

When God Gets Personal With My Failure

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Announcements

Servant Leadership Summit is coming Monday, May 4

Many of you serve here at Westwood... in Area 51, in preschool, as ushers & greeters. We have a new event for you on May 4. We'll meet to train, encourage, motivate. You can register at WestwoodGroups.com by clicking on "Summit". Join us to discover your role in the big picture of what God is trying to accomplish in and through Westwood.

Sermon Overview

Life-changing Lessons

1. Some failure occurs when I trust my own efforts instead of God's activity.
2. When my failure involves sin, God wants me to own up to who I am without Him.
3. When God gets personal with my failure, my walk is different.
4. Failure will have an impact on who I am, but it shouldn't define who I am.
5. The one sure way to fail is to never attempt anything for Christ.

Scripture

Genesis 32:24-31

²⁴ So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

²⁷ The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

²⁸ Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

²⁹ Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

³¹ The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

John 21:15-21

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

²⁰Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?")

²¹When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

Opening Question

What is one of your greatest failures in life (that you would be willing to share with the group)?

Digging for Truth

1. Wikipedia defines failure as "the state or condition of not meeting a desirable or intended objective, and may be viewed as the opposite of success." Les disagrees with the last part, believing that failure is something that helps us reach success. Can you think of some ways failure has helped you?
2. Life-Changing Lesson 1 states that "**Some failure occurs when I trust my own efforts instead of God's activity.**" In what areas of our lives are we most tempted to take things into our own hands?
3. Lesson Two states "**When my failure involves sin, God wants me to own up to who I am without Him.**" Why is it important that we own up to what really happened?
4. How do we respond in the midst of failure? Do we deny what happened? Do we spin facts to justify what happened?
5. The encounter between God and Jacob is something that God wanted to happen. God wanted Jacob to admit his failure (by confessing his name). Have you ever been jumped by God?

Is it easy or difficult for you to admit who you really are?
6. Lesson Three states, "**When God gets personal with my failure, my walk is different.**" Sometimes scars remind us of our weakness, but also of God's greatness and provision. His strength is made perfect in my weakness. When my failure causes me to limp it's a reminder that God delivered me and that I didn't prevail on my own.

2 Cor. 12:9-10

The Lord said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

7. Lesson Four states, "**Failure will have an impact on who I am, but it shouldn't define who I am.**" What public failures are identified by failure? (example: Dick Cheney with hunting.) Can you think of any people you know who are examples of people defined by their failure?
8. After Peter's failure, Jesus affirmed him and gave him a new assignment. Has God ever done that in your life?
9. Michael Jordan said, "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed."

Any thoughts on this quote? We don't have to be remembered for our failures!

10. The main lesson of this message is this:

Sometimes you have to try and fail and learn and adjust. And then eventually, through your failures, God does something very, very special.

How does this truth make you feel? What is concerning and what is encouraging?

11. Lesson Five states, "**The one sure way to fail is to never attempt anything for Christ.**" Are you willing to fail our your way to success? If we are not, will we ever truly be successful?

Closing Thought

The only way you can truly fail is if you never trust the Lord and step out of the boat. In what area of your life do you think God is calling you to step out of the boat?