Failure… Not Defeat

Matthew 26:34-35, 51, 58, 74-75; John 21:17

Sermon Outline

A. Accept Life’s Challenges (vs. 34-35):

1. **Said** – Christ endlessly affirms to His disciples, in an effort to convince them, they were going to desert Him.
   a) **Truly, truly** – Christ fervently and solemnly confirmed that what He said to them is true.

   - Compare Jesus’ prediction of the disciples’ “falling away” (26:31) with the concept of endurance that He taught in Matthew 24–25. Jesus used Zechariah’s prophecy of God’s shepherd being struck and his sheep scattered (Zech. 13:7) to describe what would happen to himself and the disciples, his sheep (Matt. 26:31). The word “desert” (26:31, 33) is nearly synonymous with “deny” (26:34). Galilee (26:32) will again become significant (cf. 28:7, 10, 16; see also 4:15–16).[1]

   b) **You will deny Me** – Christ informed them that they would reject ever being associated with Him.

2. Don’t strive with God’s Word:
   a) **Peter said** - Peter continuously and repeatedly command Christ to believe he will not so.
   b) **I have to; Necessary** – Peter said that even if the circumstances demand their lives they were not going to deny Christ (They said this because at the moment they were determined not to desert Him).
   c) **To die with You** – Peter said that he is seriously committed to Christ, if Christ dies, he will die with Him.
   d) **I will not deny You** - Peter, who strongly rejected what Christ said, affirms that he would willingly share in Christ shame and rejection and would never be completely committed to anything else.
   e) **All the disciples** – All those who had completely given themselves to instruction from Christ and had conducted their lives accordingly (this included Judas) joined in with Peter.
   f) **Said** – They continually, repeatedly verbalized their commitment to Christ.

3. **The intensity of a trial (which can be like fire; 1 Peter 1:6-9) is not determined by our perspective. It is designed by God’s will and plan for our lives.**
B. **Don’t Run (vs. 51,58):**

1. **Behold** – Seeing the servants of the high priest Peter gave all his attention to his sword.

2. **Reached; Stretched** – Peter, once and for all extended his hands grasping his sword with the intent to commit bodily harm. Peter demonstrated an initial commitment to fight for Christ or to die with Christ.

   a) Drew his sword. The disciples had two of these short swords (Lk 22:38). Smote the servant. **John, well acquainted with the high-priestly family, records the servant’s name as Malchus (Jn 18:10, 15). His ear.** Cf. Lk 22:51. **Peter’s rash act, while well-intentioned, seriously compromised our Lord’s position, and necessitated a miraculous healing to undo the disastrous effects it might have had at the trial (cf. Jn 18:36).** Yet so complete was the miracle that the issue of the mutilation was never raised by Christ’s accusers. [3]

3. **Drew out** – Peter’s removal of his sword demonstrates that he once and for all was determined to make an aggressive effort to defend Christ.

4. **Struck** – Peter was finally seeking to strike the servant with a heavy blow. It seems that Peter was seeking to kill him.

5. **Cut off** – Peter severed the man’s ears.

6. **When we are obeying God’s will, walking by faith but nothing seems to work out based on our expectations, it does not mean that our plans are failing.**

7. **Peter followed Christ** – Peter, with no intention of stopping, sought to remain from a distance, with those who came to arrest Christ. This would also mean that Peter sought to cleave to Christ as if he was willing to suffer with Him both inwardly and outwardly.

   a) Peter seems to mean what he said to Christ, but he did not know the intensity of the trial Christ would be exposed to. Peter was willing to suffer but not die. Paul was willing to suffer (Romans 8:18, 28) and die (Philippians 2:21; 3:7-15).

8. **Went in; Entered** – Peter determine to remain with Christ went into the courtyard of the high priest.

9. **Sat down** – Peter sat down as if he plans to remain with Christ as long as necessary. The imperfect implies that Peter’s intent was not to ever remove himself from the presence of Christ.

   a) Peter may not have been willing to identify with Christ or die for Christ, but he did not run. He was only willing to endure the process because he truly loved Christ and love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).
b) When faith is tested the heart of a person is truly exposed.

10. **See** – Peter wanted to be a part of all that was taking place so that he can have a full understanding of what was going on.

11. **Thomas ran so hard he almost ended up not accepting Christ (John 21:24-29).** Peter faced his lack of faith and grew stronger. You never see Peter saying after Christ resurrection that Christ is not the Christ. Peter’s struggle was his denial of Christ.

C. Live Flesh Free (vs. 74-75):

1. **Began** – Peter immediately started functioning without reverence to God.

   a) **When fear grows in the flesh we immediately think of survival not faith.** Faith directly opposes a survival mindset because faith seems like taking a risk when survival always seeks safe places.

2. Fear drove Peter to depend on his flesh not his faith.

3. **Curse** – Peter was continuously vulgar.

4. **Swear** – Peter continuously made an oath that he did not know Christ.
   
   Remember Peter saw people trying to stone Christ in the temple but could not. Christ put the servants ear back on and Christ is not defending Himself. So, it was becoming apparent to Peter that Christ was truly going to die.

5. **I do not know the man** – Peter was complete sure that Christ was someone he had no knowledge of.

6. **Remembered the word** – All the operative words that Christ spoke to Peter immediately came back to mind.

7. **Had said** – All that Christ clearly stated to Peter, which expressed Christ inward thoughts came vividly back to Peter’s mind.

8. **Went out** – Peter with no resistance and with no intention of coming back left the high priest courtyard.

9. **Wept** – Peter immediately began wailing as if he was mourning the death of someone who was very close to him.

   a) Peter had been so sure of himself and his loyalty (26:33, 35), but he failed to recognize the weakness of the flesh. He did not depend on God for strength and wisdom (26:41). We would do well to heed Peter’s example, becoming less confident in ourselves and more dependent on God. It is the most basic and the most difficult lessons to learn in Christian living.

10. **Bitterly** – Peter was experiencing mental anguish. His wailing was as if Peter was in agony.

11. **What is amazing is that in the midst of all the drama of loud voices, leaders slapping Christ in His face and accusing Him of things He did**
not even think to do, when Peter denied Christ, He looked at Peter; the only person in the room Christ knew loved Him. It did not matter what everyone was saying, what hurt most is what Peter said.

D. Restoration Erases Failure (John 21:17; Jeremiah 23:4; Ezek. 34):

1. Said (3xs – same tense) – Jesus broke the silence to repeatedly ask Peter about some unfinished business.
   a) Jesus initiated the meeting and the conversation.

2. Jesus asked Peter – Love (agape – 2xs) – Jesus questioned Peter as to whether he had a passion for fishing and was willing to sacrifice his life for fishing or Christ.
   a) Christ set up this meeting at the thing Peter loved doing and would risk his life to fulfill to create a vivid comparison. Christ asked Peter this twice.

3. Love (Phileo 2xs – Peter’s response) – Peter continually tells Christ that he has “tender affection” for Christ and is bounded together in-faith with Him. This is a love based on common interest and desire or basic obligation to a friend.
   a) Peter did not use agape, maybe because of what he knew took place.

4. Christ 3rd question – Love – (Phileo) – Christ wanted to now know if Peter meant what He said. In other words does Peter really mean that he has a ‘tender affection’ for Christ and now shares a common interest of faith that leads to a mutual obligation to each other? “Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for a friend.” (John 15:13).

5. Grieve – Peter had an inward deep sense of sadness and distress that could be exposed outwardly.

6. Said – Commanded or bid - an alternative form of expression as an interpretation of what has been said.

7. Lord – Peter acknowledges that Jesus has all authority and power in his life and Peter would allow Christ to dominate his life each day.

8. Know – Peter says that Christ has a full divine knowledge and a complete understanding of everything that is unchanged. Christ also has this understanding because He experienced it before it can ever happen, and it remains the same situation.

9. Knows – Christ has a continuous complete approved understanding and knowledge of all things.

10. Love (Phileo) – Peter agrees with Christ, especially since Peter is convinced now that Christ knows everything, that he has “tender affection” for Christ and is bonded together in-faith with Him.
11. **Said** – Jesus now changes the questioning to reaffirm Peter to ministry. Peter is now fully restored. *Peter did not need to say nothing else but set his heart right with Christ.*

   a) Christ did not confront Peter with everything he did; just focused on what was needed to move forward.

   b) Peter is restored; Thomas must be saved.

   - Running creates more doubt.
   - Staying leads to a true experience of the goodness and truth of God’s Word. Peter saw everything Christ said come through. Thomas running did not allow him the same experience.

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