

Can I Fail?

Scripture: John 21: 1-17, 19

Date: May 3, 2020

SERIES OVERVIEW

In the aftermath of Easter Maranatha YYC is on a journey of faith and life – even in the midst of Covid 19 culture – by looking at the sadness found in the disciples on the road to Emmaus and the doubt found in Thomas and seeing brokenness turned into blessing

FAIL

PETER'S FAILINGS

This week we see Peter a brash and bold disciple capable of great things. In Matthew 16: 16 Peter declares Jesus as Messiah – Son of Living God. Even when everyone else was getting a blurred vision - Peter nailed it. In Matthew 15: 29 Jesus walks on the water in a great storm and invites Peter to join Him – and Peter does !! In Matthew 26: 35 Peter is adamant in his declaration – “even if I have to die I will never deny you”

Yet this week will also see Peter brashness lead to failure. Immediately after understanding Jesus as Messiah, Peter rebukes Jesus for the way that Jesus will die to become the Messiah. As Peter understands he's walking on water - he begins to sink and drown. As Peter spends the rest of the last evening with Jesus – he denies knowing Him – emphatically swearing an oath that he doesn't know Jesus.

Peter is filled with amazing feats of faith and yet also amazing failures of faith.

LIFE FAILS US

Life itself is filled with amazing failures as well. The brokenness of humanity and creation is all around us – even today. Our world was broken, sin riddled and pain filled even before Covid 19. We were rushed, distracted, disconnected. We were selfish, control focused through power. There were job losses, anxiety over income, broken relationships and uncertain identity and purpose in life.

Fort McMurray here in Alberta was recovering from a overwhelming flood – mere years after being devastated by forest fires. Nova Scotia still reeling from the mass killings two weeks ago – mourns again the death of a young woman in the armed forces overseas.

Sometimes life treats us like the Robert Munsch book A Horrible, Terrible, Not So Good Day. We don't do anything wrong. We don't deserve such harsh fates. Life CAN be hard on us causing massive failures regardless of our actions.

WE FAIL LIFE

Yet truthfully – there are parts of this broken world - that we contribute to as well. Like Peter, there are brash and bold attempts in life that end up in failure. Attempts that did not fail because of life - but because of us. We messed up. We failed. The responsibility

– in words, in actions, in attitudes – were ours and ours alone. We can try and blame other factors – but the truth is we failed in so many parts of our lives. Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and loving our neighbours as ourselves.

GOLF ILLUSTRATION

Golf is a tricky game as we aim is to put the ball in the hole in as few as strokes as possible. But sometimes you take out a club that is SUPPOSED to hit it far and the result is something sideways. The ball goes away from where it's supposed to costing the player strokes – and frustration. Occasionally the ball hits an object and diverts its direction. Occasionally the club spins or twists in the grass resulting in a wayward shot. However, in most cases – it's the golfer's poor swing that caused the poor result!

FOUND

JESUS ENGAGES PETER

It's been a few weeks since Easter and the celebration of Christ's resurrection – for some – has faded into the daily failings of life. Failings that we do and the failings that happen to us. But in this dark and dreary world – God still is. In this lost and lonely world God still speaks. In this helpless and hopeless world – God still does.

Jesus engaged the disciples on road to Emmaus as he relationally walking alongside of them talking with them and drawing them deeper into awareness. Jesus engaged Thomas in the closed room showing the proof he needed to leave no doubt.

Peter is also engaged by Jesus – personally – for what he needs. Peter is addressed in Mark 16 : 7 as the angel speaks to the women – go tell the disciples – and Peter also. God is aware of Peter's indiscretion and matters aren't done with them.

Later in this story Jesus is talking with Peter and identifies him as Simon – Son of John. Jesus uses Peter's proper name – Simon – and his full name ensuring that He gets / has Peter's attention. Like a parent speaking to a child on important matters.

Jesus also engages the disciples by helping them by helping them catch fish and helping them to have breakfast. Reminding them of the times spent over the past three years and at the same time revealing Himself – yet again – that He IS alive and that the resurrection IS true!

In this place Peter is engaged by Jesus - as Rabi / teacher and as Messiah / Savior. In this place Peter's forgiveness is found and in this place Peter's future is found. A place where Jesus' love for Peter grows into Peter's deeper love for Jesus.

In golf – in friendly golf – after a wayward shot a player will take another ball and another swing with no penalty or consequences from the first shot. It's called a mulligan and offers a fresh start – a do over to try again. Despite Peter's failures – Jesus Christ's death on the cross offers him just that!

JESUS DIRECTS PETER - DO YOU LOVE ME?

As Maranatha YYC has worked through Vision 2020 through questions as leverage to learn more of who God is and who we are to God. Jesus also uses questions as leverage to reveal more of who He is and more of who we are to be for Him.

Jesus asks Peter – do you love me. He asks Peter this on three different times – perhaps repeating the number of times that Peter denied Jesus on the night of Jesus’ betrayal. But the first time Jesus adds a qualifier. Peter do you love me - more than these things? It is not clear if the question to Peter refers to the other disciples around them or to the fishing gear of Peter’s trade laying beside them? Perhaps Jesus is speaking into the hurts of Peter’s past and the current priorities of Peter’s life.

Peter’s final reply is that Jesus DOES know all things and as such Jesus knows how much – and how little – Peter loves him.

JESUS DIRECTS PETER - WILL YOU SERVE ME?

The grace given against Peter’s denials become a restoration of Peter’s role in the kingdom building. Jesus instructs Peter to feed my lambs, to take care of my sheep and to feed my sheep. There is similarity of thought and at the same time there is a development of thought. A progression of depth, a progression of intimacy and a progression of responsibility for Peter.

Jesus as the shepherd – described by John in chapter 10 - leads Peter into that role as as a type of undershepherd. Peter is directed to serve Jesus BUT it is based on the love he has for Jesus.

FOLLOW

FAILURE IS NOT FINAL

Peter’s failures in life were never small nor hidden and his bold and brash love for Jesus often failed because his eyes were still mostly on his own wants & needs. But God’s grace restored Peter giving Peter a greater passion and a greater purpose.

Failure is NOT final and failure is NOT fatal. By God’s grace ALL can be redeemed and for God’s glory ALL can be restored. There is hope. There is forgiveness.

FOLLOWING IS FOREVER

BUT the challenge by Jesus - of loving Him and of serving Him ISN’T the final calling. Peter in vs 19 is challenged to come and to follow Jesus. Taking Peter back to the beginning of his time with Jesus where Jesus invites Peter to - come follow me and I will make you fisher of men. Peter’s calling is to be a follower of Jesus that will– lead by Christ - will be fully be able to be a fisher of men and then shepherd them into Christ’s love and life.

Peter’s calling as a follower of Jesus is one that loves Jesus with all their heart, soul, mind and strength but also serves God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

APPLICATION / CONCLUSION

Can I fail? The answer is obvious as we do – often and significantly. In this broken and fallen world there is much failure to us and by us.

In the darkness of a failed creation are we willing to be found by Jesus' grace. Jesus who walks alongside of us and Jesus who offers us proof? The Jesus who knows our name and who offers us nourishment? Can we accept the forgiveness of Jesus grace as a mulligan do over?

In the light of this grace - can we choose Jesus' love above all other things – priorities? Can we serve – willingly and wholeheartedly – God's call to follow into service and love?

In this Easter Tide season where we look for – and at – the resurrected Jesus in all facets of life and discover the resurrected Jesus – everywhere for everyone !! An interesting note is that today – May 3, 2020 in certain liturgical calendars is Good Shepherd Sunday. A reminder of the good shepherd calling us – to follow Him by loving Him and serving Him. Forever !!

AMEN