

God Allows Mulligans!
John 21:15-25

The Gathering Place
July 29, 2007

Yesterday Pastor Gittens and I were invited by Wayne Ball to attend the Canadian Open and watch Bubba Watson play golf! Wow! He hits a golf ball close to a quarter of a mile – 373 yards!

But you know what I noticed – there are no MULLIGANS permitted in the Canadian Open. They won't let you play your shot over again without a penalty.

God allows Mulligans!

Have you ever said: If I could only do it over again ...?

I am sure you have. If I knew what I know now, there is a lot I would do differently than I did the first time.

When you use those words "If I could only do it over again ...?" we always assume that the rest of the sentence would be ... "but you can't." But the truth is there is a lot we can do over again, if we have the will to do it over again!

People will sometimes say, what's done is done, you can't do it over again. Yes, but also No. Because with God you are often given the chance to do it over again! It's called the mercy and grace of God.

In the movie "City Slickers" Billy Crystal's character says that, "**life is a do over.**"

Interestingly, in the Bible we find "do overs"! Someone did this neat little poster – **With Jesus life is a "do over"**.

God works with our failures if we will let Him. He doesn't easily give up on us. I know that often I have given up on people far too soon. I have had expectations of what a person could do or what they should do and when they don't do it I am ready to write them off.

God never gives up. And we shouldn't either.

VIDEO: Danny Boy

God does not throw people away. He does not consider any of us fit for the garbage heap. He doesn't give up on us. He is not willing that any of us perish, but wants every one of us to come to repentance. The Bible tells shows us that God second chances or "do overs".

Let's consider some of them:

Jonah was told by God to go to Nineveh and warn the people of that city of God's intention to punish them for their sin. Jonah doesn't want to do it and his reason was that if he were to tell them this the people of Nineveh would repent and God would give them a DO OVER! Israelites didn't like Ninevites, Jonah wanted them obliterated, so he got on a ship and went in the opposite direction. The neat thing about this story is that God gave Jonah a second chance to obey Him.

Moses ordained of God to be a deliverer of God's people escapes to Midian. But God gives Him a DO OVER!

King David really blows it when he enters into an adulterous affair with Bathsheba. But God doesn't throw David away. He gives Him a DO OVER!

Judas he sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and then felt so bad about it that he gave all the money back or at least he tried to give it back. He actually tried to take a "mulligan" a "do over". But the Chief Priests wouldn't let him do it. Judas in his despair committed suicide. He gave up too soon! I am absolutely convinced that if only he had taken the path Peter and the other disciples took, Judas would have experienced the same mercy, grace and forgiveness that all the rest received from the resurrected Lord. But Judas believe he was garbage and the threw his life away. He ruined his chance for a "do over", a "mulligan."

Thomas, disbelieves the reports about the resurrected Jesus. Jesus appears a second time to the disciples and Thomas gets a DO OVER.

James and John, the sons of thunder got a second chance.

They selfishly desired the places of honour, seated at the left and right of the throne when Jesus would enter His Kingdom. Pretty arrogant. Jesus told them they didn't know what they were asking for. The other disciples when they heard what James and John had done were furious. It all the elements of a disaster, a split in Jesus' discipleship group. BUT IT DIDN'T. Eventually they experienced Pentecost and they ended up "drinking the cup" that Jesus drank, just like Christ predicted. James was martyred for his faith (Acts 12:2) John ended up spending the last years of his life in exile on an island.

All 11 remaining disciples

But the best example of all ...

Peter got a second chance.

When Jesus died it was a dark day. The disciples lost hope. They went into hiding. They were like sheep without a shepherd.

You remember what happened with Peter? Jesus had predicted that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster would crow to announce the dawning of the noon day.

Peter absolutely denied that he would ever deny Christ – **"even if I have to die with you I will never disown you."** *And all the other disciples said the same.* (Matthew 26:35)

But three times Peter denied that He knew Jesus even swearing on one of those three occasions as he vehemently denied that he had any acquaintance at all with the One who was being tried in Pilate's judgment hall.

And then the rooster crowed!

Peter remembers the words of Jesus – and Matthew records that Peter went outside and wept bitterly. That was a hard night!!!

Peter must have felt like a complete failure. He had blown it!

And then Jesus died. Wow! How would you feel if your best friend died after you betrayed him or her and you never had a chance to make amends or tell them how sorry you were for having failed them.

I can imagine that Peter cried out to God in the midst of his tears

GOD, IF I COULD ONLY HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE ...

IF I COULD ONLY SEE JESUS AGAIN...

IF ONLY I COULD TELL HIM HOW SORRY I AM ...

If only life was a "DO OVER"!

But now Jesus is dead ... and there is no second chance.

AND THEN COMES EASTER MORNING!

Mary tells him the tomb is empty. He and John run there and find that it is just like she reported. Peter may have felt a little ray of hope – what if!!!
But there's no second chance, is there? and what if He is somehow alive, what will He want to do with me? Can you imagine all the "if only's" going through Peter's mind ...

Later that very day Peter sees Jesus face to face. In fact, it happens twice. Jesus doesn't mention anything at all about his denial.

Now they are standing beside the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee).

Jesus asks: Simon son of John, **do you truly love me more than these?**

What is the these in this question?

Is it the fish?

Is it his companions?

There's a blank at the end of that question so we can put in all the things that tend to consume us.

It is significant that Jesus asks Peter 3 times, *Simon, son of John, do you truly love me?*

Peter denied Jesus 3 times.

Three times now in the hearing of all the disciples Peter gets to affirm His love and devotion to the Master!

The idea that there is no second chances with God, that once you have blown it you may as well give up is a lie sown in our minds and hearts by the devil.

Romans 8:34 *“who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us”?*

No! Again and again we are given the opportunity to start over again. Its called **GRACE**

The question to be answered though – is what will we do with the opportunity?

Judas continued in self judgment and bitterness.

Peter took the road to Galilee where Jesus said he would meet with them. He received mercy and grace.

HE GOT A DO OVER! A MULLIGAN!

His original call from Jesus was – **Come follow me!**

Jesus reveals what it will cost Peter to truly love Him ...

Then He says --- FOLLOW ME! How do we show we truly love the Lord? Follow me! Whatever it cost! Obedience is the key. Jesus said, “if you love me keep my commandments” But Jesus what will John do?

Peter, it doesn't matter what John does. YOU MUST FOLLOW ME.

Do you need a Mulligan in your game of life? Do you need a “do over”?

Do you feel like you've blown it?

GOD ALLOWS MULLIGANS!