

At The Movies Msg 6 – Yesterday: Finding A Fresh Start
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church
 July 5 & 7, 2019

Welcome to ERBC.

My name is Rick and I'm glad you're here today as we continue our "At The Movies" teaching series.

Each weekend during "At The Movies" – we're exploring some spiritual themes behind some of the summer's biggest movies.

Today is a really fun day – it's Beatles weekend here at ERBC – because we're looking at the new movie, Yesterday.

In this new film - the lead character, Jack, is a **struggling singer-songwriter** whose dreams of making it big are rapidly fading.

But after a **freak bus accident** during a **mysterious global blackout**, Jack wakes up in a world where The Beatles have never existed.

He's the only one in the world who has ever heard of The Beatles or their music.

To give you an idea of what I'm talking about, let's take a look at a trailer from the movie . . .

YESTERDAY TRAILER (3:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qD6FDkUXSZQ>

So with that turn of events, Jack Malik sees his chance for a fresh start.

And he **begins performing songs by the greatest band in history AS IF** they were his...

And he **performs them to a world that has never heard them.**

And, as you might imagine, **Jack becomes an overnight sensation** – a **musical genius** - **Jack gets a fresh start!**

And **that's what we're talking about this morning** – fresh starts.

And the good news is - **God is a God of fresh starts!**

Take a look at the verse at the top of your notes, from Isaiah 43

This is God speaking through the prophet Isaiah, and He says...

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!" Isaiah 43:18-19

Regardless of your past mistakes, regardless of your sins or mis-steps, **God has a plan for your future.**

God says that with Him you can have a fresh start!

So today...I want to show you from the Bible...**God's proven process** for experiencing a fresh start.

I want to **encourage you to take careful notes** today for **three reasons**:

1) **You may need** this message today . . .

2) **You may have a friend** that needs this message . . .

And if you're saying neither of those things is true of me . . .

3) **You will need this message** at some point in the future

So - let's look today at

My Steps To A Fresh Start

Step one . . .

This is where it all begins . . .

Ask God For Another Chance

In order to truly begin again we need to first ask God for another chance!

Let me tell you something...**if you need a FRESH START**...God is just waiting to give it to you!

He wants to give you another chance!

So, **why do we often find it so difficult to ask God** for another chance?

First of all - because to ask for another chance is **an admission of a mistake.**

And **we don't like to admit when we mess up.**

Plus it means **we have to make some changes**, right?

If you **do what you've always done**, you'll **get what you've always got.**

We **can't keep doing what we've been doing**.

We **don't like change because change isn't easy**.

But it **can also be difficult** to ask for another chance because we're **feeling guilt and regret**.

We are **so busy beating ourselves up over a mistake** that **we miss out on the gift of a fresh start** that God is offering to us.

Look . . . **as long as we are alive . . . we will make mistakes**.

But **God is willing to forgive us** and **give us a second chance**. Guilt and regret free!

You know – **most of us are willing to give someone a second chance**.

People in our lives mess up.

We get that.

Sometimes we'll **even give third** and **fourth** chances.

But **at some point – our patience runs out**.

The chances run out.

But **here's the incredible thing about God** - His 2nd chances never end.

No matter how many times we've messed up - we can turn to Him.

Lamentations 3 says . . .

"Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning." Lamentations 3:23

I love this verse.

God is faithful.

Every day God gives us the chance for a fresh start.

Every day.

This is big – because there are some of you here who don't believe God will give you another chance.

You've blown it.

In your marriage.

In your job.

With your finances.

And you don't believe, that God will give you another chance.

And your disbelief in God's mercy can be a barrier to the future and the new life that God has for you.

See – **God isn't just a God of 2nd chances**.

He's **not just a God of 3rd or 4th chances**.

He's a God of "**another**" chance.

And **another** chance.

And **His mercy begins afresh each day**.

And that means **EVEN TODAY!**

So – **how do you do it?**

How do you ask God for another chance?

It **begins with confession**.

Proverbs 28 says . . .

"People who cover over their sins will not prosper. But IF they confess and forsake them, they WILL receive mercy." Proverbs 28:13

There's a lot of **confusion about confession** so let's talk about it what it means for a moment.

To **confess** means **to agree with, or admit**.

And to **forsake** means **to give it up**.

To **leave it behind**.

To **renounce it**

A lot of times **we get things mixed up**.

We **confess our sins to God**.

And **He forgives us**.

But we **wonder why** things aren't getting better.

The reason is that **even though we confess that we've failed**...we're not willing to **forsake the things that got us in trouble**.

"God - I confess I got drunk and I really messed up."

But **you don't do what is necessary to stop getting drunk** going forward.

You don't remove the temptation.

“God - I confess I should have done better in that relationship.”

But you **don't do anything** about your **temper** or **selfishness**.

“God - I confess that I blew it with my finances.”

But you **don't change your spending habits** and you are **still spending more than you make**, living beyond your means, and **not tithing**.

So – when we ask God for another chance, what we need to be saying is. . . .

“God – I admit I've blown it. But I don't want to keep living that way. I'm willing to forsake the things that got me into this situation and I want to live for you moving forward.”

And one of the steps that helps us in that process of confessing and forsaking is next in your notes...

Apply the lessons from my past mistakes

See - we **can't just ask for another chance** and then **do nothing** – and then **think everything will be better**.

We need to **APPLY** the lessons from our past mistakes.

Everyone makes mistakes.

The **Bible is full of people** who made mistakes.

In fact . . . **most of the great characters in the Bible made some BIG mistakes** that **could have kept them from a fresh start!**

* **MOSES** –

Remember Moses?

The one who went up to Mt. Sinai and came down with the 10 Commandments

The one who parted the Red Sea?

MOSES actually argued with God about whether God was maybe making a mistake in choosing to use Him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt

He argued with God about whether Pharaoh would even listen to him when he told him to let the Israelites go.

Remember DAVID

The kid who with a slingshot brought down the giant, Goliath?

The Great King David . . . committed adultery with Bathsheba, arranged for the killing of her husband to cover it up, and eventually was run out of town by his own son.

* **PETER** –

The **same Peter who was Jesus' most outspoken disciple...**

The same Peter who **promised that he would die before ever denying Jesus**,

Actually denied Jesus three times when Jesus needed him most!

* Apostle **PAUL** –

The **great church planter** . . . is **also the one who hunted and killed Christians**.

And **even after he became a Christian** - he **struggled with a hot temper and sin**.

In Romans 7 he wrote . . .

“I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.” Romans 7:18-19

This is the story of our lives.

We try to do right.

But we fail over and over again!

But each one of these Biblical examples **learned from their mistakes** and **as a result grew from them**.

God gave each of them a new beginning!

- **MOSES** went on to lead the Israelites out of bondage.
- **DAVID** became king again and God called Him “a man after his own heart”
- **PETER** went on to become the primary leader of the early church.
- **PAUL** went on to write more of the New Testament than anyone else.

They overcame their mistakes.

How?

They didn't waste them.

They **learned the lessons** from them.

In the same way... **we can't waste our mistakes either**.

We need to embrace them, and learn from them.

Make our mistakes work for us – instead of allowing them to limit us.

In other words . . . **turn our mistakes into our milestones.**

I'm sure that there is not one person in here (including myself) that **has not made the same mistake multiple times.**

We are **creatures of habit** and **can easily get caught in cycles of sin and mistakes** – where we **do the same dumb thing over and over again.**

Paul did... remember our verse from earlier?

You **promise to change**, but **inevitably you find yourself making the same mistake again** and **the cycle continues**, and the **guilt and regret multiplies.**

The **only solution** that will **lead us out of guilt and regret** and the **cycle of bad decisions** is to **turn to God** and then **learn from our mistakes and grow.**

How do we do this?

The **first thing** we have to do is to **evaluate the experience.**

You have probably heard that

Experience is the best teacher,

But that's not true.

Evaluated experience is the best teacher.

It's important that you **honestly evaluate your past failures** and mistakes.

You **have to ask yourself some honest questions.**

Like: ***Why did I make that mistake?***

What was the cause?

What should I have done differently?

What did I do that led to my marriage ending?

My business failing?

Losing that job?

That relationship not working out?

And then: ***What do I have to do to ensure that I don't repeat it?***

You **can't just accept the fact that you made a mistake...**you **have to take time to honestly evaluate why** you made the mistake.

If you don't understand why you made the mistake . . . you're doomed to repeat it.

Listen... **every mistake has a consequence.**

And **often they are painful** and **sometimes the consequences last a lifetime.**

But **just because you are dealing with the consequences** of a past mistake **doesn't mean that these mistakes have to limit your future.**

Your past does not have to limit your future!

In fact, God can use the trouble you're facing as your greatest teacher and lead you to a better future.

Psalm 119 says . . .

"My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees." Psalm 119:71

So – if you're willing to apply the lessons from your mistakes – you are not doomed to repeat them.

Even times of suffering can become opportunities to grow!

That leads to our 3rd step to a FRESH START...

Align my Life with God's Purposes

Mistakes give us a chance to evaluate our life and to **see if we have gotten off track** – to **test to see if we've gotten out of alignment.**

Have you ever driven a car that was out of alignment?

If you're not aware of it,

We have a pothole problem here in the City of Los Angeles.

The **record rainfall this past winter** has resulted in the **L.A. Department of Public Works** receiving about **four times the number of reports of potholes** from the public than it normally does.

One of the **problems with potholes** is that they are the **#1 cause of alignment problems in cars!**

Vehicle repair costs due to pothole damage in the U.S. totals about \$15 billion, with the average pothole repair cost being \$300, according to AAA.

Potholes cause problems . . . not just for our cars, but for our lives.

The same is true for our lives.

These mistakes and these sins are the potholes of our lives and if we aren't careful, they will get us out of alignment with God's purposes and we will miss God's blessings,

So, how do we align our lives with God's purposes – so we can have that fresh start?

To answer that – I want to go back to the story of King David. Remember we talked about him earlier in the message?

David was described as a man after God's own heart.

But he hit a BIG pothole in his life.

David committed adultery with a woman named Bathsheba, and when he found out that Bathsheba was pregnant, he had her husband killed!

David was WAY out of alignment with God's purposes and he was desperately in need of a fresh start.

So David went through this process we're talking about here today.

Psalm 51 is David's prayer to God where he asked God for another chance.

Where he learned to apply the lessons of his big mistake, and then David prays something very specific to help him align his life with God's purposes.

Look at Psalm 51:12.

He prays . . .

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.” Psalm 51:12

Underline that phrase,

“make me willing to obey you.”

That prayer is God's purpose for your life.

That you would learn to love and obey His will.

You see – God is perfect.

He created us and he loves us and wants what's best for us.

So, God's will is, that we would obey Him and his word – the Bible – and live the lives he has created us to live.

The problem is we don't want to.

We want to go our own way.

We want to do our own thing.

And that's what gets our lives out of alignment and in need of a fresh start.

So, to align our lives with God's purposes, we learn to pray David's prayer.

“God, make me willing to obey you. I want to do what you want me to do. I want to do what your Word says... not just now but in the long run.”

The Bible constantly compares life to a race –

Not a sprint, but a marathon

And it's a race with a destination in mind – a race to enjoy God's purposes in this life and for all eternity.

To win the race requires constant alignment because life is filled with potholes and this alignment requires discipline and hard work – 1 Corinthians says it this way . . .

“Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. All athletes practice strict self-control. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step.” 1 Corinthians 9:24-26

Underline that last phrase:

Straight to the goal with purpose in every step.

Learning to align every step of your life with God - in your relationships, career, finances, in every area – is part of God's process for receiving a fresh start.

So you . . .

Ask God for another start

- **Apply** the lessons from your past mistakes
- **Align** your life with God's purposes

. . . and then, on the back of your notes... here's one more step to experiencing your fresh start:

Anticipate Challenges and never Give Up

Just because you experience a fresh start doesn't mean that you won't face challenges.

The same temptations that got you off track, will still fight against you.

Fear of falling back into addiction may still haunt you.

Uncertainty about whether you "deserve" another chance may still plague you.

In other words – **challenges will still confront you**, and if you're not careful, get you off track with God's best for you again.

The **key is to learn to anticipate them.**

Don't let them surprise you or catch you off guard.

Expect the challenges to come.

And when they do – trust God, stand firm, and don't give up.

Winston Churchill

. . . was a man who knew a thing or two about fresh starts.

He was called the '**bulldog**' because in the face of failure he refused to give up.

After a strong rise in politics around WWI, he was **defeated in 1922 and eventually left politics.**

He remained outside of government for 10 years.

Yet, he **refocused, anticipated future challenges, learned some new skills and came back on the main stage in 1938 to lead England to take a strong stand against Hitler... until in 1939 he returned to government and was elected Prime Minister** one year later.

He led Brittan through one of their darkest times of history with dogged determinism.

He said one time that

Success is going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm.

On **October 29, 1941** (in the Middle of World War II as the Nazi's were attacking Great Britain), Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited the **Harrow School** to speak to the students.

This became one of his most quoted speeches - and there is a lot of debate over what exactly was said.

The story is that Churchill stood before the students and said, **"Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, give up.**

Never give up. Never give up. Never give up."

Then he sat down.

Makes you wish that when our politicians spoke today, their messages were that short...and that clear!

Listen . . . **to start over again is hard work.**

Asking God for another chance...

Applying the lessons from my past mistakes...

Aligning my life with God's purposes... it's not easy.

But the results are worth it.

So - never, ever, ever, ever give up on yourself.

God hasn't!

Long before Winston Churchill, the Apostle Paul, who knew a thing or two about fresh starts, wrote these words:

"So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time." Galatians 6:9

Look, maybe you are sitting here today and you're discouraged because of your:

- 1- Past Sin
- 2- Recent Failure
- 3- Dreams that you had that didn't work out

In a certain area of your life – maybe you need a fresh start with a relationship, with a career, with your finances... or maybe you need a fresh start by asking God to forgive your sins.

God's word for you today is that **YOU CAN EXPERIENCE A FRESH START!**

God allows Do-overs!

God allows U-Turns.

There are NO DEAD ENDS with God.

But it begins by asking God for another chance – turning your life over to God.

Running the race of your life FOR and WITH Jesus Christ.

Let's read our last verse... our memory verse out loud together:

Memory Verse:

"No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven." Philipians 3:13-14

Let's Pray