

I'll Take a Mulligan...

We just read the essays on “Is God Fair?” and “It’s Not Fair.” We in our human thoughts often struggle with this concept and I’m confident that, like me, most of you have uttered at least once or twice in your life, “why me?” “I try and try and God just doesn’t give me a break.” We all make mistakes; we all commit sin (**Rom.3:23**). If we stop and think for a bit, why should God give us a break? Especially me. Just how many breaks do we need before we realize we’re given numerous “breaks” from God with every breath and every heartbeat?

I’m not sure if any of you play golf, whether for relaxation or are more serious than just a pastime. Judging from some of the comments and actions I’ve seen in videos of golfers, it can be quite frustrating. For me, getting the ball in the clown’s nose or through the windmill was my biggest challenge. That should clarify how much interest I have in the game. One thing I do remember from playing golf on a real golf course (18 holes) is taking a “mulligan.” Or a “do over.” “Mulligan” is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as: “a free shot sometimes given a golfer in informal play when the previous shot was *poorly played*.” Now I’m not sure just how many mulligans are permitted in a round of 18 holes and I’ll bet you won’t see any in a PGA Tour. So, essentially a mulligan is a do over when we “mess up.” I’ve only played 18 holes of golf twice in my life and in those 2 rounds I used my limit of mulligans. I wonder how many mulligans God has given to us throughout our lifetime when we have “poorly played?”

“Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but until seventy times seven.”- **Matt. 18:20-21**. If you do the quick math, that’s 490 times! That’s just instructions for us forgiving one another, giving our offender a “do over.”

Just because God gives us “do overs” does not give us a pass on continued sinning (**Rom. 6:1-2**). God is by far more gracious to us than we are to each other. Those called and who have chosen to follow and obey God’s commandments and His way of life will be given countless “do-overs” on the journey to His Kingdom. God will supply our needs every step of the way (**Psalm 84:11-12, 2 Cor.9:8**).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift from God.”-**Eph. 2:8**. Salvation therefore is a gift. It was bought and paid for with the Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 1:18-19**). It is not something we can buy; it is certainly not something we deserve nor can we even earn it. However, salvation can be lost if we don’t stay on the narrow path to life, “Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go into thereat: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”-**Matt. 7:13-14**. Understanding this eases the burdens on the “what ifs” with which we tend to beat up on ourselves. We know the way, we must walk in it (**Deut. 30:16, 2 John 1:6**). While we know that salvation is a gift from God, it is not without cost. We talked about Divine oxymorons before and salvation, the greatest gift of all is free but it will cost you everything (**Luke 14:33**).

God certainly knows how many mulligans we needed and how many more we *will* need. He knew us before we were born (**Jer. 1:5**) and He knows what we need to put in order to bring us to the place He has intended for us in the Body of Christ. The change *and* changes we go through on our journey to the Kingdom may not take place overnight. God is not the author of confusion (**1 Cor. 14:23**). Making order out of decades of sin and mistakes can and most likely *will* take the rest of our lives. Rest assured, He will be with us all the way (**Phil.1:6**).

REPENTING, putting things in order in our homes, families, marriages, correcting past mistakes, and living our lives following the example of Jesus Christ is not for the faint hearted. But the rewards are eternal (**1 Cor.2:9**). We need not grumble and complain the way the Israelites did coming out of bondage (**Num. 21:5-7**). They would have taken a mulligan and gone back into captivity in Egypt rather than be grateful to God for their deliverance!

God is more than fair as He has and continues to give us “do overs” on a daily basis. Further proof of His fairness is that those who fail to make par in the first round (those who were not called at this time) get yet another mulligan to hit the pin in the second resurrection. But for those of us who have teed off into God’s way of life we need not be concerned for a second round, provided we play the first round according to God’s rules (**Rev. 20:6**).

God is the Alpha and the Omega (**Rev. 1:8, 11, 21:6, 22:13**). He doesn’t wear a wristwatch. God knows just how much time we each have to stay the course, but we do not (**Psa. 69:13-14, Ecc. 3:17, Acts 17:30, Titus 1:3, 1 Pet. 1:4-5**). We will not know just how much time we have to play through before we are called to our rest. God gave us His breath of life (**Gen. 2:7**); He gave us His Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:4**) and most of all He gave us His only Son (**John 3:16**). Through His Son Jesus Christ, we have the gift of salvation and the promise of eternal life (**John 3:15, 17:3, Romans 5:21, 6:23, Titus 1:2, 1 John 2:25, 5:11, 5:20**). With these assurances, let’s make the most of our mulligans while we still can. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time”-**1 Peter 5:6**.

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