

We “Failed”

The fear of public speaking continues to top the list of people's greatest fears. Having a whole room full of people looking at them on stage is mortifying, to say the least. Wouldn't it be much better to sit in the audience and blend in? Ask yourself, "How much do I blend into the world around me? Does my faith stand out and put my life fully displayed, or is it hidden?" As the world tests us to see if we're one of them, remember James' words:

"... do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

If we followed God, we "failed" the world's tests! Yet, over and over again, the world looks at us and realizes that we're not one of them — especially when they sink deeper into the darkness with each passing day.

Big Idea: Resolving to be a failure in the world's eyes is worth it when we're truly victorious in God's eyes.

"Failed" Beliefs

- We believe "foolish" things in the world's eyes (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). Stopping to think about our faith in Jesus for any time, it may strike you with how strange the message of the cross sounds to others. But that powerful message, though rejected by humanity, shows just how wise our God truly is!
- We're not worried like the world is (Matthew 6:25-34). Whether in a pandemic or a recession, famine, or fierce storms, we know that God is always good and in control. And the more the world around us flails for answers, we look even more strange in our calm and trusting demeanor.
- Are you willing to stand out in the world with "failed" beliefs? Will you hold firmly to "foolish" ideas, in spite of what people think or teach? Will you avoid the constant worry and anxiety that plagues our coworkers and neighbors?

"Failed" Actions

- We're not at home here (1 Peter 2:9-12), and we don't pretend like we are. The more the world tries to take advantage of this life's pleasures and comforts, we stand out by not participating. The fleshly lusts that war against us are kept at bay because we don't want to stay here.
- We welcome suffering (1 Peter 4:1-6). Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to suffer like Jesus did. We've had enough time for sin and unrighteousness, and now we embrace the ridicule from others when we don't participate.
- Will you act in ways that look like a "failure" to others? Are you willing to avoid the fleshly lusts of this earth, as we pass along as sojourners? When you're ridiculed and mocked for being different, will you rejoice rather than relent?

"Failed" Associations

- We let love tear down walls (Colossians 3:11-15). We could live in fear and suspicion like the world around us, but instead, we believe in God's power to unite all humanity. We don't believe in the world's plans and schemes to fix their problems — we believe that Christ's love heals us and draws us together.
- We offer good news to all (Romans 1:14-17). We build no walls where God has broken them down. The gospel of Christ has the power to save everyone, which compels us to share that news to help save lost people.
- Are you connecting with people the world considers "failures"? Does your love for humanity lead you to destroy your prejudices and pre-suppositions? Do you see everyone as worthy of the good news of Jesus?

Conclusion

Get used to standing out! The darker the world gets, the more your light will shine. And praise God that as people's lives crumble around them, they can reach out to you — someone whose beliefs, actions, and associations have all been touched by God's love and peace.