

“Failure, Frustration, & moving Forward!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. Someone asked an ex-paratrooper how many **jumps** he had made. He said, **"None! I was pushed out 18 times!"**
 - 1.1.1. In our text this morning the disciples didn't fail **18 times...only 6!**
 - 1.1.2. **So we'll be talking about failing!**
- 1.2. **Think you're the only one that's made mistakes? Hardly!**
 - 1.2.1. Imagine if you had been **the president of a Michigan bank** who advised **Henry Ford's lawyer** **not** to invest in the new motor company, assuring him, *"The horse is here to stay, but the automobile is only a novelty."*
 - 1.2.2. Or there was **Gary Cooper's** comment about **Clark Gable** accepting the role of Rhett Butler which he had turned down: *"Gone With the Wind is going to be the biggest flop in Hollywood history. I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling flat on his face and not Gary Cooper."*
 - 1.2.3. We all make mistakes, including the experts. **The key is not to live in the mistakes of the past, but to move forward learning from those mistakes!**

2. **FAILURE TO PRAY & FAST! (37-42)**

- 2.1. The only Son heals an only son.
- 2.2. (40) The 9 waiting below the Mount of Transfiguration were **in trouble**.
 - 2.2.1. **They couldn't heal a demon-possessed boy brought by his father.**
 - 2.2.2. On top of that religious leaders were arguing w/the disciples(Mrk9:14)
 - 2.2.2.1. **They were probably also ridiculing them for their feeble efforts.**
- 2.3. (41) What strange words from Jesus! *"How long shall I be with you & bear with you?"*
 - 2.3.1. Yet we'll see Him bearing with their/our **unbelief & failure**(here); w/**spiritual blindness**(43-45); w/**pride**(46-48); w/**lack of love**(49-56); & **lack of dedication**(57-62).
 - 2.3.2. **Q: Haven't you ever said the same**(or at least thought the same) **regarding your own children?**
 - 2.3.2.1. You were frustrated...but you knew the answer...forever! Yes, forever! [w/the **son** struggling with his pot or cocaine addiction; w/the **daughter** that continues to cut herself]
 - 2.3.2.2. And we have the following verses to prove Jesus' answer was the same!!!
 - 2.3.3. **Q: Is Jesus blessing you or bearing with you?** (www)
- 2.4. (42) So they were given the power in vs.1 of this ch. but something had happened?
 - 2.4.1. **Apparently they stopped praying & fasting!**
 - 2.4.2. **Their faith had become weak!**
 - 2.4.3. **Read Mark 9:22-25 & 29.**

3. **FAILURE TO PERCEIVE HIS PLAN! (43-45)**

- 3.1. **CONFUSION ABOUT CALVARY!**
- 3.2. This is the 2nd time He explains His passion(yet right after Moses/Elijah discussed it w/Jesus).

4. **FAILURE TO LOVE EACH OTHER! (46-48)**

- 4.1. Did the failure of the 9, & the privilege of the 3, create a jealous rivalry?
- 4.2. **SELF-SEEKING DISCIPLES!**
- 4.3. A **humble, childlike trust** & a **tolerant spirit** toward others are the marks of followers of Jesus.¹
 - 4.3.1. See, whenever there is trouble over who is the **greatest** there is trouble over who is the **least!**
 - 4.3.1.1. Most of us know that we'll never be the greatest; just don't let us be the least! [never hear, "I'm last, I'm last!"]
- 4.4. Pastor Armando shared last week about the choice God gives all of us...“walk humbly, or **be humbled!**”
 - 4.4.1. Micah 6:8 “He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to **do justly**, To **love mercy**, And to **walk humbly** with your God?”
 - 4.4.2. Jesus showed that true greatness comes from being **insignificant in the eyes of the world.**
 - 4.4.3. Love always stoops! – True greatness in serving lowest & least.
- 4.5. Phil.2:3,4 “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

5. **FAILURE TO LOVE OTHERS NOT IN THEIR GROUP! (49,50)**

- 5.1. Did you see John quickly change the subject? 😊
 - 5.1.1. He was far more at home struggling w/a knotty theological problem.
- 5.2. **SECTARIANISM!** [dogmatic and intolerant: rigidly adhering to a particular set of doctrines and intolerant of other views]
 - 5.2.1. How to love others who are not part of your special group!
- 5.3. John thought he was being spiritual by forbidding the anonymous man from serving. [sounds like **Numb.11:24-30**]
- 5.4. (50) Don't stop him! Anyone who is not **against you** is **for you.**
- 5.5. It isn't ours to forbid any work done, however imperfectly, in Christ's name.
 - 5.5.1. **Take heed to this sober warning saints!**
 - 5.5.2. To me this is our “*Non-Denomination's Denomination*” biggest sin.
 - 5.5.2.1. You mean God accepts other denominations? **Amazing!**

¹ Shepherd's Notes; pg.38

5.5.2.2. **Let it be never said of us!** – Rejoice in Rancho Community’s beautiful new building; the growth at Revival & Cornerstone.

5.5.2.3. **“But they do things differently”...So What!** [same purpose; same love; same Kingdom we’re fighting for; same King!]

5.5.3. They may say **shibboleth** instead of **siboleth**(Judges 12:6); his **accent** may not be your accent; her **method** may not be your method; but if done in the name of Christ...be careful!

6. **FAILURE TO LOVE THEIR ENEMY! (51-56)**

- 6.1. A new section starts here, but I include it here because it records **more failure**.
- 6.2. (51) **He set His face to go to Jerusalem** – a Hebraism implying fixedness of purpose, esp. in the prospect of difficulty or danger. He made His decision.
- 6.3. (53) **They did not receive Him** –
 - 6.3.1. Same issue in the same place today(Samaria/Palestinian occupation).
 - 6.3.2. Most Arab nations will not admit tourists you into their country if they’ve been in Israel.
- 6.4. (54) James & John’s response shows just how far they were from sharing Jesus’ commitment to **the way of the cross!**
 - 6.4.1. Known as **“the sons of thunder”**(possibly for their thunderous temperament) **they seem to want to be also known as “the sons of lightning!”**
 - 6.4.2. They were given the power back in vs.1 of this chapter.
 - 6.4.2.1. And they were eager to duplicate Elijah’s feat in 2 Kings 1.
 - 6.4.2.2. Especially because they just saw Elijah 8 days ago!
 - 6.4.2.3. **As kids they would have grown up hearing the incredible stories from these OT heroes!** {better than any comic book hero!}
- 6.5. James, John, this is no way to turn your enemy into a friend!
 - 6.5.1. **Story:** John & Lisa when 1st got to Belize we’re told by many missionaries, **“don’t buy at the Supoul family’s shops, they don’t like missionaries & they hike up the prices.”** John turned to Lisa & said guess where we’re shoppin! – Paid extra for a long time...but won their friendship & now very good friends. 😊

7. **FAILURE IN LOOKING BACK! (57-62)**

- 7.1. 3 prospective disciples who lacked commitment!
 - 7.1.1. **Discipleship is not a frivolous decision.**
 - 7.1.2. His disciples must 1st **count the cost** before making such a commitment.
 - 7.1.3. These 3 promise to follow Him, but then draw back!

- 7.2. **1ST PROSPECTIVE DISCIPLE - EAGER EDDY!** (57,58)
- 7.3. He volunteered to follow Jesus **anywhere...till Jesus warned that discipleship might be uncomfortable!**
- 7.4. **Hardship keeps him from following!** “Let me count the cost before I shoot of my mouth!”
- 7.5. “A person desiring to follow Him must give up what others consider necessities.”²
- 7.5.1. So He asks him, can you give up some of the comforts of life?
- 7.6. **2ND PROSPECTIVE DISCIPLE - RELUCTANT RALPH!** (59,60)
- 7.7. **Kinship keeps him from following!** “Let me wait & bury my father”
- 7.8. The father hadn’t died yet! Because they buried them the same day & he would have been home with dad in that process.
- 7.8.1. The son wishes to go home, live in comfort with his father till his death (perhaps years away), collect his inheritance, and then at his leisure...become a disciple.³
- 7.8.2. We spell this P-r-o-c-r-a-s-t-i-n-a-t-i-o-n!
- 7.9. (60) Let the **spiritually** dead, bury the **physically** dead.
- 7.9.1. The proclaiming the kingdom of the God was so important that it could not wait!
- 7.9.2. So He asks him, can you give up the warmth of family ties?
- 7.9.3. This man was concerned with the **wrong funeral!** (see 9:23)
- 7.10. D. L. Moody spoke against certain parts of the church of his time for its **misappropriation of energies**. He said, the church reminded him of **firemen straightening pictures on the wall of a burning house**.
- 7.10.1. We can’t forget our **basic activity** given to us by the Lord...“preach the kingdom of God!”
- 7.10.2. See, only the spiritually alive can save the spiritually dead.
- 7.11. **3RD PROSPECTIVE DISCIPLE - JOHNNY MANANA!** (61,62)
- 7.12. He just wanted only a little time to say goodbye to some of the home folks, then someday soon, he would follow. I’m sure it will be, tomorrow! tomorrow! tomorrow!
- 7.13. “I will” “but” – **I will but** I’m too afraid of losing friends; **I will but** it may cause them displeasure about me going on the mission field.
- 7.13.1. What is our “**but**”!
- 7.14. **Kinship also keeps him from following!** “Let me say goodbye”
- 7.14.1. Long involved goodbyes...he might be liable to forget his call & not return. Feelings change when one looks back.
- 7.14.2. So He asks him, can you set your eyes in the right direction?

² The Bible Knowledge Comm.; pg.232

³Stern, D. H. (1992). *Jewish New Testament commentary* (Mt 8:21)

- 7.15. **PAUL THE PLOWBOY!** (62)
- 7.16. Jesus wants “now disciples!”
- 7.16.1. He is looking for disciples who will put his/her hand to the plow, w/o looking back, move straight out to do God’s will!⁴
- 7.17. **Looking back** is a waste of time, it slows you down, your path goes crooked.
- 7.17.1. That blade must stay level & steady. Only by looking ahead, with eyes fixed on your guiding marks, can you get your job done.
- 7.17.2. So Jesus says, fix your eyes ahead on Me, & don’t look back.
- 7.18. **Q: Are you looking back to your spiritual yesteryear? Holding on to yesterdays spiritual accomplishments as today’s spirituality?**
- 7.18.1. We cannot **live & serve** on the basis of **past victories!**
- 7.19. **Q: Why do we think God had changed & now accepts weak commitments?**
- 7.20. To all the excuses the bible has answers.
- 7.21. Some Christians are so afraid of failure that they become reserved, overly cautious, and uninvolved in life. They follow a policy of guarded living, holding back time, talents, and treasure from God's service. Their motto is: To keep from failing -- don't try! On the other hand, those who are willing to **make mistakes** and **risk failure** are the ones who ultimately achieve great things. Instead of being filled with fear, they go forward in faith. Problems are challenges. While they may not all be solved, these courageous people would rather live with that reality than have a clean record of no failures and no accomplishments. **Benjamin Franklin** said one time, "**The man who does things **makes many mistakes**, but he never makes the biggest mistake of all...**doing nothing.**"**
- 7.22. In Yorkshire, England, during the early 1800s, **two sons** were born to a family named **Taylor**. The older one set out to **make a name for himself** by entering Parliament and **gaining public prestige**. **But the younger son chose to give his life to Christ**. He later recalled, “Well do I remember, as in unreserved consecration I put myself, my life, my friends, my all, upon the altar. I felt I was in the presence of God, entering into covenant with the Almighty.” With that commitment, Hudson Taylor turned his face toward China and obscurity. As a result, he is known and honored on every continent as a faithful missionary and the founder of the China Inland Mission (now known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship). for the other son, however, there is no lasting monument. He became known simply as “the brother of Hudson Taylor.”⁵
- 7.22.1. Not saying **Missions** is better than **Politics** – Its motivation & dedication to the field Christ’s calls you to is what is important!

“Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.” (Henry Ford)

⁴ The Teachers Commentary.

⁵Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

Karen Mains, *With My Whole Heart*

Nature shouts of this **beginning-again-God**, this God who can make all our failures **regenerative**, the One who is God of **risings again**, who never tires of **fresh starts**, **nativities**, **renaissances** in persons or in culture. God is a God of **starting over**, of **genesis and re-genesis**.

He **composts** life's sour fruits, moldering rank and decomposing;

He applies the organic matter to our **new day chances**;

He **freshens** the world with **dew**;

He **hydrates** withered human hearts with his **down-pouring spirit**.