

MOVING BEYOND FAILURE

“Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” —JOHN 13:8

The road to failure is usually paved with good intentions. It’s at the end of this road, when we’re out of our own resources that we meet with God’s abundant grace.

Peter, though well-intentioned, had failed Jesus several times. At the last Passover Supper, Jesus wanted to wash his feet, but he protested, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” Peter quickly reverses his response. “Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well.” Shortly after, Jesus tells His disciples they would all fall away on account of Him. In his usual outspoken manner, Peter replies, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Matthew 26:33). Jesus then tells him before the rooster crows that night he will have disowned Him three times.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, despite Jesus’ repeated requests to pray with Him, Peter was too tired and slept. When the soldiers came, he wasn’t prepared. In an effort to protect Jesus, he hastily drew his sword, and cut off the ear of Malchus, one of the soldiers. Because he had failed to pray, he had failed to exercise self-control. Jesus rebuked him, and offended, Peter fails to say he’s sorry. He then fails to remain loyal, and as Jesus said, denied Him three times that night.

If we’re not living in a prayerful place, we’re not prepared for coping with unexpected turmoil and tragedies. Most of us can click in at some point in Peter’s failures. We come out of an over-inflated sense of our own ability to live for Christ, and then discover we can’t. But Jesus

doesn't leave Peter in that desolate place. He teaches and re-teaches a principle that we must never move away from. Jesus can only do through us what we allow Him to do to us. "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

Recovery for Peter did not mean perfection. It means acknowledging where he is in his life, and being realistic in his assessment of who he is. His reinstatement does not come because of his strength, but because of his brokenness. We step into the will of God by acknowledging our love for Christ. We are loved to love. We are strengthened to strengthen, and having moved beyond failure, we do it in the power of Jesus. As Major Ian Thomas said, "I can't and You never said I could; You can and You always said You would." Failure leads us to that beautiful discovery that when we are faithless, Christ is faithful.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, no matter how many times I fail, grant me that strength of Spirit that will always abide in You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Have my failures inhibited me from seeking to know Jesus more?