

THE GOSPEL *and* Second Chances.

July 26, 2015 - Mike Foster

- **Introduction**

- We all need second chances.
- God is in the rescuing, redeeming, second-chance business.
- He wants to take your story and the not-so-perfect parts of your life and give them meaning and purpose.
- He wants you to cheer others on with His pom-poms of hope and grace. (Outward—love others compassionately with His overwhelming love and scandalous grace)
- Discuss the following two statements:
 - *Just because you've made mistakes doesn't mean you're a mistake.*
 - *Just because you've failed doesn't mean you're a failure.*

- **The story of Elizabeth Henson.**

- Discuss Elizabeth's spring-cleaning story about the green, fuzzy, worn-out jacket.
 - Why was she going to toss it out?
 - What did her son, Jim, see in the jacket?
 - Can you imagine a world without Kermit the frog? :)
 - God sees potential and possibility in you just like Jim saw in the jacket.
 - What does God see in you that you or others may not see?
 - How has God made something beautiful out of something broken in your life?
 - How can we invite other people into God's story?

- **"We are a grace-flavored snow cone on a hot, judgmental day."**

- Discuss this statement and how you can apply it to your relationships.

- **Paul and Barnabas.**

- **Read Acts 15:36-41 (Read in the ESV and the Message).**

- Paul and Barnabas came to an impasse regarding John Mark.
- Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them and Paul didn't want to take him.
 - Why didn't Paul want to take him?
 - What happened to Paul and Barnabas because of this impasse?
 - What did Mike mean when he said we should look at the Bible heroes differently?

How can you be a person of the Second Chance?

1. Don't forget your own story.

- Paul forgot that he used to be Saul.
 - What happens when you forget your own story?
 - When you remember your own story, how does that help you deal with people who need a second chance?
- Mike's story.
 - Discuss Mike's story.
 - Discuss the following statement: *"The only thing that rescued me was the love of my friends and the love of God...in that order".*
 - Have you ever wanted to rewind history?
 - How can you be the heart, hands and feet to someone walking through a struggle right now?
 - Take time to pray for anyone—in your group or someone a group member knows—who is going through a struggle.

2. Listen to the voice of Grace.

- The voice of Grace tells you that you are His beloved.
- Satan plays a “mix tape” that plays songs of accusation, songs that condemn us.
 - o How does Satan use the mix tape in your life? (HINT: strips you of your joy and peace)
 - o How does he accuse you? (HINT: you’re not good enough, you’re not worthy)
 - o What does the voice of Grace say to you? (HINT: you are free, forgiven, and whole)
- Discuss the following statements:
 - o *There’s nothing spiritual, holy or sacred about beating yourself up.*
 - o *There’s something spiritual, holy and sacred about loving who God has created you to be.* (HINT: love yourself correctly)

3. Risk being misunderstood.

- Grace will cause division and misunderstanding
- Grace is often scandalous and messy.
 - o Has anyone ever misunderstood you because of grace?

- Mike’s neighborhood story.
- Discuss Mike’s story about their neighbor with the two teenage sons.
- Discuss the following two statements Mike’s friend Brian made:
 - o They saw his home and family as a place of safety in a time of need.
 - o His neighbors are going to think something crazy is going on in his home/family.

- **Close in prayer.**
 - o Praise God for being a God of Second Chances.
 - o Pray that you will accept God’s overwhelming love and scandalous grace in your own life.
 - o Pray that you will be a carrier of God’s pom-pom’s of hope and grace for people you know who need a second chance.
 - o Pray for the mighty men of Kershaw and Lee prisons will be men of second chances. Praise God that over 300 of them will receive Grace packs! (sold at both campuses last weekend)