



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

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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.