

## Love Does: Free to Fail

Mark 9:14-18, 21-23

6.9.2019

Series Intro – “Love Does” by Bill Goff is a book about LOVE. And as the title indicates, it is about the fact that real love is lived! Today, we are going to look at how love and failure sometimes go together.

We had an amazing trip! We walked over 80 miles and climbed the equivalent of 474 flights of stairs. I learned SO much! Just preparing for this message was a much richer experience. So, for example ...

While Jesus was up on the Mountain with Peter, James and John, the rest of the disciples were down below trying to solve problems. It wasn't going so well. In fact, they were failing terribly!

**14 When Jesus, Peter, James, and John came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them. 15 When the whole crowd saw Jesus, they were amazed and ran to greet Him. 16 He asked them, “What are you arguing with them about?” 17 Someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to You. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. 18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked Your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't.” Mark 9:14-18**

There is a man who has a son who is possessed by a spirit. The disciples try to help, but they can't. They fail.

**NB: Professional failures vs. personal failures.** Personal failures feel bad! They are embarrassing and they often leave us wounded. The disciples, in one failure, have failed both professionally and personally.

**Professional ... 7 Calling the Twelve to Him, He began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. Mark 6:7**

**Personal ... 21 “How long has this been happening to him?” Jesus asked his father. “From childhood,” he said. 22 “And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy him.” Mark 9:21-22**

This father is heartbroken, and the disciples' failure has left him distraught.

The disciples' professional mistake has damaged this man's personal faith. We can tell by his request for help from Jesus.

**22 “But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”**

**23 Jesus said to him, “If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes.” Mark 9:22-23**

This man's faith has been shaken badly. The disciples' failure is a big deal!

**4 Lessons on Failure** Failure is a big deal in our lives, as well. Let's take a look.

**1. Failure happens.** At one time or another, everyone fails! The Biblical term for remembering the future – HOPE! The Bible has a term for our failure – SIN!

**23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23**

This verse is saying that sin is inevitable. If so, failure is inevitable. If we think we can avoid all failure, we are only fooling ourselves.

**8 If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8**

Failure is a consequence of the sin we battle every day.

When we realize that, we can take steps to limit our failures! How?

**Join an Accountability Group and Be in God’s WORD every day!**

**2. Failure hurts – us and others.** Knowing that our failure hurts others leads us to three things we need to do.

**We need to ask: “How have I hurt you?”** At times we can cause wounds we don’t even realize! Slow down and take the time to listen.

**We need to apologize.** Sometimes, the most important thing we can offer is a heartfelt and sincere apology.

**We need to make amends.** The 12 steps of AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) speaks about amends in steps 7 and 8.

7. Make a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

8. Make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

We begin a series on Leviticus shortly. This is God’s instruction regarding amends.

**2 “When someone sins and offends the LORD by deceiving his neighbor in regard to a deposit, a security, or a robbery; or defrauds his neighbor; 3 or finds something lost and lies about it; or swears falsely about any of the sinful things a person may do – 4 once he has sinned and acknowledged his guilt – he must return what he stole or defrauded, or the deposit entrusted to him, or the lost item he found, 5 or anything else about which he swore falsely. He will make full restitution for it and add a fifth of its value to it.**

**Leviticus 6:2-5**

Making amends goes beyond admitting wrong and moves us to make an honest attempt to make it right. There is a cost that goes with this ... it could be financial, time or even pride. But it’s worth it! When we work to set things right when we have hurt someone, we rise above our failure! Making amends sends the message that you care about the person you’ve harmed and want to make things right between the two of you even if there is a cost. That’s why it’s so important to understand that failure is hurtful.

**We demonstrate God’s grace in our lives when we rise above failure!**

**3. Failure isn’t the final word.** It is NOT the end!

**25 Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you: Come out of him and never enter him again.” 26 Then it came out, shrieking and throwing him into terrible convulsions. The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, “He’s dead.” 27 But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up. Mark 9:25-27**

Jesus is in the business of fixing failure! He fixed the disciples’ failure and He can fix your failure, too. This is why the safest place for failure is Jesus.

**God’s grace is bigger and more powerful than your failure!**

**4. Failure is a powerful teacher.** We can learn from our failures, often better than we learn from our successes. That doesn't mean that failure is desirable! We should TRY NOT to fail. But when it happens, can be valuable.

**3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4 (NIV)**

Not all of our troubles come from our failures, but some sure do. God uses even those troubles to help us understand His grace and share that grace with others! The point of our mistakes is often the point where you learn the most about God's grace and love for us. Even in our text from Mark 9, when Jesus and His disciples have a private moment, the disciples ask Jesus why they could not cast out the spirit. Jesus explains,

**“This kind can come out only by prayer.” Mark 9:29**

Do you think the disciples ever forgot that lesson? Would you?

**With Jesus, our failure can help us grow!**

One more thing ... **Don't be deceived!** What looks like failure can lead to success.

This past week we recognized the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day.

Almost 10,000 Allied troops lost their lives on those beaches to stop the advance of a horrible enemy. What ended in death for thousands turned the course of the war. It looked like defeat, but in reality, it was victory.

<Romans 8:28> If we believe that, we realize that what appears to be an utter failure, can be a great victory. The terrible losses on D-Day remind me of another gruesome scene that looked like a total defeat ... when Jesus stretched out his arms in death, it looked like evil had won. You and I put our hope in the fact that even though Jesus died a horrible death, he won a GREAT victory. Because He rose from the grave on Easter morning, we celebrate the fact that Jesus turns our failures into victory!