

A Righteous Man Falls

Proverbs 24

16 For a righteous man falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

- Righteous men fall. Any believer who truly loves The Lord and has a heart after Him is all too painfully aware of this. Falling is a bitter and sorrowful reality of this earthly life. The closer we draw to The Lord the more we see our lack and the greater these falls can seem.
- Those who fall find themselves in a hole; a swampy mire which only draws deeper down and is impossible to climb out of. The dirt leaves a stain, a dirty mark on a testimony/reputation. The fall leaves a wound that quickly becomes infected. Blemishes of guilt, shame, frustration, self-pity, bitterness... These infections grow and become defining characteristics of what was once a righteous, holy life. Once fallen, focus is immediately on self-preservation. They are distracted from God's word, from His love and provision from His loving correction. They forget God's promises.
- **GILL:** *these (righteous men) often fall either into troubles or into sins, and indeed into both, and the one is the cause of the other;*
- God's word is full of examples of God's people, righteous men, falling... Falling from the place of blessing, falling from the place of communion and fellowship, falling from the place of joy, peace and service.
- The message The Lord has put on my heart this morning is to encourage someone who may have fallen. Someone who recognises that they are in a hole, stained by sin, their testimony tarnished and communion with The Lord broken. Falling is a sad reality, and consequences are real and often severe... But brother or sister I'm here to tell you that you can get up!!

We read in Ecclesiastes 7:20 that there is not a just man in all the earth that does good and sins not. Daily and frequently this flesh life is prone to falling and therefore a man stands every day in need of fresh repentance and fresh cleansing, for which we are directed to pray daily! Sometimes these falls may be into very gross sins, as David, Peter, and others; but just like with these men, The Lord is longing for us to get up!

PETER'S FALL

Luke 22

31 *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,*
32 *But I have prayed especially for you [Peter], that your [own] faith may not fail; and when you yourself have returned, strengthen and establish your brethren.*
33 *And [Simon Peter] said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.*
34 *But Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, before a [single] cock shall crow this day, you will three times [utterly] deny that you know Me.*

- Sometimes we are in desperate need to be reminded that The Lord knew all along! He knows! He saw it coming and yet He has prayed for us! He is still praying for us! He knows where you are! He knew before you ever got there! Everything is transparent before The Lord, He knows our secret sins, He knows our laziness, our pride, our secret lust, our bitterness...
- But we can't see what The Lord sees. That is why we fall. We don't recognise our flesh at times.
- Peter is so caught up in His flesh. He makes this boastful claim, cuts off the servant's ear, he runs from the soldiers and then follows fearfully at a distance... Peter denied any connection with Jesus! He utterly rejected to be counted as Christ's! With cursing!

Mark 14

29 *But Peter said to Him, Even if they all fall away and are caused to stumble and distrust and desert You, yet I will not [do so]!*
30 *And Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you, this very night, before a cock crows twice, you will utterly deny Me [disclaiming all connection with Me] three times.*
31 *But [Peter] said more vehemently and repeatedly, [Even] if it should be necessary for me to die with You, I will not deny or disown You!*
And they all kept saying the same thing.

John 18

10 *Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.*
11 *Therefore, Jesus said to Peter, Put the sword [back] into the sheath! The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?*

Matthew 26

55 *At that moment Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out with swords and clubs as [you would] against a robber to capture Me? Day after day I was accustomed to sit in the porches and courts of the temple teaching, and you did not arrest Me.*
56 *But all this has taken place in order that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples deserted Him and, fleeing, escaped.*

Matthew 26

57 *And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*
58 *But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.*

Matthew 26

69 *Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean."*
70 *But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."*
71 *And when he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene."*
72 *And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man."*
73 *After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them too; for even your [Galilean] accent gives you away."*
74 *Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.*

- I think we often miss how severe this event was/is. We are so quick to empathise and understand failure that we excuse sin! Peter Denied having anything at all to do with Jesus!! He rejected his faith in the Living God!

- And then in Luke's gospel we read this detail.

Luke 22

61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter recalled the Lord's words, how He had told him, Before the cock crows today, you will deny Me thrice.
62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

- Oh that look cut through everything! Peter has come face to face with his flesh and he is exposed before The Lord and to himself! He's been caught out, and he is bitterly sorrowful.

- Then Jesus is crucified and we know that all the disciples struggled with believing in the resurrection so consider the finality of this for Peter. He was stained, tarnished, wallowing in guilt, shame, loss, grief... That is always the end result of the flesh life and this is the result of falling, Peter was in a hole that he could never lift himself from!

- He is repentant... but he does not have the faith to believe in forgiveness. Self-pity and unbelief still cling to him.

PETER'S RESTORATION

- Praise The Lord that Calvary was not the end of the story. There was resurrection life and there was a tender call to Peter.

Mark 16

5 And going into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting [there] on the right [side], clothed in a [long, stately, sweeping] robe of white, and they were utterly amazed and struck with terror.
6 And he said to them, Do not be amazed and terrified; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.
7 But be going; tell the disciples and Peter, He goes before you into Galilee; you will see Him there, [just] as He told you.

- Oh, how that call must have comforted Peter's heart.

- And then to see Him!!

John 20

19 Then on that same first day of the week, when it was evening, though the disciples were behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace to you!
20 So saying, He showed them His hands and His side. And when the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy (delight, exultation, ecstasy, rapture).
21 Then Jesus said to them again, Peace to you! [Just] as the Father has sent Me forth, so I am sending you.
...
26 Eight days later His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, though they were behind closed doors, and stood among them and said, Peace to you!
...
30 There are also many other signs and miracles which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book.

John 21

1 After this, Jesus let Himself be seen and revealed [Himself] again to the disciples, at the Sea of Tiberias. And He did it in this way:
2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, called the Twin, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, also the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.
3 Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing! They said to him, And we are coming with you!...

- I would suggest here, even after see Jesus twice, that Peter is still wallowing in the hole of his regret, shame, guilt and unworthiness.

- They had seen Jesus resurrected! They had received The Holy Spirit and they had been sent out just as The Father had sent Jesus... but Peter goes fishing!

- He goes back to what is comfortable and familiar to the flesh. No bold, rash claims now. He's learned that lesson. He is a shamed failure and how could he possibly be used in God's kingdom?! There's joy that Jesus is alive but, there's only one role he can do now...

- Peter's fall had caused him to be very self-conscious... Or to put it another way, very self-focused! He was so focused on his failure that he had forgotten what Jesus had said to him in the upper room...

Luke 22

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,
32 But I have prayed especially for you [Peter], that your [own] faith may not fail; and when you yourself have returned, strengthen and establish your brethren.

- Peter had forgotten the knowledge that Jesus had and the hope that He had offered. In his fallen state Peter was no longer holding on to the promises of God and the hope in his word. Peter was forgetting all the testimonies of God's dealings with Israel and His great mercy and love!

- But then Jesus, in His great loving kindness, longsuffering, tenderness and grace comes and makes breakfast...

John 21

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"-knowing that it was the Lord.
13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.
14 This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.
15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."
16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."
17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

- "Feed my lambs" / "Tend my sheep" / "Feed my sheep"

- If you love me Peter, love my sheep, serve them, protect them... "establish your brethren"! Don't make proud claims in bravado of how well you will serve me... but humbly and faithfully care for my flock.

DAVID

2 Samuel 11

1 In the spring, when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab with his servants and all Israel, and they ravaged the Ammonites [country] and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

- In 2 Samuel chapters 7-12 we see how David rises to such a precious place of communion with The Lord and gives such wonderful worship. He offers to build a house for God but The Lord instead promises Him an eternal throne! But from such wonderful heights of worship and fellowship, he falls.

- He falls into a hole and try as he might to get out of it he only makes it far worse! His flesh cannot right this Spiritual wrong! There is no solution in the flesh! There is no life in the flesh! Only death, suffering, curse and consequences!

2 Samuel 12

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!

9 Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

11 Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.'

12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'"

13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

14 However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."

- The consequences are so incredibly severe!! We must be so aware of the consequence of sin!!

Psalm 51

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.

- Repentance is a crucial part of a Christians continual growth and maturity. A continual means of Spiritual growth and renewal. Sinful choices may have lasting consequences. Repentance does not guarantee the removal of consequence but it does remove guilt and it does remove shame!

- Thomas Watson: "It is not falling into water that drowns but lying in it. It is not falling into sin that damns but lying in it without repentance."

From Thomas Watson:

Sight of Sin:

Recognizing sin's ugliness and its offensive nature to God is crucial for repentance. This involves understanding the depth of sin's impact and its consequences.

Sorrow of Sin:

Experiencing genuine grief and distress over having sinned is a key element. This sorrow should stem from a deep-seated understanding of the offense to God and the harm caused.

Confession of Sin:

Acknowledging sins to God and others is essential. This involves not only admitting wrongdoing but also recognizing the injustice and wrongness of the sin.

Shame of Sin:

A sense of embarrassment and humiliation in the face of one's sin is a natural part of repentance. This shame should not lead to despair but to a renewed commitment to change.

Hate of Sin:

Develop a deep aversion to sin, recognizing its destructive nature. This hatred should extend beyond the specific act to the underlying sin nature.

Turning from Sin:

Making a decisive break with sin and resolving to live a life pleasing to God is the ultimate goal of repentance. This involves actively pursuing holiness and resisting the temptations that lead to sin.