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Just Give me a Second Chance
Mark 16:1-8

"Boy, I'd give a hundred bucks to take back those words." Did you hear yourself saying that last week? Did you find yourself wishing you had never said the hurtful comment to your wife or husband or boss or your kids? Do you wish you could turn back the time and remove those damaging words from your history? We've all been there haven't we. It sure would be nice to have that second chance. Some things we let slip from our tongues fortunately glance off their target and only cause a scare. Other arrows sink deep into the flesh, become infected and cause all sorts of pain.

Last week I was talking with some folks and I let slip some information that was not yet common knowledge, it had the potential to drip egg on my friend's face. I thought the decision had already been made, but I found out later the issue was still being dealt with. I wish I had not let that information slip. I wish I could have a second chance, turn back the time and redo that conversation. There have been things I have said to my wife I'd love to take back. There are things I've said in anger to my sons I'd love to have a second chance to try saying it again in a kinder way. I'd like to have a second chance at some of the choices I've made, comments I've uttered, things I've done. How about you? Ever wish you could have a couple dozen tickets in your pocket good for a slate-wiping second chance? Some of us wouldn't mind having a couple hundred of those tickets...every other week.

Problem is...there just aren't many folks out their willing to give out second chances. The competition for good jobs is tight even for the very well qualified. You mess up at work while clinging to the bottom of the seniority ladder...See ya, kicked in the teeth out of a job. No promotion for you, there are too many of folks in line behind you. You've heard the words, "Around here we don't tolerate incompetence," "It's either now or never" "You snooze, you lose." "Three strikes and your out." If your a field goal kicker playing NFL football and happen to miss the big one...it's time to pack your locker and find another team. No second chance. If you make a mistake in love. No second chance to redo

your choice. You must endure the consequences no matter your choice to stay or leave. If you happen to be exceeding the speed limit on the river road...just ask the sheriff. No second chances, a ticket is guaranteed. Now that would probably not be a great time to whip out one of your "second chance" coupons.

We all could use a second chance. Maybe you've failed at love, you've failed at life. Maybe you've said some things that have caused others or yourself great pain. Maybe you've done some things that you feel are unforgivable. Maybe you've been distant from God for quite a while. Maybe you've been downright rebellious against God, and you know it. I want to look at a man this morning who discovered something very interesting about God. It may prove both challenging and encouraging for those of us who could use a second chance.

The man's name was Peter. Now I like Peter. He was not your clean cut professional, Peter was a man's man. A leather-faced fisherman with salty skin and a peppered beard. Black dirt under his fingernails. he could probably swear up a blue streak. A raw leader in a rough crowd, on the Sea of Galilee shores. He prided himself on always being there to help out, always loyal to his friends. If a buddies net ripped, he was there to help out. A boat needed repair, he'd come to work early, packing his tool box. Peter worked hard for his money to keep the family fed and clothed. The hours were long and the money was poor...but he liked what he did. He was a rugged independent man who could solve his own problems.

Then one day, Peter meets a man named Jesus. He is so impacted that his focus on life begins to change. There was a gentle strength in this man Jesus that drew him. There was a truth in His words, a compelling love and total acceptance that he had never known. Here was a learned man of God who spoke before thousands...**He** wanted to hang with Peter the sweaty, muscle bound fisherman. For several years Peter went with Jesus whenever he could. Often they would stay up late at night watching the fire and just talking. Peter had seen some amazing things and watched Jesus live life like no other. When asked who he thought Jesus was, Peter said that a few folks thought he was a good teacher, some thought he was a great prophet just like Elijah or John the Baptist. But Peter, he affirmed that this man wasn't just a

good teacher, he **had** to be the Son of God the Great Deliverer whom they were all waiting for.

You might think that Peter would be would be the one disciple who would stand up for Jesus when things got tough. After all wasn't he the fearless fisherman sculpted with loyalty? Well, bold and brave Peter was going to learn a few things about himself, and about Jesus as well. In Mark 14:30 Jesus predicts His death. He also predicts that Peter will be more concerned with his own safety than standing by his friend Jesus. Jesus predicts that Peter will deny even knowing Him. Pick it up at verse 27. Jesus is speaking to his disciples out on the Mount of Olives after the last supper. (READ) -v.31. Mr. Loyalty kicks out some bravado. It was that same night the religious authorities came with soldiers and caught up with Jesus and the disciples. They had enough of the one who claimed to be God, they were angry at Jesus, the one who turned masses against the organized legalistic religion of the day. They handcuffed Jesus and led him away to be tried. We read in v. 50 "They all fled to their homes, out of breath telling their wives what happened in the garden. But brave old Peter v.54 says "followed and watched from a distance." He eased into the jail courtyard and waited for the outcome of the trial while warming himself by the fire. That same night when some folks came by and recognized him, he swore up and down he wasn't one of Jesus friends. Jesus was inside getting interrogated, whipped and slapped. When a young girl said to Peter, "Hey, you were one of the guys that hung out with Jesus" Peter, cussed the air blue saying he didn't know what she was talking about. In the early morning hours, a rooster crowed. To the rest of those standing about the courtyard fire it was just another rooster and a morning come too soon. To Peter, it was a sobering shock. Instantly he remembered, instantly guilt and shame washed through his body. Every day for the rest of his life he would here a rooster crow and remember. "I betrayed Jesus." I failed the man who was my best friend, who loved me unconditionally and showed me I could live a better life free from my own hurtful ways, no longer a slave to addicting behavior's but free to live as I was created.

A few days later Peter's friend Jesus was hanged by the authorities on a pole sticking out of the ground. You can picture Peter, he is sitting back in his home, crying into his hands, saying "Oh, I just wish I could

take back those things I said that night in the courtyard. I wish I could just have a second chance." "Why, Why, why Jesus was a perfect man. I've done so many bad things, yet he has never once been angry for a bad reason. He's never once said mean or hurtful things, yet here I have betrayed my best friend and they have killed a perfect man. Why, Why, Why. This man is truly who he said He was...the son of God. I just wish I had a second chance to tell him how much I love him. Just give me a second chance.

Jesus was buried Friday night in a tomb owned by a wealthy man from Arimathea named Joseph. There were few folks who witnessed the funeral, a few women watched from the distance huddled in silence...few words were spoken as Jesus body was wrapped in the burial clothes and laid in the crypt. There was an air of finality as the large stone shuddered into place. The bleary-eyed women trudged home, empty stomachs filled with despair. Hours past..fear of the authorities...what would happen now? Sunday morning early the women get together. Their friend Jesus is dead but they want to do something to honor him. Lets pick up the story at verse 1 of Chapter 16 in the gospel of Mark.

Turn with me to Mark 16:1. (READ) As I read this passage I asked a few questions. 1) **Why did that stone need to be moved?** In verse three we read that the women were wondering about how they were going to move the stone as they walked toward the cemetery that early Sunday morning. They knew they weren't strong enough to move it on their own. Maybe some of the gardeners would help them move the large stone. The women wanted to honor Jesus by pouring some spices over the body, slowing down the process of decay. By this time the corpse would be smelling quite rank. The women were probably unaware the tomb had been sealed with guards posted at the entrance. They were not running to the tomb expecting a risen Savior, a Jesus that was alive. They expected to find the same body they saw placed in the tomb that Friday evening. Yet, when they arrived at the entrance they were surprised to see the stone had been moved out of the way. Immediately assuming some thieves had stolen his body, they poked their heads into the tomb and were blinded by the light of an angel. Why did that stone need to be rolled away? It wasn't so the women could pour their spices on Jesus body. It wasn't their. It wasn't so that Jesus could get out of

the tomb. He showed later in the week that walls were no obstacle to His glorified body. So why? God moved the stone so that the women could see that Jesus was not there, that He'd been raised by God from the dead. God wanted the women, and all of us to see an empty tomb. The stone was rolled away so we all could see our second chance.

Point #2 **If Jesus is still in the tomb there is no second chance.** What if the women were able to find someone who would roll back the stone and they anointed a body that Sunday morning? The history books would make Jesus just another great teacher. Some may call Him a liar or a lunatic for having claimed to be God's son yet by death proving he was not. If Jesus were still in the tomb anointed by the spices of the women there is no hope for any of us today. I might as well turn off the mike and go home. We might as well bolt the doors, eat drink and be as merry as we can because this messed up world is all you have. Live for the now because that's all there is. If Jesus were still in the tomb our future would be dim...no second chance. But... the women didn't find him in the tomb. The angel answers all the objections in their minds, v. 6. Yes your looking for the right man, Jesus the one from Nazareth. OK no mistake there. Yes, he was recently crucified and they laid him right here. Ok, They're looking in the right place. He is risen! Passive tense there. He has been raised by God and he didn't stick around among the dead. He's Alive! Amen? If Jesus is still in the tomb we have no second chance.

Look at the instructions given to the women. Point number 3 **We all need a second chance.** Mary Magdelene who looked into the tomb that morning had 7 demons cast out of her by Jesus. Do you think she enjoyed having a second chance at life. What about Peter? Yes, Peter the one who denied ever knowing Jesus. Could he use an empty tomb of hope and a fist full of second chances? You bet he could. Look with me at verse seven. Don't miss it. (READ v.7 and Peter. The angel said, "Don't stay here. Go tell the disciples...a pause filled smile. and especially tell Peter, that he is going before you into Galilee. It's as if all of heaven had watched Peter fall on his face that night in the courtyard and then was cheering to help him get back up again. Don't leave Peter out. Make sure and tell him that one flop doesn't make a failure. This good news is called the gospel of the second chance.

The world doesn't give many second chances to those who let their tongues slip away or mess up once or twice. Just ask the little guy who didn't make the little league team or the man who got handed the pink slip Friday or the mother of three who was left for the pretty little twenty something. When we ask for that second chance, the world just laughs. Jesus says, "Sure you can have a second chance" The empty tomb gave us all a fistful of slate-wiping second chance tickets. Just ask Peter. The gospel of Mark was written by Mark from the Sermons that Peter preached. He wanted to make sure that we saw that Jesus would give a second chance to even Peter. Peter went on to preach the gospel all over the know world. He preached all the way to Rome where he was martyred for his faith. What kind of mercy, unconditional love and acceptance filled with second chances does it take for a man to be crucified on a cross upside down? Well now you know. Peter knew that finding someone who would give him a second chance was rare, but in Jesus, he had found a someone who would give Him a second chance every day. Are you willing to accept his Second Chance? He's just waiting to hand you a free ticket.