

A Second Time

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time:

Jonah 3:1 (NIV)

Yesterday we considered the God of the second opportunity. I wish to remind you of several other biblical characters who were restored by the Lord after falling away from the place of useful service.

One of the truly great characters of the Bible and who is very popular with all of us is mighty King David. Perhaps David is loveable because he not only does great things for the Lord but he also sins against the Lord as we do.

David's sin does not need to be described here. What is vitally important is that the Lord returns to His wayward child and provides him with the second, third and fourth opportunity to be of service for Him. God does not give up on him, rather David is restored again and again. God is very patient with us as David's history shows.

Then we have the life of Peter. Here again is a person who does wonderful things in God's service. For example there is the story of Pentecost as recorded in

Acts 2. Peter's wonderful sermon that day was tremendously blessed by the Lord and thousands were added to the church through Peter's one sermon.

But this is the same Peter who had recently denied his Lord when accused of being a follower of the Saviour. Peter was quickly put back into service after such an embarrassing fall.

Again we read of Peter in Matthew 16 where he attempts to tell Jesus that the cross has no place in His ministry. Peter is soundly rebuked that day by Jesus for his arrogance at trying to organize the work of his Master.

Just a few days after this disaster of Peter's we read of a remarkable privilege given to Peter. Matthew 17:1-3 (NIV) "After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. [2] There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. [3] Just

then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus."

Are you not encouraged by such a history of God being faithful even when his people falter? The proof that someone is truly a child of God is that when they fall they are given a spirit of repentance to return to the Lord. Then, when they return, the Lord graciously receives them.

Thank God for His grace to all of us! There is wonderful encouragement in seeing that the Lord came the second time to David, Jonah, Peter and many others in Scripture. Be confident that you may come back to the Lord and He will receive you with loving kindness. Luke 15:20 (NIV) "So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

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