

The word of the Lord came

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time.” (Jonah 3:1)

Here is a message that glows with hope and promise. Just because a man has failed does not mean that God has put him on the shelf.

David's failures are recorded with stark realism. As we read them, we sit in the dust with him and burn with shame. But David knew how to break before the Lord, how to repent with bloodearnestness. And God was not through with him. God forgave him and restored him to a life of fruitfulness.

Jonah failed to answer God's missionary call and wound up in the belly of a great fish. In that animate submarine, he learned to obey. When God called him the second time, he went to Nineveh, preached imminent judgment, and saw the whole city plunged into deepest repentance.

John Mark made a brilliant start with Paul and Barnabas, but then he copped out and went home. God did not abandon him, however. Mark returned to the battle, regained the confidence of Paul, and was commissioned to write the Gospel of the Unfailing Servant.

Peter failed the Lord in spite of his protestations of undying loyalty. Men would write him off by saying that the bird with the broken wing could never fly as high again. But God did not write him off and Peter flew higher than ever. He opened the doors of the kingdom to 3000 at Pentecost. He labored tirelessly and suffered repeatedly at the hands of persecutors. He wrote the two epistles which bear his name, then crowned a glorious life of service with a martyr's death.

So when it comes to service, God is the God of the second chance. He is not through with a man just because that man has failed. Whenever He finds a broken and a contrite heart, he bows to lift up the head of his fallen soldier.

This must not be taken to condone sin or failure, however. The bitterness and remorse of having failed the Lord should serve as sufficient deterrent.

Neither does it mean that God gives the unrepentant sinner a second chance after this life. There is a terrible finality about death. For the man who dies in his sins, the awful sentence is, “Wherever the tree falls, there it lies.” (Eccl. 11:3 NASB).

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