

THE BIG IDEA: Our mistakes can be the cake for the icing.

The Take-Off

Have you ever made a mistake?

I know, that's a pretty obvious answer, isn't it? In fact, the issue probably isn't have we ever made a mistake, but how public was that mistake, right?

Hopefully, none of your mistakes were quite as public as these that were caught on film!

[Mistake pics]

But what happens when they are? Today, our journey through Acts brings us across 2 stories involving one man, and while both of the stories are pretty incredible, it's the backstory of the man that makes them full of hope for us. Acts 9:32 re-introduces Peter to the Acts narrative, and if you've been reviewing, then you already know that we've seen Peter before.

He preached to thousands in Acts 2, healed a crippled beggar in Acts 3, arrested in Acts 4, took up and offering in Acts 5 that resulted in 2 deaths and then was re-arrested and then part of a heavenly prison break.

Dude's been around, and it's safe to say he was (and still is) a rock star in the world of Jesus followers.

And now we meet him again, and he's about to be a part of 2 experiences that could further elevate his rock star status, and to make this a bit easier to follow, we'll just divide today's teaching into three parts: the stories, the backstory, and the point.

1. The stories

In the span of about 7 verses, Peter is going to heal a man who has been bedridden for 8 years and bring a dead woman back to life.

First, the bedridden man:

- Peter knew who was doing the healing: "Jesus Christ heals you."
- Notice the authority that he had
- He didn't ask him if he wanted to be healed
- Peter made the assumption that no one wants to be sick
- We usually make the assumption that no one wants to be healed

Second, the dead woman:

- It took place about 11 miles west of the city where Aeneas was healed
- A bad thing had happened to a good woman (v. 36)
- After Dorcas died, the first person called wasn't a doctor or a mortician, but Peter (v. 38)
- Peter got rid of the distractions so he could clearly see the problem (v. 40)
- We usually fill our lives with distractions so we don't have to see the problem

We don't see a lot of people raised from the dead, do we? It becomes easy to see stories like this and not think they really happened, or even if they did, to think they couldn't ever happen today.

And while that's a worthy topic to discuss, the Big Idea today isn't so much about the story we just read, but more about the main character in the story we just read.

The Big Idea says that our mistakes can be the cake for the icing.

Let me explain that: it is so easy to read stories like this and want them to be our story. Basically, this is like the icing on the cake, but so often we simply want to pull out a big tub of icing and eat it plain. It can taste good, but only for a while. After that, we're sick.

The danger can be that we only see the icing, and never see the foundation - the cake - underneath it. The cake, believe it or not, is made up of the mistakes that we've all made.

See, Peter was a giant in the early church, and just like we put men on pedestals today and assume they've never struggled, there's a danger of doing that with Peter, too. But there's more to Peter than just the icing.

2. The backstory

Before this was the Peter that we see here healing a paralytic and raising the dead, he was:

- a failure at walking on water (Matthew 14:30)
- a failure at protecting the Messiah (John 18:10)
- a failure at praying for a demon possessed man (Luke 9:40)
- a failure at standing up for his faith (John 18:15-27)

And unlike a lot of our failures, his were not only public when they happened, but also written down by God in the Bible for all mankind to read forever!

So the question has to be: what happened in Peter's life that allowed him to live past those failed moments in order to be the confident man of God that we see here in Acts 9?

How did God take his mistakes and turn them into the cake that held the icing we just read about in Acts 9?

Let's dig a little deeper and find out.

There are 2 other moments in Peter's backstory that made Acts 9 possible:

First, he was found out, and then he was filled up.

- How he was found out (John 21:15-19)
 - Perhaps Peter's greatest failure was when he denied even knowing Jesus not once, but three times
 - That would be a low point for all of us
 - Jesus comes to Peter and asks him if he loves him and Peter says yes (but with a different Greek word that means "like a friend")
 - Jesus asks again and Peter lies again until the third time when Jesus asks Peter if he loves him "like a friend"
 - When Peter answers honestly, Jesus begins to reinstate him to the ministry
 - He was found out - laid bare - by Jesus
- How he was filled up (Acts 2:4, cf. Acts 1:8)
 - We know that Peter received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2
 - Why was he able to be filled with God's power? Because he had been emptied of himself when he was found out!
 - Being exposed - found out - isn't fun, but it's a critical step to be an empty vessel that can be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit
 - 2 Kings 4:3 - the prophet was clear: get EMPTY vessels to fill
 - He never could have done what he did in Acts without being filled up with that power
 - The point of that experience was so that he would have the power to spread the gospel

Like Peter, we're called by God to do mighty exploits for Jesus and his kingdom. Ephesians 2:10 makes that clear.

But before we can, we've got to be found out and filled up

When we stop hiding our mistakes and start allowing God to not only heal them, but in a way that only a Sovereign God can, actually incorporate them into our story now.

3. The point

So, what does it all mean?

Let's look back at Acts 9 and see what we can takeaway:

v. 32 - (ESV) "as Peter went here and there among them all"

- It's time for some of us to get moving again
- We've allowed our past mistakes to keep us from present ministry

v. 40 - "turning toward the dead woman"

- It means that God never turns a blind eye toward our mistakes
- It means that God sees all and redeems all
- This is what GRACE means - God's Redemption Always Changes Everything

It means that God is looking to find what we are trying to hide because God still wants to use what we think we've abused

It means that when we allow ourselves to be found out and filled up, our biggest failures can fuel our greatest moments!

It means that **our mistakes can be the cake for the icing.**

The Landing

How do we end this? We give God time to do in us what he did in Peter.

ILL: Share the story of being found out as a teenager by Dad and how his response to me in that moment changed everything

Pray