

God's Mercy and My Failures

SERIES: The Miracle of Mercy – Part 3

WHAT CAUSES OUR PERSONAL FAILURES?

3 Things Peter Did Wrong

1. WE OVERESTIMATE OUR STRENGTH

"Jesus said 'Tonight every one of you will desert me. For the Scripture says that when the shepherd is killed, the sheep will be scattered. BUT after I've been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.' Then Peter boasted, 'But Lord, even if everyone else fails you, I will NEVER deny you!' Jesus replied, 'Peter, the truth is that before this night is over, and before the rooster crows at dawn, you will deny knowing me three times.' Peter insisted, 'But Lord, I would NEVER do that! Even if I have to die with you I'll never deny knowing you!' And all the other disciples vowed the same thing." Matthew 26:31-35

"If you think, 'I am strong! I can handle this. I'd never fall for that temptation,' then be careful! For you could easily fall too!" 1 Corinthians 10:12

2. WE FEAR THE DISAPPROVAL OF OTHERS

"Peter followed Jesus at a distance to the courtyard of the high priest's palace. He went in and sat down with the guards to see what was going to happen to Jesus... As he was sitting in the courtyard, a servant girl came up to him and said, 'You were with Jesus of Galilee, weren't you?' But standing there in front of everyone Peter denied it. 'I don't even know what you're talking about!' he said." Matthew 26:58, 69-70

"It is a dangerous trap to be concerned with what others think of you, but if you trust the Lord, you'll be safe." Proverbs 29:25

→ **AN UNGUARDED STRENGTH IS A DOUBLE WEAKNESS!**

3. WE SPEAK WITHOUT THINKING

"Then Peter went out to the entrance of the courtyard and there another woman saw him and said to those standing there, 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.' Again Peter denied it, and this time he swore an oath and said 'I don't even know that man!' But after a while, the men who have been standing there came over to Peter and said 'We KNOW that you are one of them because your Galilean accent gives you away.' Peter lost his temper and started cursing and swearing. He shouted 'I don't know the man!' Immediately he heard a rooster crow." Matthew 26:71-74

"The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do! Just as a tiny spark can burn up a great forest, the tongue is a flame of fire. That part of your body is full of wickedness and can poison everything else in your life. It is set on fire by hell itself and can turn our whole lives into a blazing flame of destruction and disaster." James 3:5-6

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I FAIL?

3 Things Peter Did Right

1. GRIEVE

"When Peter heard the rooster crow, he remembered that Jesus had said, 'Before the rooster crows, you'll deny me three times.' Then Peter went outside and WEPT BITTERLY." Matthew 26:75

"The sacrifice God wants is a broken and contrite spirit, God will not reject a humble and repentant heart." Psalm 51:17

2. LET MY SMALL GROUP SUPPORT ME

(Easter morning) "Mary Magdalene went and found the disciples together, grieving and weeping." Mark 16:10

(Easter night) "That evening the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group, and said 'Peace be with you!' ...The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!" John 20:19-20

"A week later the disciples were together again meeting in a home." John 20:26

3. CAST MYSELF ON GOD'S MERCY

"Because of his great mercy God has given us a new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope..." 1 Peter 1:3

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

WHAT DOES JESUS DO WITH OUR FAILURES?

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned back to me again, strengthen and build up your brothers." Luke 22:31-32

1. HE ISN'T SHOCKED

"God certainly knows what we are made of. He bears in mind that we are dust." Psalm 103:14 (GW)

2. HE PRAYS FOR US

"Jesus is able to save us completely because (in heaven) he lives to intercede on our behalf. He is always talking to the Father, asking him to help us." Hebrews 7:25

3. HE BELIEVES IN US

"...so WHEN you have repented and turned back to me again..." Luke 22:32

"For even though a righteous man falls seven times, he will rise again!" Proverbs 24:16

The Angel said, "I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. But he is not here—he's risen from the dead... Now go tell his disciples, AND tell Peter, that he's going ahead of you to Galilee and he'll see you there, just as he promised!" Mark 16:6-7

4. HE SHOWS US MERCY WHEN WE'RE DOWN

(Two weeks later) "Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. Seven of the disciples were there and Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' 'We'll come, too' they all said. So they went out in the boat, but even though they fished all night, they caught nothing. At dawn the disciples saw a man standing on the shore but they couldn't see it was Jesus. He called out, 'Friends, have you caught any fish?' 'Not a thing!' they replied.' Then Jesus said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get plenty of fish!" So they did what Jesus said to do, and they instantly caught so many fish, they couldn't even draw in the net because it was so full of fish! Then John said to Peter, 'IT'S THE LORD!' When Peter realized that he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and swam ashore, leaving the others in the boat to pull the loaded net to the shore, for they were only out about three hundred feet. When they got to shore they saw that Jesus was cooking fish and bread over a charcoal fire. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you just caught.' So Peter went back aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was filled with a 153 large fish, and yet the net had not torn. 'Now come and have some breakfast!' Jesus said. Now they were sure it really was the Lord! Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead." John 21:1-14

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23

5. HE USES OUR FAILURES TO BUILD HIS CHURCH

"When you have turned back to me, strengthen and build up your brothers." Luke 22:32

"After breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you,' Peter replied. 'Then FEED my lambs,' Jesus said. Then Jesus repeated the question: 'Peter, do you love me?' Peter said, 'Yes, Lord! You KNOW I love you!' 'Then TAKE CARE of my sheep,' Jesus said. Then Jesus asked the same question one more time: 'Peter, do you love me?' Now Peter was grieved that Jesus asked the question a third time, so he said, 'Lord, you know everything! You know I love you!' And Jesus replied "Then feed my sheep!" John 21:15-17

Jesus: "Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it!" Matthew 16:18