

HOMILY – HOW DO I SUCCEED AFTER I HAVE FAILED & LET PEOPLE DOWN? - 10 APRIL 2016

How do I succeed after I have failed and let people down?

It is a question we can all ask.

Let us look at today's Gospel from John 21.

Back in John 14 Peter says to Jesus,

*“Lord, why can I not follow you now?
I will lay down my life for you.”*

And Jesus answers him,

*“Will you lay down your life for me?
Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.”*

This is Simon whom Jesus has named Peter, ROCK.

This is Peter, who had been dependable, a leader, loyal, honest.

Now he has FAILED BIG TIME.

(Think of someone now who is a rock for you, and that person lets you down.
Think of someone who trusts you – you are their rock – and you let them down.
Pause and think for a moment.)

Peter tried to defend Jesus by turning to violence in John 18:10 when he drew his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus.

Even the fact that Peter had a sword with him, shows he is worried.

But VIOLENCE WAS NOT the ANSWER.

Jesus tells him to put his sword back in its sheath.

Jesus is taken away.

Another disciple and Peter follow Jesus.

The other disciple goes through the gate then comes back, speaks to the woman at the gate, and gets the okay for Peter to go inside too.

WHAT does Peter, the ROCK, the LEADER, and loyal APOSTLE do???

Peter denies Jesus in the Gospel of John 18:17, 18:25 and 18:27.

He now deserts JESUS during his passion and crucifixion.

He has failed, as a leader, to be a role model.

Failed to inspire the apostles, failed to challenge them.

Failed to trust God.

Failed himself. Failed God.

Yet some didn't fail Jesus.

Mary the mother of Jesus, some of the women disciples,

And the disciple of John's community were there for Jesus.

How can you get your life together after that?

How can you look others in the eye?

How can you forgive yourself?

How do you let others forgive you?

How do you let God forgive you?

And now we come back to today's Gospel.

Peter and some of the other disciples have seen the risen Christ in Jerusalem.

They have received the peace of Jesus.

Now they are fishing up in Galilee.

Jesus calls them to cast out the net to the right side of the boat.

It is through FOLLOWING the DIRECTION of JESUS that they make a huge catch.

Lesson 1. BE HUMBLE

–it is God who makes the call, not ourselves, not our own ego.

We work with Jesus, to his invitation.

As church, we need to REMEMBER this continually.

Lesson 2. SPEND TIME WITH JESUS.

Jesus invites them ashore, around the charcoal fire.

Jesus invites us too.

Lesson 3. JESUS WILL FORGIVE US.

Jesus has used the charcoal fire as a symbol.

Remember Peter, warming himself at the charcoal fire while during his time of denying Jesus.

And Peter denies Jesus three times.

Jesus will now challenge Peter three times,

“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Do you love me?”

Jesus helps Peter REMEMBER, forgives him and commissions him.

How does he forgive him?

He has already offered him peace back in Jerusalem.

NOW he calls him TO LOVE.

Sometimes we feel so bad when we fail; our grief can be all about ourselves.

Jesus invites us TO REMEMBER.

Jesus forgives us in love,

Asks us if we love him,

And waits for us to tell him of our love for him.

And calls us in our daily lives, our work, our mission through baptism TO LOVE.

If we mess up, turn back to God in love.
Be honest with God.
God will help us through it.
God showed MERCY to Peter.
God will show MERCY to us.

On Friday 8th April 2016, Pope Francis issued his Exhortation on THE JOY OF LOVE.
He had signed it on the feast of St Joseph, March 19th.

I think of Peter before Jesus when I read these words from Pope Francis in the document:

"I encourage the faithful who find themselves in complicated situations to speak confidently with their pastors or with other lay people whose lives are committed to the Lord."

Pope Francis encourages,

"...the Church's pastors to listen to them with sensitivity and serenity, with a sincere heart to understand their plight and their point of view, in order to help them live better lives ..."

The Pope's Exhortation is over 260 pages on love and mercy.
On Mercy he says,

"mercy does not exclude justice and truth, but first and foremost we have to say that mercy is the fullness of justice and the most radiant manifestation of God's truth."

How do I succeed after I have failed and let people down?

What do we mean by **succeed**?

How did Peter succeed after he failed and let Jesus and the disciples down?

Jesus loved him with the fullness of MERCY.

Jesus invited him to remember.

Remembrance brings humility and repentance.

FORGIVEN, LOVED and COMMISSIONED TO LOVE.

Let us pray.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Homily – How do I succeed after I have failed and let people down?
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[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041016.cfm>]