

## Acts 13:13

### Failure Doesn't Have to be Final

<sup>13</sup> Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. - **PRAY**

#### **Intro: Have you ever made a mistake?**

A) I have Authored two books - the one that has by far sold the most has been this little guy.

B) Lessons from a Church planter - the things I have learned from my mistakes.

C) Now When I say it has sold the most - not talking in the 1,000's but probably pretty deep into the 100's

1) It has been an encouragement to many Pastors and church planters

D) I get emails and messages from Pastors all over the world who have read it - been blessed by the honesty.

1) They get a chance to learn from the mistakes I have made,

D) So they hopefully can avoid making those mistakes themselves

**A few years ago when we were meeting with the head of CD to see if they would want to carry the book.**

A) Lance the guy who heads of CD looked at the title - the things I learned from my mistakes -

**B) THIS IS GOOD- You could do something with this: You could be the mistake guy -**

1) Marriage the things I learned from my mistakes

2) Parenting - the things ..... mistakes

C) I could totally write those books too - lots of mistakes

1) As a parent - as a grandpa and definitely as a husband

**There was the time in our marriage - Denise and I got into a Gnarly fight**

A) She got so mad at me that she grabbed her keys - stormed out the door got into the car and drove off.

B) Now it was night time - this is before Cell phones - so this is a while ago.

C) What did I do - **did I run out the door after her begging her not to go** - NOPE

D) Did **I jump in front of her car** so she could drive off - NOPE

1) Did I jump in my car and chase after her - NOPE

**You know what I did? - I went upstairs got in bed and went to sleep.**

A) I KNOW NOT MY FINEST MOMENT -

B) My book on how to have a successful marriage is coming out NEXT WEEK.

**C) Huge Failure on my part - Denise drove around for like 20 minutes - but didn't know where to go**

1) Circled the block - driving by our house - hoping I was out in the driveway looking for her.

D) But NOPE - I was in bed. - Really pretending to be asleep

**I had to repent of that attitude and pride - Jesus forgave me - Denise forgave.**

A) Thankfully that Huge failure on my part didn't define our relationship

B) Made 37 yrs - still madly in love -

1) Sometimes -MAD - BUT IN LOVE

**That was probably MY worst moment in our marriage - but there have been many others.**

A) My wife married a sinner - and so did I - so did you.

B) Flawed people are full of flaws

C) So thankful that in Jesus our failures are not final

1) So thankful our failures don't have to define us.

**So here in our text we find Barnabas and Paul and John Mark - leaving the Island of Cyprus -**

A) after a time of fruitful ministry there. They sail 305 miles from Paphos to Perga - Pamphylia

**B) which is modern day Turkey.**

C) Notice the last phrase of our text again: and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

D) Once they leave Cyprus - John Mark - takes the first opportunity he can to bail - to quit the ministry.

E) If you are taking notes today: Notice 3 things in the story of John Mark

- The Desertion of John Mark
- The Training of John Mark
- The Restoration of John Mark

### The Desertion of John Mark

A) As we look further into his story - We don't know why he left -

B) It would seem that something happened during their time of Ministry on the Island of Cyprus that made John Mark want to quit

C) Ministry is hard- A report done by Lifeway research in 2015 states that 80% of pastors leave the ministry within 5 years

### D) Barna research - The stress connected with Pastoring a church in the last 3 years has caused

1) 42% of the Pastors to admit they have thought about quitting in the last 3 yrs

E) So we are not told why John Mark bailed - but the fact that he did becomes a big deal - Turn to Acts 15

### Here in Acts Ch.15 this dynamic duo of ministry partners -

A) Paul and Barnabas are getting ready to go on their 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary Journey.

<sup>36</sup> Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."

B) Follow up - this is something we try to incorporate into our missions - circling around - to check on our missionaries

C) Text - Phone - Zoom - email - But Face to face is always best!!!!

<sup>37</sup> Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup> But Paul insisted that they

should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, (CSB -even stronger Deserted them) and had not gone with them to the work.

So these two ministry partners Paul and Barnabas have a difference of opinion on bringing John along.

A) Barnabas who's name means - (Son of encouragement)

B) He is like let's give the young a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance!

C) Determined = a settled desire, one born of or springing from reason and not from emotion.

D) The idea is Barnabas thought this through - 1) this wasn't an emotional reaction because John Mark was his cousin

E) Noted in a previous story about Barnabas - that he is a guy who sees potential in people

1) where others only see a problem - i.e. - Saul

I can hear Barnabas saying - Paul remember when no one knew what to do with you - you were a ministry outcast

A) I came and found you and gave you a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance? -

B) I really think he still has potential and we should give him a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance

C) I can hear Barnabas saying something like -

1) Come on Paul haven't you heard our God is the God of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> chances

D) Paul you wouldn't even be here if - I hadn't found you and given you a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance. COME ON BRO!

1) Barnabas was determined

But then we read in V.38 Paul insisted - (kept on insisting) -

A) the word and phrase used here carries the idea of not being worthy.

B) In Paul's mind John Mark was not worthy of a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance in Ministry.

C) Paul is a go getter, he knows how hard what they are doing is - not a place for wimps - or quitters

1) Paul might have argued - we need dependable guys with us and he is NOT DEPENDABLE

D) I think if Paul were alive today - he would have been labeled as a hard-nosed old school guy by the Gen Z and Millennials

1) Chill out Paul

**39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another.**

A) As we read this - I would guess the room here is divided.

B) Some of you are resonating with Paul - "I wouldn't have given him a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance either."

C) Due to your personality - your work ethic, your up bringing -

1) maybe you have been burned by people - given 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> chances to -

**D) You are RELUCTANT to do that anymore!!**

1) So you relate to Paul - FIST PUMP - right on bro!

**Others of you are so on board with Barnabas.**

A) Like Barnabas you are an encourager, you have that gift of Mercy - you are a champion of grace

B) If honest Sometimes to the extreme!!!!

C) When our kids were Younger - I tended to be more like Paul

1) and Denise was definitely more like Barnabas. She was way More Gracious for sure

**In ministry I have become way more like Barnabas - into giving 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chances.**

A) This was the turning point for me. Years ago - when I was on staff here doing YM -

B) I had this intern assigned to me - he was on staff - my responsibility

1) This guy drove me crazy - just flaky - all over the place - Zeal BIG PERSONALITY - but just radically undisciplined -

C) One day he crossed a line with Pastor Brian - really ticked Brian off - it was the final straw -

1) It was right before a Wednesday service

**D) After Service - Pastor Brian said to me - Hey I want you to tell \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow that he is fired -**

1) OUTSIDE - OH - inside - IT IS ABOUT TIME - praise emoji's

**The next Morning - Brian calls me before work and says - Don't fire him**

A) Why? I see so much of myself in him - I was the same way when I was his age. - Give him more time.

B) Then Brian said: People have given me so many chances too.

C) As soon as Brian said that - I thought of all the 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chances I had been given by my mentors -

1) Changed my whole perspective...../ even about working with that guy after that.

E) Eventually he ended up - quitting and moving on but it wasn't because we fired him -

**Now here is what is interesting about John Mark's story -**

A) We are not told who was right and who was wrong between Barney / Paul

B) Was Barnabas right for wanting to show grace or was Paul right feeling John couldn't be depended on?

C) The Bible doesn't give us that information -

1) all we know is this was such a contention that Paul and Barnabas separate

**D) Now instead of one ministry team there is going to be two TEAMS**

**Paul would pick Silas to go with him and V.39b And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus;**

A) Why back to Cyprus? #2 The training of John Mark!

B) Notice V.36 again - <sup>36</sup> Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."

C) So it is obvious that God did something on the Island of Cyprus and there was a need to go back - check on the believers

D) Maybe Paul and Barnabas agreed - Barnabas would go there - Paul would go to the other spots

**But I also want to suggest another reason why Barnabas wanted to take John Mark back to Cyprus**

A) Was because that is where the Problem occurred with John Mark

B) Barnabas is wise enough to know that if John Mark is ever going to become the man God wants him to be -

C) He has to face those giants he was prone to run from.

**God's goal for each one of our lives? Romans 8:29 - "God has predestined us to be conformed into the image of his own dear son!"**

A) God's end game! - Molding us into the image of Jesus

B) That is a process - it doesn't happen overnight -  
1) but that is what God is seeking to do with each of us.

C) The goal is not to make you a better version of you - it is to make you and I more like JESUS

D) We have this promise in the book of Philippians 1:6

<sup>6</sup> being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

**God has started this good work of transformation in your life - conform you into the image of Jesus**

**A) AND HE IS COMMITTED TO FINISHING IT**

B) Sometimes God will allow us to go through uncomfortable situations

1) Situations that stretch us - that take us out of our comfort zones - make us very uncomfortable

C) It is part of the TRAINING process - build up our spiritual muscles and our spiritual flexibility

**D) But sometimes when we get in those hard situations - we do what John Mark did**

1) WE BAIL - WE QUIT - WE RUN

**But because God is a good, good, father who loves us so much and is committed to completing the work HE started**

A) When we bail/ when we run/// - after some time

B) God will often take us back to that situation where we failed.

1) It might not be the exact same place or situation - but it will be a situation that is similar in SCOPE

C) The reason is God knows - if you are ever going to grow in that area -

1) you are going to have to face that giant

D) If you are going to develop that spiritual muscle - you are going to have to - work through that pain.

**I have a friend who owns a gym here in town - and he wants me to be as healthy as I possibly can be**

A) So he has graciously set me up and paid for me to work out w/ one of the personal trainers at the gym.

B) The guy is a great trainer - his name is Sean - He will push me -

1) he has me doing things I never thought I could do

C) He will demonstrate an exercise or stretch he wants me to do - I will look at him and say -

1) YOU ARE CRAZY - NEVER DO THAT

**D) He is 30 and super Flexible - Wrestler**

**E) He encourages me - try it and I end up surprising myself - It is his job to push me - NEW LEVELS**

F) Sometimes he will try and get me to do something - and I just can't do it -

1) after 2 hip replacements - lack Mobility

**He is like ok - no problem - lets try this -**

A) but a few weeks later he brings me back to what I thought I couldn't do

B) Try this again: He knows - If there's going to be progression - I have to get through that

**God is the same way: He loves you so much and is so committed to you.**

A)He brings you back to a situation that is like the one that you failed in - or ran from

B)So that you can learn and Grow - so that spiritual muscle can be developed and strengthened

C)He wants you to face it - to grow in through - that trial is a part of your Spiritual development - don't RUN

**Sometimes I will be talking to someone who has left a work environment that was really hard.**

A)I get that - it happens - sometimes just not the right fit or it is so Toxic you have to get out of there.

**B)But sometimes I watch that person and I see a pattern that develops - 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Job they have left**

1)It is always the same story - My boss or my environment

**C)I will say: Have you ever thought the problem might be with you?**

1)God is trying to teach you something - learn some perseverance ?

**D)Most of the time they don't want to hear that.**

**God is committed to molding and shaping us to make us more like Jesus**

**A)Adversity is a part of that Process. -**

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, **WHY?** <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. JAMES 1:2, 3

**B)So Rejoice in Adversity Why? We Know -God is using it to make us more patient like Jesus -**

**C)So Don't run - Lean in - A WORD FOR SOMEONE TODAY**

<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 PETER 1:6-

7

**C)GOLDSMITH - the gold is purified - when he can see HIS reflection**

**So Barnabas takes John Mark back to where he had the difficulty.**

A)Now here is what is also interesting - Barnabas is not heard from again in the book of Acts after 15:39

B)The rest of the 13 chapters of the book of Acts are devoted almost entirely to Paul's missions Journeys

C)Which has led some people speculate - see Paul was the one who was right about John Mark  
1)and that is why the story continues with him.

**But this is one of the things we need to understand about the Bible -**

A)the Bible tends to focus on one thread of the story

B)In the Old Testament the focus is on the lineage of the tribe of Judah - which is going to lead to Jesus

C)If the Bible told every story - of what God did - it would be an even bigger book than it already is.  
1)10X as big - Imagine carrying that Bible to church!!!

D)Think of it this way: If you were here last week  
1)I was sharing some of the stories of the people from our church that have been sent out -

**2)as church planters and missionaries**

**I told 6 stories - that all centered around a Wave of connection in a relationship to a certain place**

**A)But I could have told 33 stories -**

B)I could have talked about the Stewarts - the Warners +2 Williamsons, Burans - Augie / Tony Clark /  
1)LA Nelson/ Nettles - many others

C)But we would have been here until 3pm at least  
1)I was illustrating a point about waves of connection that led one family from here to answer a call to somewhere else.



**Well the rest of the book of Acts focuses on Paul's journeys because Paul is going to plant churches all over the Middle East**

A) And then he is going to be led by the Lord to write letters to those churches -

B) Those letters are going to make up the rest of the NT that we know as our Bibles -

1) Paul wrote 2/3 of the NT

C) That is the plan of God and focus of God

D) But it doesn't mean that Paul was the only one who was legit in planting churches and being used by God

**E) So was Barnabas and John Mark as well as many others**

**So Barnabas doesn't show up as being linked to Paul again in the book of Acts -**

A) But guess who does show up in Paul's story - John Mark

### #3 The Restoration of John Mark

B) John Mark ends up having a pretty fruitful life in ministry.

<sup>23</sup> Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, <sup>24</sup> *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, **my fellow laborers**. Philemon 1:23

<sup>10</sup> Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him) Colossians 1:23

<sup>9</sup> Be diligent to come to me quickly; <sup>10</sup> for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 2 Timothy 4:9-11

<sup>13</sup> She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and *so does* Mark my son. **1 Peter 5:13**

### C) GOSPEL OF MARK

**Precious church - Know this - Our failures don't have to be final**

A) Although there might be life long lasting consequences -

**B) But if we repent - Jesus will forgive us - cleanse - He doesn't hold our past against us.**

1) he is able to restore the years that the locust have eaten

C) Our failures don't have to define us!

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:28*

D) You today - forgiven - Restored - turn to Jesus

**Jesus releases us from our past and we can release others**

A) How freeing it must have been for John Mark to get that call from Barnabas.

B) He might have known that he was forgiven by Jesus - but might have wondered -

1) will I ever be used again?

C) Then Barnabas reaches out - I am going back to Cyprus and you should come with me?

**Is there someone in your life - that you know is sorry and repentive of a failure - a sin - they have made.**

A) Everyone else has given up on them - put them on the shelf - keep them at arms distance?

B) Maybe the Lord wants to **USE YOU** to help restore them

**Application for today**

#1 Have you been running from a situation or a trial? Trust your father and lean into it.

#2 Have you failed? Jesus wants you to know today that your past failures don't have to define you.

#3 Is there someone that you need to release from a failure?