

Daily devotional, April 6, 2021 Lord, Use Me For Your Greatness

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38-39

Some of history's most renowned characters are remembered for the great things they did. However, even the greats had some not-so-great worst moments. For example, Walt Disney was fired by his editor at the Kansas City Star. This man had said that he "lacked imagination and had no good ideas." Despite this temporary setback, the entertainment empire that he founded has impacted nearly every segment of popular culture.

Did you know that Vincent Van Gogh only sold one painting in his lifetime, *The Red Vineyard*. Unfortunately, that sale was made just months before he died. His works are today viewed as priceless masterpieces. Then there was Thomas Edison who was told by his teachers that he was "too stupid to learn anything," and he failed more than 1,000 times before he had invented a working incandescent light bulb.

And then there was Dr. Seuss whose first book was rejected by 27 different publishers, went on to sell numerous titles that have over the years sold more than *600 million* copies.

Most all of us Illinoisans know that Abraham Lincoln was born into poverty, received virtually no formal education, lost his mother at a young age, failed in his business ventures, was unlucky in love, and was defeated in several elections before he became President of the United States and helped save the Union, and many from slavery.

If history has been made by a number of unlikely people, could there be some small chance that we too could leave our mark on today's events, as well? More importantly, if failure has not excluded many of history's greatest figures, could the Lord possibly use people like us to tell His story?

When we view our future through the lens of our past, there is not always much reason to have hope. When we take that perspective, our worst moments would surely disqualify us from ever being useful to our great God. But then again, there's Peter...

Simon Peter was the leader of the early Church, the one who preached to thousands on the Day of Pentecost, and the only disciple who got out of the boat and walked on water with Jesus. He was truly one of the Bible's greatest figures, but Peter also had more than his share of bad moments. Soon after he got out of the boat, he was overwhelmed by the fury of the waves when he took his eyes off of Jesus. When Jesus was on trial for His very life, Peter repeatedly denied even knowing Him. And when Jesus told His disciples of His impending death on the cross, Peter felt the need to rebuke Jesus, which was not the brightest idea.

Jesus most certainly had Peter in mind to tell His story and to defend it, but his role was far more unlikely than it was a great one. If God could use Peter, He can use anyone. His limitations did not exclude him, and because of the work of Jesus on the cross, they don't have to disqualify us either. Our Heavenly Father is in the business of using some of the most unlikely people to do the most unbelievable things. Your mistakes in life don't have to define who you are. If you keep following Jesus after your every stumble, your mistakes can improve you because Christ is greater than your worst moments.

Lord God, there are many times when I lack confidence in myself, and this causes me to be timid and afraid. Help me to stand tall in the certainty of my self-worth as Your child. Destroy my negative thoughts. I know that I am accepted by Your love regardless of other people's opinions. I know that, as Your child, I am good enough, I am strong enough, and I can do all things through You who strengthens me. I have been made competent by Your Holy Spirit, and I thank You, that in Jesus, I am secure in my eternal destiny. You have called me by name, and I am Yours. Amen.