

## Jan 24,2021 GOD GIVES SECOND CHANCES

Have you ever done something in your past that you are ashamed of?

Have you ever felt that you have disappointed God to such an extent that He would never love you again or accept you into heaven?

Wouldn't it be nice if we could just erase certain parts of our lives that disappointed God...

When I was a kid, I used to play with a toy called an Etch-a-sketch. The Etch-a-sketch was a little red and gray drawing board full of sand (or at least something like sand). You twisted two knobs on the bottom of the screen to draw a picture. If you messed up, all you had to do was shake the thing a couple of times and you got a clean screen. You got a chance to start all over again.

the good news is that it is possible for us to start all over again with God. We can have all of our past sins erased.

we can have all of our disappointments with God exterminated.

In order to start over though, we must first realize the quality of god's mercy and grace.

God is a merciful and forgiving God who does not enjoy punishing us.

The prophet Ezekiel put it this way in (Ezekiel 33:11) "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live."

One night in 1935, Mayor LaGuardia of New York, showed up at a night court in the poorest ward of the city. The judge of that district had a reputation for being jaded and harsh in his sentences. If you went before him you know you would get the maximum sentence the law allowed.

On this particular occasion, La Guardia dismissed the judge for the evening and took over the bench himself. One case involved an elderly woman who was caught stealing bread to feed her grandchildren. La Guardia said after she pleaded guilty to the crime, "I have to punish you. Ten dollars or ten days in jail." It was obvious she couldn't pay.

So the judge out of his own pocket paid the fine for her. He then fined everyone in the courtroom 50 cents for living in a city "where a person has to steal bread so that her grandchildren can eat." The hat was passed around, and the woman left the courtroom with her fine paid and an additional \$47.50 in her purse.

Solely out of the goodness of his heart, the Mayor of New York helped the woman who could not help herself. He reflected God's character of Heseb that we studied last fall. Heseb is when someone I have no right to ask anything gives me everything. The judge gave her the opportunity to pay her debts and start all over again.

God is this kind of judge. He has mercifully paid our penalty for sin and has given us the opportunity to start all over again. God is a merciful God.

(Ephesians 2:4) tells us that God is "rich in mercy"

(1 Peter 1:3) says that God has "great mercy."

In the 136th Psalm, 26 times it says, "His lovingkindness is everlasting."

Hesed which can also be translated as lovingkindness and mercy is a definitive quality of the nature of God. Listen, God has oceans of mercy and it will never run out.

Before we start all over again, and rededicate our lives to the Lord, we must realize and accept the quality of God's mercy. It will reach us if we want it. In order to start all over, we must understand that God is willing to give us another chance.

God wanted His prophet Jonah to go and preach against the city of Nineveh. However, Jonah did not want to fulfill that mission so in order to flee from the Lord, he boarded a ship and sailed for Tarshish. But during that journey, the Lord sent a great wind on the sea that threatened to break up the ship. In order to save the ship, the crew, after discovering that the storm was Jonah's fault, threw him into the sea. While drowning in the sea, Jonah prayed for the Lord's help, and God sent a great fish who swallowed Jonah and eventually vomited him onto the dry land.

"Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh."

Although at one time Jonah had refused to go to Nineveh, God gave him another chance. For it says, "the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time." Even though Jonah at first disappointed God, he was still given another chance.

God gives second chances! No matter what we have done in our past, God will accept us and give us another chance.

God is not interested in what we once were; instead, He is interested in what we can become.

Many people in the Bible overcame a turbulent past, and became great and faithful servants of the Lord.

Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation, at one time worshipped other gods (Joshua 24:2).

David, the third King of Israel, although he committed adultery, became a man after God's own heart.

Paul, the great apostle of Jesus Christ, at one time had Christians arrested and killed.

Although at one time these men lived ungodly lives, they were given another chance and eventually they became great servants of the Lord, and so can we.

We must forget our past failures and focus on our future successes.

Paul put it this way in (Phil. 3:13-14) "But one thing I do: forgetting what is 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."

When I was 16 I knew that God had a call on my life. I knew that I would be serving him. In my young mind I thought I knew what God was telling me to do and I thought for sure I had a handle on it. Well it's possible that that's true but even knowing that I took a

detour. I fell in love in college, got married, and moved to Germany for three years. When we returned to the states I continued to ignore God until a cataclysmic event in my life took place. My then husband decided that he was no longer interested in being married.

Interestingly enough the first thing I did was claim God's promise that he would never leave me or forsake me. I didn't know what that looked like at the time but I knew it was a promise and I had to hold onto it.

After a year or so of being on my own I started attending a Methodist Church. What I discovered there was that God loved me more than I could ever imagine. I learned that even though I had walked away from him he had not walked away from me. I learned that even though the call on my life was from long ago it hadn't changed.

It was like God was making up for lost time. Within a year of starting church, I became a member. One year later I found myself on the way to seminary. That's a long story but the point is that I had my second chance. I had done everything I could to run away from the Lord perhaps not intentionally avoiding the call, but certainly wanting to do things that attracted me at the moment. But God doesn't give up on us.

Today God is offering YOU a second chance. No matter what you have done or not done, No matter where you have been or not been when you were supposed to, no matter who you've hurt, or who has hurt you, it can all be made new.

All You have to do is ask him. A chance to begin again  
His mercies are new every morning.