

“Failed”

Do you love to fail? Of course, the question seems nonsensical as everyone would prefer to succeed. But as hard as it might be to accept, sometimes failure is the correct option — sometimes failure is real success. Let's consider Jesus, as Hebrews 12 describes him:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Jesus appeared to fail as he shamefully endured the cross. But Christ was victorious at that moment, leaving us an example to follow today. Though Jesus didn't fit the religious mold of his day, does he fit ours?

Big Idea: Christ was purposefully polarizing 2,000 years ago and continues to demand we make a choice today.

"Failed" Beliefs

- To the religious leaders of Jesus' day, his beliefs failed their tests. He made bold claims about who he was. Without equivocation, he claimed to be God's Son, which drove the religious leaders to want to kill him (John 5:18). All they could see was blasphemy rather than opening their eyes to the truth.
- He forced people to make extreme choices about sin and righteousness. He took sin seriously and wanted his audience to take it seriously, even teaching that self-mutilation would be better than spending eternity in hell (Matthew 5:27-30).
- **Would Jesus' beliefs have failed my test?**
 - Would I have believed Christ's bold claims about himself being God's Son?
 - Would I have taken Jesus' extreme positions seriously about getting rid of sin?

"Failed" Actions

- To the religious leaders of Jesus' day, his actions failed their tests. What kind of "rabbi" would dare go into the temple and kick people out for conducting business (John 2:14-21)? But, of course, they were more bothered by the disruption than by their own failed practices.
- He also attacked their traditions, which didn't set well. More concerned with the outward show than the inner person, the leaders couldn't handle Jesus' disciples not washing their hands like they did (Matthew 15:1-3).
- **Would Jesus' actions have failed my test?**
 - Would I have accepted Jesus cleaning up anything out of order in our worship?
 - Would I have allowed Jesus to break all the traditions and customs I'm so used to?

"Failed" Associations

- To the religious leaders of Jesus' day, his associations failed their tests. Who in their right mind would eat with known sinners (Matthew 9:10-13)?! No one who claimed to be as important as Jesus should be stooping to the level of tax collectors and prostitutes.
- But Jesus also spent time with Gentile foreigners, something the Jews couldn't stand. So, shocking his disciples, they found him sitting at a well with a Samaritan woman alone and couldn't even think what to say to him (John 4:27-30).
- **Would Jesus' associations have failed my test?**
 - Would I have looked askew at Jesus spending time with obviously sinful people?
 - Would I have accepted Jesus welcoming in foreigners?

Conclusion

Ultimately, Jesus was not accepted by the religious leaders. He was despised, rejected, and acquainted with grief. He went to the cross and allowed these people to kill him. But while it may seem like he lost, we believe that he was raised from the dead, proving he was victorious over death and the religious leader's tests.