

Pastor David's notes for 4/17-18/2010

Pushing Back The Darkness

# Responding to Defeat

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

"What do I see? They are terrified, they are retreating, their warriors are defeated. They flee in haste without looking back, and there is terror on every side," declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 46:5

"The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers."

1 Corinthians 6:7-8

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

Proverbs 15:22

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Luke 22:31-32

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"Responding to Defeat"

All of us experience failure, each of us knows times of defeat. How we respond to such times will either bring more light or darkness into our lives. We do not want to respond to defeat in the typical way:

1. with paralysis
2. with a wider assignment of blame
3. with increasing fear
4. with isolation

We will find "the light of life" in the face of defeat when we respond:

1. with self-examination and adjustment
2. with renewed determination
3. with deeper reliance on God

next week: Pushing Back the Darkness - "Refusing Despair"



# CONNECTION QUESTIONS

for personal study & individual reflection,  
and small group discussion & comment

“Responding To Defeat” - John 8:1-12; Luke 22:24-34;  
1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Jeremiah 46:5

1. The Bible is not a white-washed storybook full of heroes without flaws. It is an open and honest account of real people in real relationship with the real God. All of the Bible’s greatest heroes, like Abraham, Moses, David, Peter and Paul, knew failure and defeat as well as triumph and success. If times of failure are common to all our lives then how we respond to our defeats will in great measure define the people we become and the life we lead. What are some of the places where we can meet failure? What do people typically do when they experience defeat?

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2. In Jeremiah 46:5, the Prophet speaks of the fear and terror that accompany great defeat. For many the experience of failure or defeat brings increasing fear and paralysis into their lives. They stop trying to succeed in important ways out of a fear of failure and an expectation of defeat. Can you think of examples where people have not allowed defeat to make them quit, and they came back to win? Why do those stories inspire us? What do we need to learn from such examples?

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3. When speaking to Peter about his coming defeat in the dark hours of Jesus’ arrest, Jesus told him that Satan wanted to “sift him as wheat” and see what his faith contained (Luke 22:31-32). How does defeat test us and reveal what is really true in our hearts? Why is defeat an important place to lay a foundation of truth and humility?

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4. Jesus prayed for Peter in the testing of his will and courage that “his faith may not fail” (Luke 22:32). If financial losses, moral failures, relational setbacks, career defeats, health crises, or family disappointments cause your faith to fail, then you have suffered loss on the deepest level. By God’s grace so many of our failures and defeats can be overcome, reversed, or resolved. But if we do not have faith in Christ, who does not abandon us in our failure and shame, to lead us forward from defeat, we are trapped in a formidable darkness by our circumstances. For Peter pushing back that darkness meant returning from his defeat and “strengthening” his brothers. Where is your faith being tested right now in terms of failure and defeat? How would God have you “turn back” and move past the pitfalls of defeat?

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5. Proverbs 15:22 says that a lack of “counsel” contributes to failure but well thought out advice leads to success. Who advises you on the things you most want to succeed in doing? How do you receive that advice?

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