

Failure Is Not The End, It's The Beginning

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- [0 : 00] Luke chapter 22, Luke chapter 22. We're going to talk about someone that's near and dear to our heart and that we probably act like quite a few times.
- We're going to talk about Peter tonight. That's what I said too. Great. Luke 22, we'll be in verse 31 to 34. We're going to look a little more in chapter 22 about Peter as well.
- But Luke chapter 22, verse 31 to 34. We'll begin there. If I had to title this this evening, it would be failure is not the end. It's the beginning. Failure is not the end. It's the beginning.
- All right, so let's look in verse 31. It says, And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fell not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.
- And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.
- [0 : 56] All right, let's look at Peter a little bit. Let's do a little background into the New Testament about Peter. All right. No disciple spoke as much as Peter did, and out of necessity, Jesus addressed him more than any of his other disciples.
- No disciple was reproved by Jesus as much or as strongly as Peter. And he was the only disciple who thought it was his duty to reprove the Savior. No disciple ever so boldly confessed and encouraged Christ.
- Not sure if any other disciple bothered Jesus as much as Peter did. Jesus said sterner things to Peter than he even did to Judas. The Gospels testify of the primacy of Peter among the disciples.
- In each of the four lists of the apostles and the disciples in the Gospels, Peter's name was always first, and Judas' name was always last. Peter could say some of the dumbest things, and also some of the most profound in the same chapter.
- Because of Peter's ever-evident humanity, he makes him everyone's teacher. So tonight, we're going to look at him. I believe in this chapter, this may be the most instructive of all the events in Peter's life that we can learn.
- [2 : 02] I'm going to give you a little context from chapter 22 to where we began. But in verses 1 through 6, we see that Judas, Satan has come into Judas, and he's ready to betray Jesus.
- He's ready to betray Jesus. Alright, 7 through 20, we see that Jesus shares his first communion with his believers. The very first communion, this is only hours before his death. Only hours before his death, he's communing with his believers.
- He's telling them that he's going to suffer, that he's going to die, that all these things are going to happen to him. In chapter, verse 21 to 23, we see that Jesus declares that one of them is going to betray them. And they all ask themselves, Is it I? Is it I? Is it I?
- Very lack of confidence there. 24 to 30, we see that disciples argue which one is greatest. Alright, just imagine. Jesus is getting ready to die, just hours away from dying, and his disciples, whom he spent three and a half years with, are arguing among one another, which one of us is greatest.

Hey, which one of us is... Man, I look a lot better than you, Brenda. Alex, it's good to see you, but I look better than you. I'm better than you. I'm taller. Man, I'm just better. Imagine just hours before Jesus is dying.

[3 : 05] That's what his disciples are talking about. Not very spiritual conversation going on before Jesus dies. But Jesus, I'm telling you, he's very patient with them. He's very loving with them.

And I'm thankful that he is, because he is with me. He may not be with you, but he sure is with me. But he talks with them. He talks about their future position of leadership. He doesn't rail on them like I probably would.

If I was Jesus, I'd be like, you guys are so dumb. Just shut up. Gosh, I'm getting ready to die. Hours later, do you not understand? Do you not understand? But no, he's like, no, you're going to have future positions.

By the way, it's not about who's greatest. Being in leadership is about serving, guys. It's not about being number one. It's about serving. He gives them a lesson. He's still teaching, still concerned about his disciples just hours before he's getting ready to die.

What an amazing man Jesus was. What's interesting to me is that Jesus is so near the pain of the cross and his followers are so far spiritually from him. But yet his concern was for his disciples.

[4 : 06] All right, today, if you don't want to listen to the rest of this message, you, oh, you got a clock back there. Praise the Lord. You can write these three things down and you won't have to listen to the rest. Okay, here it is. Our presumption of strength will fail us.

Our presumption of strength will fail us. Number two, our failures are not the end, but the beginning. Our failures are not the end, but the beginning. And number three, Christ has not forsaken nor forgotten us.

Christ has not forsaken nor forgotten us. So let's look in verse 33. We're going to go backwards through the text that may be a little weird. All right, verse 33, and he said unto him, Lord, I'm ready to go with you both into prison and to death.

I'm ready to go with you both into prison and to death. Peter's response to Jesus was classic, self-dependent, and an extremely naive response. Jesus tells him exactly what's going to happen.

He tells him the past. He tells him the future, exactly what's going to happen. But Peter says, Jesus, you're crazy. You're crazy. I'm willing to die for you and to go to prison. I won't fail you.

[5 : 05] I won't fail you. Okay? That's what Peter says. It's obvious to me that Peter said this out of a true heart and out of love for Jesus. But yet it was so naive. So naive.

Peter was simply going about as he had always done before. He simply thought he could combat Satan in his own strength. You know, we're exactly the same as Peter. How many times do we think that we can do things in our own power and in our own strength?

But I'll be honest with you. We are all failures. All of us are failures. We're all frail. We're all weak. We're all screw-ups. We all mess up. We are not perfect people.

We are screw-ups. We are failures in every sense of the word. And we are incapable of doing anything great apart from Christ. John 15, verse number 5, it says, I am the vine, you are the branches.

He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth what? Much fruit. Much fruit. For without me, you can do what? Nothing.

[6 : 02] Nothing. He says, if you abide in me, you will bring forth much fruit. But without me, you can't do anything. You can't do anything. We are imperfect in every way.

The only reason that God chooses to bless us or to use us is so that He can receive the glory and honor. It's not that you can have a good name or a great name or that you can be made to be someone.

No, it's that God receives all the glory and all the honor. We are not stronger than the devil. We are not ignorant of his devices. But we are hard-headed enough to try to do things our own way.

Thinking the whole time that we can handle the situation. Thinking we are strong is but a figment of our own imagination. Let's look in verses 54-62. Verses 54-62.

It says, Then they took Him, Jesus, and led Him and brought Him to the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

[7 : 00] But a certain maid beheld Him as He sat by the fire in earnest. He looked upon Him and said, This man was also with Him. And He denied, saying, Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while, another saw Him and said, Thou art also of them.

And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.

And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him before the cock crow, Thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out and wept bitterly. Here we see Peter's greatest failure and denial of Christ. His overconfidence did not provide him with the strength to handle the situation, the temptation.

Peter, left to his own, could not even boldly stand in front of a little servant girl. It only took a menial maid to chop down the greatest of all the disciples. The pain that Peter realized as Jesus looked across the courtyard must have been unbearable.

[8 : 05] I cannot imagine that feeling that Peter must have felt at that point. But God was beginning His perfecting, sanctifying work inside of Peter so that the Peter that comes through the failure will be greater use than the Peter we see here.

Because failure is not the end. It's the beginning. It's the beginning. Second, we see Peter's reinstatement. Peter's reinstatement. As hard and as disgraceful as Peter's failure was, something new had begun inside his heart.

It was the sanctifying work of repentance. Job says in chapter 23, verse 10, he says, But he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Peter was now coming forth as gold.

He had been tried. He had failed. But you know what? He was not forsaken. Jesus did not give up on Peter. Peter was a different man after this failure.

He would be a better man, not a perfect man as we see in Galatians 2. He was not perfect, but he was better. He was better. He was a changed man. Although he had greatly sinned and had failed Jesus, Jesus still grants forgiveness and gives him a ministry.

[9 : 10] We see this officially happen in John chapter 21. All of this meant to perfect Peter, not to destroy him. It meant to perfect Peter, not to destroy Peter.

Just because we fail doesn't mean that God is done with us. It doesn't mean He's done with us. It does not mean that God cannot use us. I had a friend come up to me Sunday at church and she told me, Jim, I don't know how God can use me because I've been divorced and my husband's been divorced.

And I just don't know how that God can use someone like me. I just don't know what I can do. But you know what? I have good news for her. God has not given up on her. God still has a plan for her. Yes, she failed.

I don't know the situation there. There was something that happened, but I don't know. She may have failed. Things may have been done. But you know what? She's not forsaken by Jesus.

Jesus still has a plan for fallen people. Jesus still has a plan for those that have failed, those that are weak, those that are frail. God can still use those people and wants to use those people.

[10 : 11] Here's the great thing about Jesus. He wants to reinstate us. He doesn't want to keep us down. He doesn't want to see us failing and in misery and in guilt and in remorse our entire life. No, He wants to reinstate us and He wants to use us.

He wants to forgive us to forgive us. He can use us in our most broken form. When we are hurting, when we can't quit failing or falling, God can still use us.

He is always there to receive us. Don't let the devil fool you. Jesus will forgive you. He will reinstate you and He will use you. There is something for you.

Jesus can use you. He will move you forward and He will use you greatly. If you come to Him today, repent of your failure, you can begin afresh with Christ. Yeah, we're screw-ups. Yeah, we're failures.

And yeah, we're weak. And we're incapable of doing anything without Christ. But guess what? Those are exactly the people that Jesus uses. Those are the people that Jesus chooses to use. Are the weak ones, the frail ones, the screw-ups, the mess-ups, the ones that can't get anything right, the ones that keep failing, God still can use them.

[11 : 15] How do we know? Well, praise God, He used Peter. He used Peter. And I'm a lot more like Him than I am any of the other disciples or apostles, that's for sure. Jesus uses because when we are weak, what is He?

He is strong. When we are the most fragile point, His power is shown. As we see in Acts 2, we see the power of God is coursing through a broken and humbled man who before coward, before a simple slave girl, and now here He is preaching with the boldness that only Christ can give.

If you'll turn to Acts 2, we're going to look at a few verses there and just see what kind of new man this Peter is after his failure. Who before he cowered before that little maid girl.

Acts 2, verse 22-24 says, You men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know.

Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death because it is not possible that he should be a hold of it.

[12 : 20] So a man who was broken, who could not even stand to a little maid, to a servant girl, is now boldly proclaiming Christ in front of a multitude of people. This man is new.

That's why failure is not the end. It is just the beginning. It is just the beginning. Failure is not the end. God can use screw-ups. Lastly, Christ prays for Peter.

Christ prays for Peter. Look what he says. Satan hath desired to have you back in Luke that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fell not. What did he pray? He didn't pray that he wouldn't go through the temptation.

He didn't pray that he would do this or do that. What did he pray? He prayed that his faith would remain strong. He said that your faith fell not.

He said, And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Although Peter declared to Jesus that he did not need his prayers for him, Jesus knew better. Jesus gives Peter the past and future of what happens.

[13 : 19] What I love about this is that Jesus knows all that is going to happen with Peter. He knows his failure. He knows what he's going to do. He knows his reinstatement, what's going to happen. And proclaims to Peter, Hey, Peter, I prayed for you that your faith would fail not.

Peter, I'm in your corner. Peter, I'm for you. Peter, I will not forsake you. I won't leave you. Peter, I love you. I know you're going to fail me, but I still love you anyway.

And I'm still going to use you anyway. And it doesn't matter to me that you fail. It doesn't matter to me that you fall. What matters to me is that you avail yourself to me to let me use you because he wants so greatly to use us as he used Peter.

But I still love you and I still have a work for you to do. What a great God we serve that knows all about how weak we are and is so caring and loving toward us regardless of all these things. I tell you what, it's amazing that God would even use people like us.

I mean, when you look at it and when you think about it, we are nothing and we are nobody to deserve to be used of God, but yet he sees fit to let us serve Him.

[14 : 26] Finally, after 11 years, my wife has learned something. I'm just joking right there. That was a joke. Maybe a bad one. Yeah. Yeah. But you know what?

It is an honor that we get to serve Christ because I'll be honest with you. Sergei, we're nothing. We're nothing. All the things we did in our life, the lives that we lived, John, we don't deserve this opportunity.

We don't deserve for the God of heaven to say, you know what? You screwed up, but I still love you. You've messed up so many times I can't even count, but I still love you and I still want to use you because it's not the end.

It's the beginning. Failure is not the end. It's the beginning. There is no greater friend that we could ever want than what we have in Jesus. He knows what we are. He knows we are failures. He still loves us and desires to fellowship with us.

He still desires to use us. He's willing to forgive us no matter what. No matter what we've done or how long you've been gone, He desires that fellowship and forgiveness. What a blessing to know that Christ even now is praying for us as well.

[15 : 29] He didn't save us. Listen, He didn't save us to be perfect. He saved us to be perfected. That means the moment you got saved didn't mean He made you perfect right there. But you are being perfected through sanctification.

He is working on every single one of us and that involves this. We would like for it to be like this. But I'll be honest with you, most of the time it's like this. And you know what?

He loves you just as much here as He loves you down here. Failure is not the end. It's the beginning. So if I had to apply this, if I had to apply this, in your own strength, you can't do anything.

You can't do anything. The Bible says that we can do nothing without Christ. Nothing. So when you try to do it, because you will, you will try to do it on your own and you will fail.

But you know what Jesus does? It doesn't matter if you fail. I still love you. And I want to reinstate you and I want to bring you so I can use you. He will always be there for you.

[16 : 39] And it doesn't matter about the failure. It doesn't matter how much you've failed. It doesn't matter what you've done. God still has a plan for you. He still has a plan for you. Our presumption of strength will fail us.

When there is failure, there is also restoration. When there is failure, there is also restoration. restoration. He will restore you. He will restore you because He loves you.

So what I told that girl on Sunday, that God can still use you. God wants to use you. You give yourself to God and let Him use you and He will. He will use you.

Maybe you're here tonight, maybe you say, I've messed up so many times, I can't even count. I don't even know where to begin in restoration. You can begin asking God just to forgive you and say, Lord, I want to start over.

It's not the end, it's the beginning. Ask Peter. If we could talk to Peter now, He'd say, you know what, that day I thought it was over. I went back to fishing. I didn't want to be with Jesus anymore. I went back to my old job.

[17 : 40] He said, but then Jesus came around again. He said, hey, I can still use you, Peter. How much do you love me, Peter? Peter, do you love me? Then feed my sheep.

Feed my sheep. And you know what, in Acts 2, we see a completely different Peter than we saw right now, didn't we? He's willing to stand bold for Jesus. Jesus gave him another chance.

Jesus gave him hundreds of chances. He'll do the same for you. Same Jesus. Same Jesus. Yeah, we're screw-ups, we're mess-ups, we're failures. But you know what, Jesus can still use us.