

Brief recap of Week 1

- The line. Caution Tape. Represent the laws and commandments of God. When we step over the line, we are in sin. Sin brings death and sin brings bondage. When we remain inside God's boundaries we are free and at liberty. These boundaries are not put there to oppress us but to protect us from the harsh effects and baggage of sin. God is not a dictator looking to control us, He is a loving father looking to protect us!
- Trespass - Slip
- Transgression - Step
- Iniquity - Separation. Stand on the other side.
- Sin - Shortfall

I want to start tonight's lesson by talking about an Epic Fail.

This is without doubt the biggest Epic Fail that has ever taken place in human history, and we can read about it in our Bible.

The culprits were Adam and Eve. They were both created by God. Adam was formed from the dust of the ground and God used one of Adam's ribs to form Eve.

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden; a place of perfection and beauty.

The fall of man, the original sin, has always fascinated me. Eden had perfect conditions to serve God. They walked and talked with God every day. There wasn't even the knowledge of what sin was. They had everything they ever could have needed or wanted; there were all sorts of trees that were good for food. And what really boggles my mind is that they only had one commandment from God to obey. Only ONE! God put up only one piece of CAUTION TAPE.

Genesis 2:16-17

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou **shalt not** eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

This was their only rule, and they broke it! They disobeyed God and **crossed the line**.

The reason this fail was so epic is because in ONE solitary act of disobedience, Adam and Eve:

- Brought a curse upon every human being.
- Stripped mankind of immortality.
- Severed relationship with God.
- Caused painful childbirth and farming.

- Started humanity on its way to Hell to be eternally separated from God.
 - They created the canyon that we talked about last week.

That's an Epic Fail!

We are still seeing the effects of their sin today, 6000 years later. All this because of ONE act of disobedience; ONE Epic Fail.

Don't underestimate the implications of JUST ONE disobedient act.

Now if that's where the story ended, we wouldn't have much to talk about tonight. I wouldn't have a message of hope but a message of woe and despair. But that's not where the story ends.

Even though God's original intentions for humanity were messed up, God had another plan ready to go.

It was through the bloodline of Adam and Eve (the Epic Failures themselves) that God would redeem mankind.

Adam and Eve - Seth - Abraham (father of the faithful) - David (man after God's own heart) - Jesus.

Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a perfect and sinless life, and would eventually go to the cross and shed His blood for the sin of humanity.

God had a plan of redemption for mankind, and it would come through the bloodline of Adam and Eve. They weren't so tainted that God couldn't work with them.

God still has a plan for Epic Failures.

Adam and Eve's sin brought a curse upon themselves and humanity, and we read about it in Genesis 3.

This is where God is pronouncing a curse over the serpent, the man and the woman after their sin:

Genesis 3:14-15

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; **it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**

The seed of the woman is the subject of this prophetic promise. It will bruise the head of the serpent (the devil) and the serpent will bruise its heel.

God was warning the serpent that a descendent of the deceived woman, Eve, would someday destroy Satan. This scripture was referring to Jesus!

Bruise thy head is an Oriental term meaning to break the lordship of a ruler. Jesus Christ was soon coming to break the lordship of Satan over humanity.

Bruise thy heel refers to the bitter persecution that Satan used against Jesus; the crucifixion. The "heel" directly relates to Christ's human nature.

Satan killed Jesus (he sent Him to the cross), which fulfills the "bruisse thy heel" prophecy, but Jesus didn't stay in the grave. He rose again and conquered death, Hell and the grave which fulfills the "bruisse thy head" prophecy.

Here's the point. Even in the midst of the **curse** God was declaring, there was a **promise** too! And even in the midst of an **Epic Failure**, there is a plan of **redemption**.

God still has a plan for Epic Fails and Epic Failures!

Somebody here has fallen so short of God's standard. You have crossed God's line so many times and you feel like you have gone too far. But God still has a plan for your life.

God still uses Epic Failures.

- Noah got drunk, yet God used him to save humanity.
- Jacob was a liar, yet all of God's chosen people would come from him.
- Rahab was a prostitute, yet her life was spared for helping God's people and she was brought into God's chosen family, the Israelites.
- Peter denied Christ, yet he preached the first sermon on the very first day of church history.

God still uses Epic Failures!

Let's look at three individuals who knew what it was to fail.

David, Jonah, Samson.

David

2 Samuel 11:1 (NLT)

1 In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of Rabbah. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

David should have been out on the battlefield leading his troops into battle, but he chose to stay home. It was during this time that David fell into sin. The old saying is true: Idle hands are the Devil's playground. David's hands were idle. They should have been wielding a sword, but they weren't. With nothing better to do, David went and had an affair with a woman named Bathsheba. To cover his tracks, David had Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, murdered. So not only is David an adulterer, he is also a killer. And this guy is supposed to be the King of Israel.

Yet even after his failure, David remained king for almost 20 more years and led God's people. He won battles and conquered territory; surely the Lord was with David during these years after his failure. The Bible even tells us that David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

God uses Epic Failures.

Jonah

Jonah 1:1-3

1 Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

Jonah was given a direct command from the Lord and completely neglected it. In fact Jonah didn't just say no and stay where he was, he ran in the opposite direction. He fled from God's presence and started on his way to a place called Tarshish. Tarshish was 2500 miles away in the opposite direction of Ninevah. Jonah was attempting to get as far away from the will of God as possible.

Yet even though Jonah disobeyed and ran, God still used him and gave him another chance.

Jonah 3:1-2

1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the **second time**, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

Jonah obeyed this time and went and declared God's word to the Ninevites! Because of Jonah's preaching the **whole** city turned from their wickedness.

God uses Epic Failures.

Samson

God blessed Samson with incredible strength. If Samson would let his hair grow long, his strength would increase. In the book of Judges we read of this strength. Samson killed a Lion with his bare hands. Later he killed a thousand men with only the jawbone of a donkey. Although mightily used, Samson had a weakness: women.

Judges 16:1 tells us how Samson went and slept with a prostitute. Later, he fell in love with a woman named Delilah, a Philistine. Samson wasn't supposed to be with a woman of a different nationality, especially not with a woman from their enemy the Philistines, but he did it anyway. She seduced him and eventually cut off his hair, stripping him of his strength.

Yet even though Samson was a womanizer and disobedient to God, God used him powerfully at the end of his life.

Judges 16:29-30

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

God used Samson more powerfully at the end of his life AFTER all his failures.

God uses Epic Failures.

I have come to tell you tonight that it doesn't matter what you have done, God can still use you. It doesn't matter how far you have gone, God can still use you. It doesn't matter how many times you've crossed the line, God can still use you because God uses Epic Failures.

If you know that you are in sin and you want to give your life totally to God so He can use you, there is only ONE thing you must do.

David, Jonah and Samson all had to do it, and you do too.

All three of these men, after they had failed, came to a place of REPENTANCE.

David

Psalm 51:1

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Jonah

Jonah 2:1

1 Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly,

Samson

Judges 16:28

28 And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

If you want to put your life back in God's hands and let God use you again, or maybe for the first time, the first step is a step toward an altar to REPENT.

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The only answer for an Epic Fail, is God's Epic Grace.

Romans 5:20b

20 But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

If you could remember one thing from tonight, let it be this:

God doesn't just want to forgive you, He wants to use you!

God didn't just forgive David, Jonah and Samson, He USED them.