

Date: _____



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Character Shapers Series, Lesson 51

Lesson Title: Facing Failures

Take Home Point: God can lift your past failures and use them for his purposes today.

Warm-Up:

One of my co-workers is an amazing person. He doesn't make mistakes. Ever. His work is always exactly right, never needing correction or improvement. He gets very defensive if someone suggests a change to his products. He always makes right and fair decisions, and will endlessly battle anyone who disagrees or takes a different position. His attitude is always good, his relationships with others are always positive, and his integrity is unassailable. These attributes are all true – from his perspective. Not surprisingly, if you ask other co-workers, the story is different. It is unfortunate that he believes and acts this way. Because his work is always perfect, there is no room for improvement. He is unteachable. Which means he is also mostly unusable for any but his own purposes.

Read: Romans 8:28-34; Acts 25; Revelation 12:10

Observation (What happened?):

What accusation or charge is great enough to be greater than the God who justifies?

How were the plans of the Jewish leaders and of Festus used for God's purpose?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What do you think Romans 8:30 means?

Why do you think Paul decided to appeal to Caesar?

Insight:

The Bible is stuffed with accounts of people failing and God using that failure in amazing ways to accomplish his purposes. There is no question that we are all failures. We can hardly move without sinning, hurting someone else, or failing in some other way. Satan knows this, better than we do, so when he makes his accusations, they may be accurate. Of course, as the father of lies, they may not. But it doesn't matter, because for those who believe, Jesus stands right with us before God saying, "I paid the penalty; it is forgiven. The charge cannot stand." And the Father says, "Case dismissed." There is so much we don't understand about God's ways of using us in spite of and through our failures. We need to be careful that our feelings of failure or inadequacy don't overwhelm us and so hinder God from using us. There is an old axiom that goes: "Man proposes but God disposes." Though we sin and fail, God is greater than all and uses especially our failures to demonstrate his grace in us and through us. Our responsibility is to live and respond in trust no matter what we do or don't do or what happens.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What difficult circumstance are you in due to your own sin or failure? How are you letting God work to use it for his purposes?

How do you respond when Satan accuses you of your sin and failure? How can you respond?

Kingdom Quest year 2