

Discovering What God Actually Thinks About You

Part 6: What about my failures?

Peter- Matthew 26:33-35; Luke 22:54-62; Mark 16:6-7; John 21:15-17

IN: How much does it take for God to stop wanting you?

What does it take for God to be done with us... to finally give up on, not only using us for something good, but even seeing us being worth the effort to keep around/forgiving...

The truth is ridiculous, illogical, and amazing... So let's talk about it together.

WE: Experience tells us failure leads to rejection.

People have failed us and we've rejected them... We've failed others and been rejected.

So what about God? How does he see our failures?

Important Note: Might be a few out there tempted to think I'm saying something I'm not. Often people try to minimize the horror of what they are doing/did by calling it "a failing" ... when it should be called what it is evil/abuse.

Example: Systematic Ongoing Abuse whether in the past or currently... Jesus doesn't turn a blind eye to those who use their power/authority to hurt others... can't hide behind just calling it "failure."

He also has some very strong things to say against those who harm innocent children. It's evil and it must be dealt with and justice must be done.

So WARNING... You cannot use the story we are about to talk about as an excuse to ignore or not to deal with the evil you/others have/are committing.

But as we'll see... even in the worst offenses, Jesus' offensive grace is available for all who truly want it, accept it, admit their need for it... yes there will still be and NEEDS to be consequences/justice... sometimes life changing consequences... but his love doesn't change.

The difference is there are those who try to minimize what they do/did and those who admit what they did and are horrified by it... those who don't try to hide anything or cover up anything "for the good of the church/organization/keep the peace/save face", Don't ignore what doing/did simply to hang on to their role/position/power.

What we are talking about here are the failures large and small that keep clinging to us... the things we didn't want to do/tried so hard to avoid, had no intention of falling into...

When you swore you would be faithful in sickness/health and now divorce?

Overly frustrated with the kids? Flunked out? Couldn't live up to expectations (yours/others/what you think God's are)

Chose selfishness over love?

Sure God loves and accepts people... but...

"I feel like he can't even look at me b/c of what I've done... I've failed too many times/too big..."

"How can I even pray expecting him to listen, let alone actually make any kind of difference for/with him?"

"The best I can hope for is for him to tolerate me if I just try to get through life trying to be the best person I can."

Natural/logical to feel that way... b/c that's how we treat people/how we've been treated by other people...

But Jesus is different... **Jesus embraces and renews our failures.**

The proof is in the story of one of Jesus' closest friends and how Jesus dealt with his failure... in we see how Jesus deals with our failures AND how we can deal with those who fail us...

GOD: Simon/Fisherman... One of 1st to follow Jesus... Jesus preaches one of his 1st sermons in Simon's boat. Tells him to cast net after catching nothing... almost floods boat b/c caught so much fish.

Jesus changes his name to Peter (Rock)

Leader of the disciples... always named first. Spoke first... often w/o thinking

Asked the questions when Jesus was saying weird things

He was the 1st to recognize Jesus' deity. (who do you say I am?)

During Jesus' last dinner with his disciples...

He told them that he was about to be arrested and executed... and that they will all desert him.

Peter speaks up- **Matthew 26:33-35** Big promises/boasts... I believe he truly meant it.

Problem is he based his confidence on himself/his good intentions/his love/his ability/his faithfulness

When Jesus is arrested later that night... Peter takes into his own hands and tries to fight back... cuts a guy's (Malchus) ear off

The soldiers take Jesus for a late night trial

Peter and John follow behind into the courtyard of the place the trial is taking place.

COURAGE... But then..

Peter finds out **When our confidence is based on our intentions and abilities, failure is not far behind.**

Luke 22:55-62 Complete/utter failure... Imagine... Jesus looked right at. The pain... the humiliation.

Jesus wasn't surprised. **Our failures don't surprise Jesus.**

A few hours later... Jesus is crucified. It's over. All hope lost. No chance to make things right.

Peter probably goes through it over and over in his head wishing he could do it differently.

Why I think true story... nobody makes themselves look like this in a story they are making up

A few days after Jesus' execution... Women went to his tomb to make sure his body was prepared properly

Stone rolled away, soldiers gone, and Jesus body missing.

See man sitting there wearing a white robe... "They were alarmed."

Mark 16:6-7 "And Peter."

Makes a point to tell Peter he hasn't been forgotten... even more so... that he is still IN.

Had Peter done anything to deserve this? No he's been hiding with everyone else.

But **Jesus doesn't view us through OUR performance, he views us through HIS never-ending love.**

Jesus later appears to the rest of the disciples and shows them the nail scars. Has some food with them
Proves he's resurrected... just like he said he would...

Sure Peter's happy... IMAGINE (Joy, relief) BUT... his days of working for/with Jesus are over... He's still A COMPLETE failure

Might be "forgiven" but, no one would give him any responsibility in this new Kingdom after what he did.

So he and 6 other disciples (including John) go back to their boats and their fishing career.
They catch nothing... even a failure at what they used to be good at.

Jesus shows up (they don't recognize him)... In a call back to how they first met... Tells them where to cast their nets... catch 153 fish

Almost swamps the boat. They realize it's Jesus and he invites them to have some fish breakfast.

Now if Jesus, what would you do?

Employee/colleague not only promised to carry out a job, but arrogantly said they would do it better than everyone else... but failed at it so miserably it put the entire company at risk?

They'd be fired!... Not with Jesus.

Jesus' love gives us the space and ability to grow from our failures.

John 21:15-17 Jesus- More than these? "Remember that boast you made Peter? What do you think now?"

Peter- "You know I love you" Leaves out the more than these.

Jesus asks him 3 times around the fire... Mirroring the three denials around the fire.

"Do you love me?" Jesus knew the answer... The question was for Peter... didn't get it at first.

"Peter I still want you... do you accept that you can still love me/ you can still do great things even after you've failed?"

I knew you would fail... but I've never based any of this on what you can do... but what I will do in you."

"You're still my guy... take care of my sheep... lead my church..."

" I will give you my love I will give you the ability to love me the way you actually want to."

Jesus- "Peter when you let go... I was still holding on... It's not about what you did it's about what I did..."

"You failed... but I conquered for you."

"It's not about what you did or didn't do... can or can't do. Its about what I'm am going to do in and through you."

B/c you will have my love in you and I will love through you..."

"You will be the one to lead this new movement... Don't believe me?"

"You're going to become one of the bravest/courageous leaders of the church... you're courage for me will inspire and TRANSFORM millions..."

V. 18-19 64 AD. Nero. Crucified upside down.

Reassuring [weird right?] Peter that his past failure will be nothing compared to what he will become through Jesus' transforming love.

Our failures are not stronger than Jesus' love and plan for us

Then Jesus gave Peter the exact same call he gave him at the very beginning... FOLLOW ME... Be following me.

Don't worry about the past. Don't dwell on you and what you did...

Don't worry about what you may or may not be in the future... It's not about you at all... Just keep Following ME.

Stop looking back and look at me... **When we are focused on following Jesus, it's difficult to focus on our past**

YOU: Peter's story is so powerful b/c we can all see ourselves in it... We have all failed and will fail again.

Have ruined relationships, opportunities, potential, maybe even families...

So many people think that if there is a God, he expects you to follow the rules, be perfect in order to be accepted... can only do good things through good people...

Nothing could be further from the truth.

He knew we couldn't ever measure up to perfection... that we would fail, that selfishness would constantly try to overtake us...

That's why he came and made a way for us to be forgiven, renewed, and have our relationship restored...

Conquered the power of Sin on the cross and rose to give us new life through him.

Offers forgiveness and true acceptance... we just have to choose to trust him.

When we choose to trust him and accept that he can use us for good... we can stop looking at our failures and start looking around us to find others to love with Jesus love...

When we accept our weakness... it makes us stronger... b/c that's when we realize it's Jesus who gives us strength... Paul- When I am weak, then I am strong.

And when others fail us... instead of canceling them... we can have the strength to offer them the grace/forgiveness Jesus constantly/consistently insists on giving us.

When we stop looking at our failures we can see the good God wants us to give to others.

Paul sums it up perfectly in **Eph 2:8-10**

Read: Eph 2:8-10

Pray: Thank you for loving/accepting/restoring me. Help me to stop looking back at my failures and look ahead by following you and loving those you send into my path, especially those who fail me.

What about those guilty feelings?

1 John. Especially 2:1-2 and 3:20

WE: What if we weren't paralyzed by dwelling on our failures?

What if we let Jesus use them to grow us and help others grow?

What would that be like?

No fear of rejection b/c you know you're already perfected accepted?

No more shame from failures b/c you know it's not about perfection... its about his love

When you accept Jesus' love you never have to question your acceptance again.

You are not your failures. You are invited to be a child of God... fully loved, fully accepted

You are invited to become exactly who Jesus knows you can be...

Accept him. Follow him... b/c he accepts you and loves you... and choose to offer that acceptance to those he brings to you.

Failure doesn't have to be the end. It can be the beginning of something you never expected...

B/c... **Jesus' love eclipses our failures**

Summary:

What does it take for God to be done with us? When does God finally give up on, not only using us for something good, but even seeing us being worth the effort to keep around and keep forgiving? The truth is ridiculous, illogical, and amazing.

Episode Breakdown

00:00 Does God give up on us?

00:50 Quick disclaimer

02:38 Failures that cling to us

04:00 How Jesus treats our failures

05:30 The story of Peter

08:30 Our failures don't surprise Jesus

13:00 How we grow

15:06 Not about what we can or can't do

17:38 Where our focus should be

19:13 When others fail us

20:09 This week's challenge

22:28 Questions and stuff

Main Points:

Experience tells us failure leads to rejection.

Jesus embraces and renews our failures.

When our confidence is based on our intentions and abilities, failure is not far behind.

Our failures don't surprise Jesus.

Jesus doesn't view us through OUR performance, he views us through HIS never-ending love.

Jesus' love gives us the space and ability to grow from our failures.

Our failures are not stronger than Jesus' love and plan for us.

When we are focused on following Jesus, it's difficult to focus on our past.

When we can stop looking at our failures we can see the good God wants us to give to others.
Jesus' love eclipses our failures.

Weekly Challenge:

Read: Ephesians 2:8-10

Pray: Jesus, thank you for loving me, accepting me, restoring me. Help me to stop looking back at my failures and look ahead by following you and loving those you send into my path, especially those who fail me.

Questions:

1. How have you seen God's love this week?
2. Jon said, "Our failures are not stronger than Jesus' love and plan for us." When have you experienced this personally, or watched it happen for others?
3. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What stands out to you personally? What stands out to you in terms of God's view of our failures?
4. What good (small or big) do you feel God might be showing you that he wants you to give to others? What are some next steps you can take?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

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SHOW NOTES


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