

Good morning.

I was telling the first eight o' clock service which meets down on a fellowship hall. A lot of people are now finally establishing where they sit because it's only been meeting there for four Sundays. So for those of you who have regular places where you sit, we're going to start charging you a fee for that. Not really. Just kidding.

I just thought about that. We could make can make money on that, but that's how you can sit where you want to. So, hey, I want to start off telling a baseball story of mine. And before you think, oh, no, it's not a glory story, it's a failure story. All right, So I went to high school at Columbus North High School.

And when I was a junior, I played on the junior varsity, which if you know anything about high school sports, if you're a junior and you're still playing on the jv, it's not that fun. All right, so there was one particular game. I was playing right field and guys on base. There was a ball hit to me, a single was hit to me. The idea was supposed to scoop it up and then throw it in so they don't get extra bases.

I scooped it up and then bobbled it. All right, so they got extra bases. That's called an error. All right, this is what goes in the score book, right, E. See? Same inning, two batters later, same thing.

They hit a single to me, I scoop it up, I bobble it, they get extra bases, E. In the same inning. To make matters worse, my coach called timeout from the bench, sent somebody out in the middle of the inning to replace me. If you know baseball, that rarely happens. So can you imagine my 200 to 250 foot jog of shame back to the dugout? Because I had two airs, all right, two.

But I'm jogging back to the dugout. Do you think I gave everybody high fives? No. You think I kept my head down? Yes.

Think I even looked at the coach? No. Do you think I wanted a hole to swallow me up? Yes. But I sat on the end of the bench and kind of felt isolated, alone and like a failure.

My other story, baseball wise, was. So the next year I was on the varsity at Columbus north and we played a game at Winslow park here in Bloomington against Bloomington South. I struck out three times in that game. That's called a K in baseball. All right, if you're a pitcher, you want strikeouts, K's, but if you're a hitter, you don't want three of these by your name.

So I had These. I had these. These are both failure things, right? Nobody wants those. Strikeouts, errors, failures, shame, mistakes.

You know what that's like. And now I'm not talking sports. I'm talking

life. You know what it's like when you fail? And I don't mean fail a test.

I mean fail Jesus. You know what it's like to have a struggle in your life with Jesus, that you keep falling over, getting up, falling over, getting up. And you're wondering, is this the Christian life? Or your failures may have been so dark in your point of view that you're gonna be permanently benched by Jesus. You're still on the team, still going to heaven after you die, but you're on the bench.

So we're doing a series called Hope and Healing, started a number of weeks ago, and we're talking about different struggles, failures you have. And here's a sample. Here's maybe some of your struggles or failures. Lust, lying or laziness, Arrogance, anger or alcohol, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of intimacy, greed, gossip, or gambling. And the list can go on and on.

Or maybe you were mistreated by someone or even abused by someone, and the pain is real and the grief is real, but forgiveness and bitterness, unforgiveness and bitterness are your reality. And you can't seem to leave that space. That's what we're talking about here. How do I get past those issues, especially the errors and the strikeouts and the failures? So I had a sign made.

I'm a sign guy. You know, Sean told me I should have a sign budget, so. But the very first week of the series, Sean made this statement. The healing begins where pretending ends. So I'm kind of declaring this as a no pretend zone.

None of us are gonna pretend we're better than we are. None of us are gonna pretend that we have it all together. And none of us are gonna pretend that we live a life that is. And the absent things are errors and strikeouts. We live a life.

Those are part of our reality. And if you've been here in the last number of weeks, you've heard Sean talk about some of his struggles in the past and even present me talking about Maggie. And then you might be thinking, what kind of people does this church hire anyway? Right? But this church hires people who understand that we don't want to live this way anymore.

And there's power in Jesus to not live that way anymore. Doesn't mean we don't fail. Doesn't mean we don't stumble. It doesn't mean we don't fall. So this is a no pretend zone.

We're going to talk about. We're going to talk about Peter today and Peter's failure story. And I have. I'm calling it Peter's story, but then I'm also calling it your story. And it's my story.

Cause the story of Peter in John, chapter 21. And we're actually gonna

read the rest of the passage at the end. I usually like to do at the beginning of this one. We're doing it at the end. Cause we're gonna look at Peter's failure story, but we're gonna look at Jesus bringing restoration to Peter.

But let's talk about the story first. All right, first thing is this. You, like Peter, have a new life in Jesus. And it's supernatural. You, like Peter, have a new life in Jesus.

Supernatural, new life. If you have the spirit of Jesus in you, Scripture tells us you have a new life inside of you. It's not a religious stamp. It's not a moral badge. It's new, supernatural life inside of you.

And you're like Peter. All right, so when Peter. Let's tell a little bit of Peter's story from the beginning. So Peter was a fisherman. He was a blue collar guy.

He was an ordinary guy. Didn't have a lot of. Wasn't super, wasn't trained necessarily, didn't have any degrees. And then we read about Jesus seeing some of these guys fishing. He hadn't called his disciples yet.

This is from Luke chapter five. And they weren't, they did not catch any fish. This, they weren't catching fish. Jesus yells from the shore, put out in the deep water, let down the nets. Peter.

In the book of Luke, he's called Simon. Simon and Peter. Same person says, master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, we'll let down the nets. Kind of like, oh, well, they caught so many fish, the net started to break, the boat started to sink.

Peter, Scripture tells us, was astonished at this word of Jesus that told him to do something the fishermen wouldn't do anyway. But they catch all this fish. Astonished, he fell at Jesus feet and he says, go away from me, Lord, for I'm a sinful man. He knew something was uniquely special about Jesus. And from this point on, Peter was all in.

And Jesus even said, don't be afraid. From now on, you're gonna catch people. Peter was all in. He had a new life. And then he spent three years with Jesus.

Here's some of the things that Happened to Peter. Jesus calls Peter the rock. Peter means rock. His name was Simon. Jesus says, I'm gonna call you Peter.

You're the rock. I mean, what guy in here doesn't wanna be called the rock, right? As opposed to sand or whatever, right? Peter saw Jesus

heal a lot of people early on in Jesus ministry. Heals Peter's mother in law of a really horrible fever.

He also saw Jesus heal the woman who reached out and touched Jesus robe cause she had this long term bleeding health issue. He saw Jesus raise Jairus daughter from the dead. So Peter saw a lot of things. He saw Peter, he saw Jesus cast out demons. One point, Jesus even asked the disciples, who do you say I am?

Who do you think I am? Peter of course is the one who speaks up. He says, you're the Christ. You're the one we've been waiting for. You're the one that's gonna turn the world right side up again.

You're the one that's gonna make the world the life we've always wanted. It's what we've always been promised by God. Then later on, Peter's part of the people that Jesus sends out. 72 he says, Go out and heal the sick and sends them out on mission and they come back and they're like so overjoyed. They're like, even the demons obeyed us when we use your name, Jesus.

So Peter was part of that. Peter was all in. He was all in as a follower of Jesus. Then there's a time where Jesus is on the mountain and Elijah and Moses show up and there's all this radiant light around him. And Peter is one of the three invited up there and they're like wow.

It's called the transfiguration. But it's like Jesus is like wow. And, and Peter's like this. We need to build a monument here or something. But it's like wow.

So Peter saw this.

Peter walked on water. If you remember that story.

He was all in. Peter was all in. So Peter, like you had a new life in Jesus. He was all in. All in.

Second thing though, this is the part we don't like to hear is you like, Peter will fail Jesus and you'll fail him miserably. And you're like, wow, this is a great sermon, Matt. Wow, Whoopee, right? And I'm not, I'm saying, let me say it this way. Make sure you understand this.

You do not. If you have the spirit of Christ in you, you do not have a wicked heart. That's the old person. Jesus Says, with the spirit of Christ, we now have a new heart. I will give you a new heart.

Book of Jeremiah, he calls us, have the good heart. So I have a good heart. I have a new heart. And so do you if you have the spirit of Jesus in you. But.

But I still this side of heaven, incapable of hurting people and failing Jesus. You understand that? I'm not saying you have a horrible heart, you're a failure, you're wicked. I'm saying if you have the spirit of Christ in you, have a new. You have a really good heart, God tells us, but still capable of hurting others and failing Jesus.

But the starting point is you have a good heart.

So Peter is pretty confident of himself, like we often are. So in Mark, chapter 14, this is the night Jesus was having the last supper. He was going to be betrayed in a matter of hours. And he's sitting around the table. Judas had already left the table.

So Jesus and 11. And Jesus says to them, this very night, all of you will desert me. That's a little unsettling, Jesus, really. And Peter says, of course Peter speaks up. Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will.

He's all in. And Jesus turns to Peter and says, I tell you the truth, Peter. This very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me. Peter replies, scripture says it was emphatic, no, even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you. Way to go, Peter.

Right. And it says all the others vowed the same, well, no, Jesus, we will never deny you. We'll never fail you. And they were emphatic. So there's a lot of emotion going on here.

Within an hour or so, they're outside soldiers come to seize Jesus because Judas, Judas had betrayed him. So they led him away and they took Jesus to the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. Well, at least he was there, right? I'm not gonna deny you.

And when someone there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, he sat down with them. So, okay, we don't know where the other disciple. They all left. They all ran when Jesus got arrested. But Peter's at least with.

He's close by, right? Let's give Peter a look credit. He's close by. He's sitting there. I will never deny you Jesus.

Now that's kind of. It's wavering.

Then what Scripture tells us that same night, a servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, this man was with him. What Did Peter do? He denied it. Woman, I don't know him, he said.

A little later someone else saw him and said, you are one of them,

man. I am not.

He was afraid. We don't know what's going on, Peter, but I'm not. About an hour later, same night, hours after he had said, I will never deny you, Jesus. I'll never ever, ever, ever, ever. About an hour later, another one said, certainly this fellow was with him, for he's a Galilean.

Galileans had a certain accent about them, so they knew he was from Galilee. They knew that's where Jesus had come from. So certainly he was with him. He's a Galilean. Peter replies, man, I don't know what you're talking about.

And Scripture said he called down curses like, that's pretty. He was getting violent in his spirit. No way.

Just as he was speaking, this is the passage continuing, the rooster crowed.

This next line, if you think about it, is heart wrenching. Then the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. So Jesus is over there, he's arrested. Who knows if he's tied up. He hadn't been beaten or whipped yet, but he's going to be.

But obviously something bad was going to happen. Peter denies a third time. And then who knows how far, probably maybe 30ft away, 40ft away, says Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter.

If you're married, you know what it means if you say, my spouse's looks could kill, Right? We know how looks kill. Can you imagine what it was like for Peter when Jesus looked straight at him? I've never, I even searched this week. I was trying to find if there was some kind of famous painting of the face of Jesus when he turned and looked at Peter.

I couldn't find any. But how would you paint that face of Jesus?

Sad, disappointed, not condemning, sad, disappointed. I mean, wouldn't that kill you if you're Peter? I just did what Jesus said I'd do. I can't believe I did that.

Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him. Before the rooster crows today, you'll disown me three times. So slow this down and just be Peter for a second.

And then it said he went out and wept bitterly. I failed. I failed. I failed somebody that I love, I failed.

I mean, just imagine the emotion of the moment, the intensity of the emotion of the moment. And maybe it doesn't. It's not hard for you to

imagine. It goes, you failed Jesus like I have and you live in what I call self condemnation world. You live in failure world.

You feel like I'm on the bench now and I probably won't get in the game ever again. And I probably deserve that.

I failed.

You failed. If you haven't failed at all, you don't need to be here. You can leave. Right, but we've all failed the last part though. Yes, you have a new life in Jesus.

Like Peter. Yes, like Peter, you will fail him. Or maybe most of us already have in different ways, miserably.

Now what do we do?

So now, third point. You, like Peter, will be restored by Jesus amazingly, completely and tenderly. So let me just talk about this restoration.

Jesus appeared to the disciples 3. He appeared to the disciples the Sunday night after his resurrection. Showed up in the room. They're all there. We have no record of Jesus talking directly to Peter at that point.

But if you're Peter, what are you feeling in that room when Jesus walks in? Resurrected? If I'm Peter, I'm probably standing behind some guys, maybe with my eyes down. I'm still amazed that he's resurrected, but I. So I'm soaked in my own self condemnation.

Like I'm hoping he'll meet eyes with me again. Cause that last time he looked at me, it killed me. But we have no record of Jesus talking to Peter. Then a week later we read he showed up again with the disciples to talk to Thomas about his doubts. Talked to Thomas.

But again we have no record of Jesus saying anything directly to Peter. So what was Peter feeling at this point? He had denied him. All he remembers is that last look of Jesus. He knows he died and he's resurrected.

So I'm sure he's like amazed that he's resurrected. But Peter's still probably feeling like, what does he think about me? Does he even want me on his team anymore? I failed him three times. So this time now is the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples.

We don't know Jesus was. He ascended to heaven 40 days later. So sometime between a week and a few weeks after his resurrection. And we still don't know if Peter had any kind of conversation with Jesus. But here we do.

This is what happens in John chapter 21. And let me just read this now.

Jesus appeared to again to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee. And it happened. This Simon, Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, Sons of Zebedee and other disciples were all together. Peter blurts out, I'm gonna go fish. Jesus still wasn't.

He'd resurrected. But they weren't sure what their mission was. They kind of probably felt purpose lasts. I'm Gonna go fish.

And the others said, we'll go with you. So they went and got in the boat. But that night they caught nothing. Remember when Peter was first called? When Jesus saw them, they had caught nothing.

Sort of been three years ago or so they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore. Scripture tells us they were about a hundred yards away. So on the shore. But the disciples didn't realize it was Jesus.

One, it was 100 yards away. But two, for some reason they didn't totally recognize Jesus. He was a body. Cause he ate. But they weren't, you know.

Jesus calls out to them, friends, have you caught any fish? I don't know if that was his tone, but the word could also be translated. Hey kids, have you caught anything?

No. They answered from a hundred yards away. He said, throw your net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some.

Peter might be wondering, this story sounds familiar. When they did, they were unable to haul in the net because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved. Whenever you see that in the book of John, John's talking about himself. Instead of naming himself, he just said the disciple whom Jesus loves.

So then John said to Peter, it's the Lord.

This is almost kind of funny here. As soon as Simon Peter heard it, he wrapped his outer garment around him. For he had taken it off and he jumped in the water. Hundred yards away. Probably wasn't too deep.

Figure it might have been 90 seconds of sloshing through the water, swimming, feet on the ground, feet hurt by shelves on the water.

A really long 90 seconds for Peter. Cause he's thinking, I gotta go talk to this guy. He's changed my life. I failed him. So he sloshes through.

And we're told the rest of them just followed in the boat towing all the fish.

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with the fish on it and some bread. Peter got there first. We have no record of any conversation yet with Jesus. Peter was probably just kind of looking, maybe head down. Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish you just caught.

So Peter climbs back in the boat and drags the net ashore. It was full of large fish. 153. Who counted? 153. Why is that important?

I mean they probably had to split up the prophetic up. I just think it's kind of funny that John thought that was important to include that in there. 153.

But even with so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. None of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord Jesus came and took bread and gave it to them, and he did the same with the fish. And this was now the third time he appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

But it's the first time we have a record of his conversation with Peter. Put that on the screen. This is what comes next. It's what Quentin read earlier. This is Jesus conversation with Peter.

First one we know of, post resurrection. First one we know of, post Peter's miserable denials of Jesus. All right, you read the Jesus part. I'm gonna read the Peter part. All right, so read the Jesus part.

First section. Here we go. One, two, three.

Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Okay, stop there for a second. I'm gonna point out something. The word love that Jesus uses and the word love that Peter uses are different. In the original language, the word Jesus uses is the word agape.

But it kind of means, do you really like me? When I was dating my wife, she wouldn't say she loved me. She said, I'm in deep, like, with you, all right, Or I like, like you, all right. So that's kind of what Jesus saying, do you really, really like me? You know, are you.

Do you love the Hoosiers? Do you love the. Do you love me? But Peter, his word is a word that indicates kind of a tender. Well, Jesus, you know, I feel very tender and close to you.

His word was phileo, which is the word for like, brotherly love. I feel close to you, Jesus. And then he said, then go to the next one.

Because Jesus does the same thing. He uses the word, do you really, really like, like, like me?

All right, go ahead and read that, Jesus. Good.

Yes, Lord. You know that I have deep affection for you, Jesus. One more time.

So now Jesus uses the word Peter was using. Do you have deep affection for me? Do you love me deeply and tenderly? And then Peter's hurt. The Bible says he's hurt because Jesus asked him three times.

He's still probably flashing back to the face of Jesus staring at him. And Peter says, lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.

Another failure story of mine. This is not about baseball, although I could tell you many failure stories from baseball. But this is probably 35, 40 years ago. And I've mentioned some of my struggles of different things in the past. But this particular day, I will just say I had a bad day, and it wasn't a bad day.

Like, I ran out of gas. Or whatever. It was a bad day between me and Jesus. I, I failed Jesus. And I was feeling, I was living in self condemnation world.

Feeling maybe this tall maybe and just kind of. I was in seminary. I was trained to be a pastor.

And we had a park league softball game that night. And a guy on the team was a neighbor of mine named Jerry. Not a churchgoer, not a Christian. After the game was over, he's like, hey, you want to come over, sit in the porch and talk? He wasn't a neighbor then.

He lived somewhere else in town. And I'm thinking to myself, I kind of want to just go home and get in the hole because I feel really awful about myself because I failed today and Jesus probably isn't really fond of me right now and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But I was like, yeah, I'll come over.

We're talking and he says pretty quick, hey, tell me more about Jesus.

Wasn't expecting that. I mean, I'd been failing that day, so why in the world would Jesus want me to talk to anybody about him? And we talked and we talked. And I texted him this week just to get the story straight. He doesn't know I had a bad day, but this is what he said.

Oh, I remember that. That's the time I decided to get back to church. I was eventually dunked in a tank of water baptism. Right then he says this. Our conversation that night probably helped change the course of my life.

Jesus, I failed you. Why would you use me to change the course of Jerry's life? I failed you. I mean, I deserve a few. I need to be on the bench a few games, right?

Don't I need time out? Don't I need after school detention?

It was Jesus way of saying, no, no, I'm gonna use you. You'll get past this bad day stuff. I'm gonna use you. It was tender. It was kind of.

I remember it very vividly in my head. I can remember what the porch looked like. Cause it was such a moment of like, God, why are you doing this? Why were you using me? See, because what we tend to think is, at least I did.

And I'm thinking you probably do too. I used to think of God. I didn't say it this way, but God was like this big stick holder. And whenever I failed or sinned, it was like I deserved a little bit of a blow. I need to feel the pain of my shame.

I would never have said it that way, but that's exactly what I was feeling.

Ah, bad day. I need to Feel the shame. I need to go in self condemnation world. I need to put myself in the penalty box, whatever. And I can't remember how this even transformed, but I remember clearly a phase of my life in a few days where I still had this sense of the big stick holder.

And I'm doing this intentionally with the cross over there. So I felt like God was, I deserved a blow. So I was waiting for the blow of the stick. And then I realized the stick went over me and hit the cross, hit Jesus. And I was like, is that, Is that what that.

Is that what you did for me, Jesus? Cause I deserved that blow. I was the one who failed. I made the error. I struck out.

I did the wrong. I gave in to my struggles and my failures. And it was like, oh, no, the stick doesn't. It crosses over my head and hits the Lord Jesus on the cross. It's when Isaiah said he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment, the punishment that brought us peace was on him. On him. And by his wounds we're healed.

Why would I not follow that guy if that's what he does for me when I'm in self condemnation world and failure and I don't get the stick, he took it from me. What kind of love is that? Why would I not follow that guy? See, here's the thing I want to make sure you know from today is your story with Jesus isn't over. It's not over.

He always finishes what he begins. And hear me when I say this, you're the sum. You are not the sum of your struggles and failures. You are the sum of the Father's love for you and the power of Jesus to change your life. You are not the sum of your failures and struggles.

You. You are the sum of the Father's tender love for you and the power of Jesus to change your life. Don't ever let the enemy define you by your failures and struggles. You are defined by the power of the love of God in your life and the power of Jesus to change you. Scripture says in Philipians, I'm confident of this.

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Jesus will not quit on you. He will not. He promises he will not. I don't care what your failures are.

You might say, well, you don't know what I've done. No, I don't. But I do know what Jesus said. He's not gonna quit on you. So you may think you're on the bench, in the penalty box, whatever zone you're in that you think you deserve, Jesus isn't finished with you.

He loves you tenderly. It's like the prodigal Son, if you know the story. The prodigal son. The prodigal son made all kinds of mistakes and failures and totally failed his father and denied his father. And then he comes home, and if you don't.

Here's what I used to think God was like. The prodigal's coming home and the Father's on the front porch. What do you have to say for yourself? You need some time out in the timeout box.

You need to work off your sin. What does the Father do? He runs. He runs to the prodigal and he hugs him, falls at his feet and he cries. That's what God does to you.

He's not this.

He runs to you.

You're not the sum of your struggles and failures. You are the sum of the Father's love for you and the power of Jesus to transform you. Here's what we're going to do. We always have a response time started off a little bit differently. We're going to have 90 seconds of quiet.

No piano. People are coughing or kids are making noise. That's okay. 90 seconds. And I promise you it will feel like five minutes.

But I also promise you I'm using my phone to time it, but I want you for the 90 seconds. Just see what the Holy Spirit's saying to you. All right, so 90 seconds of quiet. Listen to the Holy Spirit.

It.

30 seconds more. Just maybe take a deep breath and exhale.

It.

I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. What we also do for our response time is we have communion up here. We have little the cups and the bread. And Jesus said, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, remember me. And we're prone to remember.

I'm gonna remember all the bad things I did to put him on the cross. That's not at all the heart of Jesus. Remember what I promised you. Remember that I promised you forgiveness and restoration. Remember that.

I won't finish. I will finish what I started in you. Remember that. So when you're taking, maybe that's what you need to remember. The steadfast love of Jesus in your life, the.

The love of the Father in your life, and the power of Jesus to change your life. Leave your failures behind you. That doesn't define who you are. There'll be few on the sides with prayer lan orange lanyards on if you want somebody to pray for you. I'm up here in the front row if you want to talk to me.

But you are not the sum of your failures. You're the sum of the God of God's love for you. Amen.