Believe!
The Gospel of John
PART SIX —— JOHN 17:1-21:25

Phenomenal Failure

Pastor Jeff Bucknam | John 18:1–27

For a brief recap, the sermon was about “Phenomenal Faithfulness and Failure”

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help with group and family discussion, or for personal reflection. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

Icebreaker

Describe your perfect fall day. Or share a favorite childhood memory from the fall.

Understanding the Text in Context

After His “High Priestly Prayer” (John 17), Jesus and the disciples leave to a garden. Read John 18:1-27 together. As you read, make a mental note of the contrasts between the actions and reactions of Peter and Jesus. Discuss those contrasts together.

Old Testament background helps us. Read the scripture and discuss how it brings clarity:

- “I am” (from John 18:5-6) – Exodus 3:13-15; 1 Kings 18:37-39; Ezekiel 3:22-23.
- “Cup” (from John 18:11) – Psalm 75:7-8; Jeremiah 25:15-17

Connecting to Jesus and His Gospel

Jesus drank the “cup” that the “Father has given him” (John 18:11). What are the astronomical implications for us because Jesus died in our place (see Rom 3:23-26; 2 Cor 5:21; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10-11)?

John contrasts Jesus’ faithfulness with Peter’s denials. How does this contrast show why we need

more than determination or promises to do better? Why is Jesus' faithfulness good news for people who recognize themselves in Peter?

In John 18:18, 25–27, Peter stands by a charcoal fire and denies Jesus. In John 21:9, 15–19, the risen Jesus meets him beside another charcoal fire and restores him. How does comparing these two scenes show what Jesus' death and resurrection make possible for people who have failed Him?

Living Out the Truth

Peter was confident in his commitment to Jesus (John 13:37-38), yet denied Him when following became costly. In what situations are you most tempted to compromise your faith or distance yourself from Jesus?

Jesus remained faithful to the Father even when obedience meant suffering. What is one area of your life where you struggle to trust God's way over your own desires, plans, or instincts?

Jesus didn't abandon Peter in his failure but graciously restored him. How does knowing that Jesus can restore us despite our failures change the way you respond to your own sin, guilt, or shortcomings?

Pray for one another.

Parenting Moment and Family Focus

Read the passage with your children. Jesus knew what was going to happen (John 18:4), but He didn't run away. What does this teach us about Jesus?

Jesus stands firm in the truth while Peter is scared to tell the truth. When can it be hard to tell the truth, and why is it important to be honest about our faith in Jesus? Encourage one another and pray together.

Further Study

Read some articles:

- A Savior Stepped Forward
- The Cup Consumed for Us
- Scripture's Answer to Our Waywardness and Wandering

Listen to the "Betrayal and Arrest" at the Symphony of Scripture.

In your John Study Journals, look ahead to next week's sermon and text for John 18:18–19:42: "The Pressure of Authority," "True Obedience," and "From Darkness to Light."