

Failure, Forgiveness, Restoration & Victory
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

This morning I am going to take a side trip from what I had planned on the tentative sermon schedule for our study of the book of 1 Peter. After getting some feedback on the sermons from the last two weeks, I believe it would be helpful to the congregation if I dealt with the topic of responding to failure in a Biblical manner. The directives Peter gives concerning husbands and wives in chapter 3 are far higher standards than the vast majority of even Christians consider concerning their marriages. For that reason, it is easy - or at least it should be easy - to recognize your own failures in applying your identity in Christ to your marriage in an utterly selfless manner toward your spouse. In fact, if after those two sermons you do not recognize there are times you fail in fulfilling God's role for you in your marriage, then humble yourself to ask your spouse and learn the truth. (Just remember Proverbs 27:6, "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy,*" and Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4:15 to *speak the truth in love*).

While 1 Peter 3:1-7 gives specific direction to wives and husbands according to the role of each in marriage, what Peter writes is only application of the principles he has already talked about in the previous two chapters and the general commands of Scripture to the specific situation of marriage. Married or not, your identity in Christ needs to be lived out in practical ways in every area of your life. Jesus' command to love both one another and even your enemies needs to be applied in every area of life (John 13:24; Matt. 5:44). Because Christians live for a higher purpose and can trust God to work in us to fulfill that purpose, we can live out the practical application of humility Paul commands in Philippians 2:3-4, ³ "*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* ⁴ *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*" Marriage gives a specific opportunity to put these things into practice, but they are to be part of the everyday life of Christians in all of their relationships.

Neither the sermon on wives or husbands was meant to discourage you. They were meant to admonish you and point to the higher purpose God has given you in your marriage and encourage you to strive for it since God has already given you what you need to do so in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells you and sanctifies you. However, I recognize that an emotional response can easily block the cognitive one. There is nothing unusual about emotional reactions distracting you from even hearing what is said or from your emotions dragging you down even if you hear and agree with what was said. That may be more common among women, but it happens to men too though usually triggered by different emotions than the women.

This morning I want to talk to you about failure, forgiveness, restoration and victory. God does not want your failures to mean defeat. He wants your failures to be lessons that increase your understanding resulting in a life that is being changed to be more godly. Proverbs 24:16 is a good theme verse for this sermon, "*For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in calamity*" (LSB).

Failure

This is an obvious point, but it must be emphasized. You are a human and therefore you can expect to fail, and you can expect to fail throughout your life, and you can expect to fail in every area of life for a wide variety of reasons. That is not meant to discourage you. It is meant to make sure you understand

and are living in reality. The reason for your failures is very simple. You are not God. Only God has the attributes that enable Him to be perfect and never fail. Only God can make the claim of Isaiah 46:11 “. . . *Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.*”

I will talk about our sin nature in a minute, but even if you did not have any problem with sin, failure would still be a fact of life because you do not possess any of God’s infinite attributes. In fact, you do not even have sufficient knowledge, wisdom, power, or ability for all you would desire. The wisdom literature of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes all point out man’s lack of knowledge and wisdom about all sorts of things. That is a major part of God’s rebuke of Job in chapters 38-41. It is good to acquire knowledge and seek to apply it in wisdom, but please note from Proverbs 1:7; 9:10 that both of these begin with the fear of the Lord. Man’s current effort to become like God through the acquisition of meta data has the foolish premise that enough knowledge will enable man to accomplish anything he desires.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is based in application of meta data and being pushed heavily as a solution to many of man’s problems. I am sure it will have some good applications, but it is also fatally flawed because it, like wikipedia, is only as good as the algorithms of the biased programmers and the data allowed by the biased gatekeepers. AI gives the illusion of being verified truth which makes it dangerous for it can then easily fool you to go down its primrose path leading to destruction. The bias in it is factual as well as philosophical because it becomes restricted to what the supposed experts think. If COVID has taught us anything since 2020, it is be wary of experts. The acclaimed “experts” were wrong because their focus was too narrow and their pride would not allow challenges to what they have already decided. But as Proverbs 16:18 warns, *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.”* My dad usually referred to such people as “educated fools.” An astute observation from a jack of all trades.

Knowledge is not enough even when there is wisdom to apply it because there still has to be the ability to do it, and man often lacks sufficient power and ability to keep even well intentioned promises because you cannot control other people or your circumstances. How many legitimate reasons have you experienced for missing an appointment? Ever have a financial shortage that kept you from getting what you desired, or worse, being late on a bill? Ever have to leave a project unfinished until someone stronger, or taller, or had the right equipment could do it for you? Reality check. You are not faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive or able to leap a tall building in a single bound. You are a finite human, so expect to fail.

Failure only gets worse when sin is factored into the equation. Sin is an inherited and fatal spiritual, moral flaw passed down from Adam to every human (Romans 5:12). It is so bad that even the righteous deeds of a man are like filthy garments before our holy Creator. Pride, selfishness and fear pervert man’s motives so that even right actions are done for the wrong reasons. That is why a relationship that began with mutual attraction can end with mutual revulsion. Like a tick looking for a dog, the tick is seeking a source of nourishment to sustain life, and the initial attraction is each thinking they have found in the other that source of nourishment. As long as the tick can suck the dog’s blood, the tick is satisfied, and the dog, though perhaps irritated, is not greatly harmed. The problem is that eventually either the dog runs out of blood leaving the tick unsatisfied or it is discovered that there are only two ticks and no dog in the relationship.

If God’s love had not been extended in mercy and grace to mankind, there would be no hope, and I do mean that in the broadest sense. Genesis 6:5 already describes what mankind became like without God’s intervention - *“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* When enough sinners follow the downward spiral into depravity described in Romans 1, they will take its society with it as has been happening in our own nation. However, God’s love has been demonstrated in Jesus Christ who became a man, lived a sinless life, then voluntarily died as the sacrifice for man’s sin thereby paying the redemption price so that man can be redeemed, forgiven, and adopted into God’s family. God always has

a remnant that will follow Him and serve as models for what He wants for the rest of mankind. That includes how to deal with failure before God and in relationship to other people.

The first step in overcoming failure is dealing with the sin problem through repentance (changing your mind and turning away) from it to believe God and place your trust in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That not only brings God's forgiveness, but it also means being transformed into Christ likeness by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:1-2). You begin to look at life from God's perspective instead of just your own. Selfishness begins to give way to selflessness. Habits of sin are replaced by new habits of righteousness. A life of consumerism lived for the present starts to yield to a life of generosity lived with eternity in view. And failure, though still something serious, is no longer devastating. Failures should be stepping stones of learning leading to lives marked by increasing righteousness in action and attitude. I will expand on this in some practical ways at the end of the sermon, but first I want to at least briefly explain forgiveness and restoration which are the other stepping stones on this path leading to victory.

Forgiveness

What is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? As the Christian matures and walks in greater righteousness the divergence in the manner of life between the two will become more obvious, but there is something very fundamental that is the root of this. The Christian's response to failure, both those due to sin and those based in inability, is what separates him from the non-Christian. 1 John 1:5-10 brings this out.

⁵ *"This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us."*

The Christian has been cleansed by Jesus' atoning sacrifice and therefore has fellowship with God and walks in the light. The non-Christian remains in darkness and in fact has an aversion to the light according to John 3:19-20. Non-Christians will also try to find an excuse for their sin claiming it to be something else and thus deceiving themselves as stated in verse 8. That is why so many sinful vices have been re-labeled by psychologists as some sort of disease for which the sinner is not responsible. Examples of that include alcoholism and other addictive behaviors. The unregenerate may also strive to redefine their sin as something not sinful at all as stated in verse 10 in which case they are calling God a liar. Examples of that are the many sexual perversions being reclassified, defended and promoted as within the realm of "normality." However, as I put on the church sign this week, redefining a word does not change reality. Renaming pigs as cats does not keep them from the mud hole.

The Christian's response accepts both God's definition of sin and personal responsibility for it. The Christian confesses sin, that is, he agrees with what God says about it. God is good, righteous and just in all that He has commanded, and the Christian admits his failure to obey God. The result is that God stays true to His own character of being faithful and righteous and keeps His promises to forgive and cleanse those who place their trust Him. Keep in mind that sins against God often include sins against other people, so we are also to be humble and confess those sins to them. James 5:16 commands us to *"confess our sins to one another,"* and as the passage continues, it ties in prayer and healing with it.

The Christian also learns to accept responsibility for failures toward other people whether due to ignorance or inability in the same way. There are many things at which we will fail even though the intentions were good and there was not any violation of any of God's commands. Common examples of this would include accidents that happen despite striving to be careful; misunderstanding instructions, an

agreement or what the other person desired; outside interference that prevented what was intended; personal inability to actually carry out what was intended. Whatever the cause of the failure, the other person was harmed in some way, tangible or intangible, so there needs to be an admission of the failure. That will probably include a simple explanation, but one without blame shifting excuses or justifications. We shoulder our own responsibilities.

Confession of sin and / or admission of failure is the first step. The second step is to ask for forgiveness. In our society this is usually substituted with the words “*I’m sorry.*” The manner in which that is stated often seems to be the opposite of the feigned sentiment. In 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 Paul warns about worldly sorrow that produces regret versus godly sorrow that produces repentance. Are you sorry you got caught or sorry the other person was harmed by your sin or failure? Saying, “*I’m sorry*” even when a true expression of your sentiment is only a statement about yourself. If there is actual sorrow for the sin or failure, such a declaration of emotion will include sorrow for the harm done to the other person and a quest to restore the relationship. That may also include restitution if there is some sort of financial harm caused. In Luke 19:8-10 Jesus noted Zaccheus’ offer of restitution to anyone he may have defrauded as a genuine sign that salvation had come to him.

Because both holiness before God and proper relationships between one another are important to Christians, we will seek both forgiveness when we have wronged someone else and granting forgiveness to those who have wronged us. That is why in the passages dealing with admonition of a brother or church discipline it is important to seek out and try to get things right with a brother whether it is a sin against you, you have sinned against them, or you just see they are stumbling in sin (Matthew 5:23-25; 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1-4). Don’t neglect bringing about harmony in the relationship by casting the entire responsibility for it on the other person. Romans 12:18 is direct on this subject, “*If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*” Hebrews 12:14 adds, “*Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*”

This also means your attitude toward others is to be one of forgiveness. Jesus emphasizes this point in Matthew 18:21-35 in response to Peter’s question about how many times he should forgive someone. Colossians 3:12–14 describe the proper attitude and response of a Christian to others. ¹² “*So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴ Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*” How did the Lord forgive us? Jesus both paid the price for the sin and He sought us out to bring us the news of the offer. We have to do the same. You have to be willing to pay the cost of the damage done whether it is tangible or intangible, and you have to make the offer. But in saying that, keep in mind that forgiveness is a transaction. The other person may not be willing to forgive you if you are the offender, or he may not be willing to accept your forgiveness if you are the offended.

A quick illustration of this. Many decades ago when I was working for the County of Los Angeles, one of the women in our office got into financial trouble and I offered her a \$700 loan, thirteen days of pay for me at that time. She offered me three items for collateral, but I only received one, and it was broken. After about four months it became obvious she would not be able to pay it back since she had developed cancer and was missing work. I finally told her that I was forgiving the loan and she no longer needed to pay it back. She refused the offer and continually kept claiming she would pay me back, though she never was able to make even a single payment. I had forgiven the loan, so it no longer bothered me, but it bothered her resulting in her avoiding me at work as much as she could until she could no longer work due to her cancer treatments. Forgiveness is part of pursuing peace with others and you are to do all you can towards that goal as much as it depends on you, but unless forgiveness is both given and received, there will remain a rift that will prevent the harmony that is part of peace from developing.

Restoration

While forgiveness is critical, it must be kept in mind that it is a means to an end and not the end goal itself. The actual goal is restoration of the relationship. Jesus did not die at calvary to purchase you a fire insurance policy. His atoning sacrifice is the redemption price for man's sin so that man can be justified and forgiven of sin (Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:4). The purpose was reconciliation with God as explained in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. Escape from hell is only a benefit of being reconciled with God. Paul points out that God "*reconciled us to Himself through Christ*" by making "*Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" That righteousness is critical because without it, you cannot go before the Lord because He is too pure to behold it and is a consuming fire (Hab. 1:13; Heb. 12:14, 29). It is through the blood of Christ, His sacrifice which has reconciled us to God, that we are able to enter into God's presence (Hebrews 4:16, 10:19).

The same is actually true in your relationship with other people. Forgiveness is the means by which reconciliation and restoration take place. Without forgiveness and reconciliation there remains a rift in the relationship that will keep the trust and harmony that should be there from developing. The two may be able to tolerate and even enjoy each other in many areas, but there will be caution and even boundaries put up in those areas where harm has been done. As the years progress, the lack of trust will creep into other areas creating more boundaries putting even more distance between the two. A once close friendship becomes distant or even estranged. A married couple may claim they "drifted apart," but the reality is that they stopped doing what is needed to keep the relationship strong, vital and growing which includes forgiveness & reconciliation over the big and little failures that occur in all relationships.

Reconciliation brings back harmony in the relationship and restoration returns the one who failed back into the place they were prior to the failure, or even better, to the place that matches God's design. That usually includes issues of trust, responsibility and involvement. A good example of this Jesus' restoration of Peter.

You will recall that after Jesus was arrested, Peter had denied Him three times. The third time included cursing and swearing that he did not know Jesus. It was then that the rooster crowed and Peter remembered Jesus' warning this would happen resulting in him going out and weeping bitterly. It was only hours earlier that Peter had boasted to Jesus that he would never fall away from Jesus and now he had utterly failed the Lord. After Jesus' resurrection, Peter had been as unbelieving as the rest of them until he saw the physically resurrected Christ with his own eyes.

John 21 records that Jesus had sent Peter and the other disciples to Galilee to wait for him there. After waiting awhile, Peter decided he was going fishing - returning to his old trade - with the other men joining him. They fished all night, but caught nothing. At dawn, Jesus came to the shore near where they were fishing and told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they caught a large quantity of fish. When Peter recognized it was the Lord, he jumped into the sea and swam to Jesus. After breakfast, Jesus took Peter aside to ask him a series of questions and then restore him. Translating ἀγαπάω / agapaō as "love" and φιλέω / phileō as "fond affection" in order to distinguish the two words, John 21:15-19 is as follows.

¹⁵ *So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I have fond affection for You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."* ¹⁶ *He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I have fond affection for You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."* ¹⁷ *He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you have fond affection for Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you have fond affection for Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I have fond affection for You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."* ¹⁸ *"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."* ¹⁹ *Now this He said,*

signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

The series of questions brings out Peter's sense of failure. His denial of Jesus is proof that he did not love Jesus in the sense of ἀγαπάω / agapaō, a sacrificial love. The best he can affirm is φιλέω / phileō, a "fond affection" for Jesus. When Jesus questions that, Peter appeals to Jesus' omniscience. But want I want you to take note of here is that with each statement Jesus is restoring Peter to responsibility to serve Him - "tend my lambs," "shepherd my sheep," "tend my sheep." Jesus then concludes with a prophecy about Peter's future that would be scary to any of us, but would have been a great encouragement to Peter. Peter had denied the Lord in the past, but he would not do that again. He would be crucified as a martyr. Jesus then said, "Follow me," which is what Jesus said when He called Peter to become His disciple and a fisher of men. Jesus restored Peter.

Whatever failures you have had in life, none of them are as serious as Peter's denials of Jesus. Jesus had even warned in Matthew 10:33 "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." And yet here we find Jesus restoring Peter. Why? Because God's desire for you is salvation and restoration, not condemnation (2 Peter 3:9). That is why He has provided in Jesus Christ the means of redemption and forgiveness resulting in adoption into God's family of all who believe (John 1:12). Do you believe in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ?

As I already pointed out from 1 John 1:8-10, Christians will stumble and sin, but God's command to us is to confess those sins so we will be forgiven and cleansed which restores the harmony we are to have with God and our usefulness to Him. The purpose of church discipline in Matthew 18:15-17 is also restoration - win your brother. The only ones that are disfellowshipped are those that refuse to repent and follow the Lord, and even then, the desire is still repentance and restoration. If Jesus could forgive and reconcile Peter to Himself and restore Him to useful ministry, then He can do the same with you regardless of whatever sin and failure mark your life.

What is true in our relationship with God is to be reflected in our relationships with others. As Christians we are to both forgive and be forgiving in our relationship with others. We are to strive for reconciliation and restoration. That is the example Jesus has given to us and which we are to follow. That brings glory to God.

Victory

While Christians will not have ultimate victory over sin and failure until we are with Jesus either by death or His return, we can progress in our victories in the present time as we repeat this pattern of forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration in this life. Why? Because the goal of the Christian in this life is to become more like Jesus as the days go by. It may be three steps forward and two steps back at times, but the overall direction is forward. Our relationship with God is to be deepening. Our relationship with other believers is to be increasingly marked by the love Jesus has commanded us to have for one another. Our usefulness in God's kingdom is to be increasing. All of that will be true as your understanding of God and all that He has done for you increases and you then apply these great truths of your identity in Christ to daily living. That is why I have stressed that so much in the sermons from 1 Peter.

1 Peter 1 & 2 teach that if you are a disciple of Jesus, a true Christian, then you are chosen by God, sanctified by the Spirit and cleansed by Jesus. You have been born again by God's mercy and redeemed by the Christ's blood. You are a "living stone" being built up as a spiritual house for you are part of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people for God's own possession. Therefore you are also an *alien and stranger* in this world and a slave of Jesus. The reality of your identity in Christ will affect every area of your life. How much of this reality do you understand? How much of it is being demonstrated in your life? God has given you the purpose and goals for your life. How much are those directing your actions and you attitudes?

Examples

There are many examples in the Scriptures of these principles being played out in the lives of people. Joseph was greatly wronged by his brothers and others, yet because of his trust in God his life was marked by the willingness to forgive and work for the benefit of others. After secretly testing his brothers to see if they recognized their sins, he sought them out and restored the family. When his brothers sought his forgiveness, he readily gave it to them saying in Genesis 50:19–21,¹⁹ . . . *“Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place?”*²⁰ *“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”*²¹ *“So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.”* So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

David and king Saul are a contrast to each other. Saul had worldly sorrow, not genuine repentance and so remained unforgiven losing both his dynasty and kingdom. David demonstrated that he did have a heart after God by his genuine repentance for his sins. The Lord forgave him, restored him, and blessed him.

God has commanded us to be holy as He is holy, but He also knows our weaknesses, therefore what He is looking for in us is direction, not perfection. Have you entered through the narrow gate to walk the narrow way leading to life? God is the one that gives the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you along the way, and Jesus ensures that the end of that journey will be with Him. Do not demand of others more than what God is asking of you. Neither you nor the people around you are perfect nor shall they be in this life. The two questions are what direction is each person going? And how can God use you to direct and help them on their way to Him? That should be your quest in all your relationships, but even more so with your spouse if you are married. That is Peter’s point in 1 Peter 3:1-7.

The husband and wife have specific God given roles within marriage designed to reflect Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32) and strengthen the bonds between the couple as each looks out for the best interest of the other. Wife, how are you seeking to win your husband to greater godliness? Are your own attitudes and behavior toward him godly ones? How much do you care about his soul? Do not let his sin and failures become foolish excuses for you to treat him in a like manner. Live out the reality of your identity in Christ in your role as a godly wife. God has called you to be submissive, chaste, and respectful with a gentle and quiet spirit. To be less than that means there is still plenty for you to work on. Be both forgiving and seek forgiveness. Strive to be at peace and reconcile as much as it depends on you. Seek to restore what sin, yours or his, has broken or lost.

Husband, the same truths apply to you in your own role which includes being the head. That means it is your responsibility to direct the development of the relationship. You are to make your wife your life study so that you will know and understand her which will enable you to be better at guiding, providing and protecting her even from her own weaknesses. You are to show her respect and honor her both in private and public.

Do not be defeated by either sin or failure. Overcome them both with forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. That is the path of increasing victory. *“For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in calamity”* (Prov. 24:16).

FAILURE, FORGIVENESS, RESTORATION & VICTORY - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

1 Peter 3:1-7 sets such a high standard for husbands & wives that it is easy to feel like a _____

Peter's standards include specific application of _____ commands to all Christians (John 13:24; Phil. 2:3-4)

The last two sermons were meant to admonish & point you to a _____ purpose for your marriage

God wants your failures to result in change leading to _____ godliness, not defeat - Prov. 24:16

Failure

Failure is a fact of life. _____ is the only one that never fails - Isaiah 46:11

Even without a sin nature, humans would fail because they _____ sufficient knowledge, wisdom, power & ability

A fatal flaw in application of meta data in A.I. is the _____ of the programmers & the data gatekeepers

As demonstrated in the last two years, the "experts" often prove themselves to be "educated _____"

Even if adequate knowledge & wisdom are present, man still _____ sufficient power & ability to control his future

Failure only gets worse when our _____ nature is factored in for it perverts the motives of even good deeds

Without God's love extending mercy & grace to man, there would be _____ (Gen. 6:5; Romans 1:18-32)

The first step in overcoming failure is _____ to believe & trust God

Failures should be stepping stones of _____ leading to lives marked by increasing righteousness

Forgiveness

The Christian's _____ to sin separates him from the non-Christian - 1 John 1:8-10

The reclassification of sin as something else is self deceiving & leaves the sinner in _____ - the disease model

_____ sin to be normal or even good is calling God a liar - Calling a pig a cat does not change what it is

A Christian accepts God's definition of sin & personal responsibility for it _____ it to God - and others

The Christian also learns to accept _____ for his non-sinful failures

After confession / admission of failure, the next step is asking for _____. "*I am sorry*" is not sufficient

The holiness of God & proper relationships with others _____ us to correct wrongs, forgive & seek forgiveness

Christians are to have a _____ attitude toward others - Matthew 18:21-35; Col. 3:12-14

We forgive in the same manner as the Lord did in _____ paying the price needed to bring it about

Forgiveness is a _____, if either the quest or the offer is rejected, then a rift in the relationship will remain

Restoration

The actual goal in forgiveness is _____ of the relationship which is what God did for us through Christ

Forgiveness is the means by which reconciliation & restoration take place - without it the relationship _____

Reconciliation brings back _____ in the relationship & restoration returns the person to their previous position

Jesus' restoration of _____ in John 21 is a good Biblical example

Jesus' questions bring out Peter's sense of failure, yet He responds with statements of _____ of ministry

God's _____ for you is salvation and restoration, not condemnation (2 Peter 3:9)

1 John 1:9 is about _____ and so is church discipline in Matt. 18:15-17

Christians we are to both forgive & be forgiving striving for reconciliation & restoration in our _____

Victory

The goal of the Christian in this life is to become more like _____ as the days go by

1 Peter 1 & 2 explain your _____ in Christ which is to be applied to the situations of life

The greater your understanding of your identity in Christ, the better you can apply it life resulting in _____

Examples

_____ - he restored the family by forgiving his brothers their wrongs against him - Genesis 50:20

Saul had _____ sorrow instead of repentance resulting in the loss of his dynasty and kingdom

_____ genuinely repented resulting in forgiveness, restoration and blessing

We are to be holy, but He knows our weaknesses & provides. He is looking for our _____, not perfection

Do not demand of others more than what God is asking of you, and strive to help others in their _____ with God

God's specific _____ for husband & wife are designed to reflect Christ & the church & strengthen the marriage

Living according to her identity in Christ, the wife fulfills her role in all godliness, thereby _____ her husband

Living according to his identity in Christ, the husband fulfills his role in all godliness, _____ her to godliness

Forgiveness, reconciliation & restoration yields _____ over sin & failure. Proverbs 24:16 - keep getting up

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the word "failure" is used. 2) Discuss with your parents what God how you can learn from your failures to be better.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. How do you react to failure in your life? How have you reacted to failure in your marriage? Why should all humans expect to fail? Explain. What would be necessary in order to never fail? What is the fatal flaw in Artificial Intelligence as a means of solving man's problems? How does sin increase human failure? What is the first step in dealing with sin? How does a human gain God's forgiveness? What is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian in dealing with sin (See 1 John 1:8-10)? Why is confession of sin important for the Christian? Why is it important to accept responsibility for even non-sinful failures? Why is saying, "I'm sorry," not enough? Why should a Christian seek out both those he has sinned against and those who have sinned against him? We are to forgive others as the Lord has forgiven us - how has the Lord forgiven the Christian? In ways is forgiveness a transaction? What are the results if the transaction is not completed? What is the actual goal of forgiveness? What is reconciliation? What is restoration? How did Jesus forgive and restore Peter to useful ministry (John 21)? What is the primary purpose of church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17)? When will the Christian have ultimate victory over sin? What is God looking for in our lives until then? What is your identity in Christ according to 1 Peter 1 & 2? How is that identity to express itself in relationship to civil authorities? In the workplace? In the home as a husband or wife? How can you gain victory over sin or failure? In what ways is Joseph a good example of godly forgiveness? In what ways is King Saul an example of unrepentant failure? David sinned and failed in many ways, so why was he still called a "man after God's own heart"? What should you do if you have failed in your role as a husband or wife? What should you do if your husband or wife has failed you? What should you do if you stumble in sin or fail due to inability?