



Links Players

A Fresh Start

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth; who keeps faithfulness for thousands, who forgives wrongdoing, violation of His Law, and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, inflicting the punishment of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." Exodus 34:6-7 NASB

Tom Hoge booked a flight home. Sitting at plus two, the bite of missing the cut felt eminent. Darkness halted play on Friday forcing Hoge to wait until the remaining seventy-one players finished Saturday morning. TPC Sawgrass is an unforgiving course, especially the par 3 17th surrounded by water. But it is not unredeemable.

Hoge made the cut on the number and embraced it like a fresh start. With nothing to lose, Hoge redeemed his 78 with a new course record 62 in the third round. And then he went on to finish tied for third.

Moses had lows and highs during his tenure leading the Israelites. The people's allegiance shifted daily like the winds over TPC Sawgrass. When Moses came down from the mountain and found them worshipping a golden calf (Exodus 32), his anger burned. He threw the stone tablets with the writing of God, and they broke. After three thousand perished at the hands of the Levites, Moses returned to the Lord and pleaded forgiveness for the people's sins. Moses boldly asked, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here." Please show me your glory (Exodus 33:15, 18 ESV)."

The Lord replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name (Exodus 34:19 ESV)." Back up on the mountain, God passed by Moses but didn't show him his face. And then God spoke of himself as compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth. Is this a familiar phrase to you? Do you know what comes next?

Immediately following are three words worthy of our attention: wrongdoing, violation of His Law, and sin. The Hebrew language offers three distinct words for our one English word for sin.

Wrongdoing is translated from *avon* representing the actions that cause harm to another person. *Pesha* means violation of the Law, or rebellion in an intentional way. *Hata* is most often conveyed as "missing the mark," unintentional failures that cause harm to others or our relationship with God.

The beauty these distinct Hebrew words offers is the understanding that there is nothing God will not forgive when we turn to him in repentance (confession and changing direction). From unintentional screw-

ups to our ugliest and most deliberate violations, God's compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and faithfulness and truth forgives. Think about this. Does it become more meaningful, real, and amazing?

Easter is coming and Jesus offers a fresh start. His love is compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth. Will you receive his forgiveness?

Prayer: Lord, thank you that I can bring all my wrongdoings, violations of your law, and sin to you. Help me to receive your compassion and mercy fresh today.

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Tracy Hanson

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