

I Can't Believe I Did That!

by K.P. Yohannan

God's forgiveness and love can bring restoration and a new beginning, even in the face of past mistakes.

Scripture: Luke 22:54

Topics: "Redemption", "Repentance"

Description

K.P. Yohannan shares the story of Roy, a young man who spiraled into despair after abandoning his promising future due to bad choices and addiction, leading to a moment of deep regret and disbelief in his actions. He parallels Roy's experience with Peter's denial of Jesus, emphasizing the pain of realizing one's failures and the overwhelming guilt that follows. Both stories highlight the importance of repentance and the transformative power of God's mercy, illustrating that even in our darkest moments, there is hope for restoration. Yohannan encourages listeners to embrace God's forgiveness and to understand that their stories are not over, as God can redeem even the most broken lives. Ultimately, he calls for faith in Jesus, who offers a fresh start and a new purpose.

Transcript

Growing up in a respectable family in his community, Roy led a life of affluence with a bright future before him. His father, a successful medical doctor, was so proud when his son decided to enter medical college. Then right before his eyes, all that looked so promising began to collapse like a deck of cards. A new school brought him new friends. But these colleagues were living on the edge, and their company took Roy on a downward spiral. After only two years in medical college, nothing seemed to be going right.

He was into drugs, and with his new pastime, his health began to waste away and his grades were slipping--he was failing. To top it off, this wayward student found out he was going to be fathering a child. His world was falling apart around him. His parents got wind of his wild life and were completely devastated. Roy found himself shaking his head saying, "I just can't believe how it all happened." In essence, he was saying, "I can't believe I did this!" Then when things could not get much worse, Roy's best friend, who had always been there no matter what, jumped off a 12-story building and committed suicide.

Can it get any worse? I believe there is a key New Testament personality who would answer, "Yes, it can!" Maybe we should look briefly at a mortifying part of his story as told in all four of the Gospels. Then seizing him [Jesus], they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down

with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight.

She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter (Luke 22:54-61, emphasis mine).

What a horrific moment that must have been. The Son of God had heard Peter's hot words of denial, and after listening, Jesus, the prisoner, turned and looked straight at His disciple. What a dreadful turn of events for Peter. In his wildest dreams, he never would have believed himself capable of what he had just done. We know this was traumatic for him, because the passage reports that "he went outside and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62). I Can't Believe I Did That! Chances are you can recall a time in your own life when you "wept bitterly" over something.

Like Peter, what you thought could never happen to you did indeed, leaving you ashamed . . . confused . . . uncomfortable . . . frightened . . . conscience-stricken. Maybe it was a divorce that threw off your normal equilibrium or a marriage that underwent severe stress. Perhaps it was a business failure that made your life so wretched or an important relationship in which miscommunication and hurt feelings took over. Could it have been the belief that you failed someone important, even yourself?

You fell so far short of your personal expectations. Whatever it was, you couldn't believe this was happening, not to you anyway. Certainly Peter's earlier words, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death" (Luke 22:33), came back to mock him. Each of us starts out in life with desires, ambitions and dreams, plus the early commitment and resolve to achieve them. But somewhere along the way, whether by our own deliberate choice or by external circumstances, these aspirations come crashing down before us, crumbling in our hands.

There we sit in the ruins, replaying the various destructive scenes and moaning at the appropriate times, "If only that didn't happen!" Regret clings to our every thought as we struggle to stand with knees made weak by our own choices. That's where Peter was stuck in his thoughts. Earlier he had so triumphantly announced that Jesus was the Son of the living God. Yes, he was one of those in the "inner circle" closest to his Lord. He even miraculously walked on water. And it was to him that Christ talked about that rock upon which His Church would be built.

But he had just denied the very One he earlier declared to be the Messiah, the man he had said he would follow to the very end and even die for. So much for all his big talk. Jesus had heard with His own ears Peter's strong statements of denial. How could this happen . . . to Peter? How Could This Happen? We all have had those feelings. We think, "How could I have done that? I know better than this. I should have learned by now." Deep inside we have the defense that we are better than the wrong we committed.

Even the worst criminal has all kinds of reasons and explanations for the mess in which he finds himself. For example, "Two Gun" Crowley, responsible for murdering many people in the 1930s, was cornered within a building awaiting an inevitable arrest. He wrote a note while the police were firing at him. The note read, "Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one." Then as he faced capital punishment, he questioned his sentence, saying: "This is what I get for defending myself."¹ In spite of rationalizing and trying to minimize our failure, guilt gnaws at our heart.

We sink as we consider what we have done. Yet as followers of God, we know that upon repentance we can experience firsthand His marvelous mercy. Why then do we feel this shadow over us? Roy Hession puts it so clearly in his book "When I Saw Him": If you are still mourning and blaming yourself it is not because God is blaming you; He has put the blame on Jesus. It can only be due to one of two things. Either that you have not really repented, or, more likely, you are mourning over your lost righteousness.

Perhaps you feel that, having been saved for so long, you should not be failing as you are. . . . You are in effect saying, "Alas for my lost righteousness." That is nothing but pride.² Jesus has taken our blame, the charge against us, the sting of our failure. Then why are we so sick about our failure? Because we thought we were better. We regret that our "report card" does not show all the "good marks" we want others to see. But all the best marks of our own righteousness can only amount to "filthy rags" as the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 64:6.

They will never be anything we want to showcase. The only righteousness worthy of displaying is the righteousness of Jesus that we have through His powerful and precious blood. If what we hang on to is filthy rags, why grasp for it anymore? Why mourn over the loss of it? Will we be like the criminal who until the very end esteemed and held on to "his own righteousness," although obviously it was nothing to boast in? Paul sums it up in the book of Philippians: I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith (3:8-9). Let us leave our rags behind and hold on to His riches. He Wept Bitterly Back to Peter--little wonder this giant of a man ran, brushing aside any outstretched arms that would stop him, to a place outside where he could openly sob his heart out.

Crying can be therapeutic. The genuine tears of a naughty child usually quickly touch the heart of a loving parent. When we are truly saddened by what we have done to hurt the heart of our Savior, those tears of remorse can lead us to repentance. Being vulnerable through them can help bring us to the place of looking Christ in the eye, knowing He saw and heard everything, and telling Him how sorry we are. Too bad Judas didn't understand this truth. Scripture reports that he was "seized with remorse" (Matthew 27:3).

Unfortunately, instead of going to his heavenly Father, he "went away and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:5). If you have never asked Jesus to be Lord of your life, He is waiting for you with open arms. He has long awaited the time to forgive you of all that you have ever done and draw you into His embrace. He sees your heartache. He wants to wipe away your tears and give you a fresh start. Don't harden your heart like Judas and walk away. Simply believe that Jesus is the Son of God, who never sinned, who died for the consequence of your sins and rose to bring you life eternal.

Ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins; then commit your life and all that you have into His care and direction. Your Final Chapters Remember Roy? That was not the end of his story. After his friend's death, he too considered suicide. But that same week he miraculously heard a Christian radio broadcast. He listened to God's Word, and he too found restoration in Jesus Christ. His life completely changed. His sins and wild life were forgiven. What looked like a life that was lost, became a beacon of light to many.

He married the young lady who was pregnant with his child and finished his schooling. Then he went to one of the hardest regions of North India as a doctor ministering to the poor, bringing his skills and the

message of Jesus Christ. Many people have found hope through Roy's life. For Peter, at that moment when his eyes met the eyes of Jesus, he did not know the end of his own story. He could not comprehend the incredible manner in which Jesus would rise from the dead. He didn't foresee his own restoration taking place on a beach in Galilee a few weeks later.

He wasn't yet able to envision the miraculous growth of the New Testament Church and the strategic role he would play in that narrative. All he knew at that instant was how he was spiritually washed out. Maybe all you see right now is your own failure. But as you ask for God's forgiveness, He sees His perfect righteousness when He looks at you. He sees the beautiful end of your story--it isn't over yet. Those final chapters have yet to be written. The Lord is saying to you, "Your story isn't anywhere near finished!"

Countless times our sovereign and gracious God has heard the bitter cries of His people after they have sinned in ways they never imagined possible. Countless times the Master Potter has shown His great skill as He remolds these vessels into expressions of His glory. Do you believe that the One who did this for Peter 2,000 years ago can still do the same for you today? He who did it then still does it today. What He did for others, He will do for you. Take that step: Believe Him.

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