Failing, Falling and Faithing

John 16:29-33

Our Lord knows us better than we know ourselves and is not surprised by our weaknesses. We all fall and fail, even though we may commit to standing strong. What can we learn about ourselves and our God in such valleys? Even more, what kind of restoration can we hope for after our bout with failure?

1. Our _____ is unreliable.

2. Our _____ is inevitable.

> They got _____.

> They _____.

> They ran from _____.

3. Our _____ is unmistakable.

> Peace is the presence of God in the _____ of conflict.

> Jesus has overcome the _____.

Scripture References (In order of use): Acts 1:6; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Proverbs 16:18; Hebrews 10:24-25

Reference Works: Addresses on the Gospel of John (H. A. Ironside); The Gospel of John (Jack Wilson Stallings); The Gospel of John, Volume 2 (William Barclay); John (Kenneth O. Gangel); John—That You May Believe (R. Kent Hughes)

Discussion Questions

1. "I've fallen and I can't get up." When you hear that phrase in a spiritual context, what comes to mind from your own life experience?
2. Read **John 16:29-33**. Is there anything from the sermon you would like to discuss?
3. The disciples declared their belief with great confidence, yet their understanding was disconnected from what Jesus had actually been telling them. In what ways do people today sometimes believe things they assume the Bible says, without actually examining what it says? How has that affected you personally?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 10:12. This warns that those who think they are standing strong should be careful not to fall. Why do you think spiritual confidence can sometimes make us more vulnerable rather than less
5. Hebrews 10:24-25 speaks to the importance of gathering together, especially in difficult seasons. What makes it so tempting to isolate when we are struggling? What has helped you stay connected during hard times?
6. Most people think of peace as the absence of conflict. The sermon offered a better definition: peace is the presence of God in the midst of conflict. How does that distinction change the way you pray for peace or pursue it?
7. Patrick described two ways of living in a troubled world. The first is clenching your teeth, putting your head down, and enduring until death or Christ's return. The second is transformation through abiding in Christ so deeply that you find refreshment even in the fire. Which of these two postures most honestly describes where you are right now? Which do you want to move toward?
8. Ted and Dorothy Hustead operated by the motto, "Pain is inevitable, but misery is optional." How does that motto connect to what Jesus said in John 16:33? Do you actually believe misery is optional for a follower of Christ? Why or why not?

Daily Devotions

Day 1: The Danger of Overconfidence

Reading: John 16:29-30 | 1 Corinthians 10:12 | Proverbs 16:18

The disciples were certain they understood. They declared their belief with boldness and confidence, yet within hours their faith would crumble. There is a particular kind of spiritual danger in thinking we have arrived. When we assume our faith is unshakeable, we stop tending to it. We stop praying with urgency. We stop leaning into God with desperation. Scripture warns plainly that those who think they stand strong should take careful note of where they are placing their feet. True faith is not loud and self-assured. It is quiet, dependent, and rooted in honest relationship with God rather than in our own perceived spiritual strength. Examine today where your confidence is truly resting.

Day 2: When Faith Fails and We Scatter

Reading: John 16:31-32 | Hebrews 10:24-25 | Psalm 22:1

Jesus did not shame His disciples for their coming failure. He predicted it with compassion, not condemnation. He knew they would scatter. He knew confusion would overtake them. And He told them so in advance, not to discourage them, but to prepare them. There is something profoundly freeing in knowing that God is not surprised by our failures. When trials arrive and our faith wavers, the temptation is to run, not only from God, but from the community of believers who could help carry us through. Isolation in suffering is one of the enemy's most effective strategies. The writer of Hebrews urges us to remain together, to stir one another toward love, and to keep showing up. Your presence in community matters more during your hardest days, not less.

Day 3: Peace That Does Not Depend on Circumstances

Reading: John 16:33 | Philippians 4:6-7 | Isaiah 26:3

Jesus promised peace, and then in the very same breath acknowledged that hardship is coming. He did not offer peace as an escape from trouble. He offered peace as a companion within it. The painting described in this sermon captures it well. The storm is real. The waves are violent. The lightning is genuine. But nestled in the cliff, sheltered and still, the mother bird watches over her young. Peace is not the removal of the storm. It is the steady, present reality of God in the middle of it. Philippians reminds us that the peace of God surpasses human understanding, meaning it will not always make sense to the watching world. It will simply be there, quiet and unmistakable, when you choose to remain in Him.

Day 4: The Wounded Enemy and the Victorious Christ

Reading: John 16:33 | Colossians 2:13-15 | Revelation 12:11-12

The enemy is dangerous precisely because he is defeated but not yet finished. Like a mortally wounded animal still charging forward, he moves with desperation, knowing his time is short. This is not a reason for fear. It is a reason for clarity. Scripture is unmistakable: Jesus has overcome the world. The victory was secured at the cross. What we experience now is the violent, desperate thrashing of a defeated power. Colossians describes what happened at the cross in terms of a public triumph, a conquering display that left no room for doubt about who holds authority. You are not fighting for victory. You are fighting from it. Stand in that truth today, especially when the battle feels overwhelming.

Day 5: Transformation Over Endurance

Reading: John 16:33 | Romans 12:1-2 | 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

There are two ways to face a difficult world. You can clench your teeth, lower your head, and simply endure until relief comes. Or you can be transformed, abiding so closely in Christ that you find genuine refreshment even within the fire. The sermon draws a vivid picture of Wall Drug in South Dakota, a small store that offered free water to weary travelers in a harsh and dry landscape. People came from everywhere for a cool drink in a difficult world. That is precisely what Christ offers. Not a removal of the difficulty, but living water in the middle of it. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that our outer circumstances may be wearing down, but inwardly we are being renewed day by day. Transformation is not a destination. It is a daily, intimate, abiding process connected to the One who has already overcome.

First Plains

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Sermon Notes and Daily Devotionals

TODAY'S MESSAGE

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