

S.N. June 6, 82 A.M. (Graduation)

~~Things fail~~ - car - air conditioner - School Grades -
I had a Robin in the back yard all spring - Nest built lovely location
2nd floor condenser in yepson tea top - Nest for observation from dining R,
Construction - original 3 days. "HOW TO HANDLE YOUR FAILURES" ~~Immediate~~ moved in next week
3 blue eggs - Mother Robin took her place faithfully covered the eggs - wind, rain, cold -
Next 3 weeks - " " Actual strange early one A.M. ; Time had run out for new family bird,
INTRODUCTION: No sign of life - she sucked some straws & covered the eggs - Eggs had failed - she
was disappointed - she left - Not return to nest - appears in back yard

The wonderful thing we find about the Bible is, that some verses show up
with a great deal of light when we look at them. And suddenly we understand
them with a new understanding. Especially at this time, when we think about
High School Graduation, College, Seminary - all will be given pointers about
how to succeed. People will be telling all of those finishing school about
great goals and great things out here in the future.

No doubt
Planning for
Next year

But today, I want to share with you what Jesus taught his Disciples to do when
they failed. And not everyone is going to succeed in everything that he undertakes
in life.

Jesus said, and we look at the lesson here - Matthew 10:1-14. It is a real
commencement sermon. You have to look into this as Jesus sent his Disciples out
to preach, to teach, and to heal. He said some people aren't going to hear you,
some people are going to turn away from you. He knew that they wouldn't succeed
all the time. They would sometimes fail.

And failure is something that millions are afraid of. What is wrong with
failure. Why is it that we fear it. Why does it have such a hold upon us.

We will never learn how to handle our failures, until we discover that they
are not always fatal and they are not even final. One of the greatest men that

ever served this country was a failure. He failed in a business. He failed in other things - he turned to law. He finally was nominated as a candidate of the legislature, of his state - his enemies made fun of him. He was so poor. He had to borrow a coat, to look respectable - as he went to fill the office that he had been elected too. He walked 100 miles, to take his seat. His name was Abraham Lincoln. What is wrong with failing. By whose standards do we judge failure.

Failure may be just a stepping stone to success.

This is what Jesus said - when you come into a house, salute it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it. If it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever will not receive you, nor hear your word, when you depart out of that house or that city - shake the dust of your feet. Shake off the dust of your feet.

Failure is something that Jesus knew that people were going to face. I read the other day a little amusing story, by Dean Olives, of the Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia. He was brought up in England. He said when he was a boy, he had the habit of catching sparrows in the cemetery at night. The next day, his mother would make sparrow pie - and it was delicious. He said it usually would take about 20 sparrows to make a pie. These sparrows would roost in the vines in the cemetery. And while they were asleep, they were easily caught. One night he was catching sparrows, and he fell in a newly dug grave. The grave was so deep that he could not get out. He tried every way he knew, and finally failed. In exhaustion, he sat down in a corner to wait until morning. Presently, he heard the footsteps of another boy, who had come to the graveyard looking for sparrows. The boy was whistling, as people are apt to do in a graveyard at night. He recognized him as his friend Charlie. His first

thought was to call out to Charlie to help him out. But he decided to wait awhile to see what happened. Sure enough, Charlie slipped into the same grave. Being oldest, he explained that he sat down quietly in the corner as Charlie tried to get out. But neither could climb over the side. After a while, being older, he said - in a deep voice - "can't you let a man enjoy his own grave in peace."

The result was electric. Charlie got out over the side of the grave as if he had wings. He thought he could not get out of the grave - but he discovered that he could.

Now I have seen that story attributed to various sources. But I think it illustrates the unused powers, and the failures that we have that come to us - and how we are going to handle them.

Jesus seems to say to his Disciples, simply, the time is short. And he is saying to them - time and time again an opportunity may come to a man and it does not come back. You remember the old Proverb - three things come not back. A spoken word, the spent arrow, and the lost opportunity.

That is the tragedy of life - the lost opportunities that we might have. Paul said in I Cor. 13:8 - that love never fails. There is some things that never fail. But we as individuals are going to fail.

Paul went down to Phillippi to preach. His preaching got him in jail. But his

praying got him out of jail.

On another occasion, Paul was talking to a man about his salvation. The man said, "almost thou persuadest me." And yet it was not a failure entirely. In one city Paul went in, they stoned him, and cast him out for dead. Failure. How are you going to handle these things.

There is much truth there in the text of which Jesus spoke - we all fail. Dr. Ted Adams, for many years, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, said one time - I remember in my first church, after I left the Seminary. What a stunning blow it was to me when I found one family in the church just plain didn't like me. No matter what I did, they didn't like it. No matter what I didn't do, they didn't like it. And worst of all, they didn't like me, he said. I tried everything that I had learned in seminary and in school. They finally, just left and went somewhere else. And I had to learn and to live with that fact. I had to let my peace return to me and shake the dust off of my feet, and go on.

There are many times that in preaching, a Pastor feels - "I could have done better. I will do better the next time." All of us fail. And we wonder, where did we fail.

We all fail - the Bible says, and come short of the Glory of God. How wonderful it is here - this word Jesus teaches us. The art of failure. How to handle the problem when we fail.

It is very simple he says, let your peace return to you. Don't get all hot and bothered. Keep your cool, keep your peace. Shake the dust off of your feet and leave it behind you and go on. We have other work to do.

Now Jesus practiced what he preached. Do you remember the time he went or wanted to go to a Samaritan village and preach. They wouldn't have him. And they said - we don't want you."

And the Disciples were upset because they didn't want Jesus. And they said, Lord, let's burn the place down." They even said Lord, call on fire from Heaven. And consume this place from off the earth.

Did you know what Jesus said - he said, we'll go to another village. Let your peace return to you. Shake the dust off your feet, get up, and go on. God had a work for you to do.

There is a story by which we can illustrate this found in a book entitled "The Yearling" by Marjorie Rawlins. She tells about a little boy who finds a fawn whose mother had been killed. And he reared the fawn until he became a deer. Grown and beautiful. They were pals in many ways. (Jody and his deer.)

The time came when the deer becoming destructive of gardens and crops, and building a fence. The fence wasn't high enough and the deer would jump over it.

Finally they had to take the deer far away and let it go. And Jody was disturbed. His father said son, life is like that. You'll have disappointments in life and you may as well learn it early. Some things go wrong, and they don't work out the way you'd like. Sometimes life just plain smacks you down.

When that happens - what do you do. You just don't stay there feeling sorry for yourself. You get up and go on. That is what Jesus is teaching here. And of course, we learn from our failures. Sometimes the Lord gives us enough sense to say, never again. I'll never do that again. We might get that good lesson from our failures - and we'll never repeat that mistake.

Sometimes we have to ask ourselves honestly, why did I fail. If we are honest, we know it is because we didn't work hard enough, or soon enough, or apply ourselves as diligently as we should. Quite often, we recognize that we fail due to our own inabilities and our own weaknesses.

Do you remember another story when someone came for healing, to the Disciples. And they could not do a thing about it. They said, Lord, we can't do anything about this boy. Can you? And the Lord took care of the matter. And they said, why couldn't we heal this boy or help him. Why did you succeed.

Jesus said, these things come only by prayer and fasting. You have to pay the price to succeed. You have to take up your cross and follow him. It is costly to follow Jesus. We learn from our failures.

There is another thing about this. And it is the temptation that we sometimes have and we say "I'll Quit". That is the one thing that we learn from failure - and that is if we keep at it - we can succeed time and time again.

Let me illustrate with Thomas Edison. Who worked on the electric light bulb. He had a brilliant idea. All that he had to do was to find out how he could some how get this light in a vacuum and then he would have an electric light bulb. And he worked on this for weeks, and months and months. A friend said to him, I understand that you failed to find what you are looking for. Edison said, no, I haven't failed. I know 200 things that don't work. All I have to do is find the one that will.

And he found it. And we have these light bulbs today. And sometimes what seems to be failure - is not failure at all. It turns out to be success.

Many years ago, the leaders of the (night watch) in Amsterdam, Holland, commissioned a great painter to paint a picture for them. And he did. They came one day to view it. They came in and said, it is no good - you have failed. Well, the artist said, you can't have it. They said, you don't make me prominent enough. I am hidden behind those people there.

The artist had painted them on their jobs. Defending a city and its people. All they wanted was a portrait of their glory. They had someone else paint it. If you go to see the "Night Watch" in Amsterdam - on a side wall, you will see the one they wanted and the one they got. But the "Night Watch" - the original, is one of the

greatest paintings in the world. He succeeded, not failed.

There was a minister once, on his way home, he was visiting in a block around his church. Looking for new people for his church family. Some people he could help. He rang the bell, the man came to the door, and he introduced himself. And he said - I just wanted to know if I could come in and talk to you a minute. The man said, not today. Well, the minister said, "may God's peace be on your house." He turned to go, and the man slammed the door in his face and said - "there is no peace in this house." A few days later the minister's phone rang, and the man said, sir, I want to apologize to you. I am the man that slammed the door in your face the other day. I have been thinking about what you said. "There isn't any peace in our house. If you can help us find it, please come."

Sometimes success comes out of seeming failure - if we are ready.

There is another thing to learn about our failure. Sometimes the important thing is not what we do, or what we are, or what we become. In part, because we fail, and it tests us and shows what we really are. When we measure up to our possible best.

Now we will keep on failing unless we have a deep desire - we need to decide first, what we really want. And many people go through life never getting anywhere. They never hit anything because they never aim at anything. A second thing, we need to do, is write down on a piece of paper some of the dominate desires of ours. And condense the idea that we are working on. The objectives in life.

Another thing we need to do is memorize these - repeat them aloud.

Then we need to test these ideas. Do we feel these are according to God's will. We need to test them.

And then we need to begin to pray about these things that we ought to be doing. This is one of the main things. Now if you have ever watched a baseball pitcher warm up for a game, it is really important. Now in your life, if you are going to achieve and going to accomplish, and if you are going to handle these failures, you need to warm up with prayer. You need to get in condition. And then you need to do all that you can to accomplish that desire.

Your failures may be God's appointments. If you fail in what you want, it may be that God has something better for you out there.

Scott, the novelist, wanted to be a poet. But he failed as a poet. And some of the first writings, he did not even use his own name.

Whistler, the artist, when that stamp was honored in the United States, as the mother who was chosen, that artist, wanted to be a soldier. He went to West Point but he flunked out - he failed. And he turned, and he took up painting and he became a success.

God will always give us another chance. I think about the prodigal son. How the father welcomed the boy back home. If you have failed, God will still let you

come back and try again.

Ernest Rodgers, who wrote for the Atlanta Journal, wrote a poem about another chance. I'll give you two or three lines of it.

Maybe I've failed in the final drive
When sinue, nerve, and heart
Had lost the urge and the will to strive
And I played the losers part.

But down on my trembling knees I fall
Though others may look askance
To say a prayer to the Lord of all
The God of another chance.

Those who have drunk from the bitter cup and tasted the dregs of defeat.
May win again, if lifted up, and placed in the mercy seat.

There is a British museum in London, in which you can see the diary of some men who went with Scott on an expedition - they hoped to be the first men to reach the South Pole by land.

And Scott, and three of his companions, struggled on the long hard journey on the ice and snow, dangerous and cold, and difficult - and finally they got there.

But to their dismay, someone had gotten there first. They failed in their objective, to be the first to reach the South Pole. All they could do was to plant their flag along side of another one. And turn back because winter was settling in. They wondered if they would get back to their base before traveling was impossible. They went for a ways, and the storms came, and much to their surprise, one went in and had frost bitten feet - he couldn't walk. They had to throw away valuable food and other things, to make a place to put him on the sled. So they could carry him. Because you couldn't leave a companion behind to die. They went a little way, and another winter storm came when they were just a few miles from the base that meant safety and security. They huddled in the tent for days. Hoping that the storm would break and they could go on in safety.

One day, the man with the frozen feet, stood up painfully and said, I think I'll take a little walk. Scott, writing in his diary said, he would never come back. But we were powerless to stop him. He was going out so that we could have a chance to make it if the storm broke.

The storm didn't break. They made their peace with God, wrote last notes to their families, and died. They hadn't made it. They failed.

Men and women journey from afar to read the story of their faith, their heroism. Their courage. They didn't fail. They gave the world a picture of success.

So there are certain things that we can learn from our failures.

1 First to let our peace return to us. That means, get up and go on.

2 Second thing, it is to remember that we are made by God for a purpose. There is no body else in the world quite like you. Some of us have five talents, some have two, and some have only one. But God expects us to use that one talent in the place in which he has called us. He says, take up your cross and follow me.

3 The third thing we learn is, that we are far more important than anything we do. What we do, reveals what we really are. So what we are is important. We may fail. But still, we can carry on.

Really, remember this - Jesus said, they thought they were going to fail. But he says, shake off the dust, get your peace and move on.

Remember the story of Jesus they thought that he was a failure. He died on a cross. They laughed at him. They mocked him. They crucified him. They said, if you are the son of God - come down off that cross and prove it.

And Jesus let his peace return. And he said, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, it is finished. Into thy hands, I commend my spirit. And he died.

It is no wonder the harden Centurion at the foot of the cross said truly, he was the Son of God.

He won! He will win the world. And in the last scene - he and the Father are one.

If you'll let God help you, and he will help you. The Lord has promised that I will be with you always.

Remember now, we fail, but God never fails. Dr. Louie D. Newton, well known minister and writer from Atlanta, sat down beside a young mother and her five month old daughter. As the plane climbed higher above the clouds, they began to talk. The mother and child were on the way to Los Angeles. It is a difficult trip for us to take, she said. We are going to California she said, to meet my husband's body. He was killed in the war. We just had to come and meet him. He has never seen his daughter, but I wanted her to go along with me. Maybe someday, somehow, he knows that we are meeting his body.

Just then the plane prepared to land, starting down through the clouds, and there in the folds of the clouds was a beautiful rainbow. The woman, tears shining in her eyes, said softly - I never thought I would see another rainbow. But God's promises never fail. His light always shines through the clouds.

Our times are in his hands. Who said a whole I plan, trust God, be all, or
be afraid. If we are going to handle our failures, we must accept our situations.
And then we must rise to go out and face them.

I know this morning, you thank the Lord for his blessed assurance. That he has
made us for his own. He has called us to serve. And he will forgive us when we
fail and when we fall short. And he will help us to learn even from our failures.
May we keep the peace in our hearts - rise and go on for his Kingdom's sake.