

## You only get one shot

### Acts 3:11-26: Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

<sup>11</sup> While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. <sup>12</sup> When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. <sup>14</sup> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. <sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. <sup>16</sup> By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

<sup>17</sup> "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. <sup>18</sup> But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19</sup> Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, <sup>20</sup> and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. <sup>21</sup> Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. <sup>22</sup> For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'

<sup>24</sup> "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. <sup>25</sup> And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' <sup>26</sup> When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

YOLO, you only live once

Who doesn't know that YOLO means? I had to google it a while ago because I kept seeing people talk about it. The YOLO idea is you standing on a bridge over water and you think to yourself, I don't know what's in that water, I could hurt myself, drown. But you only live once so... jump. It's like you only live once soooo ... take a risk on life. But I always thought that the fact that you only live once should make you decide to not jump. If you lived twice, then jump away, you can get another go if you mess this one up. But in this reading today Peter has his YOLO moment, where he gets up and takes a risk.

There is a huge difference in the Peter we hear about today, from the Peter of last week. Last week he is sitting around confused, scared, twiddling his thumbs, gone fishing. This week, he heals a lame man in the temple courts then jumps up and preaches to the crowd that has gathered around him.

This was probably less than a month after the fishing miracle yet Peter seems to be a radically different person. Something has changed in him... Or to be more accurate, something has changed him.

He has gone from heading out to go fishing to seizing every opportunity... from sitting back waiting to going out there and hunting down every opportunity to share the gospel. Which brings us to the title of this sermon...

You only get one shot at life. How do you want to use it? How do you want to be remembered at the end of it? What do you want people to be able to say about how you lived your life?

Hamilton – one of the most famous musicals ever – at one stage was sold out almost 2 years in advance and if you want to buy a ticket online, you'll be paying over \$1000! Probably the main song from the sound track is "MY SHOT" – all about how Hamilton was a man that seized every opportunity to make an impact in the world. From humble beginnings, he helps free USA from the Brits because he is not throwing away his shot. Every chance is precious every opportunity, may be the last.

Peter decides that he is not throwing away his shot. He and John are in the temple courts where they see a lame man, who cannot walk.

*"Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."*

They heal him and instantly he jumps up and walks. Crowds gather around to see what is happening and they recognise the lame man. They know him as the lame beggar they probably see every day, but now he is walking! And they are all blown away by what they see. Peter sees his shot.... The crowds gathered, all wondering who did this, by what power? And he seizes the moment.

Peter points out to the crowd the 4 rejections of Christ by the Jews.

- 1) V13 You handed him over to be killed, they arrested him in the middle of the night and falsely accused him.
- 2) And you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. They let the Romans, the pagan foreigners take his life, even though Pilate didn't want to kill him.
- 3) They asked that a murderer be released to you v14. As well as the injustice of convicting the innocent, they let the guilty man go free.
- 4) You killed the author of life v15. They took life from the one the gives life to us all.

Peter reveals to the crowd that in Christ there is now new blessing given to us. V19

In the ancient times, the ink and papyrus was not like ours. When you put ink to paper, the ink bites into the paper, seeping into it. But in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the ink sits on top of the paper. With a sponge it could be wiped clean as if there was nothing ever there. Peter says this is what Christ does to our sins, our mistakes, our shortcomings, they are wiped away for ever and always, there is no "Ctrl Z", no digging them up. They are gone for now and always.

Peter says, In the Lord there is refreshment of your soul. For a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew, and perhaps for modern Jews today there was a lot of GUILT that when along with following God. Guilt for not being able to keep the law, guilt for falling short of the mark and a level of fear, wondering if I have done enough... Have I been good enough to make the grade, to get across the line, to be ok with God?

Well in Christ there is a refreshment of the soul... you don't have to live with guilt because you are saved by your faith and his grace. Not by your works, or your smarts or your deeds, but by his goodness.

Peter sees his shot, sees his moment to do with his life what he is called. This is a public announcement of what he was about from now. At Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to those gather in the house. But here is in the Temple court! In the public arena – it's like the centre of the city, Pitt Street Mall – and he sees his moment, he takes his shot, and tells the world that Christ is alive and in his name you can have life... and this is my calling.

The Hamilton song "My shot" is really similar to Eminem's "Lose yourself".

You only get one shot, do not let your chances go, opportunity comes once in a life time. There are moments in life that can define us, moments that can set us on one part or another, moments that we look back on and say if I did X instead of Y, things would be very different.

Peter stands up and says publically to all in the temple court. "I am a follower of Jesus Christ, my life is his, my destiny is in his hands." He declares to the world... this is who I am, this is what defines me, shapes me. And it can define and shape you too.

Maybe for some the idea of taking that step with Christianity, is a scary one. Or just seems to full on, too serious, too much work. But here is the truth of it, you get one life to live, you get one shot to take don't let a defining moment of life pass you by.

For 2000 years people have given all they have, time, energy, money, future over to Christ.... Missionaries like Marty, faithful servant of Christ, who see what God has given them and just want to bless others. People who live their lives His way, because Christ knows how life is best lived – all because they took seized the moment, they took that step.

Maybe this is your moment, maybe this is your shot, this is a point where your life will be changed.

I'm going to pray a prayer, I want to ask everyone to close your eyes, pray along. Maybe it's the 100<sup>th</sup> time, or maybe it's the 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Father God, in you there is something new in the world. In Jesus I can be made anew. Lord take my life and make it new, recreate me to be more like your son. Forgive me for all the ways I have rejected you and become Lord of my life.*