

**Crossville Church
of Christ**
P.O. Box 211
Crossville, TN 38557
Phone:
484-5297 or 484-2960

COMPASS

**Using God's Word to Chart The Course
Of A Congregation**

www.crossvillechurchofchrist.org
Email: Office@crossvillechurchofchrist.org
Elders@crossvillechurchofchrist.org



Elders:

Frank Bohannon
Jonathan Loveday
Larry McDuffee
Brian McLaughlin
Jon Tatum

Deacons:

Jim Bell
Charles Evans
Kyle Fairman
Dale Hennessee
Mike Isaacson
David Kerley
Doug Loveday
Greg Maxwell
Don Napier
Tom Parham
Mark Roberts
Roger Smith
Jason Wyatt
Jerry Wood

Ministers:

Barry Kennedy
Ken Mears

Missionaries: (India)

Don Iverson
Jim Waldron

Service Times

Sunday Bible Study	9 AM
Sunday Worship	10 AM
	6 PM
Wednesday	6 PM

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Ladies Bible Class	
Tuesdays	11AM
Prayer Meeting	
Tuesdays	10 AM
Joyful Generation	
(Youth Devotional & fellowship)	
1st Sunday	7:00 PM

March 12, 2017



**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and
just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse
us from all unrighteousness”
(1 John 1:9).**

THE GOD OF SECOND CHANCES

Allen Webster

A reporter asked Winston Churchill what prepared him to risk political suicide by speaking out so strongly so early against Adolph Hitler. Churchill said he thought it might have been the time he had to repeat a grade in elementary school.

“You mean you failed a year in grade school?” the reporter asked incredulously.

Churchill retorted, indignantly, “I never failed anything in my life. I was always given a second opportunity to get it right.”

Most of us need a “second opportunity to get it right.” God is more than willing to give us that opportunity. He is rich in mercy, love, and grace (Ephesians 2:4). He especially delights in mercy: “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Micah 7:18).

A GOD WHO RUNS: A PLACE AT GOD’S TABLE One of the all-time greatest stories ever told is that of a son who ran away from home with his pockets full of his father’s hard-earned money. Predictably, he famously and foolishly spent it all.

Read again Jesus’ lovely story (Luke 15:11–20). Let’s try to imagine how it might have happened in that Jewish family so long ago.

Hungry, sad, and alone, the boy finally resolved to go back to his father’s farm and see if he could get on as hired help. As he trudged mile after mile, he rehearsed what he would say and wondered what the reaction would be. Would his father refuse to see him? Would he send out a servant to tell him that he had made his bed and now he had to lie in it?

As he rounded the last curve, he saw the home place far in the distance. With his heart in his throat and a knot in his stomach, he thought, Here we go.

His father was the first to spot him—his dim old eyes out-seeing far younger ones because they were sharpened by longing and love. He had glanced down that road a thousand times before. This time he did a double take. Is that a dot on the horizon? Who is coming to the farm? It looks like ... could it be? Yes!

Then something unusual happened. Perhaps field hands leaned on hoe handles to watch. In the barn, a worker stopped with a hay bale halfway to its landing spot. Kitchen staff stepped on the porch to better see.

The master was running.

They had never seen that before. He had pulled up his long robe and taken off down the road toward town. Their eyes followed his path to see where he was going, and they saw in the distance a lone silhouette.

As the father drew near, he threw his arms around the boy, kissing him—and you can almost see his wide smile as he sized up the young man. Then a cloud crossed his lined face as a closer examination noted the loose fit of the clothes, the rank smell of his body odor, and the new sadness around those once-innocent eyes.

The father interrupted the boy’s prepared speech about wanting a servant’s job if one was available. The master barked commands to the servants as they neared the house: Get the boy something to eat! He needs new clothes! Get ready for the party we’ll soon have. My son that was dead is alive!

Jesus’ Parable of the Prodigal Son was given to show us that God gives second chances. To some extent, we have all worn that prodigal’s clothes. We’ve all smelled of the pig pen and felt hunger gnaw at us as sin’s feast turned into its inevitable famine (James 1:15). We can vividly recall the excitement of the trip to that distant sin-city, and many of us have lived long enough to long again for what we left behind. We’ve seen the disappointment in our Father’s eyes over our bad decisions and foolish mistakes. We’ve come back with hat in hand.

Others are wondering if the welcome mat is still out for them. No matter, we picture the Father saying, Just come back. My love is unwavering. You could never be persona non grata here. Come home. There’s plenty of bread on the table, plenty of love to go around. God just longs for the family to be complete again. He pines away waiting for us to make the first move (Revelation 3:20). When we do, He >>OVER>>

enthusiastically rushes to meet us well on our side of the halfway mark.

A GOD WHO WAITS: FILLING HEAVEN'S MANSIONS Christ's second coming is presently delayed by God's long-suffering. Peter wrote of the Lord's promised return: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Of course, if we received what we deserve for our sins, we would all be swiftly and summarily condemned (Psalm 37:38; James 2:13). There would be no second chances. But God gives us both grace and space to repent (Ephesians 2:8–9; Revelation 2:21). Desiring that no person be eternally lost, He leaves the door of repentance open to all (Acts 17:30–31; Romans 2:4–5). He wants as many with Him in heaven as can be persuaded to make a reservation for a mansion there (John 14:1–3; Revelation 21:1–4).

Our sins could never be greater than God's grace. Our failures could never surpass God's love. The mistakes in our past do not predict our future. Remember, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A GOD WHO STAYS: TROPHIES OF GOD'S GRACE God never gives up on us—even if we give up on ourselves. He is eternally optimistic that we will come back. He stays to help us through the long maze of a journey from earth to heaven. Take to heart His promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5; cf. Matthew 28:20).

How do we know God will give us another chance? He has a great track record in that department. You could say that the Bible is a "trophy case" that contains the greatest feats of grace the earth saw in its first four thousand years. Each story is a remarkable reminder that God gives second chances. • God took a cowardly liar named Abraham and made him the father of the faithful (Genesis 12–20; 18:19; Romans 4:16; James 2:21).

- He made a deceiver named Jacob the cornerstone of a holy nation (Genesis 27; 46:8–26).
- He turned an eighty-year-old murderer named Moses into one of the greatest leaders the world has ever seen (Exodus 2:11–14; 5:1).
- He used a murdering adulterer named David to write songs that would strengthen and encourage His people for three thousand years (2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 23).
- He took a self-pitying, despairing prophet named Elijah and salvaged him for great works of service (1 Kings 19).
- He made a hate-filled prophet named Jonah a successful missionary to the world's then greatest city (Jonah 3:5–10).
- He took a woman who had been divorced five times and who was living with a sixth man and used her to bring a city to the Savior's feet (John 4:15–30).
- He honored a hated tax collector named Zacchaeus with an in-home visit and a place in the book read by all generations (Luke 19:5–8).
- He tapped an arrogant fisherman named Peter who cursed and denied His Son the night He most needed Him to be the keynote speaker in the greatest revival the world has ever seen (Mark 16:7; John 21:15–17; cf. Acts 2).
- He commissioned a disappointing young man named John Mark who left Paul in a lurch to write one of the four greatest books ever written (and possibly the most read of all time—since it is the shortest of Christ's biographies) (Acts 13:13).
- He gave a man named Paul a second chance who had before done everything within his power—legal action, character assassination, deprivation of human rights, verbal/physical abuse—to destroy Christ's church and dishearten God's children (1 Timothy 1:13–16).

All of God's success stories are not told in Scripture. God takes people from unusual failures to amazing successes all the time. Many will happen this week. Could He right now be making a space for you in His trophy case?

What would you do with a second chance? We are about to find out . . .

