

## GREATEST COMBACKS PART 9: PETER: COMING BACK FROM FAILURE

Mark 14:29 – 72

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### MESSAGE NOTES

*I really believe part of what it means to be spiritually healthy is to avoid losing touch with one's own depravity. I must hold in balance my blessedness and brokenness. Yes, I am more blessed than I can even fathom, but I am also more broken than I can grasp. Even though I've been redeemed and the "old man" has been crucified, I still live in a fallen world and the seduction of the flesh is still an everyday battle.*  
— Lance Witt, *Replenish*

**Understanding the pattern and process of failure is the first step toward recognizing and doing something about it.**

*Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." , "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown Me three times." But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You." And all the others said the same.*  
— Mark 14:29 – 31

#### Set up for failure:

##### 1. Lack of self-awareness.

*Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.*  
— Luke 22:31 – 32

*They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," He said to Peter, "Are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."* — Mark 14:32, 37 – 38

##### 2. Fatigue and distraction add to our vulnerability.

*The men seized Jesus and arrested Him. Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.*  
— Mark 14:46 – 47

##### 3. Trying to control things on our own.

*Jesus beckons me to follow Him to that place of weakness where I risk the vulnerability of a child so that I might know how strong my Father is and how much He loves me. But truth be told, I would rather be an adult. I'd rather be in a place where I can still pull things together if God doesn't show up, where I risk no ultimate humiliation, where I don't have to take the shallow breaths of desperation. And as a result, my experience of my heavenly Father is simply impoverished.* — Gary Haugen

*Then everyone deserted Him and fled. ... They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.*  
— Mark 14:50, 53 – 54

##### 4. Spiritual distance.

*Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown Me three times." And he broke down and wept.*  
— Mark 14:72

5. Total despair.

*We are always finding out, like the prodigal, the miserable bargains we have made.*

— Henry Drummond

**When it comes to our failures:**

- Christ has taken our sin and shame on Himself, offering us God's grace and forgiveness.
- Even though we fail, because of God's grace, we're not finished.
- God can even bring good out of our failures, as painful as they may be.

*Our God is a God who not merely restores, but takes up our failures into His plan for us and brings good out of them. This is part of the wonder of His gracious sovereignty.*

— J. I. Packer

*Our Savior kneels down and gazes upon the darkest acts of our lives. But rather than recoil in horror, He reaches out in kindness and says, "I can clean that if you want." We need to recognize that our personal insufficiency... is what draws us toward God. Our incompleteness is a kind of open space into which we can welcome the flow of grace. We can think of our inadequacies as... doorways through which the power of grace can enter our lives.*

— Max Lucado

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Take some time to look over the 5 points from the weekend's message.
- Why do you think Peter felt so sure about himself in the beginning?
- Are there ways in which you identify with Peter's vacillating?
- Can you share a time or situation you've been in when you wanted to "stand at a distance" and not be identified by your faith in Christ?
- What sort of pressure do you feel in your life context right now to hide or minimize your Christianity?
- When we realize our failures, why is it so hard for us to admit them to God? What is His stance toward us when we do finally come clean (see 1 John 1:9)?
- What are the costs of being vulnerable about our messiness with a few trusted others? What are the benefits? Are there ways in which you've really benefited by being vulnerable?
- What challenges have you faced in seeking to be authentic with others about your own struggles?
- What encouraged you from Jesus' response to Peter in John 21?
- How has God used this discussion to encourage you to live your faith boldly?