

The following is a chapter from "Faith & Fandom Episode IV: A New Book" on "Legend of Zelda: Breath Of The Wild"

Legend Of Zelda: Rising From Failure

Can we just start with giving Nintendo a slow clap for Breath of the Wild? We waited a long time for its release, but it was totally worth it. The story, the gameplay, and the overall experience was just beautiful. This may contain minor spoilers. So, before you get angry and go smashing pots, you've been warned.

The thing that hit me hard was that you are starting the game from a position of failure. Link isn't just waking up and learning he is the hero of legend. Link is being brought back from the dead after failing at his mission. He had been killed, his four teammates in the divine beasts have been cut down by blights of Ganon, much of Hyrule has been wrecked, and the princess he was sworn to protect has spent the last 100 years holding their nemesis at bay. It's a lot less joyful than waking up from a nap and magically being told he is an epic legendary hero. That's also why it's so meaningful. It's a lot more likely in our lives that we will fail at something than having greatness simply handed to us. I think there is a lot we can learn from team Links downfall and rise.

When someone falls, they need to be restored.

As the game begins, Link wakes up in a restoration chamber, and before long he comes to realize that he had fallen defending Zelda from Ganon's forces, and that Zelda had him placed in this chamber so that he could return. Yes, she is partially responsible for his downfall. It was her inability to harness her power that forced Link to the brink of death, but still there is a responsibility that comes with being the Hero of Time. She made the effort to take Ganon on all by herself just to hold him back while Link could rise. This came at great personal risk and anguish for her, but she made the effort to make sure that after falling, he would be restored. As believers, so often we watch each other fall, but once they have fallen we treat them like they were just weak, or deserved failure, or say things like "they knew better" or "they got what they deserved." Sin is tough. It's real. It's tempting. It is dangerous, and it destroys our lives. None of us are so strong to not fall for it. When we see others fall, it needs to be our goal to, like Zelda, restore them, gently.

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves." (Galatians 6:1-3)

Yes, Link failed. He went up against forces greater than himself, and even though he fought with all he had, he failed. He was depending on his team of Daruk, Revali, Mipha, Urbosa, and Zelda to back him up. They failed, he failed, and it hurt not just them, but all of Hyrule. When we see someone fall, it's not the time to point blame, condemn, or step back; we need to restore. Paul tells us to watch ourselves because he knows full well that could just as easily be us. As Impa stated about their fall, "Despite our best efforts, and careful planning, we underestimated his power." Please, listen to Paul and learn from Zelda's example. When we see someone fall don't abandon them, but restore them.

When someone falls, they need guidance.

Link wakes up from the restoration chamber with no memory, no knowledge, and no clue who he is. The only way that Link is able to move forward is because he had people guiding him. As he emerged from the chamber (hopefully you didn't make the same mistake I did and forget to open the crates and get clothing... I played for over 3 hours without putting any clothing on link), Link receives a Sheikah Slate which is basically Zelda's handy dandy iPad to help link along the way. It's pretty much like the Bible for us, an incredibly powerful source, but we fail to use it enough. He's also greeted and guided by the Spirit of Zelda's father, the King who helps us make the appropriate steps to discover his path. Impa waits to give Link the lion's share of the information he needs to recover who he was and what he is. The Deku tree also is awaiting to continue to guide Link; even the spirits of his deceased teammates are waiting to instruct Link when he enters their respective divine beasts.

Zelda knew that he would feel alone and confused after his defeat. She knew that on his own, he would likely be defeated again, so she orchestrated so many of these steps to make sure that he would get all of the guidance that he needed. We need to make sure that when someone in our world falls that not only do we

restore them, but we give them the guidance they need in order to prevent their repeated downfall, just as Impa tells Link, "In order to avoid ever making that grave mistake again, the princess left you these words." Make sure that you do more than just tell them what they did wrong, but give them instructions on how to make the right choices. Put them in touch with others that can impart good knowledge to them. Don't just rely on your own strength and thoughts, either. Zelda made sure that Link had lots of guidance and not just from one source. There is a strong biblical precedence for guiding others.

"Without guidance, people fall, but with many counselors there is deliverance." (Proverbs 11:14)

"So don't go to war without wise guidance; victory depends on having many advisers." (Proverbs 24:6)

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. " (2 Timothy 2:2)

"My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20)

So go like old school Zelda games on them and be like Navi and do what it takes to get them to listen.

When someone falls, they need others to build them.

One of the more interesting game components is the shrine system that allows you to solve puzzles or compete in combat for the ability to raise your health or stamina, so literally your strength level depends on how much effort you want to put into it. While this is a great example, in reality when we've fallen we do need strength ourselves, but we often need the strength of others to build us up in the process. As Link grew stronger through his trials, he was also built up by his team members and others that continued to equip him. Purah continued to upgrade his skills and gear as he made strides forward. After freeing his friend's spirits from

the blights of Ganon, they each built him up by equipping him with their individual skills and gifts. Mipha gave him extended life, Revali gave him the ability to soar, Daruk gave him protection, and Urbosa gave him the ability to attack with fierce power. Truly, the game got easier and more enjoyable each time his fallen friends built him up. The more of their skills and input I received while playing, the more I could accomplish. When we build up and equip those who have fallen, we take the best we have and give it to them so they have more of an opportunity to thrive and succeed in later trials. We need to realize that when others fall, they are not only broken, but they feel ill-equipped to ever be repaired. We need to do more than bring them back to where they came from; we need to leave them stronger than they ever were before. Our building them up may be the only thing that allows them rise again.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

This concept of building others up isn't just a concept of repairing the fallen, but is actually part of Christ's plan for the church as a whole.

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." - Ephesians 4:11-16

We need to also recognize that even if the whole world doesn't see our failure, that it's still just as real. Often, our biggest failings come when no one sees them. We all saw that Link and his teammates had fallen, but it isn't until you realize how far Zelda had fallen and how greatly she blamed herself for everyone else's failures to truly understand this. She says, "It's all my fault! Everything, everything I've done up until now. It was all for nothing. So I really am just a failure! All my

friends, the entire kingdom, my father most of all... I tried, and failed them all."

I'm at the point where I can take down Ganon. I've been restored, I've been guided, and I've been built up. It's up to me, my ability, and my preparation for what happens next. All of us are in the place where we may be next to fall or the next to help those who have fallen.

"We pray for your protection, and we hope that you will grow stronger together as one." - Princess Zelda