



REDEMPTION BIBLE STUDIES #2

Broken But Usable

The Redemption of Peter

"The Story"

John 21:15-17

Now when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him again, a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" Peter was hurt because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."

Back in 2000, 23-year-old Cornelius (Mike) Anderson was arrested for robbing a Burger King at gunpoint. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison, released on bail, and told to await orders on when to show up to serve his time.

The orders never came. Due to a clerical error, Anderson never went to prison. He certainly could have used his freedom to commit more crimes, but instead Anderson started his own construction business, became a football coach for area youth, and became involved volunteering at his local church. Then he got married, had three children, and became an active and well-liked member of his community.

All seemed to be fine, his past was all but forgotten. However, thirteen years later, the state discovered their error and arrested him and after all those years they put behind bars. As the case received international coverage, an online petition for his release gained more than 35,000 signatures.

Mike didn't give up hope or his faith in God. He was paying the penalty for his past sins. He wasn't sure where God was bringing him at the time, but he was willing to go. He was fully expecting to live out the next thirteen years behind the bars in the prison. And no matter what he was not going to be bitter. He was going to use whatever time he had to continue to make the most of his life.

A year later a court decided to look at Anderson's sentencing. After a court hearing that lasted a mere 10 minutes, the judge conceded that Anderson was a changed man and granted him credit for the years he should have been in prison. A teary-eyed Anderson walked out of the courthouse with his wife and daughter, telling reporters just one thing: he was grateful to God.

There are things that we do in life that we have to pay for. In Mike Anderson's case he spent just under a year paying for the bad decisions that he had made when he was younger. I am sure that throughout

**BEAR
MAN**



the years where the state forgot about him he paid a heavy price as he considered what might have been and what might still be.

How often do we look over our shoulder when we've done wrong? I know that I've looked back at times since I've turned my life back to Jesus wondering if He is going to be there holding my past against me. This is a waste of my time. Jesus forgave me at the cross and the forgiveness never goes away.

We waste so much time worrying about what God has already taken away when Jesus died on the cross. When we have given our heart to Him, He has forgiven our sins from the past present and future.

The most outspoken disciple of Jesus was Peter. In the scripture above we find Him standing before Jesus and speaking to him. This was the first time that we see that they really talked since Peter had denied Jesus and since Jesus was crucified. Peter had been carrying the shame and embarrassment for quite a while.



Let's look where Peter went wrong.

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM

1) THE LAST SUPPER – WASHING FEET AND THE PREDICTION OF PETER'S DENIAL

Jesus and His disciples gathered in the upper room for the last supper and Jesus was about to teach them about being a servant. Even in this beautiful example of Jesus actions of being a servant, Peter fought Jesus on this action.

John 13:3-11

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had handed all things over to Him, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ got up from supper and laid His outer garments aside; and He took a towel and tied it around Himself.

⁵ Then He poured water into the basin, and began washing the disciples' feet and wiping them with the towel which He had tied around Himself. ⁶ So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, You are washing my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not realize right now, but you will understand later." ⁸ Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no place with Me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet; otherwise he is completely clean. And you are clean—but not all of you." ¹¹ For He knew the one who was betraying Him; it was for this reason that He said, "Not all of you are clean."

Peter was certainly bullheaded and he shows it here. Jesus had told His disciples that He had come to serve and yet when He tried to show them what that meant, Peter fought it. In verse 8 Jesus makes it clear that Peter must allow Him to wash his feet, or he had no part in Jesus and His ministry.

On the same night that Peter said that Jesus could not wash his feet he again stuck his foot in his mouth when Jesus predicts his denial.

Matt 26:31-35

"You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I WILL STRIKE THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK WILL BE SCATTERED.' ³² But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." ³³ But Peter replied to Him, "Even if they all fall away because of You, I will never fall away!" ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

³⁵ Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" All the disciples said the same thing as well.

Peter had just spent 3+ years with Jesus and he knew exactly who Jesus was. He had seen the miracles and had lived through so much with Him, yet here when Jesus tells him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." (Mark 26:34), Peter argues against the statement of Jesus. Peter answers Jesus saying, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" (Mark 26:35). Strike One!



2) IN THE GARDEN – SLEEPING AND SWORD PLAY

Then Jesus and the disciples move to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus takes Peter along with James and John higher up into the garden. Three times Jesus came down to find the three disciples sleeping. Even after He wakes them and pleads for them to stay awake and pray for Him, they fall asleep again.

Mark 22:36, 40-45

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and told His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ⁴⁰ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, “So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? ⁴¹ Keep watching and praying, so that you do not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

⁴² He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink from it, Your will be done.” ⁴³ Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

⁴⁴ And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

⁴⁵ Then He came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

Peter disappoints Jesus again by his weakness in Jesus’ time of need. Over and over again Jesus instructs Peter (as well as James and John) to pray. Jesus is in the worst time of His life, knowing what He was coming up against and Peter let Him down.

It was right then that Judas brought the soldiers and religious leaders to the garden to arrest Jesus. When the group approached Jesus we read this.

Matthew 26:51-54

And behold, one of those who were with Jesus (Peter) reached and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?”

Peter reacted thinking that God needed his help, he took matters into his own hands. Jesus again had to rebuke Peter for taking matters into his own hands instead of waiting on the Lord. Strike Two!

3) The Denial

After all this happened in the matter of a few hours and the guilt that Peter must be feeling, Peter is faced with the confrontation that Jesus had predicted. This is the one action that Peter is remembered for more than any other. So many of us have thought, “If it had been me, that wouldn’t have happened”, but we know, if we look deep into our own heart, that we would have failed as Peter did.

Peter was standing at a fire wondering what was about to happen. Jesus had been taken and I am sure that the disciples wanted to know what was coming next. Even though Jesus had taught them all that He had they had no idea what was about to happen.

Mark 14:66–72

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said. But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway. 9 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.” Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. 10 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice 11 you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept. Strike Three!

Peter was broken. He must have felt like a complete failure. Now Jesus, the One he had followed for the last three years, the Messiah, was taken away. Soon He would be beaten and crucified. Where does that leave Peter? As the leader of the followers of Jesus, he had failed not only Jesus but the rest of the disciples as well. Was there any hope for him?



What Does It Mean to Us?

Three days seems like an eternity when you are reliving a bad decision. Maybe you mailed a letter with some things in it that you shouldn't have said. Or you send a text or email to someone with some words that were not nice and you regret it. The time spent contemplating those bad choices can be excruciating. This is what Peter must have been going through except that Peter's torment must have been many times worse. He had denied his own Savior and not once by three times. He also had messed up over and over again during the two days that lead up to the denial. 72 hours must have felt like an eternity.

Like Mike Anderson in the story I started with in this study, Peter had to have been looking over his shoulder wondering what happen because of his failure. Mike waited 13 years, Peter waited 3 days. I am sure that both of these men wondered if and when the time would come that they would have to "pay the piper" for their failures.

After the long three days and nights spent wondering what happened and what was coming prophesy is fulfilled. There are two things that we can read in the Gospels that are very interesting concerning Peter right after the resurrection. First, in Mark's writings we see that the angel told women to go and tell the disciples about what had happened. Then they were told something that makes me believe that God was sympathetic to what He knew Peter was going through. The angel then said to tell the disciples and Peter. Peter was the only one of the 11 that was named specifically, as if to say, "Make sure Peter knows." This shows that the restoration and redemption of Peter was already in the planning before he had even denied Jesus.

Mark 16:5-7

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; see, *here is* the place where they laid Him. ⁷But go, tell His disciples and Peter.

The second thing that we see happen in John's account is that John and Peter run to the tomb when they get the news of the empty tomb. John gets there quicker than Peter and stops outside the tomb, Peter runs right past John and right into the tomb.

John 20:3-6

Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. ⁴They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. ⁵Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in. ⁶Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there

Peter seems to have temporarily forgotten about his bad choices and wants to be with Jesus. I get the feeling that Peter knows that Jesus loves him enough to offer forgiveness. Peter wants to be close to Him. However the excitement of Jesus having been resurrected was a most likely bitter/sweet situation for Peter. Jesus had certainly conquered death as He had promised that this was a great victory. However, Peter was carrying a heavy load of guilt and regret. How could he ever show Jesus how deeply



sorry he was? I am sure that he had to question if Jesus would ever feel the same way to him now after Peter had denied even knowing. We've all been there, having hurt something and wishing to restore the relationship we've lost.

When Jesus and Peter finally have a chance to intimately talk, Jesus takes great care in redeeming Peter.

John 21:15-17

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?'

'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'

Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'

The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep'"

I'm not sure if Jesus does it for effect but notice that He asks Peter if he loves Him once for every time he denied knowing Him. Each time Peter responds that he does love the Lord, Jesus directs and encourages him to care for His sheep. This is Jesus' extremely loving and redeeming way, of telling Peter that his failure hasn't disqualified him from his role as Christ's trusted ministry partner.

There are many testimonies of Peter's ministry throughout the New Testament and there is no doubt about the fact that he did go on to become what Jesus had said he would, "the rock on which I will build my church." Shortly after Christ's ascension into heaven we see an amazing transformation of Peter.

Peter, along with John had been arrested and locked for preaching about Jesus, His life, death and resurrection. Shortly after being arrested the elders and teachers brought them before the group to question the two disciples. Peter doesn't hesitate and immediately preaches to them about Jesus.

After speaking of evidence of Peter finishes by telling them, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Luke the writer of the books of Acts then writes, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

These leaders of the day had seen Peter when he was walking with Jesus. They knew that he was a common uneducated fisherman. What they saw amazed them and frightened them as well. Here was Peter, the fisherman, preaching and teaching like one that had many years of formal training.

There is only one answer to the question of these religious leaders that is that Peter had been with Jesus. Jesus had taken the damaged parts of Peter and redeemed him so that he would be used in miraculous ways.

**BEAR
MAN**



The story of Peter's restoration and redemption is no different than what Jesus wants to do for you and I. We'll all have times where we will fail miserably in life, but we see in Peter's life that through our relationship in Jesus there is always a way back. God is continually working in our life to restore and redeem us, making us into the person He wants us to be. The giant of the Bible, like Peter, were no different people than you or I. If God would gladly redeem them, He will lovingly do the same for you.

Each time we sin we turn our back on Jesus. We deny His lordship in our lives. But even when this happens, we can see in these scriptures that He loves us unconditionally. We can know that our sins are "removed as far as the East is from the West" (Psalms 103:12). There is nothing that can stand between the love of God and us, when we wish to be redeemed and confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness.



DIGGING DEEPER

1) Do you feel a connection to Peter and his life? How?

2) What is your biggest failure in your own eyes?

3) Have you confessed this, laying before God and asked for forgiveness?

4) Have you felt complete redemption from this situation?

5) Is there anything that you have not confessed and gotten redemption for?

6) Do you believe 1 John 1:9? "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrightousness."

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We praise and thank you that no matter how many times we fail you, you never fail us. It is hard for us to imagine how we've hurt you, yet you never stop loving us. Please instill in us a dedication and loyalty to you that you wish for us. You are the one that loves us unconditionally and we want that same kind of love for you. We pray these things in Your name, Amen.