

Life Lessons

“Turning Failure Inside Out”

Solomon wrote: *“He that walks with the wise shall be wise”* (Prov. 13:20). **Do you know how to turn failure inside out?**

By forty-two Phillips Brooks had been a published author for twenty years, was sharing a phenomenal ministry at the historic Trinity Church of Boston, and had delivered the Yale Lectures on Preaching. His Yale Lectures have been the most often quoted for 130 years! Yet, did you know that Phillips Brooks was fired as a schoolteacher because he could not maintain discipline with older students? When released, the headmaster told him, ***“I have never known any man who fails in teaching to succeed in anything else!”*** What a foolish remark! For nine months Brooks suffered an overwhelming sense of defeat and discouragement. It was the president of Harvard and his family’s pastor helped Brooks ***“Turn failure inside out!”***

Turning failure inside out begins by turning from Self to the LORD. Nothing is more universal than the fact of failure, *“all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). The very word sin means, “to miss the mark.” Thank God for failure, for failure is the first road sign marking the way to Jesus. Have you recently failed? Take heart, you are on the right page of the instruction manual. Step one: Look to Jesus. What did Paul say in Philippians 4:13?

***I can do all things
THROUGH CHRIST who strengthens me!***

Turning failure inside out requires that we change our view of life. Imagine a deep valley. Fog shrouds you in a gray haze. Cold shadows chill you. Yet, one thing is sure: There can be no such valley unless you are also at the base of a mountain. Unbeknownst to you, you are standing at the foot of a future pinnacle experience. ***“I will look to the mountains from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD”*** (Psa. 121:1). Turn your attention...

Away from yourself toward the Lord
Away from the past toward the future
Away from what you can’t do to what you can do
Through Christ.

Turning failure inside out is a journey not a destiny. Change is not momentary or instantaneous but rather continuous and ongoing. You don’t have to “be there today,” you just have to be “on the

way.” When life is understood as an ongoing process of growth each day becomes a little brighter as we move a little close to the Lord and climb a little higher in life. Remember, ***“He who has begun a good work in you will continue it to completion”*** (Phil. 1:6).

Phillips Brooks – the premier preacher of the second half of the nineteenth century in America – began life as a failure! He once wrote, ***“It is not enough to write a sermon. We must have a message, a message which we cannot transmit until it has entered into our own experience, and we can give our own testimony of its spiritual power.”*** Are you ready to let the Lord begin to **turn your failure inside out?** Are you ready to let the Lord give you such **A MESSAGE?**