

*You are such a disappointment. This isn't working out between us. You're fired. How many of you have heard words such as these, you thought things were just fine, and then you failed.*

For anyone, failure is devastating. For the Christian, it can feel like God is punishing us:

- Phil 4:13 – context is contentedness in poverty and wealth
- Romans 8:28 – context is perseverance in suffering and hope of new creation – assumes suffering and futility from sin
- Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you... not to harm you, plans to give you hope and future.” – Context is the nation of Israel’s return from exile and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, not our personal guarantee of a successful life

### ***When we as Christian’s experience failure, how do we respond?***

Not talking about Spiritual Failure – moral failing, abandoning God (apostasy)

### **Story of John Mark thus far**

- Paul & Barnabas bring relief offering from Antioch to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30)
- Peter imprisoned by Herod, escapes, tells the church by visiting Mary’s house – mother of John Mark (Acts 12)
- Paul & Barnabas return to Antioch and bring with them John Mark (Acts 12:25) – cousins – Barnabas knew something about his cousin, helpful?
- Paul & Barnabas are sent off on Paul’s first missionary journey & John Mark assists them (Acts 13:5)
- John Mark quits the journey after their first stop in Cyprus (Acts 13:13)
- While in Jerusalem after the Council, Barnabas wants to take John Mark with them again (Acts 15:37) – thus the disagreement

### **From Paul’s Perspective**

- The mission is divinely commanded Acts 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”
- Mark proved himself to be unreliable shortly into their first journey
- Mark would be a liability and distraction from the mission

### **From Barnabas’ Perspective**

- John Mark is Barnabas’ Cousin
- Barnabas has a history of mentoring the “benched/sidelined” disciples – notably Paul himself
- His namesake – son of encouragement – his mission is the people in front of him that need help/investment

## **From John Mark's Perspective - *Speculation – What if?...***

- ... his sense of self-worth is in his actions? Justifying himself? Then he would determine himself a failure for not seeing the missionary journey to completion.
- ... his sense of self-worth is in the approval of someone else? Then he would determine himself a failure Paul's refusal to bring him a long – being labeled a failure from a “father figure” – Mark's father not mentioned (the house known by his mother's name)

*God often allows us to experience failure to show us the true desire of our hearts (approval from something other than Jesus).*

When we put our sense of worth in Christ's actions and the Father's approval through Jesus...

- ...our world doesn't fall apart when we fail – we develop resiliency.
- ... we can see failure as an opportunity to see where we need to develop and grow – be mentored by a Barnabas.
- ... we can hear the criticism from superiors to determine if there is truth in their words – receiving hard words from a Paul.

**The rest of the John Mark's Story - Date of Jerusalem Council = 48-49 – What happened next?**

### **Peter & John Mark**

- After Mark's desertion he returns to Jerusalem to the house of his mother Mary, where Peter had sought refuge after his arrest by Herod.
- After the Jerusalem Council (15) Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus.
- About a year later, Mark meets Peter in Rome (\*50 AD)
- From Rome, Peter writes 1 Peter (\*62AD) = 1 Peter 5:13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. – Also writes Gospel of Mark 14:51

### **Paul's later affirmation of John Mark**

- \*62 AD - Col 4:10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him),
- \*62 AD - Philem 23-24 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.
- 64-67 AD - 2 Tim 4:11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

If Christ is reigning on high, and Christ kingdom shall not fail – then there are no failures in the kingdom if we hold fast to our king who has overcome death itself.