

AUTOPSY • Week 4: Your Pain, Their Gain

Daily Briefing • Day 1 of 5 • Failure Is a Part, Not the Whole

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

Sunday's message introduced a five-step sequence from failure to ministry. Today we address a tension that must be settled before anything in that sequence can begin. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I believe what You say about those who are in Christ. You say that there is no condemnation for me, so I will not be ruled by my past. And I pray that You would give me wisdom to use what You have done in my own life to help others. I ask these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

This week you are going to hear two things that sound like a contradiction. Day 2 will tell you that what you have been through is exactly what you have to offer someone else. But today opens with Paul saying he is “forgetting what lies behind”. So which is it? Use your past or forget your past? The answer is both, and they are not contradictions. They describe two entirely different relationships to the same historical material. The question is not whether your past gets used. The question is who controls how it gets used.

When Paul writes in Philippians 3:13-14 about forgetting what lies behind, the Greek word carries the sense of deliberate refusal to be controlled by something, or paying it no more attention. He is not describing amnesia. Paul references his own history as a persecutor of Christians repeatedly throughout his letters. He is not suppressing it. He is refusing to give it governing authority over his direction. The Greek word (the original language for the New Testament) Paul uses depicts something finished and obsolete, no longer applicable to determining direction. The past is not denied. Its authority is declared expired. The posture is not denial. It is a refusal of dominion. The past can be remembered, processed, and even deployed for ministering to others and helping them through their own past. What it cannot be allowed to do is dictate your identity or determine where you are going.

We will also look at the prophet Isaiah who ministered in Jerusalem roughly seven hundred years before Christ, during a period of national crisis in Israel. The Babylonian empire was rising, and God was warning His people that their rebellion would have consequences. But Isaiah 43 is one of the most hope-filled chapters in the Old Testament. In the middle of it, God issues a command that would have shocked His original audience: stop dwelling on the former things, even the greatest miracle in their history, the Exodus from Egypt. He is not telling them that what happened did not matter. He is telling them to stop letting past suffering and past failure narrate their future, because He is doing something new and it requires forward attention.

Lastly, Romans 8:1 supplies the legal ground (in God's courtroom) for all of this. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The past has already been tried in the highest court available and found to have no standing over your present or your future. It cannot summon you back to face a verdict that has already been rendered in your favor. The past is not abolished. It is paid for by Jesus and repositioned. It moves from governing force to deployed resource. And that repositioning is exactly what makes Days 2 through 5 possible this week.

READ & MEDITATE

Philippians 3:13–14

“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Isaiah 43:18–19

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

Read Philippians 3:13-14 and notice that Paul does not say he cannot remember his past. In fact, he regularly uses his past as part of his testimony of what God has done in his life so that he is able to help others (Acts 9:1-22; Acts 22:1-21; Acts 26:1-23; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Galatians 1:13-24; Philippians 3:4-14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Ephesians 3:7-9). He says he refuses to be controlled by it. Then read Romans 8:1 and ask what the word 'condemnation' tells you about the past's authority over you. Lastly, read Isaiah 43:18-19 and notice what God is commanding, and what He says is happening at the same moment He gives that command.

REFLECT

Paul was not suppressing his history as a persecutor of Christians. He deployed it in his ministry constantly. What he refused was its right to govern the direction of his life.

In what area of your own life has your past been controlling your current identity and direction rather than serving your ministry? This might look like staying out of certain conversations because you feel disqualified by what happened, holding back from helping someone because you do not feel worthy after your own failure, or living in a smaller life than God is calling you into because a voice from the past keeps saying you forfeited the right. Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

"No condemnation" is not merely comfort. It is a legal verdict in God's courtroom, rendered by the ultimate Judge Himself. The past has already been tried and found to have no standing over your present or your future.

Fill in the blanks from Romans 8:1:

"There is therefore now no _____ for those who are in _____."

*(Romans 8:1)**

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

What does it change about the way you carry your past if it has no condemnation left to bring against you? Where have you been living as though the verdict has not yet been rendered?

In Isaiah 43:18-19, God was not telling Israel to pretend the exile did not happen or that their unfaithfulness was not a reality. He was telling them to stop letting past failure and suffering narrate their future, because He was already moving forward and inviting them to move with Him.

What former thing are you still dwelling on that is preventing you from seeing or responding to the new thing God is doing? And based on what this week is about, what might that new thing actually include?

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Romans 8:1 from memory:
