

Falling Short

hope amidst our failures

a newstory church series

Pt3: Case Study

Pastor Tom Kang

Ice Breaker: Pastor Tom shared vulnerably about an incident from almost 30 years ago when he was protecting his younger sister - a moment where righteous anger led to falling short. Without necessarily sharing the details, can you identify a time when you were convinced you were doing the right thing and it backfired? What did you learn from it?

1. Read Matthew 14:26-29 together. Peter is the only disciple who gets out of the boat. What do you think distinguishes bold faith from reckless presumption? How can we tell the difference in our own lives?
2. The sermon drew a powerful contrast between God's declaration of "I AM" (Exodus 3:14) and our tendency to declare ourselves the "I am" of our situations. In John 18:4-6, the soldiers fall to the ground when Jesus says, "I am he." What does this moment reveal about who is actually in control during the arrest and what might that mean for situations in your life that feel out of control?
3. Read Isaiah 47:8-11 together. God warns that when we set ourselves up as our own ultimate authority, disaster follows. Where do you see this pattern playing out in our culture today? Where do you see it in your own heart?
4. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." How does this idea connect to Jesus telling Peter to put away his sword? What are we being asked to "let die" when we stop playing "I am"?
5. In Matthew 26:33-35, Peter makes an emphatic promise that he'll never fall away and then doubles down. Why do you think our moments of greatest confidence are often the setup for our greatest failures? Has that ever been true in your experience?
6. Read Psalm 51:16-17. David wrote this psalm after his own catastrophic failure with Bathsheba. He says God doesn't desire sacrifice but rather "a broken and contrite heart." Why do you think brokenness is more valuable to God than our attempts to fix things ourselves? What's the difference between healthy brokenness and destructive shame?
7. C.S. Lewis once observed, "We are not necessarily doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be." How does this connect to Jesus' words in John 18:11 - "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" What "cups" are hardest for you to accept from the Father rather than fighting your way out of?
8. The sermon ended by reminding us that Jesus called Peter "the rock" (Matthew 16:18) long before Peter's denial - meaning Jesus built his prediction of Peter's future knowing Peter's failure was coming. Read Romans 8:28-30 together. What does it mean for your own story that God's calling isn't contingent on your performance? As you head into this week, where specifically do you need to "put your sword away" and trust the true I AM?