

After Failure

by K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan's sermon emphasizes the importance of honesty, acceptance of God's forgiveness, and faith in overcoming failure and achieving restoration.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:13, Psalm 51:6, Luke 23:41, Romans 4:24-25, Ephesians 6:14, Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 11:6, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 12:10-11

Topics: "Faith in God", "Restoration"

Description

K.P. Yohannan shares a powerful message about recovery after failure, emphasizing that it is not the magnitude of our sins that determines our restoration, but our response to them. He recounts the story of a well-known minister who fell into adultery but found redemption through sincere repentance and God's grace, contrasting it with others who falter in less significant ways and struggle to recover. Yohannan encourages honesty before God as the first step towards healing, followed by accepting His forgiveness and resisting the enemy's lies. He stresses the importance of believing in God's promises and the transformative power of faith in the journey of restoration. Ultimately, he reassures that God desires to turn our failures into something beautiful for His purposes.

Transcript

Years ago a man came to me seeking counsel. He served as a full-time minister and was very well-known for his extraordinary giftings. Within the first few minutes of our time together, he broke down weeping. I could hardly make out what he was saying because of his intense sobbing. Finally, through his tears, he voiced his deep pain with these few words--"I lost it all. I failed." He had fallen into adultery. His sorrow was deep and his repentance more sincere than any I have ever witnessed.

He knew the depths of his failure and was crying out for mercy and hope, wanting to believe they were still available to him. By the grace of God, I was able to speak the words he needed to hear and to pray with him. Years later I learned that this gentleman who took such a hard fall had fully recovered. God's grace was lavished upon him and brought restoration. Now his life and his gifts were being used in multiplied ways, more than he ever thought possible after such a moral failure.

Through the years, I have witnessed similar situations, revealing the gracious way God works. There is an irony here, however. I have also witnessed younger brothers, placed in less influential settings, fall in minor ways and lose it all. There is no adultery or murder, yet these who failed in what many would consider smaller ways are sometimes driven out of the ministry by what they have done. It makes me

wonder, "What happened?" The veteran who should have been wiped out from the ministry is restored and thrives, his life being used to touch thousands of people, while the rookie who really didn't steal all that much lost out completely.

How do you explain this? It's not the size of our sin that determines whether or not we recover from a fall. It's our response. How we deal with our failure determines our future. God desires to make your life into something beautiful and bring about His purposes through your failure. He wants to accomplish His perfect will in your life, but He is waiting on you. Just as there are real-life examples from Scripture and the people we know who demonstrate God's great skill to still bring about His best in the midst of failure, there are also real-life examples of those who never fully recover.

So there is still a question of whether God's best for your life will be experienced. It is yet to be decided . . . by you! How will you handle what is before you? Will you surrender your heart and your ways to the Lord and let Him do His work of humility within you? Or will your pride rise up and keep you captive to a life that never fully recovers? Today He is rooting for you. I also encourage you with all my heart to take these simple steps to recovery and a life that refuses to settle for second best.

It Begins with Honesty God tells us that He desires honesty in our inward parts (see Psalm 51:6, NLT). Honesty is the foundation of all good things God does in and through us. In Ephesians 6, truth is the first piece of spiritual armor we are told to put on. This belt of truth is worn around our waist, the middle of our bodies and the center of our balance. Honesty and truth must be in place before anything else because they keep us from losing our balance and falling. This is not the truth that is simply the opposite of lying.

Instead, it is a willingness to come before the Lord without any excuses and sit quietly, letting Him search out our heart. It is an openness to hearing His still small voice that all too often people keep trying to cover up. Then we must listen closely for what He says. Only then will you be able to understand, without justification and explanation, without twisting the truth to put yourself in a more favorable light, the gravity of what you have done. It may be painful for the moment, but this truth will set you free.

The Lord can then begin His cleansing in your heart. This cleansing by His Spirit far outweighs any brief moments of pain. C.S. Lewis explains it further, "It is impossible for Him to show Himself to a man whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition. Just as sunlight . . . cannot be reflected in a dusty mirror as clearly as a clean one."¹ It is in this experience of exposure, this act of truly being transparent before the Lord, that the way is cleared for the Spirit to really work in your life.

It is the beginning of a deeper work and the foundation for accomplishing His perfect will for your life. Out of this honesty with the Lord, you can truly admit you have failed and ask for His forgiveness. This is the first step to restored intimacy with God and others. C.S. Lewis states, "A man who admits no guilt can accept no forgiveness."² For each one to whom God's best was restored, the road to recovery began with honesty and admitting their failure: from David who told Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Samuel 12:13), to Jacob who finally admitted both his name and his character was Jacob, the deceiver (Genesis 32:27), to the thief on the cross who affirmed that he deserved his judgment (Luke 23:41).

It was in those moments of truth for each of these men that their restoration began: that Nathan told David the Lord took away his sin and he was not going to die (2 Samuel 12:13), that Jacob's name was changed to Israel, the prince of God (Genesis 32:28), that Jesus informed the thief on the cross that today he would be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:43). In those moments of honesty, the Lord may also show you practical steps of restoration that He wants you to take. Listen to His voice and act on what He puts on your heart.

The present awkwardness is nothing in contrast to the joy of our inner man being clear before God and man. Be aware that admitting your failure in honesty before the Lord is the exact opposite of what your flesh wants to do. When Adam and Eve sinned, their first reaction was to run for cover. Shame entered the scene, and ever since, humanity has tried to hide its failure. The reason? Simply pride, the desire to keep who we are intact. I advise you against this. You will only put up a roadblock on your way to recovery.

You cannot skip this part and move on to the next step. It begins here or ends here. Some hide not only from the searching of God's light, but also from those who know their failure. Though sorrowful over the way they failed, their pride keeps them captive. They go through life cutting off relationships and avoiding those who know their flaws, never admitting any wrong and never fully recovering. Don't let the fear of man hinder what God has in store for you. Go ahead--meet that person, make that call, send that email.

Return what you owe. Ask for forgiveness. For the "fear of man will prove to be a snare" (Proverbs 29:25). The brief pain of reality doesn't compare to the lasting joy and peace experienced in God's restoration. Step into the cleansing and the new life that awaits you. Accept God's Forgiveness You must next accept God's forgiveness. Many people today say God forgave them, but they still live with their failures clouding their lives and casting shadows over their days. They really have not believed His forgiveness.

When others have not forgiven us, it can be difficult to cling to the Lord's forgiveness. We almost feel it is wrong to accept God's forgiveness when others are still hurting. Yet it is not wrong. It is God's desire that we accept His gift of forgiveness and journey on the road to restoration. Give others the time and space that they need to work through their struggles. But we must receive with gladness the gift God has given us. The Lord makes it clear in His Word: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

What He has told us, we must simply believe. You see, it is God's free gift of righteousness. Notice I said free--it is not something we earn. Sanctification, yes--we fail, repent, grow continually day-by-day, becoming more like Jesus. But righteousness is not a growing process; it is simply a gift from God. We are made righteous in Jesus, through the Father's grace. It says in Romans, "God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:24-25). When Jesus died on the cross, provision for sin was made. We can be washed clean. Before God, it is as though our sin never happened. Can you imagine--the divorce never occurred or the cheating never took place? You never lied or lusted. You never fought with anyone. You never thought evil. You never committed murder. Through Christ, you are made as pure as the day God made Adam and Eve.

This is difficult for our minds to grasp and our hearts to believe--but it's true. When God looks at you, He now sees the righteousness of Jesus. Receive His forgiveness that washes you white as snow. Resist the Enemy Our enemy prowls around "like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). In vulnerable times when we are face-to-face with failure, Satan seeks to discourage us to the point where we lose all hope. At such times, we can become so introspective that we wallow in despair and forget the grace and forgiveness God has given us.

We become so preoccupied with our failures that our enemy wins the battle against us simply because we give up. If we are to stand against this roaring lion, we must realize that a defeated mind-set is not from God; then we must--absolutely must--resist the devil and his lies. Our faith, the blood of Jesus and our testimony are powerful weapons to resist the enemy who seeks to destroy all hope for the future and the

plans God has for us. Ephesians 6:16 tells us that we must take up our shield of faith by which we can quench the enemy's fiery darts and stand against this accuser of the brethren.

By the sacrifice and blood of Jesus, Satan's head was crushed. By our testimony, we confess with our mouth Jesus' victory over the enemy. We refuse to accept thoughts of confusion, accusation, guilt, condemnation and whatever else he may conjure up. We reject these because of what Jesus did for us and because we are "accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6, KJV). Then what happens? "The accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:10-11, emphasis mine). The devil is a defeated foe. Don't be fooled by his blustering. Believe God In every step of this process, we must believe God. It says in Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Along this journey of restoration, every step requires that we believe His Word regardless of our feelings.

So--we must believe there is hope. We must believe that His best remains. We must believe that His road of humility is better than our road of pride. We must believe His restoration is more important than our reputation. We must believe He truly forgives us. And we must believe that by His blood, Satan's head was crushed. The answer for which you are searching lies in believing God. This is a life of faith. Our salvation started with it, and our journey on earth will end with our first act of faith becoming sight.

And all along the journey, the only way we continue strong is by faith--faith in God and in His goodness. He is constantly working with us and is able to finish the good work that He started (see Philippians 1:6). My brothers and sisters, nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible with our God.

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