

## Luke 22:47-71 – Good News for failures

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Main Point – The Son of God is faithful when we fail – believe in him and speak of him

In 2016, at my last church, the senior minister asked me to take over coordinating the youth group, until another Youth Worker was appointed.

As I took that on, I had to adjust some other responsibilities, and stop meeting with 2 people I was discipling 1-1.

I'd met with a particular man for over 18 months, and I apologized to him that I couldn't do that anymore.

It seems he took that personally, because he later not only became difficult and angry, but falsely accused me of racism, because he was Asian.

He also complained to the Safe Church Unit.-----

It was a very tough time.-----**(SLIDE)**

I felt stabbed in the back.-----

Someone I'd invested hours into – loving, teaching, training; betrayed me; falsely accused me.

Because what was said of me was not true.-----

While very difficult, it did push me to rely on the Lord.-----

It also reminded me that Jesus knew what this was like, even moreso.

Jesus was betrayed, stabbed in the back by a close friend.

He was let down by all his friends.-----

But actually, we've all let Jesus down. We've all failed him.-----

We all need mercy.

Today we hear good news for failures, good news for all of us.-----

From Luke ch4 last week, we've fast-forwarded to the end of Luke's Gospel, the end of Jesus' earthly life, as we prepare for Good Friday in 12 days time.----

You may remember from Lk 4 how Jesus was rejected by the Jews in his hometown.

Numerous rejections by the Jews would follow that. [Lk6.11,7.34,10.13,11.15,32,39ff,13.34,15.2]

But by **ch19v47 (SLIDE)** and 22.2) they are plotting to kill him.

Back in 4v30 Jesus just walked through the angry mob who wanted to kill him.

Now it's different.

Today Jesus will not try to avoid capture or escape death.

But yet again, we see the Son of God, be rejected, over and over.

We're going to move through the passage and focus on some **key responses to Jesus**.

**The first being, he is Betrayed.(SLIDE)-----**

Earlier in Luke 22(v15) Jesus had eaten his Last Supper with his disciples before he suffers.**(SLIDE)-----**

He'd predicted that one of his disciples would betray him (**v21-22**).

They all think they'll stay faithful.

And yet none of them even stay awake to pray with him and for him, in the Garden of Gethsemane.-----

As Jesus is again asking them to wake up and pray, a mob arrives.

And a story very familiar to most of us, begins.-----

Judas Iscariot, comes near **to kiss** Jesus, which in **v48** Jesus knows.**(SLIDE)-----**

When a couple get married, they kiss.

We may kiss family or friends when we greet them.

It's always a symbol of good and closeness.-----

To 'betray' someone is to give them up, deliver them to their enemy.

And Judas betrays the holiest, best and most loving person who ever lived.-----

Judas does a wicked thing under a show of love.

He was a fake.-----

An enemy in the midst.

Even 'a child of hell'.(J.C. Ryle)-----

What Judas does is very different to Peter's failure, as we will see.

Judas' is intentional.

Judas' sin comes from wickedness; Peter's from weakness.----- [Judas was influenced by the devil (22.3-6, 21) but his deceitful heart was already revealed earlier – Jn 13.21-22]

How do the disciples respond to this betrayal?

Should they surrender, or flee, or fight?-----

It's a loyalty test; Ride or Die moment.

They wonder if it's a fight with swords moment.

And Peter does that (**SLIDE-John 18.10**).

They want to protect Jesus, but what does defending Jesus look like?-----

We learn from Jesus' response that it does not mean violence.

Jesus' kingdom is spread by service, and words, not violence.-----

So Jesus says, "No more." And heals the servant's ear.-----

On that night, to suffer patiently for Christ was much harder than working actively.

And in our lives, to suffer patiently is much harder than working actively.-----

Maybe you know how hard that is.-----

Jesus is no threat to the government. He's not starting a political or violent uprising.

He is the good guy here, but people are blind to that.

For this is the time of the dominion of darkness.

Jesus' arrest under cover of darkness is a symbol of the evil darkness of their hearts and actions.-----

And Jesus is willing to endure this.-----

He stays true to his mission, true to himself; true to his heavenly Father.

He's the only one who stays true and doesn't fail, even when he's betrayed.-----

And like I shared at the start, maybe you know what it's like to be betrayed, betrayed by someone close?-----

The experience of Jesus tells us, he understands; someone you can turn to, and pray to, and trust.-----

### **Next we see Jesus is Denied.(v54-SLIDE)**

The mob of Jewish leaders and authorities arrest Jesus.

And now the spotlight zooms in on Peter, who'd followed the mob at a distance, all the way into courtyard of the high priests' house.-----

Some important things have already happened that don't leave us feeling optimistic.

Back in **v33(SLIDE)** Peter was proudly self-confident that he would go to prison and die with Jesus.

But with the others, Peter kept falling asleep in the Garden.

He wasn't willing to be arrested too.[He fled-Mk 13.50]

Now, setting himself up for failure, Peter, in **v55** sits with the people who'd just come to arrest Jesus.

He mingles with bad company but tries to hide his identity.-----

And three times Peter denies that he even knows Christ, and was one of Jesus' followers.(**SLIDE**)

[In Mark 14.69 the servant girl asks Peter a second time, but perhaps more than one person challenged him at a time?]

Peter fails to be honest, fails to be loyal, and fails to keep his word.-----

His claim to follow Jesus to jail n' death was fake.-----

So often **our fears rule our choices.**(SLIDE)

Like Peter, we fear being rejected by others, and our social group.

We fear being alone.

Or we fear suffering and pain, or death.-----

And **how many times have we failed to be open** that we're Christian?

Open and honest that we live for Jesus?

Open and honest about what he says is true, and good?-----

I remember when **I was in Year 9**, and it got around my high school that I was a Christian, and was thinking about becoming a pastor.

Many Catholics called it a 'priest', and I got the nick-name, "Priesty-boy".

I'm sorry and sad to say, that the mocking I received, led me to keep my mouth shut, and pursue something else.

In God's mercy and kindness he later drew me back on that path.-----

But in Yr 12 I once had a year 8 boy come up and say to me, 'Are you the one who wants to be a priest?'

I shamefully denied it, and said No.-----

And I was convicted of my sin.

Yes, I had wanted to be a pastor not a priest, & had told myself I was too young anyway.

But I didn't speak up for the Lord then or talk about who Jesus is and what he did.

I stayed quiet; I lied, and I failed my Lord.-----

There's been other times when I should have spoken up for Jesus; when I could n' should have said more.

But I choose to say little, or not offend, or not provoke push-back.

Do you know what that's like?-----

Back in Lk 22 **v60** after the third denial, the rooster crows, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy from earlier that night (**v34-SLIDE**).

But Luke's account is the only one which tells us what happened next:

'The Lord turned and looked at Peter'.

Some say a look can tell a thousand words.

Peter had had others look at him 3 times, and he chose self-preservation.

But then came Jesus' look.-----

Do you think this was a look of anger, disapproval or disdain?-----

Like I gave to my young children when they were doing the wrong thing?-----

I think not.

I suspect it was a look of wounded but forgiving love.-----

How do you picture Jesus looking at you when you sin, and fail, and let him down?-----

Forgiving love, and open arms, is what it is. [Rom 5.8; 8.38-39; Jn 6.37; Lk 15.1]-----

In **v62** Peter goes outside and wept bitterly.

The darkness of night reflected the darkness of his own soul, the darkness of his sin, and grief.

We know from John 21 that Peter did repent. He abandoned his pride, returned to the disciples, and accepted his own weakness and failure.

And he was forgiven and restored to relationship with Jesus.

Not doubt Peter was also equipped by this experience to pastor God's people who fail too – no longer being over-confident in his own strength.-----

But I pray we will all see how **we can identify with Peter**, in his failure and shame.

Whether we have rejected Jesus, denied him, failed to love him, or speak the truth about him, we've all failed, all sinned.

We've grieved his loving heart.-----

The wonderful news of the Gospel is that Jesus offers to forgive and embrace us.(SLIDE)

There is infinite mercy from God in Jesus.

Enough to cover all of my sins, and all of yours.-----

Because of what he would go through.

**Briefly, in vv63-65 we see Jesus is Abused.(SLIDE)**

We're told that Jesus was mocked, ridiculed; and beaten.

Jesus was blindfolded as the soldiers played a sick game.

They said other blasphemous things to him, things which put him down, speak evil of and disrespect him.

Do you speak blasphemy about Jesus when you use his name as a swear word, or say "Oh my God", without speaking with true respect for God's name or Jesus' name?-----

Maybe you need to change the way you speak about Jesus too?-----

Jesus is hurt and abused physically, mentally and emotionally.

I wonder which hurt more?-----

But notice that he doesn't use his massive power to retaliate.

He experiences unjust suffering, as he bears the cost of our salvation.

**1 Peter 2 says,(SLIDE)**

<sup>21</sup> Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He did not commit sin, **and no deceit was found in his mouth;**<sup>[1]</sup> <sup>23</sup> when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness.-----

Unlike Peter, Jesus did not deceive, retaliate or hit back.

The truly powerful one, becomes the man of sorrows.

He takes on weakness to save us in our weakness.

He purchases our redemption by his humiliation, and crucifixion.-----

And he becomes an example and inspiration for us all when we endure injustice.-----

Christ is also our example of living faithfully in weakness.

Maybe you personally experience weakness, or sense how weak Christianity is in Aus.

But rather than grumbling that we're not succeeding, or winning, and convincing the masses.

Maybe we just need to wisely speak truth to those around us, with gentleness and respect, whether or not we are believed.-----

**Finally then, we see Jesus is Not Believed.(SLIDE)**

When daylight comes the Jewish leaders formally convene the Sanhedrin – their religious court.

They're like wolves encircling their prey.

Jesus won't tell them openly that he is the Messiah, the Christ.

Because they will not accept the evidence.

They won't accept the truth, so there is no point.

Their hearts are so hard.-----

Their job was to point people to the truth of God's word, but they fail in that.

Any pretense of faithful leadership from them was actually fake.

They just want to maintain their hold on power.-----

Jesus goes on to say that 'the SoM will be seated at the right hand of the power of God'.

They cannot stop it, and one day they will know it to be true.-----

Jesus here actually combines two OT references(SLIDE)Daniel 7.13-14 & Psalm 110.1

After Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension he will sit at God the Father's right hand – a divine position of rule, power and judgement.

Jesus keeps the end in view while he suffers in the present.

If you Christian, are suffering now, you need to keep your future in heaven in mind too.—

**In v70** they ask Jesus if he is the Son of God.

He doesn't tell them straight out, does he?-----

He answers cryptically, or obliquely.

But they get the message.

Remember 'I am' is God's name, the LORD revealed to Moses in **Ex 3(SLIDE,v14)**.

And in **John 8.58** Jesus had earlier said to the Jews,(**SLIDE**)

'Before Abraham was born, I AM.'

Jesus is implicitly accepting the claim to be God.(cf Matt 26.64).

And for them – they don't need more evidence.

He's committed blasphemy and deserves death.

And next week we'll see them seek the death penalty from Pilate.-----

Jesus actually speaks the truth, but he is **not believed**.

The Jewish leaders will not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour.

But it is true, isn't it?-----

So We must not stay quiet about the truth of Jesus.

We must speak it.-----

But can I suggest, that in our culture, we need to **listen to people first.(SLIDE)**

And don't just listen, waiting for your turn to speak.

Don't just listen while you work out how to argue against their view.

Really love, ask questions, and really listen. Then speak.-----

Maybe like **Sally**, chatting with her work-colleague Pam, over lunch.

Pam shared about how another colleague had taken credit for her work, and got a promotion for it. Pam was feeling bitter and resentful.

Sally, listened with care and love. Then Pam asked, 'What should I do?'-----

Instead of just advising Pam to make a formal complaint, or get even, Sally decided to share that she follows Jesus and He doesn't betray people.

In fact he knows what it's like to be betrayed and stabbed in the back.

But instead of going on to share her 6-point memorized Gospel outline, Sally said, "I'm wondering if you've heard much about Jesus?" And Sally listened more.

Later Sally shared that Jesus is the one who has forgiven her for all the times she's failed him. And he's the one who we can turn to when we're finding it hard.-----

Or maybe you could have a situation like this in the next 2 weeks:

**Ethan** was chatting with his friend Jun from uni, and asked if Jun had any plans for the Easter long-weekend.

After listening Ethan asked Jun if he knew why we got public holidays for Easter?

Jun didn't really know. And so Ethan said, "I'm wondering if you've heard much about Jesus before?"

Jun didn't know much, and Ethan asked if Jun would be happy for him to share about what Christians believe about Jesus.-----

You see, we don't defend Jesus with violence, but we can give a defense for him with our words.

As we love and listen to people, the Lord will give us opportunities to confess and **speak the truth** about Jesus.(**SLIDE**)

He is the Son of God and the Saviour.

The one who can bring forgiveness for all our failures.-----

Judas betrayed Jesus.

    Peter repeatedly denied Jesus.

        The soldiers mocked & hit Jesus.

            The Jewish leaders condemned Jesus.

All of them rejected Jesus.-----

And so often we reject and fail Jesus.

But He came to forgive and save people who rejected and failed him.-----

I was hurt by that man who falsely accused me, who I mentioned in my intro.

But I also had to see that I've failed Jesus, and need his forgiveness too.-----

Do you need to admit you've failed the Lord?-----

Maybe you've even been a fake follower of Jesus?

    And you need to repent of that, and trust in him for forgiveness?-----

**Heb 7:25 says(SLIDE)**, Christ is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because Christ always lives to make intercession for us.----

**Dane Ortlund says,(SLIDE)**

We all tend to have some small pocket of our life where we have difficulty believing the forgiveness of God reaches. We say we're totally forgiven, and sincerely believe our sins are forgiven. Pretty much, anyway. But there's that one deep, dark part of our lives, even our present lives, that seems so intractable, so ugly, so beyond recovery. Save completely or to the uttermost, means: God's forgiving, redeeming, restoring touch reaches down into the dark crevices of our souls, those places where we're most ashamed, most defeated. More than that... Christ's heart willingly goes there. He knows us to the uttermost, he saves us to the uttermost, because his heart is drawn out to us to the uttermost. We cannot sin our way out of his tender care.

Christ always living to make intercession for us means, the divine Son never ceases to bring his atoning life, death and resurrection before his Father in a moment-by moment way. Christ continues to intercede in heaven because we continue to fail on earth.

He does not forgive us through his work on the cross then hope we make it the rest of the way.

**Picture a glider,(SLIDE)** pulled up into the sky by an airplane, soon to be released to float down to earth. We are that glider; Christ is the plane. But he never disengages. He never lets us go, wishing us well, hoping we can glide the rest of the way into heaven. He carries us all the way.

This Saviour is worth believing in, isn't he?-----

He is worth speaking about, isn't he?-----

Let's pray