



Volume 12, No. 2, February, 2024



God is Calling the Prodigal
God is calling the prodigal:
Come without delay;
Hear, O hear Him calling,
Calling now for thee (for thee);
Tho' you've wandered so far
from His presence, come today;
Hear His loving voice calling still
(calling still).
Patient, loving, and tenderly
Still the Father pleads;
Hear, O hear Him calling,
Calling now for thee (for thee);
O return while the Spirit
In mercy intercedes;
Hear His loving voice calling still
(calling still).
Come, there's bread in the house
Of thy Father, and to spare;
Hear, O hear Him calling,
Calling now for thee (for thee);
Lo! The table is spread
and the feast is waiting there;
hear His loving voice calling still
(calling still).

Chorus:
Calling now for thee (for thee)
O weary prodigal, come
(weary prodigal come)
Calling now for thee (for thee)
O weary prodigal come
(weary prodigal come.)!

Charlotte G. Homer (1856-1932)
W. A. Ogden (1841-1897)

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Fred Willmon
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MY SECOND CHANCE

During Jesus' ministry on earth, Peter was in the inner circle of disciples. On the night of Jesus' betrayal, Jesus foretold that before the night was over, Peter would deny Him three times. Peter did that very thing, denying Him three times after Jesus was arrested in the Garden. After His resurrection and shortly before His ascension, Jesus also said three times, "Peter, do you love me? Feed my lambs." Peter got a second chance.

In Acts 2, Peter preached the first gospel sermon, and the church began that day. Peter became a stalwart in the first century church. He eventually became an elder in the Lord's church (1 Peter 5:1). He used his second chance to spread the gospel to others and to lead the church in its infancy. He taught and baptized the first Gentile members of the church. It is believed that Peter died a martyr's death.

Peter sometimes fell short. Like Peter, I fell short and disappointed God. During the 1970's, I wandered away from Him and the church. I was very happily married and had one son. Even though I was very blessed, it was a lonely, scary time in my life. I knew where I should be and what I should be doing...but I was not where I should have been, and I was not doing what I should have been doing. Like Peter we can be restored and serve God with all our hearts.

Thankfully, God gave me a second chance. My husband was promoted to a new position in his career. It required that we move about 275 miles from the city where we had lived after we married.

A week or so before we were to leave, an advisory board that I served on decided they wanted to host a farewell dinner for me. They chose a popular steak house about 10 miles out of town. All that day, snow fell heavily. The streets were totally snow-packed despite the efforts of the street department to keep

them clear. Neither of us wanted to go to the dinner. But how do you *not* go when you are the guest of honor?

We took our son to his grandparents' house and went on our way to the restaurant. As we slowed for a traffic light, we were slammed into from behind. Our older pickup truck had no seatbelts or headrests. I was sitting next to my husband, and my head went back and smashed out the back window. If the window had not been there, my neck would have been broken. Our truck went spinning on the snow packed street and slid down an embankment into the parking lot of an apartment building. We never made it to the steakhouse that night, but we were very thankful to be alive.

A week later, we were on the road to our new city. My husband was in the lead. Our son, and our dog, and I were following him. Again, it was snowing, but we thought we *had* to get there by four o'clock that afternoon to close on our new house.

We were about 90 miles into the journey on a two-lane highway when my husband pulled out of his lane and passed a semi. I thought I had to keep up with him, so I pulled out to pass.

All went well until I pulled back into the east-bound lane. My wheels caught in the icy ruts, and the car began fishtailing wildly from side to side. Our four-year-old son had been asleep on the seat beside me, and our dog was in the floor in front of him. My son felt the swerving and raised up. I said, "Lay down!" My tone was sharp, so he instantly obeyed.

All I could see in my rearview mirror was the grill of that semi! I'm sure that driver was as scared as I was. Once I



managed to get the car under control, I could breathe again. However, I was shaking like a leaf for the next hundred miles! For the second time in a week, God spared us from serious harm. I am forever grateful to Him for preventing us from a horrible wreck on the icy road that day.

In our previous city, we had attended a denominational church. In our new city, we found a wonderful congregation of the Lord's church that took us in. Loyd was taught and baptized, and I was restored in that congregation. They continued to teach us and nurture us, and we grew. When we left there three years later,

we were ready to fly and have been serving God through the church ever since.

I thank God for the second chance He gave me. If *you* are in need of a second chance, please don't wait until a traumatic incident happens. You may or may not survive the incident. Please come home to God now!

Evelyn Waite

Rolla, Missouri

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What I Need When I Fail

Have you ever been given a second chance? How did you feel? Hopeful? Thankful? Relieved? In Scripture we read of Peter, a man like us who made mistakes in life.

1. (The boat) Peter is in the boat with the other disciples. Jesus comes to them walking on water. Peter asks to walk on the water toward Jesus. He takes his eyes off Jesus and looks at the wind and waves and begins sinking. Peter looked away when he should have focused. (Mt. 14:22-33)
2. (Caesarea Philippi) Jesus begins explaining his impending death to his disciples. Peter fails to accept this reality and rebukes the Lord. Jesus tells him he doesn't have the plans of God in mind but the plans of men. Peter rebuked when he should have been listening. (Mt. 16:21-23)
3. (Upper room) When Jesus begins washing feet, Peter objects. Again, he fails to understand what Jesus is teaching about love and service. Peter objected when he should have accepted. (John 13:1-15)
4. (Gethsemane) In Gethsemane Jesus asked him to watch and pray. Peter failed to stay awake. Peter slept when he should have prayed. (Mt. 26:36-46)

5. **(The Arrest)** During the arrest of Jesus, Peter cuts off Malchus' ear acting instinctively to retaliate against those arresting Jesus. Peter flashed the sword when it should have been withheld. (Mt. 26:49-51; Luke 22:50-51)
6. **(Courtyard)** But Peter's biggest failure comes in the courtyard. It is there that Peter denies he is a disciple of Jesus. Three times he denies ever knowing the Lord. Peter denied when he should have defended. (Mt. 26:69-75)

This failure had to haunt Peter. There was no immediate forgiveness, second chance, or solution to what he had said and done. In all the other failures, there was a second chance within minutes. A word was spoken, a hand extended as he sank, a further explanation, an ear reattached within minutes. But this was different. In the first 5 failures, Jesus and Peter were together. But in this last failure Jesus had been taken inside the house of the high priest and the Sanhedrin while Peter was out in the courtyard among strangers. Peter had denied Jesus, and Jesus was going to the cross. Peter must have thought this had to be his worst failure. Was it? In the courtyard, Peter is asked 3 times if he knew Jesus (John 18:15-27). He denied his Lord, not once but 3 times.

Let's fast forward to the end of John chapter 21. Jesus asks Peter three times: "Do you love me?" After responding yes, Jesus instructs Peter. "Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep, feed my sheep."

Peter is given a second chance. Peter receives grace. Grace is God's favor to the undeserving.

Peter doesn't get what he deserves – Peter gets grace.

We all have received a second chance. We all have received grace. What do we deserve for our sins and failures? What have we been given? Like Peter, we have received grace in abundance (1 Peter 1:2).

Take a moment to stop and thank God for your second chance, for God's abundant grace.

Sally Shank

Edmond, Oklahoma

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NO TIME

*I knelt to pray but not for long,
I had too much to do.*

*I had to hurry and get to work,
For bills would soon be due.*

*So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,
And jumped up off my knees.
My Christian duty was now done,
My soul could rest at ease.*

*All day long I had no time
To spread a word of cheer.
No time to speak of Christ to friends,
They'd laugh at me I feared.*

*No time, no time, too much to do,
That was my constant cry:
No time to give to souls in need,
But at last, the time to die.*

*And when before the Lord I came,
I stood with downcast eyes.
For in His hands God held a book;
It was the book of Life.*

*God looked into His book and said,
"Your name I cannot find.
I once was going to write it down—
But never found the time."*

--Author Unknown

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Mold Me?

It is the new year, and many were making resolutions to do more, better, loftier things with their lives. That is not a bad thing. However, it is amazing how many do this year after year and never actually make any changes. Most have already given up on those grand plans. I am told the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Thus, I plead guilty in some instances. Why do we do that?

Sometimes we feel we are not good enough the way we are. I'm not pretty enough. I weigh too much, I can't sing, my hair is too straight or too curly, and my teeth are crooked. In other words, I am a mess. Or am I? Who am I to question God's handiwork? I do know I can muddle up what God created and become a disaster. But if I accept what God created and let His instruction

mold me, trust me, it is perfect. Oh, I may still be plain, weigh too much, and my hair and teeth are not ideal, but my inner being will be just as God wanted it.

Isaiah 45:9 says, "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—A piece of pottery among the other earthenware pottery pieces! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands?'"

We occasionally see people, both young babies and older folks, who are physically handicapped. Some are so from birth, others from accidents, and still others from the results of aging. It is tempting at times to question why God would allow that sort of pain. Occasionally we can see the reasons, because there were drugs involved or an accident of some sort. At other times there is no apparent reason, but God does form every person, and we must have faith that it is for a good reason. It is not for me to know, but I do know I am not to question. Roman 8:28 assures us, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Were those people God's "mistakes" as He molded them? No. We only see the outer being. God sees the whole person. Who are we to judge His handiwork?

That is true of you and me as well. God made us to be free moral agents able to make decisions. With that freedom, He wanted us to decide to love Him and obey His instructions, but He left us free to not do so. Who are we to tell God, "You messed me up!"? It is up to us to take the vessel He formed and let Him continue to mold us through His word and make us beautiful from the inside out. As the song says, "Mold me and make me after thy will." When we do that, we won't need to worry about trying to keep New Year's resolutions. We will be beautiful, no matter what we look like.

Wilburta Arrowood

Napoleanville, Louisiana

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Another Chance

By Helen Steiner Rice

How often we wish for another chance

To make a fresh beginning.

A chance to blot out our mistakes

And change failure into winning.

It does not take a new day

To make a brand new start,

It only takes a deep desire

To try with all our heart.

To live a little better

And to always be forgiving

And to add a little sunshine

To the world in which we're living.

So never give up in despair

And think that you are through,

For there's always a new tomorrow

And the hope of starting new.

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"The second (commandment) is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Mark 12:31

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...so, Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:28

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For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

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