



Links Players

Great Comebacks

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18)

What happened at Cherry Hills, Colorado, in the 1960 US Open ranks on the shortlist when you think of great comebacks in golf. It was a meeting of past, current, and future golf royalty, as Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer, and Jack Nicklaus were all in contention.

Arnie had already won The Masters in April, starting a streak where he would claim five of the next eleven majors, earning him the nickname “The King.”

At the end of the third round, Mike Souchak held the lead, with Hogan and Nicklaus just three shots back. And The King? He was barely on page one, tied for 15th and seven shots behind.

Before the final round, Palmer had lunch with several sportswriters. The conversation turned to Arnie’s chances if he went low in the final round, to which his lunch companions stated, “No chance.”

Of course, that fired up The King. Taking their comments as a personal challenge, Arnie drove the green on the opening Par 4 hole. That began a front nine birdie barrage that led to a final round 65. Hogan stayed close but found water on the last two holes, ending with a 73. His playing partner Nicklaus, a 20-year-old amateur, shot 71 after consecutive 3-putts on the 13th and 14th holes that ruined his chances.

When all was said and done, Arnie had won the championship. While coming from seven shots back is impressive enough, consider who he had to catch and pass to win: Hogan and Nicklaus, Sam Snead, Gary Player, Billy Casper, and Julius Boros. There are a lot of major titles among that esteemed group – 48, to be exact. To this day, it still ranks as the biggest comeback in U.S. Open history.

We’ve all experienced failures in life. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we take heart in knowing that there is always grace and forgiveness with Him.

The Bible also has some spectacular comeback stories, none greater than when Jesus rose from the grave to conquer sin and death on Easter morning. But let’s look at what happened with Peter, the undisputed leader of the disciples.

No matter what gospel you read, Peter’s name is always first when you see the list of disciples. And while Peter had some bold leadership qualities, he also had his share of faults, which we see illustrated in several gospel stories. But far and away, Peter’s greatest failure occurred on Good Friday.

Shortly after vowing to Jesus that he would never leave him, Peter not only deserted his Master but denied even knowing Christ three separate times – just as Jesus had predicted. A massive failure that would have destroyed many people. His fellow disciple Judas betrayed Christ and was so overcome with remorse that he hanged himself in shame.

But Peter was a man of strong character, one who took to heart what Jesus had been teaching him, and his comeback was remarkable: seeing 3000 people converted for Christ with his magnificent sermon at Pentecost, leading the newly formed Christian church in its earliest stages, and authoring two books of the New Testament.

We've all experienced failures in life. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we take heart in knowing that there is always grace and forgiveness with Him. To Him be the glory forever!

Prayer: Lord, when we fall short or fail in life, help us not dwell on our shortcomings. Give us strength and courage to go forward as a faithful servant to you and your Kingdom. Amen

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