us understand your heart and understand the kind of shepherd that you are and the kind of one that you go after the kind of one that you use the kind of one that you redeem and restore and do amazing things through so this is your time and this is your word do with it whatever you want and I pray that it would edify and build up your people in Jesus name we pray and God's people said amen you can be seated by all estimations he was the richest man in modern history and probably one of the wealthiest certainly Americans to ever live born in upstate New York John D Rockefeller became the owner and founder of the Standard Oil Company in 1870 and at one point he owned 90 percent of all US oil making him America's first billionaire in fact it is estimated that at the peak of his wealth he had a jaw-dropping net worth of three hundred and thirty six billion dollars now I explained that and I set that up to for you to feel the impact of a significant event that happened in his life one day Rockefeller was out on the east coast and he was visiting a small village that was facing some very difficult economic and financial hardships so much so that the leaders of the community got everybody together for kind of a town hall a town meeting to address these concerns

Rockefeller overheard that this meeting was taking place and he showed up uninvited no one recognized who he was when he tried to share some of his thoughts he was quickly dismissed by the community leaders when he tried to speak up he was repeatedly shut down until finally after this happening now several times Rockefeller just decided to leave shortly after he left the meeting a man comes running in the room out of breath what was he doing here and the leader of the meeting was like who who are you talking about that man that just left was John Rockefeller please tell me that you ask him for help and the man with great regret said we didn't ask him for help because we didn't know who he was let me ask you tonight listen listen listen have you ever missed an important opportunity have you ever had a window of time an opportunity of a lifetime a chance to seize the moment and you totally blew it i don't know like the Boston Red Sox in 1919 we had they had a guy named Babe Ruth and they decided to just trade him away or or i like to pick on Boston Red Sox fans or uh back in 1970s Steve Wozniak who uh took his idea to Hewlett Packard about an idea of having a personal computer and they rejected that because they did not believe that people would actually want a personal computer in their home and so uh he teamed up with Steve Jobs and they went to their garage and built the first Apple computer or JK Rowling the creator of uh uh Harry Potter which is worth nine billion dollars you realize she went through 12 different publishers that told her no before someone was finally willing to say yes let me ask you have you ever missed an important opportunity you ever look back on your life and think if only i had invested in that company when it was just getting started if only i had taken that job when i was had the offer if only i had said yes if only i had said no if only i had said more the reality is is if we take an honest look at our life there are times we wish we could go back and do it over do things differently use the Mulligan and make a different decision because we missed so many opportunities have you ever felt that way and oftentimes when you feel that way there's this feeling of failure that comes in because you feel like you missed it you feel like you blew it you feel like you made a total big mistake and that is certainly true listen Faith Family in our journey of faith Amen that God has given us opportunities and we messed it up God gave us opportunities and we didn't do anything with it God gave us talents and we squandered them away God gave us resources and we just totally blew it and we feel like we're a failure to God we feel like we're a total failure to God and i just want you to know that if you have ever felt that way there is someone in fact there are many people but someone in particular tonight that knows exactly how you feel and his name is Peter i'm aware that most of you if not all of you know Peter's story you're you're quite familiar with this and i get that but Peter's listen is the kind of story we should return to often why because it shows us so much of how Jesus goes after the one the one that everybody else would say you had your chance

and you blew it and Jesus goes after that kind of person let me remind you how Peter's life was a life of failure he was a man that had missed a lot of opportunities in his life don't get me wrong Peter got a lot things right uh you are the Christ the son of the living God that's right Peter but listen flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you God revealed this to you so he got some things right but he got a lot wrong didn't he i mean he missed a lot of opportunities he he swung and missed on a lot of different situations you may remember the time that Jesus told a parable and Peter said uh but what does it mean and Jesus looks at Peter and he says quote are you still without understanding do you still not get it after all this time you don't have a clue come on Peter you ought to know better by now or what about that time when Peter thought he could walk on water do you remember that one and he steps out of the boat and in just a matter of moments he begins to sink and what does Jesus say to him you of little faith or what about when Peter confesses Jesus rightly like what i just said you're the Christ the son of the living God but in literally just about a moments in that same event Jesus will look to Peter and say get behind me Satan and then what about when Jesus is washing the disciples feet and Peter says well you're not going to wash mine i mean you have the arrogance to tell Jesus what he will and will not do and what does Jesus say Jesus says well then you will have no part of me the point is Peter gets a lot right but he sure gets a lot wrong his is a life of repeated failure and of course there's the most famous failure of all in Peter's life look here at Matthew chapter 26 Matthew chapter 26 and verse 30 but when they had sung a hymn they went out to the mount of olives and Jesus said to them you're going to all fall away because of me this night because it's written in other words this is going to fulfill prophecy this is going to fulfill the old testament that it was written i will strike the shepherd and the sheep will flock and be scattered but after i am raised up i will go before you to Galilee and Peter answered this everybody say this with me though they all fall away because of you say it i will never fall away i would never do anything like that so Jesus says to him truly go back truly uh this very night before the rooster crows you'll deny me three times and Peter said to him again here's the confidence even if i gotta die with you i will not deny you and let's not just pick on Peter all the disciples said the same you see if there's one thing Peter didn't struggle with it was confidence right Peter never met a match he didn't think he could win he thought his loyalty was stronger than anybody's his ability was superior you know if everybody else falls away i won't because i'm better than they are his knowledge was greater like Jesus i mean i realize that there's no error in you i realize Jesus you always speak the truth but guess what Jesus you're wrong about me you don't know me you don't know how strong i am you don't know how good i am i know you have all truth but you don't understand who i am in other words Peter knows how the the final moment of his life the game of his life is going to go it's going to go like this at mid court extra pass and it goes for the win the three-pointer by Jordan pool that's exactly how Peter envisions it that moment's going to come and i'm going to hit the final shot they're going to carry me off the court like this i mean it is going to be my one shining moment i'll be signing autographs in the courtyard afterwards

[15:13] he knows that's how it's going to go down but that's not how the game ended is it matthew 26 69 peter's sitting aside in the courtyard and a servant girl comes up to him and says you are with jesus the galilean but he denied it before them all saying i don't even know what you mean but when he went out the entrance another servant girl saw him and said to the bystanders no this man was with jesus of nazareth and again he denied it with an oath i do not know the man after a little while the bystanders came up and said to peter no certainly you are one of them for you your accent betrays you kind of like my tennessee accent but anyways then he began to invoke a curse on himself and swear i don't know the man i do not know who jesus is and immediately the rooster crowed and peter remembered the saying of jesus before the rooster crows you'll deny me three times and he went out and he wept bitterly you see peter thought his one shining moment was going to end like this right they're carrying him off the court in victory it actually went more like this nine number nine just watch that's more like how it went for peter he gets the ball and he totally whiffs he totally bricks the rock crumbles and the one that promised he never would did and listen listen listen listen go there in your mind in the courtyard on that night he is weeping bitterly because he knows he's a failure he missed his opportunity he missed his moment and he's weeping and he's broken for a couple of reasons first obviously is his sin he sinned against jesus right obviously that that concerns him deeply but it isn't just that he sinned against jesus it's that he thought he never would sin against jesus notice this on the screen faith family peter's regret is not what he did or it's not just what he did it's that he thought he never would he he he told jesus listen i promise you even if i have to die with you i would never do this you see peter's spiritual strength was overestimated notice this on the screen his greatest weakness was he assumed he was strong his greatest weakness is he thought he could handle it he could do this and i wonder tonight if you can relate to peter you remember that promise you made to god oh god get me out of this and i promise i will fill in the blank and he got you out of it and you never did the fill in the blank right you didn't do the very thing you told him that you would do the vows that you made that i will never and then what happens you end up in the locker room of life weeping and broken and feeling like a failure and here's the question i'm putting before you tonight listen listen what do you do with people like this what do you do with your own failure do you tell yourself you'll do better next time that you drowned it in a bottle of whiskey you ignore it with another round of golf you make up for it with good deeds maybe you just resolve that i'm just going to have to live with this the rest of my life i'll tell you what others will do to people like this are you listening lean in very closely here's what others do with people like this the coach will likely bench you the boss will likely either demote you if not fire you the parent will probably ground you the church will certainly abandon you your friends will stop speaking to you your spouse might leave you the culture would try to cancel you and you'll probably give up on you

i need you to listen to me but jesus will go after you jesus will go after you because that's the very kind of sheep he seeks to rescue it's the very kind of sheep he seeks to throw on his shoulders and walk back and rejoice at the one he's found faith family the kingdom of god is full of people that bricked the final shot that missed the opportunity but they found restoration and redemption in the grace of jesus christ and that's what we're going to look at here at john chapter 21 that's right all of that was introduction now you can start timing me i'm joking i actually i actually preached in our through the ashes series this has been probably a couple years ago uh a sermon on peter and in that sermon i focused a lot more on what led peter to this moment of failure i don't want to spend the time on that i want in this sermon to focus more on the re the redemption and restoration he finds in jesus through his failure and that happens in john 21 we see the restoration here of peter after he's totally blown it and missed his one shining moment so let's start at the beginning of what peter does after his failure and we'll work our way through it and this this really won't take long first notice that failure has a tendency to revert you to your past failure has a tendency to make you want to go back to your old ways back to your old lifestyle back to your old behavior patterns in john chapter 21 jesus appears to the disciples including peter and he tells them i want you to go to galilee and i want you to wait now waiting is one of the hardest things that we can do in fact tom petty the great theologian said waiting is the hardest part and so they're waiting and they don't know jesus is is like clearly taking his sweet precious time and some of them begin to give up and so peter says i'm going to go fish now now on the surface of the text it doesn't seem like that much but the word here in the original language for going is who pago it simply means to withdraw that is to go back to something you could literally translate it this way i'm going back to fishing it's not you know i just need something to pass the time why don't we fish it's that this clearly isn't working jesus clearly isn't coming i already know that i'm a total and complete failure so i'll go back to the old way i'll go back to the old job i'll go back to those old patterns i'm going back to fishing peter is tired of waiting and he goes back to his old way of life and that is very easy for us to do when it comes to failure sometimes we want to quit we want to go back to what's comfortable we want to isolate retreat get busy with other things so that our mind is occupied go back to a certain lifestyle or relationship or addiction or relapse i mean after all who gives a rip because you're a failure who cares at all because you've blown it and if you and if you do the text actually shows you what's waiting for you when you go there look at verse uh verse 3 of chapter 21 and simon peter said to them i'm going back to fishing and they said to him we'll go with you and they went out got in the boat but that night they caught say it nothing and these are professional fishermen they caught nothing why notice this on the screen the only thing waiting for you in your old life is empty nets you go back to the bottle you go back to the addiction you go back to the whatever it is and what's waiting for you there is an empty net it may be familiar but you won't catch

fish you won't be doing the very thing that god has called you to do and therefore there'll be no joy and there'll be no peace so peter reverts he relapses because of his failure but notice secondly that failure teaches us a lesson about our performance this this i love this i love jesus is going to take this situation in peter's life in the life of the disciples and imagine this teach them a lesson he's going to teach them something very very important by the way this is what jesus wants to teach us tonight we have a room full of failures you can amen that all right from the stage to the very back of the room we have all failed in different ways and missed opportunities and there's actually a lesson in all of that and here's the lesson that jesus wants to teach us verse 4 just as day was breaking jesus on the shore and the disciples didn't know it was jesus and jesus said to them children do you have any fish no no context professional fishermen do you have any fish you know this is like saying i don't know like tiger woods or or uh tom brady like do you know how to throw a football do you know how to hit golf ball of course they know how to catch fish well have you caught any fish and they answered him no well then cast the net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some and so they cast it and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish and the disciple whom jesus therefore who jesus loved therefore said to peter it's the lord and simon peter heard it heard that it was the lord put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work and threw himself in the sea and the other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from land about a hundred yards off so what's jesus teaching them here okay i i'm convinced that jesus made sure they weren't going to catch any fish on the left side but they would catch a net full of fish on the right side what's the point here right jesus is teaching the disciples something he's already taught them before look at it in john 15 verse 5 i'm the vine you're the branches whoever abides in me and i in him it is he that bears much fruit listen here it is are you ready say it with me why don't you for apart from me you can do nothing the point faith family is this notice it on the screen christianity is not about what you can do for jesus but what jesus can do through you right listen i mean there's a sense in which jesus is saying i don't need your fish like i kind of control the seas all right don't you realize professional fishermen you're not as professional as you think don't you realize professional fishermen you're not as strong as you think you are don't you realize you think this is about you i can make sure you don't catch a fish and i can make sure that your net is overflowing in a second because this isn't about you or your performance or how good of the fisherman you are this is the one who is ultimately in control and has authority over all things listen it was never about your performance it's always about the power of god look at verse 9 look at verse 9 and when they got out of the boat they saw a charcoal fire in place this is like almost comical and what's there fish fish laid out on it and bread again the point is jesus doesn't need

You know, like the fact that you were going to fail in the courtyard, Peter? He knows everything. You know that I love you. And Jesus said, feed my sheep.

[31 : 51] Come on, come on. You don't need a PhD in the New Testament to know what's going on here. Everybody in this room who's even studied this passage before 20 different times or a brand new person that you're the first time hearing this, you already know what's going on.

What is Jesus doing? He is restoring the failed one. He is taking the one that missed his opportunity and bringing him back to a place where he is going to be used to feed the sheep of God.

Jesus is saying, listen, your failure doesn't disqualify you from this ministry. Your failure actually helps you do the ministry. In fact, notice what he's doing. Peter is standing here in verse 9.

Notice what's there. Verse 9, this won't be on the screen. But when they got to the land, they saw a what? Charcoal fire in place. You can't even make that up.

Because listen to Luke 22, verse 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, Peter sat down. Like the parallels are obvious.

[32 : 56] Notice it on the screen. Jesus takes Peter from the fire of failure to the fire of forgiveness. He's taking Peter back to the courtyard. He's taking him back to that moment when he totally blew it.

And he's saying, Peter, listen, I'm not done with you. I'm going to use you. This is now going to be a training ground for future ministry. And how many questions does he ask Peter?

Say it three times. You know this relates to how many times he denied Jesus publicly. And what does he commission Peter to do? Feed my sheep. Jesus is getting Peter ready for the ministry that's ahead.

Notice it on the screen here. Peter wasn't ready to preach the gospel until he'd experienced the gospel. He wasn't ready to proclaim the gospel of grace until he'd experienced the gospel of grace.

In other words, what does this show us? Jesus is for the one who failed. Jesus is for the one who failed.

[34 : 03] That's good news. Amen? Because I know all of us, if we're honest about our life, we know that like Peter, we've been in that courtyard when we feel like we've totally blown it.

The reality is, Faith Family, every single one of us feels like a failure. You've been in the locker room of life. After you bricked the shot. After you lost the game.

After you threw the ball away. And the feeling of that missed opportunity. That feeling of failure. And that is precisely why I'm telling you tonight, listen to me, that the good news of Jesus is such good news.

That the good news of Jesus is the best news in the world. It is why our only hope is the amazing grace of Christ. And here's why. You ready? Are you ready for the gospel?

Here's the gospel. And we're done. Notice Hebrews 4 and verse 15. We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness.

[35 : 06] We have one in every respect that has been tempted as we are. Yet, he never failed. He is without sin.

Look at Romans 5 and verse 19. For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Are you ready for the good news of the gospel? Listen to me. Listen. The good news of the gospel is not just that Jesus died on the cross for your sins. That's great news.

The good news of the gospel is not just that Jesus rose from the grave to give you new life. That is incredible news. The good news of the gospel is also this.

Jesus lived a life that never failed. Jesus never wasted one opportunity. Never got one thing wrong. Never swung and missed a single time.

[36 : 11] His life is the obedient life. And what that means, because he's the one that goes after the one that failed, you can trade your life of failures for his life of righteousness.

And all God's people said, amen. Let's pray together. Let's pray. God, thank you so much for this beautiful story. A story that, yes, we've heard before, but I pray tonight are refreshed in the grace that is in this story of redemption and restoration.

A story of a man that had that one shining moment in a courtyard and totally blew it. And yet, Jesus, you went after him. And so we thank you, all of us here tonight, all of us thank you that in a world where the culture tries to cancel and bosses will fire and friends will forsake.

We have a Savior that goes after the one. We have a Savior that sees the one that thinks they've totally blown it. They're in the locker room of life thinking they'll never have a shot at another game ever.

And you go in and invite them to the meal of grace. You go in and invite them to eat the meal you have prepared for them.

[37 : 36] And how you're going to use them to declare and proclaim the gospel of grace that is the kingdom of God.

And now, Lord, we're going to enter into a time of remembrance where we think about the cross and meditate on the cross. And what we need to think about tonight is what was hanging on that cross was an obedient life.

What was hanging on that cross was a life that never failed. And that you made him who knew no sin to be all of our failures in that moment.

That we might become the righteousness of God. Let us think and rest in that tonight. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.