

# Through Many Tribulations (3) - "I'm A Failure!"

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[ 0 : 00 ] 1 Kings chapter 19 and we'll read from verse, well we can read from the beginning down as far as verse 4. Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.

Then he was afraid and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba which belongs to Judah and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree.

And he asked that he might die saying, It is enough. Now O Lord, take away my life for I am no better than my father's.

We live in a society that is in many ways success driven. Success is something that you find so frequently promoted and spoken about.

[ 1 : 09 ] You find books on success, counseling courses on success, all kinds of things to do with success, particularly success in the likes of business enterprises and that sort of career.

And the thing is, when you are living in a society that is so much given to think about success, so much given to a drive towards success, especially in worldly terms or financial terms, you will find that the fear of failure hits many people hard and actual failure itself even harder.

Failure is not a word that any of us likes. Failure is something we understandably shy away from and wouldn't want to experience in ourselves, by ourselves.

Nobody wants to be a failure. Nobody wants to be known as a failure. And even the fear of failure is something that we go back to one of our studies in this series that we've begun just a few weeks ago through many tribulations, tribulations, looking at the many different kinds of tribulations and difficulties that we meet with in the Christian life, though they're common to human life indeed as well, but our concern is to look at how the Bible presents them to us in a way that we can, by faith and by trusting in God, meet with them, overcome them, use them in our daily experience.

And living with failure, living with a fear of failure, is itself one of the bad stresses that we looked at in one of our previous studies.

[ 2 : 48 ] Sense of failure is very often deflating for us. It's something that really hits us in such a way psychologically, mentally, spiritually, even physically, where it leads very often directly to discouragement or even to depression.

And there are so many lives, even among God's people, that really experience failure or live with a sense of failure. And indeed, we'll have to see tonight that failure has to be defined the way God defines it, because some people live with what they regard as a sense of failure.

Well, actually, it's not failure at all in the highest sense, in the ultimate sense. It's something that perhaps God is using towards their further understanding of his ways, of dependence upon him and so on.

But living with a sense of failure and the fear of failure very often leads to being terribly discouraged and really slackening or giving up in the things that we're involved with, even on a spiritual level, even in terms of the gospel or of the church or of serving the Lord in the world.

And it's at this stage that we're thankful to have a Bible. We're thankful to have God's Word before us, because that's really where we find the proper definition of failure and success, where we find God himself telling us, this is actually how I see success.

[ 4 : 09 ] This is how I see failure. And when you come to see success in the way that God defines success, then you're in a better position to appreciate what failure is and what it is not.

We're not left to our own understanding. We're not left to the way the world sees things or defines things. God is actually giving us, in his Word, records of people's lives that have experienced failure, and not only how they dealt with it, but more importantly, how God used it in their experience.

And indeed, you'll find that tonight in this case of Elijah. When you come to the Bible, and you come to discover its teaching on success and failure, all the issues that are related to, that we need to know of, it comes across as something surprising, perhaps, to discover that the likes of Elijah experienced failure, that he faced failure, that he had this sense of failure, and that it led him into this terrible crisis in his life that we find described in these verses.

And you go through the Bible, you find other people that you might think of were so strong in mind, so strong in faith, they couldn't possibly have failed, couldn't possibly have feared failure, couldn't possibly have done anything like that.

But then, you go to Moses, and you go to David, and you go to Peter, you go to others in the Bible, and you discover the same thing with them. The only human being who never experienced any sense of failure was the Lord himself.

[ 5 : 39 ] Because all of us, to some extent, fail or fear failure, or experience that sense of failure from time to time. And when we discover that some of the best people who ever lived, experienced that sense of failure, or lived with failure, then you begin to understand, well, if they had this in their lives, then I shouldn't be surprised that I have it in my life either.

And we see how God uses failure in his program. And so we're going to look tonight at Elijah, and we'll spend a couple of weeks at least looking at Elijah, and some of the issues that we find here that fit into this series of studies on going through many tribulations on the way into the kingdom of God, into eternal life finally in heaven.

This is part of the journey. This is very much part of the experience of God's people in every generation. So what is there here with Elijah that has led to this? He went a day's journey into the wilderness.

This is him running for his life from Jezebel, something you would perhaps not have associated with him, something you wouldn't expect him to do. This strong man, this man that has in the previous chapter did so many things, and was so confident in his God, and sure that the Lord would actually show himself through what he was doing, as indeed he did.

What's leaving him now? Running from Jezebel, running from this queen, this wicked queen, wicked though she is, what's leaving him running from her? What's leaving him in this situation?

[ 7 : 13 ] He's going a day's journey into the wilderness on his own. And he throws himself under a broom tree, and he asks the Lord to take away his life. He feels he's had enough.

He doesn't want to go on. He feels useless. He has a sense of abject failure. And he's saying to the Lord, that's it, it's been with me long enough.

I've done what I can do. I've done all I could. But don't make me go further. This is where it ends. This is where my service terminates.

What was it that led Elijah to that crisis? What led him to that collapse? You might call it, very rightly, a collapse in his mind, and in his spiritual outlook, in terms of how he now is, compared to what he was before.

What led to this? Well, there are two things that are outstanding, I think, in the chapter, in these verses especially, that really jump out and come across to us, as you read again and again.

[ 8 : 22 ] It's almost a good idea, when you're reading a passage of God's Word, it's good sometimes to read through a whole book, but it's also good to read a shorter passage, and even this one, verses 1 to 8, for example, just read them and read them again, and go back and read them again.

Because the more you read them like that repetitively, the more you're then discovering, well, I didn't notice that the first time, and I can see something there now, that must have led to this crisis in Elijah's life.

The two things that are very obvious, I think, from this passage, first of all, exhaustion, and secondly, frustration.

These two, very often, if not always, lead to some sort of crisis in our lives, where they exist, where they're allowed to develop, and where we don't attend to them, the way that we should.

He is exhausted. This is very obvious from what you see there. He went a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree. He said this to the Lord.

[ 9 : 24 ] Then he lay down and slept under this broom tree. And it's almost instant, just like that. He's out like a light, you might say. This man needs his rest. This man needs his mind to rest.

This man needs his soul to be refreshed. He needs his body to rest. And it shows the condition that he was in.

When you see how quickly there he rested, he fell asleep, and needed that rest. Rest is so important, that the Bible speaks of it many, many times.

We all need times of rest. Mentally, physically, spiritually, refreshment. Resting is hugely important. So important is it, that God actually set a pattern for us himself.

Because in Genesis chapter 2, and verses 1 to 3, you'll find the first reference there to resting. And it is God who is resting. I'm not saying it's exactly the same resting as we have, but God is setting a pattern for us there.

[ 10 : 31 ] After he had finished the work of creation, and saw that it was all very good, God rested from his work of creation, that he had made. And he established that particular day, as a day of rest.

That's the root of our Sabbath principle. Sabbath meaning rest in Hebrew. That's where our Sabbath principle, or Lord's Day principle, as it now is, in the New Testament comes from.

That's why it's so important to God, and so important to us. He has actually given us in Scripture, to see right from the outset, an emphasis on rest.

He's really just flagging it up for us there, right at the beginning of the Bible. Rest is something that you need. Proper rest. Adequate rest. A huge difference between that and idleness, or laziness, or slothfulness.

The Bible condemns that, but it always promotes, and brings rest to us, as an essential. And you'll find, going through the Bible, let me just pick up a couple of places, where rest is mentioned in different ways.

[ 11 : 42 ] And when God spoke to Israel, through Moses, in Exodus chapter 23, this is what he said in verse 10, for six years you shall sow your land, and gather in its yield.

But the seventh year you shall let it rest, and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat, and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

For six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien may be refreshed.

See what God is saying there, even the land had to be given rest. It fitted into the whole cycle of rest. Every seventh year, the land was to lie fallow, to give it rest.

And that was to the advantage of the poor, so that they would be looked after, so that they would actually have resources, that this fallowness provided for them, just like the beasts of the field as well.

[ 12 : 46 ] And then it carries on, as we read there, into the seventh day, into this one day a week cycle of rest. That's what makes the Christian view of the Lord's day so different, to the secular, the worldly view of the Lord's day.

Because for the Christian, rest is important, to enable them further, to work in the service of the Lord. The world has reversed that.

It's put that upside down. Because the idea you find currently, and down through history in the world really, is we work all this time, we work as much as we can, so that we can get a good holiday.

In other words, work is directed towards holiday time. Whereas in the Bible, holiday time, rest is directed towards work, towards enabling you further, to serve the Lord, to work for the Lord.

And then of course you find, Jesus himself, you remember, in the likes of Mark chapter 6, verse 31 there, where the crowds were just milling around, following him, and the disciples, the apostles.

[ 13 : 52 ] And so, he spoke to them, the apostles, and said, come and rest for a while. Come into a deserted place, a place where there aren't the crowds, and rest for a while.

He knew the benefits of rest. He often needed rest himself, although sometimes, very often, he couldn't find, even a place to rest, given the demands, that were made upon him.

But rest, is hugely important. And of course, it's part of our salvation, isn't it? What is it to be saved? It's to know peace with God.

It's to know rest. It's to know our souls being at rest. Why does the Bible speak about, entering into our rest, to the people of God? Hebrews uses the pattern, of the Lord's day, to actually remind us, that the Lord's day, is actually a foretaste, of the rest of heaven.

Of the peace that heaven, will have for God's people. So all the way through there, both in terms of our physical need, our mental need, our spiritual need, our salvation, this matter of rest, is so crucial, in God's definition, of human life, what human life needs, why rest is important.

[ 15 : 08 ] So we need, regular rest. And obviously, Elijah wasn't able, to take rest, or if he was, he hadn't been taking the rest, because he's exhausted.

He's come here, he's thrown himself, under the broom tree, you can just see, what it's like, from the words, that are used there. He's disconsolate, he's discouraged, he's fatigued, he's exhausted. What he needs, above all, at that time, is just time to sleep, time to rest. That's, in fact, what happens, what he does. So you need, your regular rest, I need my regular rest.

We need that same pattern, in our lives. If you go on, and just listen to the world, and it's busyness, and if you go on, just seven days a week, 24 hours a day, doing the same thing, following the same pattern, of work, you're going to be frazzled, you're going to be exhausted, you're going to be in need of rest, more than ever before.

Why is the world, so filled, with such stress? Why is the stress, is something we looked at, previously? Why is the world, filled with bad stress? Why there are so many things, in people's lives, that cause breakdown, that cause, lives to be shattered, lives not to be, as they should be, because, of a lack, of rest.

[ 16 : 26 ] Because the demands, of the world, are so constant, so vehement, just ongoing. You've got to do this, you've got to finish this, you've got to meet this deadline, you've got to earn, that much for the company, you've got to do this, within a certain time, here are the penalties, if you don't meet the deadlines, if you don't actually, do what is in your contract, to do, it's all to do, with just pushing you, pushing you, all the time, we need, a rest.

And you know, that's what's important, we try, as much as we can, to, to promote the Lord's day, to those, who really don't want to listen, we want to secularize it further, and just, well, they'll say, yes of course, for you Christians, it's fine, you can go to church, but don't ask us to do that, but just give us the facilities, open the sports center, let's have the golf club open, let's have all of these things, available to us, it's so important, that we keep emphasizing, rest is more, than just stopping, your normal work, rest, is the rest of worship, the rest of communion, with God, the rest that is, a day set apart, particularly, to attend, to those spiritual things, that's what the Bible calls, rest, as well as physical, and mental rest, and that's why, we can, we still resist, these claims, these attempts, to further erode, what we know of, as the keeping, of the Lord's day, because it is, so important, that people, rest, it's good for their minds, especially good, for their souls, that's what we try, to get through, it's a holistic, if you like, approach, to human life, don't leave out, we're telling them, the spiritual side of it, the worship side of it, that's really, at the very heart, of what rest, means, so he was exhausted, he needed, rest, and that's what he did, and we need, a regular rest, one of the most famous, preachers, ever in the church, in our nation,

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, may be surprising, to some people, but he, he suffered, from depression, seems to have been, something that, set in, after a, a really terrible incident, remember, the, his, church got too small, for the numbers, that wanted to hear him, so they hired, a, a large hall, a music hall, type of place, that would sit, that would accommodate, 10,000 people, and just one day, I think it was, around 1856, or so, and, this voice, was heard, shouting, fire, fire, fire, the place is collapsing, the balconies are giving way, and there was, a massive stampede, and people, trampled over each other, eight people, were killed, many others, injured, and Spurgeon, really in a sense, never got over that, some ways, he blamed himself, and, from that time onwards, he was prone to, being down in his mind, or depression, you would call it, and every winter time, he spent a whole month, every year, in Menton, in the south of France, in the French Riviera, that was for his health's sake, for his mind's sake, so that he could rest, so that he could have proper rest, I'm sure there were people, in Spurgeon, today, that, just as there was, over that, disaster, if you like, there was a lot of, press that was negative, that lambasted Spurgeon, for attracting, so many people, into such a, into such a situation, and ridiculed the gospel, that he was preaching, it took advantage of, this to try and further, erode the influence, of the gospel, and I'm sure, there would have been people, that said, well, why does he need a month, every year, in the south of France, in the French Riviera, is that not just for celebrities, is that not just for people, who have lots of money, and Spurgeon would say, if you want me to crack up, altogether, then get me to stay at home, get me to, stop taking my rest, I need this, we all need that, whether it's a month, or a week, whatever, but we need, friends, a rest, and I'm just going to mention, something else in passing there, which is

important, in relation to that, and that is, the way that the Bible, speaks about the church, or teaches us, about the church, as a spiritual body, there are many ways, in which that's important, but it's important, in relation to this, as well, because, if we regard the church, as a body, for example, in Romans chapter 12, you find the apostle Paul, there saying, regarding the gifts, that the body, as in one body, we have many members, that's our physical body, and the members, do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and he speaks about gifts, and different activities, different callings, prophesying, teaching, exhorting, and so on, and it's important, to regard the church, as a body, where each person, should have their own role, and have something, to contribute, that others perhaps, aren't really able to do, or cut out for, but one of the things, for which that's important, is that, people don't get overworked, you know what's said, very often, it's the same small group, of people, that end up doing, most of the work, sadly that's true, in many contexts, that's why, when we appeal at times, as we've done, in the intimations today, for other helpers, even for the, what you might call, the mundane task, of kitchen duties, with regard to parent, and toddler, that's important, so that others, aren't overworked, by trying to do, things that others, could do, and leaving them free, to do other things, now, there are things like that, throughout all our activities, in the church, or in the congregation, and the fact, that we should see, the beauty about seeing, the biblical pattern, of the church, as a body, is that we should, really ideally, make sure, that others, aren't overstressed, or overworked, and therefore, we contribute, our own part, to the working, of the whole body, that's, important of course, we can't actually, be at fault ourselves, for overwork, some of us, are not very good, at delegating, including myself, and, passing things, on to others, who could do things, for us, sometimes, we have the wrong, priorities all together, sometimes, we try and do, things even, within the church, that really, others, should be doing, for us, and we don't need, to be doing, ourselves, ourselves, and of course, there's always, the pressure, of people's, expectations, what people, would demand, of us, what others, would say, we should be doing, the level, to which others, would require us, to be working, you try, and please, everybody, you're going, to crash, meet up, with human demands, the pressure, of people's, expectations,

C.S. Lewis, one of his writings, said, the ultimate, failure, in human life, is to be successful, in the things, that don't really matter, the ultimate, failure, in human life, is to be successful, in the things, that don't really matter, or you could, add to that, what we'll be saying, in the things, that others, should be doing, instead of ourselves, that's why, the church, as a body, is so important, to see the church, as a body, so he's exhausted, let's look after, each other, let's give space, to each other, to take our rest, let's be persuaded, that rest, is absolutely vital, in our human life, in our church life, our congregational life, the second thing, you have, along with exhaustion, is frustration, and you can see that, in fact, from the way, that he twice, answered the Lord, and the Lord's question, when the Lord said, what are you doing here, Elijah, a very telling question, a very probing question, this is not, where the Lord, would want Elijah, to be, this is not, what he had commissioned, him to do, to sit and mope, under a broom tree, in the wilderness, and ask, that his service, would come to an end, and you can see, the way he, actually then said, well, he said,

[ 24 : 45 ] I have been very jealous, for the Lord of hosts, the people of Israel, have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, killed your prophets, with a sword, and I, even I only am left, and they seek my life, to take it away, twice he said the same thing, you can see, his sense of frustration, and that, and frustration, is very much part, of the fabric, of our human experience, as well, because, what Elijah, is really saying, and what comes across, in the chapter is, Elijah has not seen, any change, despite, the great things, that happened, in the previous chapter, he is exhausted, from his exertions, in the previous chapter, and in his life, and other things, leading up to that, and you might expect, that after all, that had been said, on Mount Carmel, the people, in verse 39, when they saw the fire, falling from heaven, they fell on their faces, and said, the Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God, didn't make any difference, to them actually, for most of them, as a people, life just went all, as it was, in idolatry, and there was, no change in the palace, no change in Jezebel, no change in Ahab, so she sent a messenger, to Elijah, and said, by this time tomorrow,

I want you dead, there is a contract, out on you, this is, this is what is waiting, for you, so he then was afraid, and he rose, and ran for his life, now if he hadn't been, exhausted, the way he was, if he hadn't been, filled with a sense, of frustration, he wouldn't have actually, done anything, like this, he wouldn't have, turned away, from Jezebel, he probably would have, stood up to that, and asked for the Lord, to preserve his life, and so on, but he did, and he escaped, he just went away, and this is

what he is now, expressing, the sense of frustration, he says, now take away my life, for I am no better, than my fathers, you see what he is saying, nothing has changed, so I am no better, than my fathers, I haven't achieved, anything at all, in the life I have lived, in the service, that I have given Lord, so it is time, that this came to an end, take away my life, it is not worth going on, and that is something, that comes by way, of temptation, to ourselves as well, in life, especially in your Christian life, there are times, when things, haven't gone, as you might have expected, times, when you, perhaps even, under the devil's prompting, say, well what is the point, of going on, what is the point, of serving the Lord, has just filled my life, with difficulties, and crises, and has just given me, to experience, things that really hurt me, and I just find, the string of these things, happening in my life, and I see the life, of others, just like a psalm, is to saying there, in one of the psalms, in Psalm 73, these people, that are ungodly, their life, is not stressed, like mine is, they are going on, from day to day, and they are not, caught up, and they are not, they are not stressed out, by things the way I am, that is what his reasoning was, and it would be better, he says, had I not just, had I just washed my hands, of the whole thing, that is the kind of thought, that was coming into his mind, just like Elijah, is here, that is why he says, it is enough,

I have had enough, there is no point, to going on, and I am sure, to some extent, you and I have been there, when life gets really tough, and when things, in the church of God, aren't what, they ought to be, or we expect, them to be, perseverance, in Christian service, is sometimes, a struggle, to go on, from day to day, serving the Lord, doing the same things, sometimes, can be just, not just tiring, and demanding, but a real struggle, even if it is very exciting, at first, very often, this sort of thing, kicks in, somewhere down the road, in our Christian experience, and especially, if there are a series, of things, that have really, caused us, distress, or pain, or anxiety, or loss, and the devil, will then come, and place his, hooks into us, and say, well what is the point, of going on, you are a Christian, why are you saving, this God, look what is happening, in your life, look at the difficulties, you have got, compared to what you had, before you became a Christian, is it really worth going on, it's a bit like, you know what it's like,

I'm sure most of you, have had children, and now have grandchildren, like myself, but when the children were young, we were going out on holiday, very often, you'd have, an explanation, of where you were going, on holiday, perhaps you were journeying, down south, or wherever, and the children, you'd go over with them, before you set out, and they'd be all excited, and you'd show them, the things you were expecting, to, for them to see, and to take part in, and all the rest of it, then you set out, on the journey, there they are in the car, all your stuff's packed, off you go, and they're filled with excitement, but, well, 20 miles down the road, they're saying, is it far away yet, how long is it, till we reach, and then they'll maybe, fall asleep, and another hour, down the road, and they'll say, are we not there yet, you see, they're losing, their enthusiasm, and they're finding, the going is so difficult, compared to what they thought, and it feels so long, and sometimes, if we're honest, Christian life, can feel like that too, that's what it is, for Elijah,

I'm no better, than my father, no point in going on, when is this, really going to end, when is the pressure, going to be lifted, and we'll see, in another study, how God actually, dealt with him, how God's, cared for him, so wonderful, in these circumstances, but God gives us, doesn't he, in Galatians chapter 6, and verses 9 to 10, you remember there, how the apostle Paul, in finishing off, his letter to the Galatians, is emphasizing, the need to, look after each other, but also, he finishes by, or near the end, of the chapter there, when you come to, verses 9 and 10, let us not, grow weary, of doing good, or in doing good, for in due season, we will reap, if we do not give up, so then, as we have opportunity, let us do good, to everyone, and especially, to those, who are of the household, of faith, that's of, the Christian people, of God, in due season, we shall reap, if we don't give up, if we don't give in, perseverance, patience, keeping on, it's a struggle, at times,

[ 31 : 38 ] Elijah is here, just about ready, to give in, sometimes, that's how it feels, the frustration, and especially, when you're not, seeing things, the way you would, perhaps be praying, that you would see, results for your prayers, results for your labor, not just in the ministry, though it is very much, part of that as well, sometimes time goes by, I remember a time, many years ago, when there were, a series of, communion times, when there were, no new professions, of faith, nothing much happening, in the congregation, and really, it comes home then, really powerfully, to your mind, well, is it worth going on, in this place, is it not time, for a change, and is it not time, to end this ministry here, until the Lord, actually then, intervenes, and shows, well that's your mind, that's your view, that's how you see it, that's not how I see it, you'll stay until I tell you, to go somewhere else, and that's how it is, without Christian service, as well, here's God's word, for the tired, for those who

are downcast, for those who are frustrated, and if you're tonight, frustrated, that things are not, as you expected them, to be in your Christian life, don't think that, that's out of place, don't think that, that's wrong, for God, to have led you, into that path, take lessons, from Elijah, and his exhaustion, and frustration, and his sense of failure, the final thing,

I want to mention, is that, from this passage, we can really, see how, God, brings success, from, or through, our failures, the way to, further success, is very often, through experiencing, failure, or a sense of failure, or even the fear of failure, you know, Elijah, actually came, to leave this world, in a remarkable way, here he is, saying to the Lord, Lord, take away my life now, let it end here, and stop this service, and Elijah, actually ended up, not dying, at all, he was taken up, to heaven, in a chariot of fire, without seeing death, how wrong, he was, at this point, as he viewed, his life, to be a failure, that's very often, what God will impress, upon us, what we term, failure, is not necessarily, so to God, what we term, success, is not necessarily, so, to God, and God, uses, our sense of failure, our fear of failure, and our actual failures, towards, further enrichment, of our experience, of walking with him, remember Peter, and Peter, in,

Luke chapter 5, I'm just going to finish, with this, Luke chapter 5, where, Jesus is using, Peter's boat, firstly, to teach the crowds, out of the boat, as he, got into the boat, he didn't actually, ask Peter for permission, of course, he just got in, he requisitioned it, as was his right, as the Lord, but, as he got into the boat, and taught the people, he then said to Simon, go out into the deep, and let down your nets, for a catch, and Simon answered, master, we have toiled, all night, and caught nothing, you see, Peter's sense of frustration, and Peter's, near exhaustion, you might say as well, because he is talking, about toiling, and he's really saying, master, we're tired, we were tired, we worked the whole night, previously, for nothing, we've got nothing, to show for it, and here you are, asking us, again, to go out into the deep, I know that there are no fish there, we've been there all night, then the next words, are the key, in many ways, to your Christian life, and mine, but, at your word,

I will let down the nets, you know, in a sense, Peter is really saying there, well, my own human experience, tells me, there are no fish there, but Lord, you know best, and because it's your word, I'll go on doing this, I'll do as you say, and of course, they then caught, such a large number of fish, that their nets, were at breaking point, and that's really, in many ways, the key, to our sense of failure, and to our fear of failure, and to our actual failures, nevertheless, Lord, at your word, because you say so, I'll go on trusting in you, I'll go on serving you, I'll go on praying, I'll go on worshipping with your people, Thomas Edison, a famous inventor, in America, was at one time, trying to find out a way, of producing, a dry battery, or now the batteries, that you would put in your, whatever electronic things, you've got, that needs batteries, you have dry batteries, which up to then, of course, you needed some sort of liquids, in order to, do what a battery does, Thomas Edison, was trying to actually, establish a way, to produce, a dry battery, and hundreds of experiments, failed, in his attempts, and one of his employees, came to him one day, and he said, is it not time, to actually give up, on this project, we failed, we've not produced, this battery, so it's time, just to give up, and Edison said, no we haven't failed, at all, I have been successful, in discovering, hundreds of ways, that this wouldn't work, you see, he had used, the failures, as tools, towards success, eventually, and eventually, he did produce, this battery, failure to him, was just a step, towards, success, ultimately, that's the Christian life, for you, this failure, that we're so, familiar with, that the devil, would press into our minds, as a reason, to give up,

[ 37 : 56 ] God is saying to us, that's a tool, and if you use it correctly, and you keep on, trusting in me, you will have success, you'll be successful, in the end, and it'll be very real, to you, Jesus himself said, in John 16, verse 33, when we've looked at, Peter, with his sense of failure, through exhaustion, the need for rest, his frustration, the challenge, that we have to persevere, in the Christian life, the success, that, God brings us to know, sometimes, through many failures, what Jesus said, to the disciples, he's saying to us, tonight, in this world, you will have, tribulation, but be of good courage, I, have overcome, the world, and when you are joined, to that I, to that Christ, success, is guaranteed, and don't let the devil, or the world, or anyone, deprive you, of the comfort, of knowing, that in Christ, you are sure, ultimately, to succeed, let's pray,

Lord, our God, we give thanks, for the many times, that we know of, our being used, by you, successfully, and of things, that you have enabled us, to achieve, in the course of life, help us also, to be as ready, to give you thanks, for our failure, for the times, that we know, that we have failed, even for the sense, of failure, and the fear of failure, help us Lord, to be grateful, that we can bring

this, to you, that our lives, can be further, enriched, through your taking, of our failure, and of your blessing, us, as we go on, grant to strengthen us, we pray, against temptation, especially the temptation, to give up, to step out of the way, and to cease, from serving you, help us, we pray, at all times, to realize, how being joined, to you, is such a vital part, of our perseverance, receive our thanks, we pray, for Jesus sake, amen, let's conclude, our service tonight, singing in Psalm 43, Psalm 43, that's in the, Sing Psalms version, the time has gone on, so I think, we'll just sing, the final, three verses, because we have, the fellowship, so Psalm 43, on page, 54, and, at verse 3, O send, O send your light forth, and your truth, let them direct me, in your grace, bring me to your holy hill, into your sacred dwelling place, Psalm 43, the verses 3 to 5, O send your light forth, and your life forth, and your truth, let them direct me, in your grace, and bring me to your holy hill, and to your sacred dwelling place, then, to God's altar,

I will go, to God, my joy, and my delight, and I will praise you, with love, O love, you are my God of might, why are you downcast, O my soul, why are you so disturbed in me, trust, for I will praise you, yet, my Savior, and my God is he.

If you let me get to the main door tonight, please. Lord our God, we pray that you would now bless the fellowship about to take place, and we ask that you bless the food provided for us there, and make us thankful for it.

[ 42 : 54 ] We pray your blessing especially on Jackie, as she comes to speak to us about the work of street pastors, and remember that work itself, we pray as we have information on it this evening.

Grant, we pray that your grace, and your mercy, and your peace, will follow us now, and evermore. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.