

What Would You Do With a Second Chance?

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How many times do we cause others to stumble, put them down, and make them hate themselves to the extent of killing themselves! How many times do we make people leave God and His church because of our arrogance and misbehavior in the church, at home, at work or even in the streets and public areas! How many times do we regret an action and its terrible and destructive consequences! How many times do we feel miserable with everlasting guilt feeling because of our wrong deeds and sinful actions wishing to have a second chance to correct everything! And how many times do we say, “If only I had a second chance, I would have done so and so.”

Often God grants us second chances, third chances, fourth chances, etc., and we either put these priceless opportunities to good use, or hopelessly ignore and waste them. We all stumble, we all make mistakes, and we all inevitably beg the Lord for yet another chance. God believes in second chances, but there are strings attached to these fleeting opportunities—namely repentance and change.

God’s forbearance or patience toward our customary sin and misconduct has predictable limits; as St. Paul said,

✠ “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. Do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance” (Romans 2: 1-4).

Nevertheless, when we come to the end of our earthly journey, reaping what we have sown, we feel compelled to say, “If only I had another chance, I would...” Would we really?

“If Only...”

This reminds me with what happened with Jonah. The Lord gave him a second chance, as the Bible says,

✠ “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying: Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you. So, Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord” (Jonah 3:1-3).

Isn’t it wonderful that even when we run away from God, He comes after us and gives us a second chance to work in His field.

Our failures can leave us feeling that God could never use us, that He could never bless us again, and that we are useless in God's work and to His plan. Actually, our God is not only the God of second chance, but the third, fourth... as He did with the right thief, the sinful woman caught in her sin, the tax collectors, etc.

Similarly, God gave the people of Nineveh a second chance. God told Jonah:

✠ “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you. So, Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown’. So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them” (Jonah 3:2-5).

You see, when the people of Nineveh got their second chance, they didn't waste it. How about us? When the Lord offers you a second chance, take it and don't think for a moment to waste it; as the Lord taught us:

✠ “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12)

Do you remember the two thieves who were crucified with the Lord? The thief on the right took this opportunity; as we pray in the Agpeya's Litany of the Ninth Hour:

“When the Thief saw the Prince of Life hung on the cross, he said: Had not the One Crucified with us been God Incarnate, the sun would not hide its rays, nor would the earth have quaked trembling. But O, the Almighty One who endures all things, remember me, O Lord, when You come into Your kingdom.”

And our compassionate loving Lord accepted his petition saying:

✠ “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43)

Beloved, do not lose your second chance. The Lord may have been possibly speaking to you for months, or even years. You have been hardening your heart against God. Let me urge you to hear His voice today, the voice of mercy, pleading with you to come to Him.

Do not resist our wonderful loving and merciful Lord, the Lord of not only the second chance but of the thousandths. Let Him show you and prove to you what a joy it is to follow Him, lest you fall under St. Paul's warning:

✠ “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have **opportunity**, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:7-10).

Please take this article as your second chance, a reminder of God's love and mercy or an opportunity to do good to others and follow the Bible's teaching:

✠ “Therefore, as we have **opportunity**, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10)

A good smile can make a difference in the life of someone whom you may meet today. A kind gentle word can lift someone up from dust. A word of “thank you” can bring a big smile to weak souls.

A sense of appreciation to little efforts can make people offer all what they have, as the Lord commended the offering of the widow who gave only two mites:

✠ “She out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood” (Mark 12:44, Luke 21:4)

All of these instances and incidences in life are second chances that God place before us. Even hard times and illnesses are wonderful second chances that God may use them to bring us closer to Him to enjoy eternity with Him.

Trust that God will never forget your good deeds and labor of love; as He promised,

✠ “For God is not unjust to forget your work and **labor of love** which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Hebrews 6:10)

And when you trust in God with full confidence, you shall receive the reward as He promised:

✠ “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:35-36)