

**WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO FAIL**  
**Confirmation Sunday/ Communion –I Corinthians 1: 18-30 –June 1, 2014**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

I attended a prayer breakfast where Jim Ryun, when I was young “the fastest man in the world”, was speaking. He was the one who broke all the world’s records for running the fastest mile. I thought it was going to be a story of how great he was and how hard he worked in order to succeed. Actually, it was a story of how often he failed –the geeky kid who couldn’t get a date, the high school student who was cut from the track team, the runner of great promise who when he went to the Olympics ran second and a Silver medal was seen by the world as failure. It was then a story of rebuilding his life and how he went on to be elected to Congress from the state of Kansas. Standing before us was a great soul, a man of God, a person who could give credit to His Lord for his successes, but a man who had allowed God to bring him through his failures. At one point he noted how important it was to fail in your life; because then you discover the things in life that are truly important; and who you really are.

I’ve heard a lot of graduation speeches over the years and mostly I don’t remember a one of them. Most of them tell us to “seize the day” and how “all of life is ahead of us”; how we are going to make a difference. But I’ve never heard one on the importance of knowing how to fail.

When we mess up, and all of us will in our lives, it is then we learn who is truly in charge of the universe –God is and we are not. When we fail, and at some point we all will because that’s the way life is, we learn who our true friends really are; we learn who truly loves us. Fake friends are only there when everything is victory; true friends are there for you on the worst day of your life. When life doesn’t work out the way we planned and we see ourselves as a failure, and all of us will, it will make us humble and kinder, more ready to forgive the failures in others, we don’t take ourselves quite as seriously any more. When we fail and we will all fail at some point, God will take our failure and make something beautiful out of it if we allow HIM to be at work in our life. God can use something that the world perceives as failure for our good and then through us to help others through their failures in life, as well. And when we fail, and when God does a work of restoration in our life we learn gratitude to God –“Thank you, Lord, that you didn’t just kick me to the curb like a lot of the world has done, but out of your mercy and grace you have restored me to new life through Your Son, Jesus Christ”. All of these reasons are the reason it is important to fail.

What is sad is how many young people think they shouldn’t ever fail. They place an unreasonable standard of perfection on themselves. They place impossible burdens on themselves –if their girlfriend dumps them then life is over; if they don’t get into the right school then there’s no reason to live; if they get a bad grade, if they don’t make the team, if some friend turns on them, if they aren’t popular, etc., etc., etc. then it makes sense to get a gun and go to a school and start shooting people; then you stab your roommates and ram your BMW into people trying to kill them; then you decide that life is not worth living and you think it is better to take your own life than to fail. When we fail, and we will all fail at some time or other, it is then we need to know how to fail, how to turn to God, how to be restored and how to come back from failure that makes us stronger and better people. If anyone ever is tempted to do something self destructive then come and talk to me because I will share with you all the times I have failed and all the times God has brought me back and I will tell you that there is always a reason to live because we always have hope in a gracious and merciful God. Choose LIFE. Choose GOD. Choose to learn HOW TO FAIL and COME BACK. It is important to fail because it is important to learn that with God it is never over. I’m your pastor and I am here to show you how much God loves you. So if you ever need me, if you ever need someone to speak with, if you ever need to see how God can bring you back,

how God will provide a way where there seems to be no way, then you come in and we'll talk and you'll discover the way God is with us, and especially when we fail. Jesus IS the WAY (where there seems to be no way) and the TRUTH (you are special and beloved in His sight ALWAYS) and HE always leads to the LIFE --in HIM, always in HIM (John 14: 7). Our scripture notes: *"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised..." (I Corinthians 1: 27-28)* God chooses us in the midst of our failures, God chooses us not when we are strong but in our weakness, God chooses us not because we have everything figured out but precisely because we don't know everything, God chooses us in our D- moments, not in our A+ moments; God intervenes in our life, not when we just won the prize, but when we are hurting and down because we have just figured out that no matter how hard we try we're never going to win the prize. This is the central message of Christianity. This is the message in the cross of God's Son, Jesus Christ. This is the Son of God hanging on a cross on Good Friday, this is the whole world mocking Him and scorning Him and making fun of Him, bullying the love of God and nailing it to a tree. Jesus' enemies triumphed over Him on Good Friday; He was a failure. His disciples deserted Him and all fled away. Failure, failure, failure was on Good Friday. His spiritual movement was over; He was finished and done. No one could look at the cross on that first Good Friday and see anything other than failure. As the Apostle Paul writes: *"The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* (I Corinthians 1: 18) Because God took the failure of the cross and by His love and mercy and power turned it into the victory of Easter and the power of new life and resurrection escaped from the tomb. It looked like it was over, but it is NEVER over with God. God is in the restoration business. God is the One who brings us back from the failures in life. If God would do that for His Son why wouldn't He do that for us, His adopted sons and daughters, why wouldn't He do that for us?. He takes and embraces our failures and our sins and our failings, our inadequacies and our worst days and turns them upside down and transforms them by the power of His love.

You'll never experience that in your life if you never fail. If for whatever reason you manage to get to the end of your life and have never really screwed up royally, with complete egg on your face, disappointing others, letting people you care about down, thinking you could never come back from this one, imagining that there is no hope and so much of life is, then you would never fully understand why it is important to fail. Because God chooses what is weak in the world to pour His love into. God chooses the foolishness of the perceived failure of His Son's cross to win your heart for HIM today!

Come to the cross, come to this table, find the place of ultimate and complete love and acceptance, and be restored in the midst of the failures of life. You all will travel many paths in life, you all will have successes and failures along the way, but I ask you as you go, please, never to forget WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO FAIL and never forget the God whose love brings us back from failure EVERY TIME. Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*