

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Returned To The First Tee

Dear Friend,

I find colloquial phrases to be very interesting because they can convey an entire thought in a few words. For example: “The cat’s out of the bag” or “You can’t un-ring a bell” are simple phrases that speak of one’s inability to reverse the consequences of their actions. I personally have never thought about putting a cat in a bag, but from the little I know about cats I can certainly imagine that once you let a cat out of a bag you will never get it back in. Likewise, once a bell is rung and the sound is created it is impossible to reverse that event. You might be able to grab the bell and silence it, but you can’t take back the sound the bell has already produced.

These two examples illustrate how difficult, albeit impossible, it is to return to how things were before we opened our mouth and said what we said or did what we did. Before we lied or committed adultery or robbed the bank or went speeding down the road into another car and someone died. Each of these acts, along with a multitude of other acts, result in consequences that cannot be erased. You might very well be dealing with irreversible consequences resulting from a choice you made that has far reaching implications. Maybe you broke the law and are in fear of what might happen to you, or, you lied to your spouse and are now looking at the possibility of divorce. No matter what you have done, no matter how terrible it might be, the end has yet to be written.

We tend to look at things in the light of our immediate circumstances instead of seeing things the way God sees them. No matter what you have done, God is on your side. He wants you to come to Him and give Him the opportunity to lead you out of the circumstances your poor choices have created. That doesn’t mean that God will put the cat back in the bag for you or un-ring the bell, but when we **repent** for our actions and humble ourselves to Him, He not only forgives us of our sin and cleanses us from all unrighteousness, (1 John 1:9), but He also takes our mess and works it to His good plan. (Romans 8:28)

***“And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”***

Too many times this verse is incorrectly used to try and explain away why someone died or why this bad thing happened or that horrible event took place. The truth of the matter is that we live in a fallen world and bad things happen to good people and good people make stupid choices where irreversible events take place. The good news is that even though God is perfect in every way He knows we are not going to be perfect. The only person in human history that God held to the standard of perfection was Adam, who was made in perfection. Adam’s dilemma was that he had no redeemer to wash away His sin and return him to right standing with God.

Think about it, not only was Adam perfect in every way but everything around him was perfect. Despite all that, Adam **chose** to sin against God. Because Adam had no redeemer his actions separated him from God with no hope of ever being forgiven. Thank God our Heavenly Father is merciful. He wasn’t willing to leave humanity in that place of despair with no hope of redemption.

As is often the case, one event can produce many consequences; a rippling effect. One event triggers another, which in turn triggers another and on and on it goes. Adam’s act of treason “rang a bell” that caused a rippling effect with multiple consequences that every human being since has felt. Despite the rippling effect of Adam’s sin on all of humanity, God has simultaneously been successfully working His plan for man’s redemption. But, in order for His plan to succeed, man has had to take God at His word. Man has had to believe that God is a good God and that He loves us deeply. Man must believe that God has a good plan for him and not an evil plan. (Jeremiah 29:11)

***“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”***

God loves us and has our best interest in mind in everything He does for us. Even when we find ourselves in messes of our own creation, God doesn’t look in disgust and walk away leaving us to our own devices. Thank God for His mercy. If we will only turn to Him in the midst of our storm and take hold of His Word, He will lead us out of our storm and to the other side. Praise God!

Consider the mess that Adam’s one act of treason set in motion. He “rang a bell” that resulted in irreversible consequences going far beyond himself and the forgiveness for the sin he had committed. Adam’s act of treason let one monstrous cat out of a bag. His act propelled him into a state of death, and all

the world around him. There was no way to put this cat back in the bag. Man's new state of spiritual death required God to somehow step into this earth and personally deliver man out of his circumstances and back into right standing with Himself.

Mankind needed a "Do over". I'm sure you know what I mean when I say a "do over". Golfers call it a "Mulligan". When a golfer hits a bad shot and his ball ends up off in the weeds somewhere he might say, "I'm taking a mulligan on that shot". In other words, he isn't going to count that shot. He drops a completely different ball on the ground and takes another shot, forgetting all about the other ball.

As much as God may have wanted to say to Adam; "Adam I'll give you a Mulligan for eating that fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, let's just forget all about that and try it again"; **He couldn't because someone had to pay for Adam's sin.** It wasn't that God was so mean and spiteful that He resented Adam for his mistake and would not forgive him. No, the problem was that the bell Adam rang left mankind with a debt he could not pay in his new state of spiritual death. But, here is the good news, here is the take away from this message that will set you free forever, even when Adam had no redeemer, no way out, no way to un-ring the bell, God stepped into the earth and became man's way out.

For God to just forget all about Adam's mistake in the Garden would have meant that our actions have no consequences, and that is not the case. No, God Himself had to come to this earth and become the payment for sin forever, which He paid through the offering of Himself on the cross. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

***"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."***

It wasn't that Jesus "un-rang the bell" for mankind. God, Himself, became a man and paid the price for Adam's ringing of the bell, ending the reign of spiritual death in the earth. God, Himself, wiped Adam's slate clean once and for all by ending the race of the first Adam in the earth. (Colossians 3:3)

***"For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."***

Allow me to use my golfer analogy again. If you hit a "Mulligan" the ball is sitting out there somewhere yet you choose to ignore it and go on playing with another ball. God could not ignore mankind. God couldn't create another man and go on pretending the first one didn't exist. God, in effect, not only paid the price for

Adam's "Mulligan", but He returned mankind to the standing Adam lost in the Garden as if no sin had ever taken place. God returned man to the first tee.

Not only that, but we became brand new creations. God didn't reuse the same golf ball again. Once Jesus paid the price for Adam's "Mulligan", we received a brand new ball that had never been used. As far as God is concerned, the first Adam no longer exists and we who make Jesus Christ the Lord of our life are born of a completely new Adam, the second man, the last Adam. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

***"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."***

Jesus couldn't "un-ring" the bell Adam rang, but He did pay the price by becoming "sin for us, who knew no sin." Think about the extent our Heavenly Father was willing to go to in order to completely deliver humanity. God did this because of His great love of man. God did this because of His mercy. God is not humanity's problem. God is humanity's solution.

You might be saying; "Mark, if God sees me back at the first tee and remembers nothing about my past, then why is my life still back in the weeds?" That is a very good question. Even though God accounts you back at the first tee with no past to be remembered, every one of us finds ourselves right in the middle of whatever kind of circumstances we created for ourselves. The key then is to whole heartedly surrender to God each day and give Him the opportunity to gradually walk you out of your mess and into His plan for your life. This is not an overnight change. It will take time and growth on your part. But, the good news is that God will be with you every step of the way.

This message is for EVERYONE! This message is for anyone who has failed. This message is for the believer who "rang a bell" that has forever impacted their life, as well as, others around them. Yes, there may be ramifications that must be dealt with, but God is right there in the midst of whatever situation you find yourself in offering to be your solution. Think about it, even when Adam had no redeemer, God's love for him compelled God to provide Adam with a solution. Yes, I believe Adam was one that heard the message of the Gospel preached by the Lord Jesus. (1 Peter 3:19)

***"By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."***

What does that say about God? It says that He loves mankind so much that even when no redemption existed in the earth for Adam's sin, God came, after the fact, and became man's redeemer.

Adam "rang a bell" that has reverberated throughout all of humanity. God's mercy has righted Adam's wrong, cleaned man's slate, and put man back at the first tee as if he had never played this course before. Thank God for His mercy. God knows we are faced with temptations all around us and yes He has made a way of escape in every temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

***"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."***

"But Mark, I did not choose the way of escape and I sinned. What about me?"  
(Hebrews 2:17-18)

***"Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (18) For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."***

Jesus knows our temptations and is here to help us overcome. But, even when we fail and give in, He is here to forgive us and cleanse us. We may still have to deal with the circumstances our sins have created. Even at that, if we will surrender to Him in the midst of whatever situation our wrong actions have created, He can work everything together for good. Praying in tongues can do wonders on our behalf to empower God to work in the midst of the problems we have created. I encourage you to give God the opportunity to walk you out of whatever mess you find yourself in and into the plan He has for your life. God is a good God who loves you and wants to help you, today. No matter what "bell you have rung", no matter how bad your "mulligan" is, God is your answer.

~ Jesus Loves You!

*Mark Jenkins*