

TEXT: **Matthew 27:1-5** Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. **2** They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. **3** When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. **4** "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." **5** So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

TITLE: **A God of Second Chances**

INTRO:

1. I loved to play basketball in high school.
2. I was tall so I played forward. But my coaches were always really blunt about what my purpose was.
3. They would tell me, you're not the best shot, you're not the fastest runner, but you're tall. Your job is to get in there and rebound.
4. I wasn't too excited at first about what I considered to be a simple role, but I soon learned the importance of a good rebounder.
5. On a basketball team it is important to have the great scorers, it's important to have the great defensive players, it's important to have the people with quickness and speed but it's also very important to have good rebounders.
6. A rebound is when you shoot the ball and you miss, and then you grab the ball again after that miss. The ability to grab the ball after the miss and shoot again is highly important.
7. The reason it is so important is that even good basketball players miss a lot. As a matter of fact, great basketball players miss a lot.
8. I caught the end of a professional basketball game last week, and during a break in the action they showed a statistic. The team who was losing had shot the ball 130 times, and had missed the shot 78 times. That means they only made the shot 40 percent of the time. 60 percent of the time they missed the shot, they missed the mark.
9. If a team is great, if they are outstanding would you be surprised to know they only make the shot 50 percent of the time. That means they miss the mark 50 percent of the time.
10. In baseball a hitter is considered great if he bats .333. That means he only gets a hit once every three at bats. That means he misses the mark two out of three times.

11. But what makes him a great hitter is that even though he has missed the mark two times in a row he doesn't give up. He keeps trying and the next time he gets a hit.
12. In sports having a great rebounder is vital but I want you to know it is even more vital that we be a great rebounder in life.
13. It's important that we don't stay down when we miss the mark but that we get up and try again.
14. One of the reasons it is so important that we are a great rebounder is that **as humans we miss the mark a lot.**
15. As humans we have all stood at the foul line of life, we have put up the shot and we have missed. To put it bluntly we fail, we fall, and we falter.
16. The headlines are full every single day of this politician, celebrity, or athlete that has done something wrong, and in many cases immoral.
17. Maybe your failures and shortcomings aren't splattered all over the news, but the truth is we all miss the mark.
18. But an even better truth is that we are not alone. We're in good company.
19. In the Old Testament the greatest king and possibly the greatest leader the nation of Israel had ever known missed the mark big time. He had an affair, and as if that wasn't bad enough, he attempted to cover up that affair by having the husband of his mistress killed in battle. His name was David. You talk about missing the mark.
20. In the New Testament a prominent disciple in Jesus' care, a man with great promise on his life committed the unthinkable. He denied that he knew Jesus. He even cursed, hoping to make his denial more dramatic. His name was Peter. Peter means rock and Jesus had declared on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.
21. But on that day the rock fell. The rock was broken. Peter missed the mark.
22. The man whose story I read to you today in our text also missed the mark. His name was Judas and he secretly betrayed Jesus. For a price he told Jesus' enemies where he could be found, and he revealed the best time to carry out the dirty deed.
23. But unlike David, and unlike Peter, **Judas didn't rebound. He didn't try again after his failure.** He didn't pick himself up and aim again, he quit. He gave up.
24. To be honest he gave up on life. After realizing he had blown it so terribly Judas decided to hang himself. And so, in a solitary place, alone and ashamed, he decided to end it all. He felt as though his guilt and inner turmoil

were too much to bear. He ended his life. If only he could have realized that he was not alone.

25. If only he could have realized that **missing the mark is a part of life.** If only he could have realized that blowing it is just simply unavoidable at times no matter how hard you try and walk the line.
26. If only he could have known that Jesus was already aware of his weakness and never expected perfection in the first place.
27. You see God knows we are not perfect. God knows we miss the mark miserably at times, that's why he had the apostle Paul write to the Roman churches in **Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**
28. When I think of that falling short, I think of basketball. You take your best shot, but it falls short. (illustrate)
29. But when the shot falls short, or when it bounces off the other side that's where the rebounder comes in. Because the rebounder says you may have missed the shot, but the play isn't over. You may have missed the mark, but all is not lost. You may have failed on that attempt but there is still another shot to score.
30. That's what makes the rebounder so vitally important. What's in it for the rebounder?
31. A second chance. I don't know about you, but I need second chances. I need a do over sometimes.
32. Maybe you're here and you need a second chance. Maybe you have experienced a
 - a. Failed marriage.
 - b. Failed relationship.
 - c. Failed business.
 - d. Failed in your finances.
 - e. Failed in school.
 - f. Failed to live like you should.
 - g. Failed God.
33. You need to know that God is a God of second chances. **Psalm 145:8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.**
34. You see God doesn't get mad at us when we miss the mark, as long as we rebound.
35. I don't know why I went through the early years of my life thinking that God was an angry God, always looking for a chance and a reason to be mad with me.

36. Especially since his word clearly states that God is slow to anger. In other words, he doesn't get mad easily. Anger is not God's first response.
37. John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
38. God is not a God who is constantly waiting for a chance to condemn us and put us down. He does not secretly hope for an opportunity each and every day to tell us how terrible he thinks we are.
39. God's continual thoughts of us are not negative and accusatory, his thoughts for us are always good and loving and kind even when we miss the mark.
40. He gives us a second chance. He gives us the opportunity to rebound.
41. 2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
42. That entire verse is about God's willingness to give his people a second chance. To give them a chance to rebound after missing the mark.
43. The older I get and the more I get to know God the more I am convinced that we are much harder on ourselves, and we are certainly much harder on others than God is on us.
44. Sure, God hates sin, but I can tell you without a doubt that he loves the sinner. Sure, God hates the fact that because of our own foolish mistakes we are sometimes forced to live with the consequences of our decisions, but his heart is still moved and touched that someone he cares about is having to endure pain.
45. God is a God of love, he is a God of second chances, and he is a God who roots for the rebounder.
46. This morning I want to quickly give you some techniques for being a good rebounder in life.

Don't tune out the little voice in your head.

1. Matthew 27:3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders.
2. Now some of you were brought up believing that if you hear little voices in your head that means you are crazy. Some grew up believing if you talk to yourself that means you're crazy. Anybody else besides me here crazy.
3. I believe if you don't hear little voices in your head, you are probably crazy. We were all designed and wired by God to be guided by a still small voice on the inside of our heart.

4. One of those voices we have been programmed with is a conscience. An inner knowing of right and wrong. No one has to tell us or teach us certain things; we just know that some things are right and that others are wrong.
5. Another voice in our heart is the voice of the Holy Spirit. That still small voice that says I wouldn't do that if I were you. I wouldn't follow through with that decision if I were you. I wouldn't say that if I were you.
6. Some people call that a check in their spirit. Something just says hold up a minute there and let's think this through.
7. Getting a second chance means you have to train yourself to not turn off that little voice.
8. The bible says that upon seeing Jesus condemned to death, that Judas was filled with remorse. He was filled with a deep and painful regret for having done wrong.
9. But I can assure you that long before he betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver his inner, still, small voice was screaming at him don't do it, don't do it. It's wrong.
10. The problem was he had become very good at ignoring and turning off that voice in his head and in his heart. And before long he couldn't hear it anymore.
11. We are pretty good at tuning things out. Several years ago, we lived in a house that was about 200 feet from a set of busy train tracks. Trains came through at least twice a night, blaring the horn.
12. At first it woke us up, but after a while we learned to tune it out and we didn't even stir or roll over.
13. Why is it so important to listen to that little voice, because that voice helps you not miss the mark so badly, and if you don't miss the mark so badly you don't have nearly as much cleanup to do?
14. Getting a second chance means you listen to the little voice on the inside of you.
15. The second technique to being a good rebounder.

Admit you missed the mark.

1. Matthew 27:4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." Finally, that inner voice has his attention. Finally Judas recognizes he has messed things up and so he finally does something right. He admits he has missed the mark. He admits he has sinned. But unfortunately, he admits it to the wrong people.

2. The second step to being able to rebound from the mistakes of life is to **own up to the fact that you blew it.** That means going beyond just feeling bad about it, but instead communicating verbally, I blew it.
3. Why is it so important to communicate verbally, I was wrong, or I missed the mark? Because verbal communication is the only way to initiate a change in behavior.
4. The purpose of a second chance or a rebound is to do it differently the next time. To do it right.
5. If you missed the mark the first time then you need to do it differently the next time, and if you don't ever admit you did it wrong, then you can never make it right. It's the only way to get the opportunity at a second chance.
6. It's kind of like a basketball player shooting a three pointer and missing. Instead of going after the rebound, he instead runs to the other end of the floor, hands raised, cheering and celebrating.
7. The coach calls time out. Son, what is your problem? You missed the shot, why are you celebrating?
8. I didn't miss the shot coach I made it.
9. You didn't miss the shot? Everybody in the arena knows you missed the shot. No coach I didn't miss it, I put it in nothing but net.
10. Well son why didn't they put the points up on the board? I don't know, I guess they missed it.
11. Now that seems ridiculous, that coach would put that player on the bench, but how many times each day do we see people in our world who act just like that. They miss the mark, but instead of admitting it they act like everything is fine, or they try and blame it on somebody else. Somebody else missed the mark.
12. Note to self, be ware of folks who are always pointing out everybody else's mistakes and flaws, it could be a sign they are trying to cover up their own.
13. If you missed the mark in life, just own up to it. You're not fooling anybody. Everybody already knows it anyway.
14. **Getting back on track is much easier when you are honest about having failed,** but getting back on track is impossible when you ignore the fact that you've failed.
15. The third technique to being a good rebounder.

Confess your failure to the right people.

1. Judas runs back to the people who paid him the money and admits his sin, but listen to their response.
2. Matthew 27:4 "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."
3. Trying to give the money back was ok, but that wasn't who he really needed to confess his sin to. He needed to confess his sin to the person he had betrayed and negatively affected.
4. He should have confessed to Jesus. Its true Jesus was on trial and was going to be killed but Judas was friends with the chief priests and the elders. Over a period of time Judas had developed a relationship with these men. They were the ones responsible for Jesus' arrest and conviction.
5. I'm sure they could have allowed Judas access to Jesus. It wouldn't have been easy, but he could have made the effort.
6. Instead Judas throws the money down on the floor and runs away to wallow in his own failure. It was wallowing in his failure that caused him to give up hope and end his life. It was wallowing in his failure instead of going to Jesus that caused him to miss his opportunity at a second chance. He missed the rebound.
7. It doesn't matter how bad you have failed. It doesn't matter how terribly you have missed the mark. It doesn't matter how unpardonable the sin seems, nothing opens the door to a second chance faster than confessing to the people you hurt, and confessing to Jesus.
8. You may not be able to make everything right with the people you hurt, they may not accept your confession and apology, but you will be able to make things right with Jesus. And if you're right with Jesus you can go to sleep at night with a clear conscience. And that's what getting a second chance is really all about.

Conclusion:

1. In the late 1980's, the 1990's and early 2000's there was a controversial professional basketball player by the name of Dennis Rodman.
2. He was quite a sight in his latter years. He had dozens and dozens of body piercings, most of his body was covered by tattoos, he would dye his hair a different outrageous color for every game, he even made a public appearance once in a wedding dress.
3. To put it simply his life was a mess. In his final years he couldn't hold a job. He bounced from place to place never able to make it work.
4. There was always continuous controversy wherever he was.

5. But there is one thing he could do. He could rebound. Many consider him the greatest rebounder the game of basketball has ever known.
6. Now I'm not asking you to follow Dennis Rodman's outrageous lifestyle, but I am asking you to be a rebounder.
7. No matter how much of a mess you think things are in, there is always the possibility of getting a rebound. Getting a second chance.
8. God is the God of second chances. Do you need a second chance today?
9. Maybe you have failed. Maybe you have really blown it. It's ok. Be a rebounder.
10. Listen to that small voice that is speaking to you right now.
11. Confess your sin and need to make things right.
12. Come to Jesus. He'll give you a second chance.
13. Salvation.
14. I have a situation that I need to start over and try again.
15. Second chances are not just for new years. God gives second chance every day.
16. Lamentations 3:22-23 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
17. Stop waiting for the perfect moment to get a second chance, every single day is an opportunity for a second chance.
18. Pray.