

Second Chances

An Opportunity to Find God's Future for You

How many of us have never made a mistake? I don't need to look: there should be no hands in the air. We are all human and have made plenty of mistakes in our lives. Most are little mistakes but occasionally we make a big one. Perhaps it cost a person their job or a bad investment lost money for them. It is a "dog-eat-dog" world out there. Sometimes the world is unforgiving.



We recently celebrated Easter which acclaims the risen Savior, Jesus Christ. In Mark, chapter 16, we hear about the women approaching the tomb, observing that the stone was rolled away. An angel informs them, "He is not here, he is risen." The angel tells the women (in verse 7), "But go, tell the disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee." It is easy to overlook an important aspect of the verse? The angel specifically wanted Peter to hear the good news. Why Peter? As you may recall, Peter denied Jesus three times and then hid as Jesus was being questioned, prior to the crucifixion. His denying Jesus wasn't a little mistake but a big one.

I read a devotional by Max Lucado that highlighted the fact that the angel specifically wanted Peter to know that a forgiving Jesus wanted to meet with him to continue the ministry. Max Lucado described the angel's report as this: "It's as if all of heaven had watched Peter fall, and it's as if all of heaven wanted to help him back up again. 'Be sure and tell Peter that he's not left out. Tell him that one failure doesn't make a flop.'" Peter had his second chance. Second chances are freeing and empowering. It was not only a relief to Peter but a green light that empowered him to move ahead and proclaim the Good News.

We know that God will give us second chances, too. We hear the familiar verse during the communion liturgy: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us all our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (Joshua 1:9)*. That frees us from the penalty of our sins. It is an offer for a second chance to get it right the next time. We've all been to a carnival where we take throws at a target, hoping to win a stuffed animal. They typically give you two or three throws to hit the target. If you miss the first time you make adjustments and hopefully come home with the prize.

How did Peter react to his second chance with Jesus? After the resurrection, the next time Peter saw Jesus he jumped from his fishing boat into the cold water of the Sea of Galilee to swim ashore to Jesus. Peter was empowered by his second chance. He lived up to his name – Peter (Petra) means "the rock" --to shepherd and feed Christ's followers. As a result of his second chance Peter preached the gospel fervently, and gave his life for the cause of sharing the Good News.

Second chances offered by God are truly special because they involve a genuine and complete forgiveness. It isn't just about confessing our sins but it is about *accepting* God's forgiveness and allowing God's Grace and Mercy to wipe away the past. It is a clean slate and an opportunity to try again, this time with God's inspiration. When God offers you a second chance, face your failure and forgive yourself so that you can make the most of the future that God opens up for you. That is what Peter did. You can, too. Accept God's offer of a second chance.

Question: Have you ever asked God for a second chance? Has your opportunity turned into something really good?

The Bible Says: *Forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13b-14)*

Prayer: Dear Lord. We thank you for the forgiveness of our sins and the opportunity to start again with a clean slate. Amen.