

# Failure

08 May 2022

## Call to Worship Psalm 30

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up,  
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

**O LORD my God, we cried to you for help, and you have healed us.**

Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name.

**For his anger is but for a moment; his favour is for a lifetime.**

**Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.**

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth  
and clothed me with joy,

**So that our soul may praise you and not be silent.**

**O LORD our God, we will give thanks to you forever.**

## Thank You for every new good morning

*Martin Gotthard Schneider*

Thank you for every new good morning

Thank you for every fresh new day

Thank you that I may cast my burdens

Wholly on to you

Thank you for every friend I have, Lord

Thank you for everyone I know

Thank you when I can feel forgiveness

To my greatest foe

Thank you for leisure and employment

Thank you for every heartfelt joy

Thank you for all that makes me happy

And for melody

Thank you for every shade and sorrow

Thank you for comfort of your Word

Thank you that I am guided by you

Everywhere I go

Thank you for grace to know your gospel

Thank you for all your Spirit's power

Thank you for your unfailing love  
Which reaches far and near

Thank you for full and free salvation  
Thank for grace to hold it fast  
Thank you, O Lord, I want to thank you  
That I'm free to thank

### Prayer

Thank you, Lord God, for the opportunity of worship,  
for the freedom to be amongst your family  
meeting together in your house,  
and in the warmth of your embrace

### Reading 1                  John 21:1-3

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. <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.

### Reflection

What do you do when you are confused or upset and need to think? Perhaps you work in the garden. Or work on a model you've been building. Maybe you cook or sew or paint or walk. You might put on your overalls and work on your car or go out and build something. Or you might go fishing...

There's been a lot going on in our lives lately. Jesus is back. But what does that mean? Where do I fit in all of this? Does Jesus remember how I behaved back then? What happens next? So much to think about. I need to find a safe space to let it all work through. Somewhere I am comfortable and can relax. I think I will go fishing.

### Prayer

Thank you that in worship we can put aside,  
the uncertainties of this world and rest  
upon the certainties of the Kingdom,  
for your promises are not changeable  
as those of a politician might be,  
but immovable and eternal

## Reading 2

John 21:4-6

<sup>4</sup> Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” <sup>6</sup> He said to them, “Cast the net to 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 there were so many fish.

## Reflection

I know, I know. We didn't catch a single thing. It's like the fish just vacated the sea. But in the end, it wasn't about catching fish, it was about throwing out all the stuff in my head along with the nets. Don't get me wrong. We worked hard – even an empty net needs effort and focus. But that wasn't really the point. So when we began to head in to shore with an empty boat it wasn't really so bad. Disappointing, but nothing major.

You can imagine our surprise when the stranger called to us from the shore. I thought he had come down to buy some fresh fish. We said we had none, and then he said the strangest thing. ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat. Now don't get me wrong, there's some pretty smart people around, but we know what we are doing. We know the fish won't suddenly turn up because the net appears on the other side of the boat – it's only a couple of metres anyway. But hey, we haven't caught anything all night and it's not hard to throw the net out one last time...

## Prayer

Thank you that we can bring to your feet  
all the hurts and fears that trouble us,  
and leave them there,  
knowing that your strength and assurance  
are all that we require

## Reading 3

John 21:7-8

<sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. <sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

## Reflection

Ummm, what just happened there? Nothing all night, and then this? Weird doesn't begin to describe it. And then one of the guys recognises the stranger on the beach and yells out that it is Jesus standing there. I hate to admit it, but I had a brain explosion. I grabbed some clothes, jumped in and got to shore as fast as I could – an epic 100m dogpaddle if I say so myself. The other guys could bring in the fish, I wanted to see Jesus. How did he know we were here? Thinking back, I guess it's kind of obvious, but right then it seemed like a miracle all on its own.

Once I got there, I didn't know what to say. That's right, foot-in-mouth Peter, speechless. There's another miracle for you right there. But just between you and me, I don't even know why he turned up, after all, we've not exactly been model disciples. But just being there, with him. It was peaceful and somehow I felt better about me.

## Prayer

Thank you that as we draw near in worship,  
we are transported  
from a world of concerns and fears,  
to a place where we can be at peace in your presence,  
find healing, wholeness, and refreshment.  
Thank you, Lord God, for the opportunity of worship

## Reading 4                      John 21:9-11

<sup>9</sup>When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." <sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn.

## Reflection

Breakfast. Man, that smells good! Made me wonder what the women were doing, but I suspect he had already spent some time with them and now it was our turn. There was already food cooking but Jesus asked for some more fish. I went and dragged the net ashore. It was heavy. Very heavy. You try pulling 150 fish around in a net and you'll soon see what I mean. And here's something else. Our nets are only rated for 95 fish. How on earth that many fish didn't rip it to shreds is beyond me. I think I might pick up another one next time I'm in town. The other guys were just standing around, not sure what to say. I guess

we were all kind of weirded out at what was going on. And, to be honest, a little bit afraid of what he might say.

### Prayer

We are sorry that our thankfulness is so limited  
Often forgotten in the midst of stress and fear  
Hear us as we bring our confessions to you.

### Reading 5                      John 21:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

### Reflection

We all came and sat down around the fire. Nobody was saying much. You could tell everyone had a million questions but didn't want to be the first to sound stupid by asking them. Jesus brought the food around to each of us. It was a little like that night in the upper room – that seemed like a lifetime ago. He said a few words to each person as he went. I didn't hear any of that, it was all a bit of a haze. He got to me, and I just wanted to say sorry. I was so sorry for not being there for him. Sorry for being such an ass when things got tight. Sorry for being afraid. Sorry for, well, for everything. He just looked me in the eye, and said, 'Here, have some breakfast, we'll talk once you've eaten.'

### Prayer

Children of God, the Gospel has not offered you more anxiety and shame, but grace, peace, and joy. Accept the gifts of God and live with the freedom and resilience of those who are destined for the highest service. Amen.

### Open the eyes of my heart

*Paul Baloche*

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord  
Open the eyes of my heart  
I want to see You  
I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up  
Shining in the light of Your glory  
Pour out Your power and love

As we sing holy, holy, holy

Holy, holy, holy

We cry holy, holy, holy

You are holy, holy, holy

I want to see you

## Reading 2                      John 21:15-19

### *Jesus and Peter*

<sup>15</sup> 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.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup> A second time he said to him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus 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 felt hurt 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. <sup>18</sup> Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” <sup>19</sup> (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

### Reflection 2

What does it mean to be a failure? What is failure? How does it feel to fail? What is the difference between failing and being a failure? These are all valid questions, and the answers are important. But in the midst of experiencing failure they are little or no help at all. Very few of us can simultaneously hold both the close-up and the wide view at the same time. Most of the time we are keenly focussed on one or the other. So it is with failure. Generally we are so focussed on what has gone wrong that we lose sight of everything else. I suspect that Peter was lost in his failure. His behaviour when Jesus showed up on the beach lacks all sense of proportion. This was the third time he had seen Jesus. The fishermen knew Jesus was alive and turning up at odd places and times. There was no real surprise in him appearing on the beach. Yet Peter’s reaction would almost suggest this was the first time he had seen Jesus alive. That can best be explained by grief fed by his sense of having failed Jesus and in that failing becoming a failure.

I also suspect that many of us can find ourselves lost in our failures. They may be failures in relationships, or in business, parenting, or finance, or any of a myriad other places in our lives where things haven't gone to plan. Does failing make me a failure? Not at all. Can I still get lost in my failure? Absolutely. Jesus knew that Peter was stuck in his failure. He saw that no matter how Peter tried to hide it the sense of being a failure was overwhelming him. Jesus wasn't concerned about the failing. He was concerned that Peter did not come to define himself by that failing. He wants to break that connection between, 'I have failed,' and, 'I am a failure.' Peter had failed. He was not, 'A Failure.' Now see what Jesus does. Three times he asks Peter, 'Do you love me?' Do you think Jesus was wondering if Peter really loved him? Of course not. But Peter was wondering. He needed to hear his own answer. 'Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.' Perhaps someone today is wondering. You feel like a failure – maybe for something recent, or for something long ago. It won't let you go. Jesus is asking, 'Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me?' Listen for your answer. 'Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.' You are not, have never been a failure in Christ.

### We Pray

Redeeming God, we live with a constant sense of failure. Your Word reminds us that we are a new creation in Christ, the old has passed away and the new has come. Help us to find that re-creation in the midst of our failure and to find Christ at our centre. Gift us your Holy Spirit at work in us and through us as we are transformed to answer, 'Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.' Amen.

### It is well with my soul

*Horatio Gates Spafford, Philip Paul Bliss*

When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say,  
"It is well, it is well with my soul!"

It is well with my soul!

It is well, it is well with my soul!

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to His Cross, and I bear it no more;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend  
Even so, it is well with my soul

### Offering

Redeeming God, many of us have no fish. Those of us who have fish hold on to them tightly lest we suddenly find need and have nothing. Yet you have an abundance of fish, waiting for us to hear your call and move with it. As we bring our gifts and offerings today, may we freely give not just out of our plenty, but out of our need, looking to you to take it and make it more than we could ever imagine. May the gifts we give this morning be just the beginning of our availability to be your tools for bringing about the world you desire. We pray it in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

### Prayer for ourselves and others

*Rev. Beth Richardson, Dean Emeritus of The Upper Room Chapel*

God makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. ...

God breaks the bow and shatters the spear;

God burns the shields with fire.

God says, “Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth.”

*Psalms 46:9-10 (NRSV)*

God of peace,

Russia has invaded the Ukraine and war is upon them, and upon us.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

God of wisdom,

Rain down your Spirit onto the leaders of the world

That they might find a way where there is no way.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

God of comfort,



Wrap the grieving ones in your cloak of consolation.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

God of courage,

Be present with all those who are in harm's way.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

God with us,

Hear our prayers for ourselves, for those we love and hold dear,

For those who wrestle with the simple things of life

For the sick and the infirm.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Amen.

## O Come to the Altar

*Steven Furtick*

Are you hurting and broken within

Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin

Jesus is calling

Have you come to the end of yourself

Do you thirst for a drink from the well

Jesus is calling

O come to the altar

The Father's arms are open wide

Forgiveness was bought with

The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Leave behind your regrets and mistakes

Come today there's no reason to wait

Jesus is calling

Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy

From the ashes a new life is born

Jesus is calling

Oh what a Saviour

Isn't He wonderful

Sing alleluia, Christ is risen

Bow down before Him

For He is Lord of all  
Sing alleluia, Christ is risen

Bear your cross as you wait for the crown  
Tell the world of the treasure you've found

### Communion

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.

**And God saw that it was good.**

God created the sky and the land and the land produced plants of every kind.

**And God saw that it was good.**

God created the sun, the moon and the stars and filled the waters and the land with living creatures.

**And God saw that it was good.**

God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

**God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.**

Then God rested on the 7th day

But we took the good God had done for granted. More than that, we broke the good relationship God had designed between us and the creation, between each other and between us and God. We set ourselves apart as better than, more than, greater than, all that God had made.

**We made ourselves gods in our own image**

But God had a plan to restore our broken relationships.

Jesus, God's only Son came to live among us

**to proclaim good news to the poor,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour  
to comfort all who mourn,  
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—**

And we spurned him, nailing him to a tree, preferring our brokenness to his promise of wholeness.

So God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

This Jesus, who gave his life to bring us back into relationship with God, is the Jesus we remember whenever we celebrate communion.

This Jesus taught us how to pray...

**Our Father in Heaven holy be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen**

*We invite you, Holy Spirit, to transform these elements, the bread and wine, symbols of Jesus' life given for us, that as we share in this meal together we also might be transformed, becoming a little more Christlike in our words and in our behaviour day by day.*

*The night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this to remember me.*

*After supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this as often as you drink it, to remember me.*

Therefore heavenly Father, in this sacrament of the suffering and death of your Son, we now celebrate the wonder of your grace and proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**Christ has died,**

**Christ has risen,  
Christ will come in glory.**

*Redeemer God, rich in mercy, infinite in goodness, we were far off until you brought us near and our hands are empty until you fill them. As we eat this bread and drink this cup, through the power of your Holy Spirit feed us with your heavenly food, renew us in your service, unite us in Christ, and bring us to your everlasting kingdom.*

## How great is our God

*Chris Tomlin*

The splendour of a king, clothed in majesty  
Let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice  
He wraps Himself in light and darkness tries to hide  
And trembles at His voice, trembles at His voice

How great is our God  
Sing with me how great is our God  
And all will see  
How great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands and time is in His hands  
Beginning and the end, beginning and the end  
The Godhead Three in One, Father, Spirit and Son  
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names, worthy of all praise  
My heart will sing how great is our God

## Benediction and Grace

As we go on from here may we leave behind any sense of being a failure and claim our place in Christ with a powerful and heartfelt, 'Yes, Lord.'

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.