

Facing Failure

Grace



2022.2.6

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of **Triangle Community Church**.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Prayer is **hard work!** What makes it hard for you?
- Tell about a time when you failed to keep a promise.
What got in the way—something you couldn't control—or did you just mess up?
- **Why** is it a blessing that the Bible portrays human beings, "warts and all"?
What do these Scriptures tell us about ourselves?
☐ Genesis 1:26-27 ☐ Genesis 8:20-21 ☐ John 8:34 ☐ Romans 5:6, 10 ☐ Ephesians 2:1-3
- Read together Mark 14:27-31 & 66-72. Think about a time when you made a sincere commitment to God, but then failed to keep it. What does that tell us about ourselves and the reality of life?

What guidance do we get from James 4:13-17 and Matthew 5:33-37?
- It's easy to think we'll never fail like Peter did. What warning does 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 give us?
- According to 1 John 1:9-2:2 & Proverbs 28:13, when we do fail, what is the faithful, God-honoring response?
- God the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. What do the following Scriptures say about His relationship to us Christians? ☐ Romans 8:9 ☐ 1 Corinthians 6:19 ☐ Romans 8:13-14
- Do the words "fatigue and failure" describe your Christian life? What hope does John 15:5 give?
- How do the following Scriptures describe "walking in the Spirit" in everyday life?
☐ Colossians 3:16 ☐ John 15:8-10
- Jesus didn't just pray every now and then; it was a regular rhythm in His life!
What would you need to rearrange to create a rhythm of prayer in your life?
How can your community group help you?

Sermon Summary (Key Text: Mark 14:27-31)

We're beginning a series of biographical messages on men who made a lot of mistakes. Have you ever wondered why there is so much failure recorded in the Bible? Its pages are littered with the wreckage and debris of men and women who have failed in the faith. We can identify with them and learn from their failures. We begin with Peter.

I. Peter Boasted Too Much When Jesus told the disciples, "You will all fall away," Peter replied in typical fashion: boastfully. "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not... Lord, you can count on me." Jesus told Peter that his defection was coming sooner than he thought: "Truly I say to you, this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." Peter's problem was not insincerity; he meant every word of it. Peter's problem was ignorance. Peter didn't know Peter; he had a misplaced confidence—and so he boasted too much. Our Lord tells us: "Without me you can do nothing." Too often we think we are doing pretty well by ourselves; we just need the occasional boost. But our needs are not partial, they are total. Friends, the flesh only knows one thing: failure. God has no self-improvement program for your flesh. It will be just as ugly and spiritually impotent twenty years from now as it is today. Christ died to defeat our flesh. We are commanded to "walk by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). A "walk" is a series of steps. The emphasis is upon continuity of action. A few verses later Paul again tells us to walk by the Spirit (v. 25), but this time he uses a Greek word that emphasizes conformity to the standard set by the Holy Spirit. Each time we take a step, we should seek to do so by the power of the Holy Spirit. That was Peter's problem. We never get to the place in our Christian walk where we don't need to remind ourselves of how bankrupt our flesh is, and how dependent we are upon the Lord. Apart from the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing of eternal significance.

II. Peter Prayed Too Little When we realize that our need is not partial but total, then we pray. Prayer is an attitude of dependency; a realization that we're spiritually bankrupt. Jesus told Peter: "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch" (Mark 14:34). Then Jesus went off to pray—and Peter slept (v. 35-37)! Jesus asked Peter—and us!—"Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (v. 37-38). Jesus always prayed. In fact, the morning after the busiest recorded day in Jesus' life, "early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there" (Mark 1:35). It must have made an impression upon Peter that Jesus "would often slip away to the wilderness and pray" (Luke 5:16). We tend to use prayer like a parachute—it's nice to have in an emergency. Right after 9-11 I remember reading the editorial page of the News and Observer. The author suggested a day of prayer. One person wrote in response, "A day of prayer?! Has it come to that?!" Prayer is the one spiritual discipline you just can't popularize. To make progress in our prayer life, you have to realize that without God we are spiritually bankrupt. Without Jesus, we can do nothing. Do you realize how dependent you are upon God—for everything really? Are you too confident in your ability to manage life?

III. Peter Acted Too Soon When he should have been praying, Peter was out like a light. Three times Jesus came to wake him up! But now, Peter finally wakes up, sees these guys coming and thinks to himself, "Now is the time to swing into action!" He swung his sword and cut off a man's ear! When he should have been active in prayer, Peter was passive in sleep. And when he should have been passive in resignation to the will of God that Jesus found in prayer, he's active with the sword! How about you? Are you ever active when you should be passive—and passive when you should be active? People always say that what we most need in our churches is more workers. No, I think what we need are more worshipers. True worshipers are both workers and pray-ers. Those who merely work in the church are busy, but often spiritually barren. They often operate out of the flesh, and the flesh only knows failure. But when a person is drenched in prayer, they go to work, and their work is energized and informed by the Spirit of God.

IV. Peter Remembered Too Late That rooster had already crowed; Peter had already fulfilled Jesus' prophecy. Peter should have been on guard—but he wasn't. It's not that we plan to be mediocre, but we just piddle along. We forget what we should remember. We don't take God's words and God's warnings seriously enough. We act as though we are living here for eternity—"I've got plenty of time to plant spiritual seeds." Our intentions might be good, but they never got translated into action. We know what the Scriptures teach—every week we gather to worship and open God's Word together. I can't think of an environment more conducive to biblical thinking than what we are doing today—if you don't put your mind into neutral! Are the things of this life more important for you than eternal things? Do you have an inverted value system? Are you and your children truly saved? Peter finally thought, but it was too late. We need to think—before it is too late.

Thankfully, Peter's failure was not final, not fatal. Peter repented and Jesus graciously forgave him. Peter went on to accomplish great things for God. The same can be said of us, for the same Spirit who worked in Peter's life is available to us. If Peter were standing in front of us today I have no doubt what he would say to us. "Don't boast so much. Watch the danger of a misplaced confidence. Don't pray so little. Don't act so soon under the impulse of the flesh." And I think he would underscore at the end, "Whatever you do, my believing friends, spend time in God's word. Obey what it says. Heed its warnings and walk in its light."

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Let's study God's Word to better appreciate His grace in the face of our failure...

Monday—Read Mark 14:45–52. After all of their big, bold talk, what did the disciples do?

Tuesday—Read Luke 24:1-11. Who believe resurrected from the dead? Who didn't?

Wednesday—Read John 21:1-14. How do you see **grace** in Jesus' interactions?

Thursday—Read John 21:15-19. How do you see grace in **this** interaction?

Friday—Read John 21:20-25. How do see grace **even in this** interaction?

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord with your church family,***
read Philemon 19-24, Colossians 4:7-14 and 2 Timothy 4:9-11.



TCC WOMEN Praying the Psalms



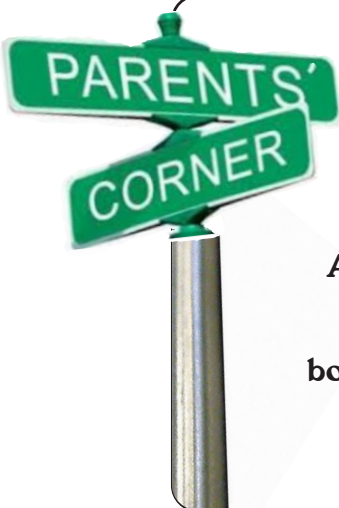
Every Thursday ♦ 9³⁰-10³⁰ ♦ Room 205



Men Moving Mountains

*"I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain,
'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,'
and it will happen."
—Jesus*

- Guided prayer using the Psalms
- Tuesdays, during your lunch break
- Connect virtually or in-person (Room 110)
- Drop in for as long as you're able
- E-mail Pastor Dan to connect
Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com



We all—we and our kids—continually are tempted to rely on human strength!

Peter blew it because he boasted too much, prayed too little, acted too soon, and remembered too late! Guess what—we all do the same things. Ugh!

At the dinner table, recount (on a child's level) the story of Peter's denials.

**Then, share a story of when *you* . . .
boasted too much, prayed too little, acted too soon, or remembered too late!**

What went wrong? What did you learn from your mistake?