



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 26:69-27:10
KEY POINT: Failures reveal our false foundations

FOR LEADERS

- **Final Week!** *This is our last week of the Winter 2020 Communities Season, and what a crazy one it has been! Spend time this week focused on recounting the season, remembering how God has answered prayer, and just enjoying time with one another.*
- **Spring 2020 Communities Season!** *At this point, we are still planning to begin our Spring 2020 Communities season the week after Easter – beginning Sunday, April 19th. We'll run for a total of 8 weeks, ending the week of Sunday, June 7th. We're assuming that we will still be meeting digitally, so please take time during the break to talk with your group and plan accordingly! Our Communities team is here for any assistance or advice as well.*

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Icebreaker:** What has been your biggest challenge this season, and what's one area that's encouraging?
- [2] Opener:** What stood out to you from the sermon this week? Did you find anything particularly helpful or eye opening?

FALSE HOPE: SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 26:69-75.

Ryan observed that failure reveals the false foundations we stand upon. For Peter, this was the lie of self-sufficiency, that he had everything he needed to be faithful to Jesus within himself, or that his own strength could carry him through. (This is revealed especially in Matthew 26-35)

- [1]** In general, do you think self-sufficiency is typically viewed as a good thing or a bad thing? Explain.
- [2]** How can self-sufficiency be a weakness when it comes to walking with Jesus?
- [3]** How does our culture lead us toward buying into the lie of being self-sufficient?
- [4]** In what ways are you personally tempted to rely on your own self-sufficiency? Has there even been a time where self-sufficiency cause you to fail in your walk with Christ? Explain.

FALSE HOPE: IDOLATRY

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 27:1-10.

In our passage we can see that the false hope Judas stood on was that of idolatry and, in this case, the idolatry of money. We can see aspects of this in Judas' life elsewhere in scripture (specifically the Gospel of John in places like John 12:3-6). Ryan went on to define idolatry as placing "something (anything) above God in our affections," and explained that idols are not always "bad" in and of themselves.

- [5]** What are some examples of things that we are often tempted to idolize?



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[6] While there are certainly many things that would qualify as idols in the human heart, interestingly, the only one the New Testament explicitly names is covetousness (Col 3:5). In what way is covetousness idolatry?

FAILURE: REPENTANCE OR DESTRUCTION?

We know that Peter, who utterly fails Jesus in verses 69-75 is eventually restored and becomes a key leader for the early church. 2 Corinthians 7:10 tells us that “godly grief produces repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” The account of Peter’s denial ends by telling us that “he went out and wept bitterly” (26:75). Judas also, as we see at the beginning of chapter 27, exhibits intense regret, but the difference is that one felt grief over his sin while the other did not.

- [7]** How would you describe the difference between someone whose failure leads to repentance and someone whose failure leads to destruction?
- [8]** In what way(s) can our community with one another help us process our failure and spur us on toward repentance and faithfulness?
- [9]** What do you think Judas could have done differently that may have resulted in a less tragic outcome?
- [10]** This passage reveals a complete failure on the part of religious leadership. As if sentencing Jesus was not enough, here the religious rulers refuse to offer any help to Judas who comes seeking help. In what way does the Church do this today? How can you and I make our church a more Christ-like community in this respect?
- [11]** Have you ever been a part of a community (church, family, job, friends) where failure was not processed in a healthy way? In what way was it destructive? How can we endeavor to model something far better?

PRAYER

- [1]** Pray that the Lord would help you to see your own failures, and deal with them in a way that glorifies Him.
- [2]** Pray that we would be a church that is marked by grace, welcoming all to repentance and life in Christ.



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LEADER'S COMMENTARY

- Peter's denial of Jesus both corresponds and serves as a foil to his faithful confession in Matthew 16:13–20.
- A subtle aspect of the passion narratives in the Gospels that is often missed by modern readers is how much an outsider Jesus was in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, a busy city, was the center of Jewish religious life. Galilee, by way of contrast, was a backwater and a very different culture. Someone from Galilee would have seemed almost like they were from a different country. No doubt, this exacerbated the conflict between Jesus and the religious establishment, and the jealousy they felt towards him. Here was a country bumpkin, going to the temple, pointing out their failures and hypocrisy, presuming to teach them, and implying that he was the true king. Here, notice that Peter's accent betrays him as being from Galilee, and makes his denial much less credible to those he is trying to convince.
- The majority of the quotation in Matthew 27:9 is lifted from Zechariah 11:12–13, yet Matthew attributes it to Jeremiah. It was fairly common in Jewish writings, when using several texts used to form a composite quotation, to cite the more well-known author only, even if the majority of the quotation came from the more obscure writer. This occurs also in Mark 1:2, where Mark combines Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1, but only attributes it to Isaiah. Here, Matthew is quoting mainly Zechariah, but is supplementing it with elements of Jeremiah 32:6–9 and also probably Jeremiah 19, which includes themes such as innocent blood, the potter, the renaming of a location, violence, and judgment and burial.