

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday October 20, 2019. "Life's Biggest Questions: What if I Fall?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Recap.

We kicked off the series; **"Life's Biggest Questions"**, with the belief that as we go through life there will be things that challenge what we think we know. These moments in life are not only are tough to get through, but cause us to wrestle with deep questions like; **"Who is God?"** and **"Can I know him?"** We want to **replace the lure towards certainty, with a posture of trust.** If we can learn to trust in the nature and character of God, then we can be okay with not having all the answers.

Knowing God is relational not informational.

Then we talked about the problem of suffering. And we accepted the truth that pain is inevitable, but how we handle it is up to us. We will face moments of suffering and struggle, but if we actually move into it, feel it, we can find God in the midst of it.

This is an important series, because the church is becoming irrelevant to so many people, because it doesn't give a safe space to ask tough challenging questions. And if we can create a safe space for others to ask these questions, then we can become a place others will turn to in order to find God.

III Sunday.

Sunday we hit one of the biggest questions that those who are disenchanted with the church ask. And that is: **"What will you do when I fall...mess up...blow it?"** Historically the church has not handled the issue of sin and brokenness in a hope-filled, life-giving manner. Sin was used to beat people up, judge and condemn them, and there was little grace shown to those in the midst of struggle. So people who need God the most, were driven away by the harshness and lack of love of the church. More often than not, people don't want to fall, mess up, or sin, but the church doesn't feel like a safe, loving place to work these things out. So people stay away, and we judge them from a distance.

So...how have you seen this in your church experience?

Do you know anyone who won't go to church? What are their reasons?

What role do you believe the church has played in people avoiding being part of a church?

The scripture used was an Old Testament passage in which God tells the nation of Israel how he views their sin, fallenness, and what the process of restoration looks like. It's a powerful and encouraging example of how we can get back up after 'falling'.

So, read **Micah 7:7-9**, and we'll pull some juicy goodness out of it.

What jumped out at you from this passage?

What did it say about our sin and how God reacts?

There were several key points the writer of this passage brought out that are important in understanding how we recover from a 'fall', sin, and how God works that process for our good.

1. We can trust at the front end of being restored that God is working for us.

This is where the entire process of accepting responsibility for falling, working the process, and eventually being restored begins. With the full understanding God's number one goal is for us to be restored. The passage says we can "wait confidently" on our God to save us.

What does "wait confidently" mean to you?

Does it change how we face up to making poor choices?

2. There are natural consequences of choices that break fellowship, that we have to go through in order to be restored.

This is the hard part. We all know there are natural consequences and discipline, that are a result when we chose poorly. Whether we made that choice in full knowledge of what could happen, or didn't know all of the possibilities, we still did harm. We broke fellowship with others and possibly hurt them. And there is a facing up to what we did, and the damage it caused to God and others, that we simply cannot avoid. We have to feel, and face, what we did to others.

There is no "if" here. What was it like for you to suffer the consequences of a poor choice?

What makes this facing up to it so difficult?

What are benefits, good things that can come from facing the consequences of our actions?

3. But the ultimate goal of God is ALWAYS restoration.

Lastly, as was said from verse 7 of this passage, the ultimate goal is full restoration. Now some things about your life most likely have had to change, but you are no longer permanently carrying the guilty mark of that sin. Yes, you still have to deal with the consequences, but the relationship is healed, (there may be some new rules in place), and as far as God is concerned, it's behind you.

The goal is always to save the relationship. And for us to do the work it takes to learn from our bad decisions, choices, or even a lifestyle pattern, how it hurt others and our relationship with God, and to place things in our life to protect us from making that mistake again in the future. So we can channel all our energy on creating messing up in new and innovative ways. Just kidding...but painfully true.

How does this change how we deal with God when we mess up?

IV Challenge.

The world wants to know the church is willing to help, not just judge people who've made poor choices.

What can we do to help be a church that does the work of God...working towards restoration?