

## Rejection, dejection and restoration

How many of us mess up in life, feel miserable about it wondering if God would ever forgive us! The world holds us to our past mistakes causing us to wallow in our condemnation. However, we have a Saviour who not only forgives us our past sins and mistakes, but wipes them out and goes on to restore us to what He intended us to be. How Christlike are we towards others who've messed up?

Luke 22:31-34 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,<sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."<sup>33</sup> Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

Luke 22:59-62 After an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean."<sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.<sup>61</sup> And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."<sup>62</sup> And he went out and wept bitterly.

John 21:1-8 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way.<sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.<sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No."<sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.<sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.<sup>8</sup> The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

John 21:15-17 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 love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."<sup>16</sup> He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."<sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

### 1) Good intentions

- Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples along with James and John. However, he was the one who took the most risks, and spoke before he thought about what he was saying.
  - On the mountain when Jesus was transfigured and spoke to Moses and Elijah, it was Peter who wanted to build three shelters for them.
  - When Jesus came walking on the water towards the disciples in the boat, it was Peter who climbed out the boat to walk on the water towards Jesus.
  - It was Peter who said that he would never deny Jesus, but would even be imprisoned and even die with Jesus.
  - It was Peter who defended Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane by cutting off the ear of the High Priest's servant.
- Peter was like most of us with good intentions but without realising our limitations of ability to follow through on those intentions or our knowledge of God's will in specific situations.
- While Peter was speaking about putting up shelters on the mountain, a voice said, "This is my Son, listen to Him."
  - In other words, don't do whatever you think you should do. Listen to Jesus and do what He wants you to do.
- Matthew 21:28-31 "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I will, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first."

## 2) Rejection

- Jesus knew about Peter's intentions but also knew his weaknesses.
  - He knew that Peter would reject Him before He did so regardless of Peter's claims to even die with and for Him
- Not only did Jesus know that Peter would deny Him, but He also prayed for Peter that He would be restored after his denial
  - Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."
  - Notice that Jesus didn't pray that Peter wouldn't fail, but that his faith wouldn't fail.
  - God allows us to fail so that we can recognise our frailties and dependence on Him.
- After Jesus is arrested most the disciples run away and scatter, but Peter still follows Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest.
  - However, he follows at a distance trying to remain obscure
- He is recognised by three different people who identify him as having been associated with Jesus
  - Peter then denies Jesus three times before the cock crows, just as Jesus had said.
  - Jesus just turned and looked at Peter
- How openly do we identify with Jesus?
  - Not wanting to be identified with Jesus often precedes rejecting and denying Him when confronted?
  - Are we like Peter who said that he would never deny Jesus but then did so when confronted?
  - Is your lifestyle one that reflects our association with Jesus or one that denies Him?

## 3) Dejection

- Luke 22:61-62 And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.
- Peter had a godly remorse in what he had done, unlike Judas' remorse that led to him committing suicide
  - Matthew 27:1-5 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. <sup>2</sup> So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.
  - <sup>3</sup> When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. <sup>4</sup> "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."
  - "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."
  - <sup>5</sup> So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.
- 2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.
  - Godly sorrow is a conviction of the Holy Spirit of your wrongdoing that leads a person to get right with God
  - I hear of Christians who are living in guilt because they feel so sinful.
  - Don't live in guilt; if you have repented of sin then accept God's forgiveness; if you haven't, then be thankful for the Holy Spirit showing you your sin so you can repent and be forgiven
- Sometimes dejection can also be caused by a sense of hopelessness that causes us to go back to where we came from, as Peter did when he went fishing again – the profession that he had left behind when Jesus called him.

## 4) Restoration

- Jesus never condemned Peter for going fishing. Nothing that Peter had done took Jesus by surprise
- In fact, Jesus causes him, and the others, to become more successful by providing them with a good catch of fish, then preparing a fish breakfast for them on the beach
  - In His restoration Jesus met them where they were at rather than rebuking them
  - He first focused on restoring their confidence in Him
- Jesus took Peter aside and restored His relationship with him asking him if he loved Him.
  - He went back to basics showing Peter that He still loved Peter
  - He went on to restore His trust in Peter by asking him to feed His sheep
- Jesus had moved on from forgiveness to full restoration of relationship and task
  - When someone messes up, do we hold it against them or do we restore relationship as well as tasks given
  - Do we give them an opportunity to be trusted again?
- We ought to be like Jesus, not only in forgiving people who've messed up, but in full restoration of relationship and task