

## Conquering the Giant of Failure

Today we are continuing our series on “Conquering our Giants”. This week’s giant is a real big one, the giant of failure. All of us will face this giant at some time or another in our life. Sometimes multiple times. If you aren't prepared, this giant will not only take you down but it will keep you down:

- Through discouragement, despair, depression, doubt
- I see that over and over in our church.
- We can't stop failure from coming, but with God's help we can grow through the failure.

**Here's the truth:** In God's eyes, failure is not final. Please say that with me: “Failure is not Final!” Failure can be a new starting point. God has the power to turn your failure around and give real hope to your life. Ready to conquer this Giant?!

**Let's consider King David's story today:**

- Israel's greatest king
- A man after God's own heart
- Also a man of grand failures: Adultery, Murder, Cover up...
- And he had lots of family issues: a daughter is raped, a child is murdered and his son even tried to kill him!
- At the end of 2 Samuel 18 David is about to lose his kingdom to his son and he walks out of Jerusalem dishonored and barefoot, the ultimate sign of failure. Wow.

**Say this with me: Failure hurts!** David's failures were major; but whatever your failure is, it hurts:

- A failed marriage; loss of a job...no promotion...**failure hurts**
- Your kids get in trouble—pregnant, jail, addictions—**failure hurts.**
- Failing God: “Can I get back on track? Can I really start over? Is it too late for me?” **Failure hurts.**

## Truth is: Failure is temporary. . .because God says we can begin again!

- Our Challenge is this: Will we give up or grow up after failure?
- Will you give up on your relationship with God? your church family?
- Or will you grow up in your relationship with God and grow through failures with your fellow Christians?

David said "I'm not giving up!" [2 Samuel 11-15] now at Chapter 22, watch how David comes through his failure. Read with me:

"I, David, sang this song to the Lord on the day the Lord rescued him from all his enemies. He sang, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior. My God is my rock in whom I find protection. He is my shield and power that saves me, and my place of safety. He is my refuge. My savior, the one who saves me from violence. I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my failures, or my enemies."

How did David Conquer this Giant? **Remember**, you can't keep the giant of failure from coming...so here is the first step:

### When I fail, I need to

#### 1. Draw close to God instead of staying away from Him.

Our tendency when we fail is to run, hide, withdraw...from God and His people. But if we go to Him, God pulls us up! David failed by adultery...he drew close by opening his heart to God. Listen to David in Psalm 51:10,

"Create in me a clean heart, oh God. Renew a loyal spirit within me...restore to me the joy of your salvation, make me willing to obey you."

It's confession. It's honesty. It's coming clean with God!

- **Not all Failure is morally bad...but we tend to stay away from God because of how we feel. We don't think God will want to accept us or help us. But the opposite is true.** Hear His promise: Jesus understands so he says "Come to me, I can handle it". Hebrews 4:14-16 says this,

"So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our

gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Draw close to God when you fail...and then

**2. Deal with the emotions of my failure.** No matter how strong or spiritual we are, **failure hurts**. Remember, you can't help how you feel. It's natural.

- Broken relationship? Lots of pain...we put lots of energy into love.
- When you lose a job....it hurts. Usually because it's our identity. So lots of emotions.
- What's the answer then? Face your emotions. Give yourself permission to be sad, to cry, to feel bad...for awhile.

Look at David's emotions in Psalm 3. He is running away from his son Absalom, who wants to kill him:

"Oh Lord I have so many enemies. So many are against me. So many are saying God will never rescue him."

**Question: what is David feeling?**

- He's afraid (not even God will help him), to be able to rescue me?
- He's panicky (all are out to get me)
- He's "off"—“So many are saying.....”

David is going through what counselors say are stages of failure:

1. Shock (I can't believe this happened)
2. Fear (What's going to happen now?)
3. Anger & blame (yourself or someone else)
4. Shame (I hope nobody finds out about this)
5. Despair (I give up)

**Number 3, Follow God's new plan for my life. His new plan.**

After Confession there is always a new path / plan for us to follow.

- Our gut says, "I'll never do anything like that again!" "I'm done!" So we stop risking: love, opportunities, involvement
- But remember, God says failure isn't **final**!
- If you came to church today after committing the worst sin last night, if you turn to God today and repent He will give you a brand new path / plan to walk in! Let God grow you through your failure.

Listen to David's words in Ps. 37:

"The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall. **[Why?] For the Lord holds them by the hand.**"

David had some major failures, but he stayed focused on God. After all of this bad stuff happened, he put his shoes on and went back into Jerusalem. He began to be the kind of man that God wanted him to be:

- He has a son, Solomon, who built the Temple David dreamed of
- Israel had a great kingdom during his reign
- Solomon is credited as one of the wisest men who ever lived...listen to his wisdom in Prov. 24:16:

"The godly may trip seven times," **[maybe he was talking about his dad when he wrote that]** "But they will get up again. But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked."

In other words: push God away and you will stay down; draw close to God and He will pull you up.

**Whatever failure you're facing right now, God says it's not final.** Stop being ashamed. No perfect people here today!! Your failure will not prevent you from being used by God. **Here's one more example** you can study this coming week. A famous failure.

He was a small business owner. After meeting Jesus he trained for 3 years to go into ministry. He was hand picked by Jesus, but he let Jesus down several times in a row. He experienced the emotions we talked about today: shock, shame, anger and despair. In fact, he was sure he committed

the ultimate sin of denying his Lord. **Anybody know his name?** His name is Peter.

After Jesus rose from the dead, an angel told the two Mary's who were there,

**"Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples *and Peter* that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."**

Why tell the disciples AND Peter? Jesus wanted to make sure that Peter, who was repentant for what he had done, knew that he was forgiven for his great sin and was still one of His sheep. Jesus didn't abandon Peter when he failed. And he won't abandon you either!

And what about Peter's new plan?

- Feed my sheep...He preached the 1<sup>st</sup> Xian sermon ever
- Thousands of people came to God!
- His failure was not final!! Don't let yours be either