

Bitter Disappointment

by Chuck Smith

God's grace is sufficient for our failures, and He seeks to restore us and recommission us, helping us to get back to work and serve Him.

Duration: 26:46

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:34, Mark 13, Mark 14:27, Mark 14:30, Mark 14:66-72

Topics: "Disappointment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by discussing the disappointment and self-disgust that can come from personal failures. He shares a testimony of a young man who grew up in a Christian home but ended up succumbing to peer pressure and trying drugs. The sermon then transitions to a study of Mark 14, focusing on the scene where Peter denies knowing Jesus. The speaker emphasizes Peter's denial and the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy about it. The sermon concludes with Peter's realization of his betrayal and his subsequent weeping.

Transcript

Present time, we're sort of stuck in Mark 13 and 14. And we'll stay there stuck for another week or so, as tonight we will be going to the Harvest Crusade there in Anaheim. So just really study over Mark 13 and 14.

But this morning, let's look at Mark 14, beginning with verse 66. As Peter was beneath in the palace, there came one of the maids of the high priest. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, and you also were with Jesus of Nazareth.

But he denied, saying, I don't know what you're talking about. And he went out into the porch and the rooster crowed. The maid saw him again and began to say to those that were standing by, this is one of them.

And he denied again. A short while later, those that were standing by said, surely you are one of them. You're a Galilean, your accent gives you away.

And Peter began to curse and swear, saying, I know not this man you are talking about. Then the rooster began to crow the second time. And Peter remembered that Jesus said to him, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

And when he thought on this, he wept. Have you ever been disappointed with yourself because of a failure, so disappointed you wanted to cry? Several years ago, when we were in the little chapel, one of the young men who became a part of our fellowship gave a testimony one night. He came from a very strong Christian home, a wonderful godly mother.

And he said that growing up in this Christian environment, looking at these kids wasting their lives in drugs, he said, I said I would never be so foolish as to take drugs. He said, but one night with a group of friends, someone had some marijuana and they were passing it around the room and he took a drag of it. Afterwards, he said he was miserable.

He wept before the Lord, so disappointed that he didn't have the strength to just pass it by, but gave in to the peer pressure. But he said, I said to myself, I would never do that again. But he said on another occasion at a party, there were drugs and again, he took.

But he said, I said, I will never be addicted. I would not be so foolish as to become addicted to drugs. But he said over a period of time, I found I was addicted.

And he said, I said, well, I would never deal drugs. That's horrible to lead others into drugs and I would never deal. And he said, before long, I was dealing in order to support my habit.

He said, I finally came to myself. I looked at my life and I said, what am I doing? I know better than this. And he said, I wept before the Lord and I came here to Calvary and I recommitted my life to the Lord and he delivered me from the drugs.

Each phase he would go through, he said, I would never go beyond this. But he did until that day that God sort of stopped him and helped him to take sort of a personal inventory, to look at his life, to look at what he was doing and to realize this is so far from what God would have me to be doing. Peter discovered that he was not as strong as he thought he was.

The night that Jesus had dinner with the disciples, Jesus said to them, all of you are going to be offended tonight because of me. And Peter boasted, Lord, though all of them will be offended, I would never be offended. And Jesus said, Peter, before the rooster crows two times, you will have denied me three times.

Peter said, Lord, they could kill me, but I would never deny you. And as Peter is there in the crowd, swearing and cursing, saying, I don't know this man that you're talking about. And the rooster began to crow, came into his mind the words of Jesus, before the rooster crows twice, you will have denied me three times.

And we read that Peter went out and he wept. One of the gospels tells us he wept bitterly. So many times our disappointment comes because we have made the mistake of thinking that we are actually stronger than we really are.

It seems like it's very easy to be deceived about ourselves. In fact, the apostle Paul warns about this in his letter to the Romans. He said, for I say through the grace that's given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think soberly.

David declared that God knew him better than he knew himself. Talking about God's knowledge of him, he said, such knowledge is too great for me. I cannot attain to it.

But coming to that realization, I don't really know myself as well as God knows me. David prayed, search me, oh God. Know my heart.

Try me. Know my thoughts and see if there is a way of wickedness in me. Disappointment comes when we've had confidence in our flesh.

When we think I can do it. I would never give in. Again, Paul wrote, for we worship God in spirit.

We rejoice in Christ Jesus and we have no confidence in the flesh. It is that confidence in the flesh that so often is an entry on into failure, yielding to temptation. We've got to be careful about boasting of our flesh.

What I will do or what I won't do. Paul again writing to the Romans said, for I know that is in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. The will is present, but how to perform it I just can't seem to find.

I have found that my flesh is always disappointing me. John tells us of Jesus that he did not commit himself to men because he knew men. He knew what was in man.

Do you think that Jesus was disappointed with Peter's failure? Of course he wasn't. He knew that Peter was going to fail. Even though Peter argued with him, he knew that Peter was going to fail.

He predicted Peter's failure. Thus he couldn't be disappointed in it because he knew all the while that Peter would indeed fail. The psalmist said he knows our frame, that we're but dust.

We sometimes think we're super saint, men of steel, but God knows we're just dust. It's good to know that when we fail, it doesn't disqualify us from the game. Jesus told Peter that same night when he predicted his failure.

He said, Peter, Satan has requested for you. He wants to sift you like wheat, but when you're converted, strengthen your brothers. Peter, you're going to fall.

And this was the sifting. Peter was going through the sifting and he failed. But Jesus said, when you come back again, when you're converted, then strengthen your brethren.

Sort of speaking of a continued ministry that Peter was to have. Jesus did not eliminate Peter from leadership just because he failed. But Jesus sought to tenderly restore him back to the place of service.

We remember that when Jesus met the disciples up at the sea of Galilee after his resurrection, he called Peter aside and he said, Peter, do you love me more than these? And Peter said, yes, Lord, you know I love you. The second time Jesus asked Peter, do you love me? And he said, yes, Lord, I know you know I love you. He asked him the third time.

You see, Peter had denied his knowing the Lord three times. Now Jesus gives him three opportunities to affirm his love for the Lord. But on each occasion when Peter affirmed his love, Jesus recommissioned him.

If you love me, feed my sheep. If you love me, Peter, tend my little lambs. If you love me, feed my lambs.

So the Lord recommissioned Peter. He didn't say, you lousy critter, you denied me, I told you and and you know through with you forever. But he tenderly restores Peter to the place of service and ministry.

In Acts chapter four, Peter is brought back to the place of failure. Brought back to the council of the high priest. The place where outside the council he denied his Lord three times.

Peter is now not outside the council. Peter is in the council. He is the one who is being tried before this council.

Interesting how that the Lord will often bring us back to our place of failure to give us the opportunity to succeed. And so here's Peter. He's standing before the council.

The prosecuting attorney said concerning the lame man that would have been healed, by what name or by what power is this man able to walk? And Peter responding to him said, be it known unto you all and to all of the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at not by you builders, which has become the head of the corner and neither is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye must be saved. Peter passed the test, no longer denying that he knew the Lord, but now boldly proclaiming that Jesus was the promised Messiah and they rejected him.

But there's not any salvation to be found anywhere except through him. Restored back serving the Lord again. Now I don't want you to worry and think, well now the pastor is going to tell us some horrible sin he's just committed.

Not so. Doing pretty good lately so. But I've been dealing with some pastors that have gone through some difficult times and oftentimes the feeling is I've disqualified myself.

I'm going to be set aside. I received a letter this week from some people in a church where the pastor did have a failure and they were sort of upset because we didn't demand that he leave the church. And they sort of wondered, you know, what is your attitude when a man fails and his was in a financial matter.

And so I responded to the letter and I said, we believe in seeking to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness as we consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted. And pastors are not perfect. And so oftentimes when we look at a pastor we think that they would never stumble, they would never fall, but that's not true.

Pastors do stumble and they do fall. And that's why it's important that we keep our eyes on Jesus rather than on a pastor. But Charles Gabriel, in the song that we opened with this morning, expressed it so well.

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me, a sinner condemned, unclean. How marvelous, how wonderful. And my song shall ever be how marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

Take a look at your life today. Maybe you are doing things that at one time you said you would never do that. But maybe you've been caught up.

And you find that today you're involved in a situation that you said, I would never do that. And yet you're doing it. You failed the test and you feel that there is really no point of trying to continue on with your walk with the Lord because you discovered a weakness.

You were disappointed in yourself. Maybe you've wept over this situation as you've struggled to gain victory. You feel that the Lord is disappointed with you, ready to dump you because you are so disappointed with yourself.

As we read in the psalm, David wrote, out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who would stand? But there is forgiveness with you that you might be revered. I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the night watchman waits for the coming of the dawn.

Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy. With him is abundant redemption. There's a bitter disappointment when your world comes crashing down.

And you find that love is missing and the circle isn't round. Every memory comes back broken, every heartache magnified. All your dreams are dashed to pieces.

You can't keep it all inside. But Jesus won't let you go another day. He knows every place you hide and what you say.

He can see through all your darkness in the corners of your soul, and he promises he will never let you go. You can spend your life running, turn your back upon the past. You can hide in dark deception, walk away and not look back.

You can say that nothing's real, but it will catch you down the road. There's a story called the truth, and it's dying to be told. He won't give you more than you can take.

He makes perfect every one of our mistakes. This didn't take him by surprise. In fact, this is the reason why he died.

Jesus won't let you go another day. He knows every place you hide and what you say. He can see through the darkness in the corners of your soul, and he promises he'll never let you go.

Oh, how wonderful, how marvelous, and my song shall ever be. The grace with which Jesus deals with our failures. Though we are disappointed and have bitter disappointments in our discovery of our weaknesses, he understands.

He knew it all the while. He's not disappointed, but he seeks to restore you and get you back on your feet again. I've always said the greatest sin isn't falling.

The greatest sin is just lying there in the mud instead of getting up, brushing yourself off, and getting back to work, back serving the Lord. Don't wallow in the mire, but get up and walk with Jesus. He's got a work for you yet to do.

Don't shirk it. Father, we thank you for your grace with which you deal with our weaknesses, for your love and your concern, and Lord, we thank you that you do come as you did with Peter, and you deal with those areas of our failure, and you recommission us and put us back on the road. Lord, there are those here today very conscious of their failure, and they feel, Lord, that you can't use them any longer.

But even, Lord, as you dealt with Peter and put him back to work, so deal with them, Lord, and recommission them. Let them know again, Lord, the joy of your salvation. Let them know again the thrill of serving you.

Let them know, Lord, that you've forgiven. Help them this day. In Jesus' name, amen.

Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to pray with you who would like this day to be strengthened in the Lord. You know, it's interesting that our failure usually comes not in the places where we know we are weak. If Satan attacks me in a place where I know I'm weak, I immediately say, Lord, help.

You know, I'm weak. Help me. And he gives me the strength.

I rarely fall where I know I'm weak. Where I fail is where I think I'm strong. Okay, Lord, watch me.

And that's where I stumble because I'm depending upon myself instead of upon the Lord. I've known those bitter disappointments of failure. We all have.

And if that's where you are today, the Lord wants to restore you. These men are down here to pray with you and to pray for you that you might experience the restoration, the forgiveness, and the help. And so do come down and let them pray with you as soon as we're dismissed.

The Lord wants to work in your life again in a very special way. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee.

And be gracious unto thee. And be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

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