

MY FAILURE IS NOT FINAL

Text: Matthew 26:69-75 / 1 John 1:9

Matthew 26:69-75 - ⁶⁹Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” ⁷⁰But he denied it before *them* all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.” ⁷¹And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷²But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!” ⁷³And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you.” ⁷⁴Then he began to ^[a]curse and ^[b]swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.

1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us..."

I have come into this house tonight because over the last several days I have been hearing a strange sound in my ears – the sound of a simple barnyard rooster crowing. For those who are parked in spot called “failure” this message is dedicated. - Pray

Introduction: I have always loved to read biographies. There is something sacred about holding the whole of a person's life in your hands, watching them rise from obscurity into greatness,

tracing the long road that carried them from an ordinary birth to an extraordinary destiny. Yet the longer I read, the more I have noticed one curious thing about the biographies of the great men and women of history. They rarely tell you the whole truth – The whole story. They record the victories in bold letters, but they whisper the defeats. They frame the triumphs and hide the wreckage. Turn the pages and you will find the mountaintops carefully preserved, while the valleys have been quietly edited out.

Consider Abraham Lincoln, the man history has crowned as the savior of a divided nation. We know the towering figure, the steady hand, the words at Gettysburg that still echo through the corridors of time. What most biographies will never tell you is that in the winter of 1841 this same man collapsed so completely that his friends removed every knife and razor from his room, convinced he might take his own life. He wrote that he was the most miserable man living, and that if his feelings were spread across the entire human family, there would not be one cheerful face left on the earth. The man who would one day hold a fracturing country together could not, in that hour, hold himself together.

History remembers the emancipator. History forgets the broken man on the floor, suicidal and haunted by a foreboding spirit.

That is the lie hidden inside almost every polished biography ever written. **We are handed the finished statue and never shown the shattered stone it was carved from. We celebrate**

the crown and conceal the collapse. Yet I have come to believe that the failure is not the interruption of the story. The failure is the making of it.

Now consider with me the greatest biographical book ever peened by mortal men under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit: **The Bible Never Whitewashes Its Heroes**

- **There is a startling honesty in the Word of God that no other sacred literature dares to imitate.**
- When we open the pages and read the biographies of the men God chose to use, we are not comforted. We are confronted.
- We blush. We wince. We find ourselves staring at the page, asking the same trembling question the ages have asked before us. "God, how could You ever have used men like this?"

Every other religion polishes its heroes until they gleam. Scripture does the opposite.

- It refuses to airbrush a single scar.
- The liar is called a liar.
- The adulterer is named.
- The coward, the murderer, the drunkard, the deceiver, each one **is left exposed on the page for every generation to see.**
- Heaven keeps no gallery of flattering portraits.

- God writes His history in the unforgiving light of truth.

It is all there. In black and white. Their failures are not hidden in the footnotes. They are written into the very center of the story.

- They failed. They failed loudly, publicly, spectacularly.
- **Then something happened that only grace can explain. They rose. From the ashes of their own ruin they rose, and they became mighty men of the Spirit.**
- The same men who fell became the men through whom the fire of God fell upon a generation.

That is the scandal of Scripture, but it is also the hope of every one of us.

God has never been in the business of using perfect men and women. He has always been in the business of resurrecting fallen ones.

Every person in this room has heard the sound of their own rooster.

A decision. A mistake. A season. A failure that still echoes in your memory.

The question is not, "Have you failed?" The question is, "What will you do after your failure?"

Before you throw in the towel and give up on hope allow me to remind you of a few things:

Peter heard more than the crowing of an ordinary rooster. To everyone else, it was just another barnyard sound. To Peter, it became the trumpet DOOM awakening his soul. It reminded him of his greatest failure. Yet that failure did not become the final chapter of his life.

GREAT MEN OF GOD WERE MEN OF GREAT FAILURE

Moses - The Man Who Talked Face to Face With God...Look at this man.

- The man who waves the rod of God and plagues an entire nation.
- The man who divides the Red Sea.
- The man whose face shines with the glory of God.
- The man who brought water from the rock.
- The man before whom an entire nation sought wisdom and judgment.

Here is the man who spoke face to face with Almighty God. You would hardly call him a failure...**Until you walk behind the scenes into the secret closest of his life and find a multitude of skeleton bones. Behind the miracles. Behind the glory. Deep into his personal life.**

There...

- You find failure after failure.

- How would you like to begin your ministry with murder?
- How would you like God's call on your life to be followed by forty years hiding alone in a desert – dealing with your guilt and shame. Wandering aimlessly without hope?

When God called him... He argued.

- "I am slow of speech."
- "Send somebody else."

The holy writ records that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses.

- He murmured before Israel ever murmured.
- He lost his temper.
- He struck the rock.

And because of that one act...He never entered the Promised Land.

Yet God still said...

Numbers 12: 7 - "Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house."

Failure...Was part of his story. It was not the end of his story.

Jacob - The Man Who Wrestled With God

This is Jacob! The man whose name is forever attached to the covenant. - The God of Abraham...Isaac...and Jacob.

- The man who saw angels ascending and descending.
- The man who recognized the presence of God and declared, "Surely God is in this place."
- The man who heard God call his name in a dream.
- The man who birthed the 12 sons that would become the great nation of Israel.

Hardly a failure...By our standards.

But behind that great testimony...Was another story.

- See him kneeling before his blind father...Living a lie.
- Watch him steal the birthright.
- Watch him deceive.
- Watch him manipulate.
- Watch him build a home filled with division.
- A husband who failed in his own house.

A life marked by deception...Craftiness...Polygamy...Family dysfunction.

Yet...God never erased his name from the covenant.

David - The Giant Killer

Here stands David...

- The shepherd.
- The worshipper.
- The giant killer.

- The king.
- The sweet psalmist of Israel.
- The man after God's own heart.
- The one whose throne would ultimately produce the Messiah.

Would you ever call David a failure? The Bible does not hide his sin.

- Watch him send Uriah to battle to be slaughtered while he remains on the rooftop to privately and pornographically observe his naked wife and then take her sexually that night.
- Listen to Nathan confront him. "Thou hast killed Uriah." "You have taken his wife." "You despised the Lord."
- **Now picture David - Standing beside the casket of an illegitimate child. Holding the hand of a stolen wife.**
- **Hear** the enemies of God laugh and blaspheme.

David failed by every human measurement. Yet generations later...Jesus would still be called... "The Son of David."

Transition...So now the question that I hear so loudly in my spirit tonight...

How? How Could God use...

- A murderer.
- A deceiver.
- An adulterer.

Because every one of them learned one lesson. **My Failure Is Not Final**

1. They FACED Their Failure

"Failure acknowledged is the first step toward restoration."

- They didn't pretend.
- They didn't excuse it.
- They didn't hide it.
- They faced it.

You cannot find freedom from what you refuse to face.

2. They FORSOOK Their Failure

"Repentance is more than feeling sorry. It is turning around."

This is where Adam, Peter, and Jonah fit perfectly.

- Adam ran because he was afraid.
- Peter ran because he was ashamed.
- Jonah ran because he felt disqualified.

The enemy always whispers: "Run!" - God always says: "Return!"

None of these men were restored because they were perfect. They were restored because they eventually turned back toward God.

Key statement: Failure is not what destroys a man. Refusing to return is.

3. They FOUGHT Through Their Failure

The devil studies your weakest link - The devil discovers your weakest link. He pounds on it relentlessly:

- "You'll never recover."
- "You're too unclean."
- "God can't use you."

His goal isn't simply to make you fail. His goal is to make you quit.

This is where you preach:

- Cover your weak places in prayer.
- Strengthen them with fasting.
- Don't surrender because you stumbled.

Key statement: The devil attacks where you're weakest because he fears what God can do through your recovery.

4.They FINISHED Beyond Their Failure

- Moses...still became the great deliverer.
- Jacob...still became Israel.
- David...still became the man after God's own heart.

- Peter...still preached Pentecost.

Don't stay in your corner. Get up. Go back to worship. Go back to serving. Go back to praying. Go back to loving Jesus.

So, get up. Get up with the fire of God in your bones and make the powers of darkness regret the day they ever tangled with you.

- Make hell wish it had never heard your name.
- Make satan and every one of his emissaries curse the hour they underestimated a broken person in the hands of a mighty God.
- Let them look at your recovery and tremble.
- Let them see the anointing rising off the very place where they thought they had buried you.

I came with a word for Somone tonight: The demons that celebrated your collapse will now witness your comeback, and they will know they made a catastrophic mistake the moment they picked a fight with a child of the Most High.

Closing Statement:

Your failure may explain your past, but it does not have permission to write your future.

- **FACE** it
- **FORSAKE** it
- **FIGHT** through it

- **FINISH** beyond it