

The Swamp of Failure**2 Cor. 12:9-10 | 2 Cor. 11:30 | Luke 14:11 | John 16:31-17:5****Ask**, What are some great failures you are familiar with?

If you ain't first, you're last. - Ricky Bobby

In the life of faith, failure is foundational. Our failure leads us to the need of salvation.

Ask, Is there ever any success without failure?**Say**, Michael said that faith without failure is a charade. What comes to mind when you hear that phrase?**Say**, the first point of the sermon is **Weakness and failure are meant to be embraced and not feared.****Read** 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ESV

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Say, What looks like weakness might actually be strength in God's economy.**Ask**, How does failure remind us of our real need of Christ?**Read** 2 Corinthians 11:30 ESV "If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness."**Ask**, How is Failure foundational to our holiness. (It causes us to realize that God is our real strength and true foundation.)**Say**, this is an odd Paradox in God's economy - We do not drift to righteousness so surrendering is a prerequisite to our winning.**Ask**, How have you seen this play out in your life? (Through surrender to God we win at the things that eternally matter.)**Say**, the second point is **Pride wants us to fear humiliation and failure****Ask**, How can humility bring you to strength in your weakness and hope in your failure? (Remind, if needed, that God has some things to say about this.)

Have someone read Luke 14:11 NCV

"All who make themselves great will be made humble, but those who make themselves humble will be made great."

Read Matthew 20:16 ESV "So the last will be first, and the first last."**Ask**, what do you think about this quote? - Failure is God's training ground for humility.- Oswald Sanders**Say**, Failure causes our pride to freak out.**Say**, Pride is what keeps us from the powerful life in Christ.

Ask, How is humility what first brought us to Christ? (We recognize our utter dependence on Someone other than ourselves to live in a way that brings God glory.)

Say, Many times humility is only a temporary condition in our lives. Finding our worth in anything other than who we are in Christ always leads to pride and failure.

Say, the third point of the sermon is **Pride makes life all about you**

Allow the group to share how pride has reared its head in their lives. (Don't allow them to wallow in that pride story, but shift them to the example of Christ as found in this verse -

Read 1 Peter 2:23 ESV

"When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

Say, Humility is the opposite of all the "selfs". And Christ modeled that time and time again.

Say, Pride cannot trust the posture of God and humility is the posture where we allow God to take His rightful place in our lives.

Say, the fourth point from Michael's sermon is **After we fail, self-pity keeps us stuck in the swamp of failure.**

Say, this quote – "Indulging in the luxury of misery" - Oswald Chambers. All of us can identify with this and at times, we have chosen to set up camp in the swamp of failure.

Ask, How is self-pity really arrogance? (We allow the world's definition of "Success" on what you can or cannot do and not focus on what God has already done.

Say, the last point of the sermon is **Faithfulness frees us from the swamp of failure.**

Ask, how do you think the greatest picture of failure to the world is Christ hanging on the cross?

Read John 16:31-17:5 ESV

"Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God." Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

Ask, How is faithfulness the true mark of "success as a believer?" (Our faithfulness trumps our service. At times, we may serve in a way that God has not called us to serve. While it is serving, it is not faithfully serving. Many times God will call us to serve in a way that does not "fit our desire or personality" in order for us to realize that faithfulness and dependence on Him in all things is His plan for us.)

Say, Changing the metric of success to faithfulness is not an easy step. It is not a step that we can take without the power of Christ at work in our lives.

Ask, How can we be praying for and encouraging one another to faithfulness to God in our own lives?