

(Words of Life) 60 - the Purpose of Failure

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes that failure serves a divine purpose in breaking and humbling us, ultimately enabling us to fulfill God's perfect plan for our lives through faith.

Duration: 27:14

Scripture: Luke 22:31

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Redemptive Suffering"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the purpose of failure in the Christian journey, highlighting how God can turn our failures into opportunities for growth and humility. It explores the concept that even in repeated failures, God's perfect plan for our lives can still be fulfilled through faith and belief in His transformative power. The message draws parallels between the worst sin (crucifixion of Christ) and the best thing (forgiveness through Christ's death), showcasing God's ability to turn the worst situations into blessings.

Transcript

Welcome once again to words of life. Our subject today is the purpose of failure. Most of us have a tremendous sense of failure when we have sincerely tried to live for God.

The people who don't have a sense of failure are the careless, half-hearted people who are not interested in pleasing God. Every sincere, wholehearted disciple of Jesus has a sense of not having accomplished God's will in his life. And then that can discourage us.

Discouragement is one of Satan's main weapons. And if Satan is the accuser of the brethren, he keeps on reminding you of your failure. And he tells you how you have failed here, you have failed there, you have failed in the other place.

And with that awareness of failure, we mess up the rest of our life. Many times we have sincerely wanted to please God and we have made mistakes. Now the question is this.

Supposing a person has failed in a number of times. Maybe a believer, he has fallen into adultery perhaps. Or made some serious blunder in his life.

Now the question is, can such a person still fulfill God's perfect plan for his life? I am talking about a young person who started out sincerely. And he has been a believer 10-15 years. And in those 10-15 years, there have been numerous failures.

Can that man still fulfill God's plan for his life? He can. Because God, in his foreknowledge, has taken into account those failures also in the plan he made for that person. See, if God was dealing as with man, then man doesn't take into account the possibility that you will fail for 10 years.

But God can take into account because he knows the whole future. So, when he selected you and chose you to be his child, he already knew what all stupid things you are going to do. See, when you got married, you did not know the foolish things your husband or your wife would do.

And sometimes you may say, oh I never expected you to behave like this. And there are many husbands who would even say, if I knew all this beforehand, I would not have married you. But Jesus, who knows all the foolish things you would do, still chose to marry you.

And me. Isn't that amazing? That is the love of God. Because God is so powerful that he can turn failure into success.

The Bible is full of such stories. For example, if I were to ask you a question, was the cross of Calvary an afterthought with God or something that he had planned from before the foundation of the world? After Adam sinned, now what shall we do? And then he planned for Jesus to come and die. Was it like that? No.

I mean, if there was no Calvary, we would never have known the depth of God's love for us. I am sure you agree with that. That, how is that possible? However many times God said to us, I love you, I love you, I love you, it would never have proved his love for us as much as Jesus dying on the cross has proved.

And there is a verse in Revelation chapter 13, which seems to indicate, in verse 8, that the lamb was slain from before the foundation of the world. Now it's not clear here whether it's referring to the book of life or the slaying of the lamb. I can accept it as both.

The book of life was written from the foundation of the world, but the lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. That means, it's true. In God's mind, Jesus' death was there even before he created the universe.

Was that something that came into God's mind much later? Then we have to say there is something God did not know in the beginning. Definitely he knew in the beginning. And from the foundation, from the beginning of time, Christ's death was already in God's mind.

Now let's go to another thing. Does that mean therefore that God planned for Adam to fail? Because if man had not fallen, there would be no need for Calvary's death. So man's failure is what necessitated the cross of Calvary.

But the cross of Calvary is in God's perfect plan. But man's failure was not in God's perfect plan. Now that complicates our sense of logic.

Man fails which is not in God's plan, but the solution to that is already in God's perfect plan. I can't figure it out with my mind. But that doesn't surprise me.

God's wisdom is like an ocean. And my mind is like a little cup. So if I tell you I can't fit the ocean into the cup, that's not a big thing.

There is a lot of water in the ocean which doesn't fit into the cup of my mind. God's wisdom is so great. And in his great wisdom, even where man has failed, he can still fulfill his perfect plan and send Christ to

die on the cross.

Now when you apply that to your life, maybe you have failed. You have failed so many times. But you can still fulfill God's perfect plan for your life.

What is the message of the cross of Calvary? Let me tell you something else. From the cross of Calvary. What was the worst sin anybody ever committed on this earth? The biggest sin.

That was the crucifixion of the son of God on Calvary's cross. There is absolutely no greater sin than that. So that is the worst thing that ever happened on this earth.

No world war, nothing. Nothing is that. Nothing equals that.

That was the worst thing. Now let me ask you another question. What is the best thing that happened on this earth? That was the death of Christ on the cross.

There our sins were forgiven there. Can you think of anything better than the death of Christ on the cross where our sins were forgiven? So what have we just come to a conclusion? The worst thing that happened on the earth is the crucifixion of Christ. And the best thing that happened on the earth is the crucifixion of Christ.

And his resurrection. The two go together always. So what does that prove? God can take the worst thing that man does and convert it into the best thing for man.

Nobody can do that to your life. Whatever people do to you, it is not worse than the cross of Calvary. If that can be turned into the best, then whatever evil somebody does to you can also be turned into the best.

What do you have to do? Believe. Believe that God will make it into the best for you. That's all.

Nothing is impossible when you believe. Lord, I believe even this failure of mine, you are going to turn it into a tremendous blessing to me. In my own life, when I was born again in 1959 at the age of 19 and a half, I did not find a godly older brother whom I could look up to, to be like a Paul to me as a Timothy.

I looked around in the assembly I was attending and I did not find one. There were some very good brothers, but not someone whom I could look up to. So, there was no one I could go to, to ask some practical problems in my Christian life.

When I struggled with sexual thoughts as a young man, I did not know anybody I could go to who would honestly help me. Most of them would not talk about that subject. Problems I had in scripture about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, nobody was there to explain to me.

If some people had that doctrine, then some other doctrine they didn't hold. So, when I was growing up, I had to learn many things by trial and error. Many of the things I learnt in the first 16 years of my life, I learnt by making mistakes.

16 years of my life after being born again, right up to the age of 35 and a half, there were so many things I learnt by making mistakes. There were good things and bad things. I made mistakes, I was frequently discouraged, and sometimes tremendously encouraged in serving God.

And then finally God opened my eyes, showed me that He loved me as He loved Jesus, and that changed my life. And He filled me with the Holy Spirit, gave me that power, showed me that Jesus lived on earth to be an example for me. And my life took a new direction.

And I began to understand what the body of Christ was. And then I began to understand how to build local expressions of the body of Christ. And that has made the last 29 years of my life so fantastically wonderful.

And sometimes I look back over the first 16 years of my life, and I say, Lord, if you had taught me all this right at the beginning, I would not have wasted those 16 years. Do you know what the Lord said to me? That there were certain things you had to learn through failing. There was no other way to learn it.

Because that failure accomplishes something. It cannot be accomplished any other way. Do you know there are some things in your life which can be accomplished only through failure? Particularly brokenness.

Jesus was broken. He never needed failure. He was perfect from his birth.

But we are not like that. We have had a history of failure in our life. Even Paul and the best of Christians have had that.

And we all need failure. Jesus was the only one who never needed it. Take the example of Peter.

We read in Luke's Gospel, chapter 22, that the Lord tells Peter, in verse 31, Simon, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. And we know what that was about. That was to make Peter deny Jesus.

Satan said, God, I want to tempt Peter to deny you. God knew that Peter is not strong enough to resist that temptation. God knew he would fail.

So Jesus says, I prayed for you, verse 32. He doesn't say, I prayed for you that you may not fail. No.

I prayed for you that after you fall and fail, your faith will not fail. So Jesus knew he is going to fail. Because he says in verse 34, tonight before the cock crows twice, you are going to deny me three times.

But you say, Lord, can't you pray that he will not deny you three times? Why don't you pray for that? No. He needs to fall. He needs to fail, then only he will be broken.

So I am not praying that he will not deny me. I am not praying that he will not fail. I am praying that after he fails, and he reaches the bottom, so far down that there is no more further to go down, that when he reaches there, he will not get so discouraged and think God doesn't love me.

That's the meaning of faith failing. When does faith fail? Faith fails when you say, God doesn't care for me anymore. There is no hope for me anymore.

That's the end. There is no hope for me. God has given up on me.

I am useless. Now I will be just useless the rest of my life. When faith has failed, then we can say that faith has failed.

But Peter's faith will not fail. Even when he has denied me three times, which is a terrible sin, and he has reached rock bottom, there Jesus prays to the Father. Father, when Peter reaches there, let him know that

you still love him.

Let him know that there is still hope for him. Let him know that even in his failure, there is a purpose. And that's what happened.

He denied the Lord three times. Jesus looked at him. We read that in Luke chapter 22 and verse 61.

Luke was a look of forgiveness. Don't get discouraged, Peter. Remember what I told you.

I am praying for you. Your faith should not fail now. The Father loves you.

Come back to him. That encouraged Peter so much. And he went out and it says in verse 62, he wept bitterly.

He wept that he had denied the Lord. He was a broken man. And a few days later, even after he has seen Jesus risen from the dead, in John 21, Peter says to some of his disciples, I have finished with being an apostle now.

I thought I would be the greatest apostle, the senior leader among all of you. But I know I am a failure. As an apostle, there is one thing I can still do.

I can go back to my fishing. That's what I used to do before Jesus called me an apostle. Now I know that the Lord may not have any place for me as an apostle because I am a failure.

I can go back to fishing. So he goes back to fishing. And the Lord shows him there that if you don't come to the place where I have called you, even in your old profession, you will be a failure.

You are not called to be an apostle and you go back and be a fisherman. When you are called to be a missionary and you go back to be a businessman, you may have been a success before but now you will be a failure. That is God's love.

He tried all night and he failed in his fishing. Praise God for that. If he had been a success in the first couple of hours of fishing, he would have said, I can do this at least.

But he tried for ten hours, six in the evening till maybe four in the morning. Failure, not a single fish. He had never had an experience like that at any time.

He says, Lord, I am a failure. Then the Lord appears on the shore and says, cast your net on the right hand side. And he gets a big catch of fish.

And when he gets a big catch of fish, his mind is on, oh, I can make a lot of money now. I can't be an apostle. I can support the Lord's work by paying my tithes out of this.

That's his mind going on. And the Lord calls him and says, Peter, what are you thinking about? Do you love me or do you love this fish? Do you love me or are you thinking how much money you can make from the fish? Peter uses a lower word and says, Lord, I'm your friend. I can't really say I love you.

In the olden days, I used to say, I'm the greatest and most wholehearted follower of yours. I won't say that now. I'm your friend, Lord.

Peter, do you love me? I'm your friend, Lord. Then he comes down to his level. Are you at least my friend? Yes, Lord.

You know everything. Peter, feed my sheep. Shepherd my sheep.

You're not called for fishing. I don't want the money you get from business to support me. I don't need that for my work.

I need you. Me, Lord? Such a failure? Yes. Your failure has broken you.

You don't have any high thoughts about yourself now. You're ready to be the leader of the apostles. And a few days later, he stands there on the day of Pentecost bringing 3,000 Jews to Christ, leading them to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And his head does not swell. You just think of this yourself. Supposing you went somewhere and you preached for a few minutes.

Peter's sermon was about 10 minutes. And 3,000 Jews accepted Christ. And nowadays, to get one Jew to accept Christ is a miracle.

3,000 Jews accept Christ. 3,000 people are filled with the Holy Spirit. And people come to you and say, brother, what a fantastic thing you did.

Your head will not remain the same size. I'm sure people came to Peter and said, great, Peter, what a ministry that was. How was it he didn't become proud? Because he knew a few days ago he has been broken.

He has failed. He has broken. And that failure served the purpose of keeping him humble when he had such success.

Did you hear that? The failure served the purpose of keeping him humble when he had such fantastic success. That is the purpose of failure. To break you.

To humble you. That is why even years of failure has got a purpose. I think of the 16 years of my wandering trying to find God's way.

Age 19 to 35. Many times of discouragement. Not knowing what my ministry was.

Failure, failure, failure. But people appreciating you. But I knew I was the defeated person.

And I found those years have put my face in the dust that today even if God does anything it cannot puff me up because I know what I was. Just like Peter. He knew what he was.

He failed as an apostle. He failed as a fisherman. In your life too God has a purpose in your failure.

Don't get discouraged. Don't think that God has given up on you because you failed. When you hit rock bottom remember that God can turn the tables on Satan.

Your failure will not hinder God from fulfilling his perfect plan for your life. That perfect plan can still be fulfilled if you have faith. But if you get discouraged you'll say I'm such a failure and nothing will happen.

Then nothing will happen. Not because God cannot do it but because you don't believe. And as a gentleman see the Christ you'll see another person whose life was 10 times worse failure than yours.

But he came to God and said Lord I'm a failure but I believe you can do something with my life and you'll find there a person who fulfilled God's perfect plan because he had faith. And you discovered that day because you didn't believe God's plan was not fulfilled. So the only thing that can hinder you from fulfilling God's perfect plan is your own unbelief.

Not even years of failure. You may have fallen in adultery you may have committed murder you may have done any serious thing. Today you can repent and believe.

Almighty God can turn the tables on Satan and do a miracle in your life. If you're a greater servant of God you have not failed like that. Think of Paul a murderer he became the greatest apostle.

The chief of sinners became the chief of apostles. These are examples for us to follow. Don't get discouraged.

Let's pray. You bow your head and say Lord now I know that even my failure has a purpose. Your humbleness will break me.

I want to be broken. And Lord if I haven't learned that lesson break me some more. I don't want to fail but if I have to be broken more I'm willing.

I believe you'll do miracles in my life. Thank you Lord. In Jesus name.

Amen. God bless you.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/cQMqytqYQe4.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/words-of-life-60-the-purpose-of-failure/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net