

THE GOD OF ANOTHER CHANCE

by
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Please open your Bibles to I Corinthians chapter eleven and verse thirty-one. I would like to preach a message entitled "The God of Another Chance." By way of introduction, let me say this: Though God is the God of judgment, He is the God of great mercy; He is the God of great grace; He is the God of another chance. In I Corinthians 11:31, the Bible says, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

My friends! That's good advice. I would warn you not to presume on the great mercy and great grace of God because God's anger can be swift; God's wrath can be devastating.

However, the character of God and the testimony of God's dealing with man is that He often gives the repentant child of God another chance.

Do you remember the story about Moses who took matters into his own hands and killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand? He did something that was wrong. He was scared and fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian. And 40 years later God came to Moses and said, "Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me." The God of another chance!

Do you remember the story about Aaron who, with his own hands, fashioned a molten calf and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel"? Yet, after repentance and restoration, it was Aaron who became the first high priest of Israel. The God of another chance!

Do you remember the story about Joseph how his brothers sold him into captivity? They abandoned their brother; they lied to their father about his whereabouts and many years later God gave them a chance to get right with their brother and to do the right thing. The God of another chance!

Do you remember the story about David and Bathsheba? Their sin of adultery? The sin of murder on David's part and the cover up? It took almost a year before God's prophet Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." David was broken over his sin and went to God and prayed that beautiful prayer of Psalms 51, which says, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies

blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight..." The God of another chance!

Do you remember Jacob? He was known as the deceiver. After a while he was used of God. Jacob was the man who wrestled with God until the breaking of the day. He was finally blessed of God. You see, God used him for the balance of his life. The God of another chance!

Do you remember the story about Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey? Half way through the journey John Mark decided, "I have had enough! I am going to go back! I quit!" And he went back home. Yet at the end of Paul's earthly ministry, in II Timothy 4:11, Paul writes, "...Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." John Mark quit! Yet somewhere along the way he got right, and God gave him another chance.

Do you remember the story about Peter who rebuked Jesus to his face when Jesus told him that He was going to die on the cross? Peter said, "You don't know what you're talking about." Peter rebuked the Son of God! At the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, we find Peter cursing, swearing, and saying, "I know not the man." And yet it was that same Peter who was standing before the crowds in Jerusalem less than two months later saying "repent" and calling them to faith in Christ. The God of another chance!

Jonah is the classic example. We are going to notice three things about Jonah: Number one, Jonah's rebellion; number two, Jonah's repentance; and then number three, Jonah's restoration.

Listen folks! God is slow to wrath. God is full of compassion. God is merciful; and because of that, you appeal to Him for another chance. You say, Preacher! Will God give me another chance? I don't know; but whatever God does, it will be right.

Notice, number one, Jonah's Rebellion. In Jonah 1:2, the Bible says, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it;

for their wickedness is come up before me.” Nineveh was a wicked city and God said, “Their wickedness is come up before me.” And I am going to judge them. I am going to judge them in my righteous anger.

God told Jonah what to do. He told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach a message of judgment to that wicked city. This was not a message of mercy. This was a message of judgment. These folks were living in rebellion.

Do you remember the story? Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. Then a terrible storm arose and Jonah was sound asleep in the ship. Listen folks! Jonah did not stumble onto the ship going to Tarshish. He planned to go as far from the presence of the Lord as he could go. How foolish that is! God is everywhere present, in all places at all times. Listen to the Bible. In Hebrews 4:13, it says, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of God.” In Proverbs 15:3, the Bible says, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

Jonah refused to obey God. He refused to go to Nineveh. He rebelled against the Lord. He deliberately disobeyed God. He sinned against the Lord.

He told the folks on the ship what he had done. He told them that he had fled from the presence of the Lord. And the Bible says, “So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea...” In other words, they threw him overboard.

So let me ask you something: Are you right now living your life in total submission to the known will of God? Think with me. God tells you to do something in the Word of God and you are doing just the opposite. It is not out of ignorance that you don't obey. You simply choose not to obey for whatever reason. That is, you deliberately disobey God.

For example, God tells you to read the Word of God so that you might grow in Christ. Are you doing that? Listen to the Bible. In II Peter 3:18, it says, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” In I Peter 2:2, the Bible says, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” And many of you go day after

day, and do not obey.

God tells you to read the Word of God so that you might not sin against Him. Are you doing that? Listen to the Bible. In Psalms 119:9, it says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." In Psalms 119:11, the Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." And many of you go day after day, and do not obey.

God tells you to pray. Are you doing that? Listen to the Bible. In Luke 18:1, Jesus said, "...men ought always to pray, and not to faint." In I Thessalonians 5:17, the Apostle Paul said, "Pray without ceasing." In Ephesians 6:18, the Bible says, "Praying always..." And many of you go day after day, and do not obey.

God tells you to tithe. Are you doing that? In Malachi 3:8, the Bible says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." And many of you go week after week, and do not obey.

God tells you to go to church. Are you doing that? In Hebrews 10:24-25, the Bible says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." And many of you go week after week, and do not obey.

God tells you how to live in light of His coming. Are you doing that? In Titus 2:12-13, the Bible says, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." And many of you go day after day, and do not obey.

The Bible commands you to tell others about Christ. Are you doing that? In Mark 16:15, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And many of you will go day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, and you refuse to do what God says. You can make up all the excuses you want about being scared and timid, but it all boils down to disobedience.

The Bible talks to you about personal godliness. In I Peter 1:16, the Bible says, "...Be ye holy; for I am holy." And you refuse to do what God says.

The Bible talks to you about personal purity. In Acts 24:16, the Bible says, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." And you refuse to do what God says.

The Bible talks to you about doing right. In Deuteronomy 6:18, it says, "And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD." And you refuse to do what God says.

You say, Preacher! I know what the Bible says. I know what the Bible teaches. I know what is right. I know what is wrong. I know what I ought to be doing. But I am going to do something else. That's not right. In James 4:17, the Bible says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Don't you see? Jonah knew what he was doing. He knew what was right. He knew what was wrong. He knew it was wrong to disobey God. He knew it was wrong to rebel against the Lord. He knew that, but somewhere along the way he made up his mind that he was not going to do what God says. He rebelled against the Lord. He deliberately disobeyed God. It's that simple.

So let me ask you something: Are you in the same place of disobedience? Whatever excuse you make for not doing what God says will not hold up under the scrutiny of the Word of God. In Zechariah 4:6, the Bible says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." In Philippians 4:13, it says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

You say, Preacher! I don't have the time to do what I should. I don't have the talent to do what I should. I don't have the training to do what I should. I fear what folks might say if I do what I should. I have a besetting sin in my life that I just can't seem to get the victory over.

Brethren, whatever the reason may be, whatever the excuse you make for not doing what God says to do and for doing what He says not to do in His Word, I say to you, that's just as

rebellious as Jonah's disobedience toward the LORD.

Take heed! God knows how to break your rebellion. God knows how to break your disobedience. God knows how to break your will. In Jonah 1:17, the Bible says, "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah." God sent a great fish to break Jonah's will.

Question! What great fish will God have to send to break your rebellion? What great fish will God have to send to break your disobedience? What great fish will God have to send to break your will?

I am simply saying this: God loves you too much to let you go on defying Him. Listen to the Bible. In Hebrews 12:6, it says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth..."

God is slow to anger. God is slow to wrath. But at some point in time, God will say to you, "I am going to do what is needed to do to break you."

Jonah would not listen to God. He would not go to Nineveh. So God prepared a great fish and sent it after Jonah, and that great fish swallowed Jonah up.

What are you trying to say preacher? I am simply saying this. Don't put God in the position of preparing some great fish in your life today.

We have noticed number one, Jonah's rebellion; but notice number two, Jonah's repentance. Jonah rebelled against the Lord. He deliberately disobeyed God, but he had enough sense to get right with God. I hope that can be said of you today. I hope that you have enough sense to get right with God today because there is hope for a person who wants to get right with God.

Brethren, if there is a tugging in your heart today to get something right with God, it is my prayer that you will do just that. In Jonah 2:1, the Bible says, "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."

Jonah cried out to God. He realized he was in trouble because of his own doings. Jonah was broken. I don't believe that Jonah knew how it was going to turn out in the fish's belly when he prayed; but he said in his heart, "I am going to get right with God. Perhaps, God in His mercy will forgive me. Perhaps God in His mercy will restore me. Perhaps, God in His mercy will give me another chance."

Brethren, you must do the same thing Jonah did if you are going to receive another chance with God. If you have already pushed God to the point where He has prepared some great fish for you, some great tragedy to break your rebellion, don't fight God anymore. You need to get things right with the Lord today.

Don't you see? God's chastening hand is upon your life to bring you unto repentance. In Ezekiel 18:30, God says, "Therefore I will judge you, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin."

The word "repent" means to change, to change your mind, to change your mind about your sin, to change your way of living, to change your lifestyle. In other words, repentance is a change of mind leading to a change of direction.

So get things right with God even in the belly of your great fish.

You say, Preacher! What must I do? The very first thing that you must do is repent of your wicked way by confessing and forsaking all known sin in your life. In other words, you need to have your sins washed away. In I John 1:9, the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And don't go on in your sins against the Lord. In Proverbs 28:13, the Bible says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Do you see the progression here? There is something in your life that is not right. You deal with it. Now that you are right with God, now that you are in fellowship with the Lord, the second thing you must do is call upon the name of the Lord out of the belly of your great fish. In Psalms 18:6, the Bible says, "In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice

out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”

Brethren, in the belly of your great fish, surrender yourself to God. In Romans 6:13, the Bible says, “But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” In Romans 12:1, it says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.”

You need to say something like this: Lord, I am in this mess because of my own disobedience. I confess my sin of disobedience and I ask you to forgive me. And I surrender myself to you.

You say, Preacher! Will God hear me? Will God forgive me? Will God restore me out of the belly of the great fish in my life? Will God give me another chance? I don't know; but whatever God does, it will be right. The same justice that curses you in your rebellion will assure your way back to God when you are repentant. After David had been exposed in his sin of adultery and murder, in Psalms 51:17, David said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

If you have rebelled against God; if you have deliberately disobeyed the Lord, you ought to come to that place in your life where you say, Lord, I want to get right with you. I want to do right. I want to do your will. I want to bring glory and honour to you.

When you have that kind of attitude, God is then in the position to grant you the desires of your heart. In Proverbs 3:5-6, the Bible says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Don't you see? The Word of God gives you hope.

The character of God gives you hope. In Psalms 145:8-10, the Bible says, “The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.”

You ought to praise the Lord that, even in the belly of a

great fish, He is the God of compassion. He is the God of great mercy. He is the God of great grace. The very fact that God is dealing with your heart is providential proof of His mercy.

I am simply saying this: If God is dealing with your heart about sins of rebellion and disobedience and if the Holy Spirit of God is saying you need to get that right with God, then you had better thank God that it is providential proof that His mercy has been offered to you.

Brethren, I would respond to that mercy if I were you. In Psalms 33:18, the Bible says, "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." In Psalms 42:5, it says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

We have noticed number one, Jonah's rebellion; and number two, Jonah's repentance; but not notice number three, Jonah's restoration. In Jonah 2:10, the Bible says, "And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."

Jonah obeyed God. He did what he should have done to begin with. He did what was right. It would have been better if he had never disobeyed the Lord to begin with. That would have been better. That was the perfect will of God. But when Jonah came to himself and said, O God, have mercy upon me, God gave him that mercy. God extended him grace. God simply said, Jonah do what you should have done the first time.

Brethren, why don't you just take up where you left off? Why don't you begin serving the LORD all over again? Perhaps you have stumbles. You have failed. You have faltered. Perhaps you have made some awful mistakes. Perhaps, you have rebelled and disobeyed God. Don't quit just because you have failed in the past. In Proverbs 24:16, the Bible says, "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again."

Never give up on the Lord. In Micah 7:7-8, the Bible says, "Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me."

Question! Are you in the belly of a great fish? Cry out for mercy. If God has forgiven you, then forgive yourself; and when God has given you another chance, arise and do what God wants you to do. That is, start over again. In Philippians 2:13, the Bible says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." In Philippians 4:13, it says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." You go on about the thing God wanted you to do when you rebelled and disobeyed God.

So Jonah went to Nineveh. God gave Jonah another chance. I am not saying go ahead and live in your rebellion and disobedience and you will get another chance at it. I am not saying that.

I am simply saying this: If you are not living by what God says, that is, if you are not doing what the Bible says to do and are doing what the Bible says not to do, I would tell you to get right with God. Cry out to God and plead for His mercy. And trust Him for His grace. He is the God of another chance.

I have primarily preached to those who profess knowledge in Jesus Christ. You are saved. You are born again. You are on your way to heaven, and you ought to be living by what God says. But, if you are here today and you do not know Christ as your own personal Saviour and Friend, it would be absolutely impossible for you to live the crucified life apart from the new birth. In John 3:7, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." You must be saved in order to begin to live the crucified life. You say, "Preacher! What must I do to be saved?" The very first thing you must do is realize the fact that you are a sinner and in need of a Saviour. In Romans 3:10, the Bible says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one." In Romans 3:23, the Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Because you a sinner, you are condemned to die. The Bible is very clear on this. In Hebrews 9:27, the Bible says, "And it is appointed unto men once to die." In Romans 6:23, the Bible

says, "For the wages of sin is death." That includes eternal separation from God and from the people of God in an awful place called Hell.

You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven to weigh your good and bad works. That idea is a lie from the Devil. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

God loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to bear your sin and die in your place on the cross. In other words, He became your substitute. In II Corinthians 5:21, the Bible says, "For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Believing is the key. In Acts 16:31, the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In Romans 10:9-10, the Bible says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," the Bible says in Romans 10:13.

If you have never been saved, if you have never been born again, you need to be saved. You need to be born again so that you can begin to live the crucified life. And with that salvation, you will receive forgiveness of all your sins, eternal life, and a home in heaven when you die.

Brethren! As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you ought to be living by what God says. But, if you are not doing what the Bible says to do and are doing what the Bible says not to do, I would tell you to get right with God. Cry out to God and plead for His mercy. And trust Him for His grace. He is the God of another chance.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

Please visit our website for a complete list of sermons that are available.

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