

## **Dealing With Disappointment**

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Good morning my dear friends,

I usually begin with a joke or a story, this time it is an anecdote that will cover both:

The anecdote is about me and it describes the week I came back from Portland (ahead of Ana and The kids) which was especially impossible:

For starters I arrived alone on Saturday and I'm not very good at being alone, I skip meals, can't sleep at night, etc. Sunday I had to work (after a week off) and when I went back to my home (downtown) it had been robbed, they broke the protection (steel bar protection) on one of the windows and got in and out through a very small opening taking very few gold rings and stuff and about 200 pesos in coins but everything from the closets was over the floor and beds...a huge mess, plus the corresponding police visit, reports, photos, etc. Monday our team of 3 became a duo as our Kathy decided to go back to Colorado (a month before) and that was her last day so the 7 days a week 10 hours a day schedule is now covered by 2, Thierry the French and me so now we only have 1 and a half days off every week, when lucky. Later on Monday, I had to deal with the welding of the steel bars and the cleaning of the big mess (which took me a week) without counting the fixing of (unnecessarily) broken closet doors, etc. Tuesday I had a "blockage" at the end of my digestive system (I don't know how to say it in English) partly because of a poor diet and partly because of the situation (never had that problem before). It was very uncomfortable 2 days and then it hurt a lot. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday we had VIP visits in CostaBaja, Thursday we got brand new boss, strategies, objectives, methods, etc. In addition every single day

around 7-8 I was going to Paula's house in Comitán and staying there until 10-11 so it looked occupied and then sneak out and drive to my own to sleep there...(after cleaning another bit of mess, that is) On Wednesday Paula's water was finished and I couldn't get the truck coordinated (with me being there too) until Friday. On Thursday there was a fight at CostaBaja (husband and wife) with beating in public and everything and the whole day was odd. Later on Thursday I had 3 important events, including the leadership meeting, a birthday party and the inauguration of a new restaurant (Palermo's in the Malecón, finally) which I couldn't attend...both close friend's...I almost forget, after my digestive system was blocked 2 days it went loose for another 2 days and by the end I was very soar. In average, my stomach was perfect during the week, that's why I love statistics...

Friday they started changing the floor in the marketing office so we had a few refugees in our office, in addition of course to the new boss, plus the VIP visits. After all that happening on Friday, I went home to finish cleaning the mess as Ana and the boys were coming back next day and afterwards I went to have dinner, well lunch, well breakfast really and the first thing I ate was a warm-outside-hot-as-hell inside "empanada de queso y elote" that burned my palate so bad that within 30 minutes the skin came off and a red skinless palate prevent me from eating anything in 3 days (liquid diet) and eating normal for almost a week. Because I was picking my family at San José del Cabo's airport (with both ends of my digestive system in fire) I changed my day off so I worked Sunday and had no rest until the following weekend...

The following week was a little better or maybe I just got used to the beating hahaha...ok just 3 highlights, my 47 year old watch failed after being worn by my dad every day for 35 years and by me every day after that...then came Friday when we got the bad news on the house lawsuit, which hit Ana much worse

than me...then when Ana was handing the house that Susan & Dennis Ross were going to house sit they found out it had been robbed too...so it is like just have been knocked over by a big big wave, then another, then another...not to mention the effect of missing church 3 weeks.

Would you agree that I have gained enough moral authority to talk to you about disappointment this morning?

Luke 24:13-24:27

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not know the things which happened there in these days?"

And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem I srael. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His

body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see”.

Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Have you ever been disappointed? There are probably some who came to worship today struggling with disappointment.

Disappointment takes many forms.

- Sometimes we get disappointed by people (marriage partner, work associate, friend).
- Sometimes we get disappointed when our plans do not materialize (marriage, school, home, promotion).
- Sometimes we get disappointed with the twists of life (death, sickness, broken dreams, etc).

Joke: Disappointment is one of those emotions we would rather avoid. A small-town prosecuting attorney called his first witness to the stand in a trial -- a grand-motherly, elderly woman.

He approached her and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know me?"

She responded, "Why, yes, I do know you, Mr. Williams. I've known you since you were a young boy. And frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, you cheat on your wife, you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You

think you're a rising big shot when you haven't the brains to realize you will never amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you."

The lawyer was stunned. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know the defense attorney?"

She replied, "Why, yes I do. I've known Mr. Bradley since he was a youngster, too. I used to baby-sit him for his parents. And he, too, has been a real disappointment to me. He's lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. The man can't build a normal relationship with anyone, and his law practice is one of the shoddiest in the entire state. Yes, I know him."

At this point, the judge rapped the courtroom to silence and called both counselors to the bench.

In a very quiet voice, he whispered, "If either of you asks her if she knows me, you'll be jailed for contempt!"

Disappointment is one of those emotions we had rather avoid. As we face disappointments we need to be reminded that even God does not shield his children from disappointment.

- Joseph had a God given dream but had to wade through disappointment in order to realize it. He was rejected by his brothers. He was the object of lies at the hands of his boss's wife.
- Job experienced the loss of everything he owned. He lost his

family and his friends.

- Jeremiah was called of God to be a prophet to Israel. However, he was rejected and his message was rejected by the people of God.
- Paul was called to be an apostle of God but he was persecuted by the very people who needed to hear his message.

I want to use a text from Luke 24 to consider this subject. This is the context. Two of Jesus followers were on their way to a place named Emmaus. Apparently Emmaus was their home town. They had been to Jerusalem and were aware of the news of Jesus death. As they walked along they were discussing the events that had happened in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus death. As they talked Jesus appears and begins to question them. As they speak Jesus picks up on their disappointment. In verse 21 we find the words reflecting their disappointment. The two followers tell Jesus "And we had our hopes up that he was the One" (the Message).

Have we not heard that phrase before?

- I had hopes our marriage would work!
- I had hopes my loved one would get better!
- I had hopes my job would work out!
- I had hopes we would win the lawsuit!

Disappointment can make or break us, depending on how we cope with it. History has abundant illustrations of people who have struggled with disappointment and yet came out on top.

Illustration: Some years ago someone sent me an e-mail entitled "Shake it off and step up." It perfectly illustrates the concept of dealing with disappointment. A parable is told of a farmer who

owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying'. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back...a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back...HE SHOULD SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP This he did, blow after blow.

'Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!' he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought 'panic' and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of the well. What seemed like would bury him, actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity. Disappointment can make or break us, depending on how we cope with it.

## **SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!**

I want to do a simple two point sermon. First, I want to consider the outcome of disappointment. Second, I want to consider how the presence of Jesus can transform defeat into victory.

First, what is the outcome of disappointment?

Disappointment will blind you. Notice verse 16. The Bible tells us Jesus' followers were restrained from seeing Him. The reading of the text makes it sound as if God hindered them from recognizing Jesus. Regardless of the meaning of the phrase the point remains the same. Disappointment will blind you.

Disappointment can blind you to the other wonderful things God is doing in your life. In our text disappointment blinded these two disciples to the resurrected Christ. They could not see the good news for the bad news.

Illustration: Leith Anderson, a pastor, shares an experience of disappointment. As a boy, he grew up outside of New York City and was an avid fan of the old Brooklyn Dodgers. One day his father took him to a World Series game between the Dodgers and the Yankees. He was so excited, and he just knew the Dodgers would trounce the Yankees. Unfortunately, the Dodgers never got on base, and his excitement was shattered.

Years later he was engrossed in a conversation with a man who was a walking sports almanac. Leith told him about the first major league game he attended and added, "It was such a disappointment. I was a Dodger fan' and the Dodgers never got on base."

The man said, "You were there? You were at the game when Don Larsen pitched the first perfect game in all of World Series history?" Leith replied, "Yeah, but uh, we lost."

He then realized that he had been so caught up in his team's defeat that he missed out on the fact that he was a witness to a far greater page of history.

Disappointment will disillusion you. It causes us to lose perspective. It causes us to lose direction. It turns life grey.

I've been there, done that, very recently...

Disappointment will cause you to lose hope. That is the fundamental meaning behind our text. The disciples had lost hope and were going home with heads hung low.

Illustration: listen to the story about a young girl named Norma Jean Mortenson. She was a young girl who spent much of her childhood in foster homes. In one of those foster homes, when she was 8 years old, she was abused physically and given a nickel and told to tell no one.

-When Norma Jean tried to tell her foster mother she was spanked and told not to say anything about it again because the man she accused of abusing her was a man who faithfully paid his rent.

-As time went on Norma Jean turned into a very pretty girl and people began to take notice. Boys would whistle at her and she liked it but she wished they'd also know she was a person too, not just a body.

-After a period of time Norma Jean went to Hollywood where she changed her name to Marilyn Monroe. Publicity people told her they were going to turn her into an American sex symbol. It worked. She became an overnight success. But she still longed to

be recognized as a person. She longed to be loved.

-She went thru 3 marriages pleading for someone to notice her as a person and not just an object. At the age of 35, on a Saturday night, Marilyn Monroe killed herself. Her maid found her the next morning on her bed with the telephone dangling off the receiver.

-Clare Buce wrote she thought the dangling telephone was a symbol of Monroe's life. She died because she never got thru to anyone who understood.

Disappointment causes frustration. Jesus called the disciples "foolish ones." This frustration can drive us to do things we would never do otherwise.

These are a few of the outcomes we experience when facing disappointment. All of us have felt the consequences of this deadly emotion. All of us struggle with managing it properly. We need to be reminded that it is not the disappointment but the handling of the disappointment that matters. The most important thing is to handle our disappointment with God's help.

11. In our text Jesus transformed defeat into victory. He changed disappointment into good news. He helped them overcome this deadly emotion. He wants to help you overcome this and other struggles you may be facing today.

How can the presence of Jesus transform.

A. The power of Jesus presence can transform.

"The Christian hope is the hope which has seen everything and endured everything, and has still not despaired, because it believes in God. The Christian hope is not hope in the human

spirit, in human goodness, in human endurance, in human achievement; the Christian hope is hope in the power of God." –

## **God is never wrong!**

- The presence of Jesus can transform defeat into victory.
- The presence of Jesus can transform sadness into singing.
- The presence of Jesus can transform darkness into light.
- The presence of Jesus can transform bitterness into sweetness.

You may be struggling with an impossible feeling that cannot be overcome. Your words may be "I cannot do this." That is exactly the point. You cannot but Jesus can. This is true for any trial you face in life. Jesus presence can transform the trial into a victory.

## **When Jesus shows up, disappointments blow up**

B. The presence of Jesus reveals God's plan. God's plans cannot be frustrated. God's plans cannot be defeated.

Illustration: When I watch movies I like action heroes. The reason I like such them is because the plan always comes together. The plans of the action heroes are never disappointed. They always come out on top. We know that such movies are make believe. They are fictitious. However, the truth of the gospel is that God's plans cannot be frustrated. God's plan always comes together. We need truth that is bigger than life.

C. The presence of Jesus gives new hope and meaning. Sometimes we go through life trying to make sense out of the

confusion which surrounds us. How does it make sense? How do we find hope?

Hope motivates us to keep going and not give up. Without hope we don't want to do anything.

An old cartoon from the comics illustrates this point.

Peanut's cartoon: Lucy and Linus were sitting in front of the television set when Lucy said to Linus, "Go get me a glass of water." Linus looked surprised, "Why should I do anything for you? You never do anything for me." "On your 75th birthday," Lucy promised, "I'll bake you a cake." Linus got up, headed to the kitchen and said, "Life is more pleasant when you have something to look forward to."

Do you have a steadfast unshakeable hope in God? Hope not only opens the door to receive a touch from God, hope also moves you through the door. Like Linus, when you have hope you're willing to get up and do something.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus got up and were motivated to serve. Jesus helped them overcome their gloom.

The source of hope is clear; the choice to seek it is yours.

Let's pray:

God, help us turn to you in despair, you are our hope and the source and end of all but sometimes we get lost in the midst of our worldly problems, which are none to you, help us turn to you for understanding and help. Help us turn to you for strength and help us turn to you in gratitude in every circumstance, always.