



Message Discussion Guide Week of May 7, 2023

Message: Encounters with Jesus, Part 4: From Failure to Forgiven

Key Scriptures: [John 21:15-19](#)

Preacher: Pastor Tom Parkinson

Message Highlights:

Has your failure ever put you on the sidelines of faith? That's what happened to Peter in John 21. After saying he was willing to die with Jesus, Peter denied in 3 times. In shame, Peter retreated to his old life and went back to fishing.

Many of us start our faith journey with passion for Jesus. We commit our lives to him. Then we fail. We backslide. And we think that our failure sidelines us from fulfilling our God-given purpose.

Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me more than these?"

- He is asking what Peter loves more – the new life he had in Christ or the old life to which he has returned?
- Jesus doesn't ask Peter to explain his previous actions. He is more interested in what is in Peter's heart than in what Peter has done.

At its core, Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship. It's not about what you do (rituals, or rules) it is about a relationship – a personal love relationship with Jesus.

Jesus trusted Peter enough to invite him to "feed my sheep." Despite Peter's past failings, Peter's love relationship with Jesus was enough for him to continue to fulfill his purpose. God doesn't hold our past against us; God wants to heal our past and give us a new start.

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Pastor Tom shared how his failure on the church softball team made him want a second chance, even as he was scared to ever get off the bench and play again. Have you ever

had an experience where your failure paralyzed you into believing you could never try again? How did you find the courage to try again (if you did)?

2.) [Read Luke 22:31-34](#)

- a. Why is Peter (aka Simon) so confident that he will follow Jesus no matter what, even if he suffers?
- b. Jesus knows that Peter is going to deny him and yet he prays that his “faith may not fail.” Is Jesus praying that Simon will not deny him, or does he have something else in mind? What does it mean when Jesus refers to Simon turning back and strengthening his brothers?
- c. What does this passage say about second chances?

3.) [Read John 21:15-19](#)

- a. When Jesus says, “Do you love me more than these,” what are the “these” to which he is referring?
- b. Why does Jesus ask Peter three times? And why is Peter hurt by Jesus’ repeated asking?
- c. What do you imagine Peter is feeling in his heart during this conversation with Jesus?

4.) Pastors Tom said that Peter’s past actions did not disqualify him from following Jesus. So long as he had a love relationship with Jesus, that is enough.

- a. Why are we so tempted to make our faith about religion (i.e., rules and rituals) instead of relationship (i.e., intimacy with God)?
- b. Have you ever felt like the sins of your past are a barrier to you following Jesus in the present? How can God’s grace heal your history?

5.) What practical lessons can you take from this message that you can apply to your life today?

Abundant Life Tip: Failure is an inevitable part of every Christian’s journey. Do not put yourself on the bench because of your failures. Do you still love Jesus? Then get up, receive forgiveness, and get back in the game!