So What? Now What?

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! (Isaiah 43:18–19)

If you are a golfer, at any level, this story could be yours. I had a simple par 3 and the easiest par 4 left to play for my lowest score ever.

My drive to the 17th green was slightly pulled and ended up in the greenside bunker. It plugged in the back wall, just under the grassy lip— aka “no shot.”

That same week, I had begun working on this devotional. God always gives me opportunities to try out what I write about. So rather than saying, “Why me?” or “That’s not fair,” I thought, “So what? Now what?”

I quietly took my drop, finished the hole, and moved on to hole 18. I did not beat my best score, but overall, I was happy with a good round. (Except for hole 17.)

Nick Saban, considered to be the GOAT of college football coaches, is credited with coining the phrase, “So what? Now what?” He wanted his players to leave the last play behind and look to the next, whether on or off the field.

If we’ve lived, we’ve either been wounded or wounded someone, or both. So what? Now what? It’s important to hear and understand this carefully. This is not to make light of the gravity of the offense.

Consequences are real. Wounds scar. Forgiveness and reconciliation are important. This statement is meant to help us understand the importance of pressing onward. Something terrible has happened. Now how do we recover and move forward?

The apostle Paul himself had to learn this. Before he met Christ, he persecuted Christians. He was a bad man. After he began following and declaring Christ as the Messiah, he was beaten and imprisoned many times. All bad things. Yet, through grace, he went on to fulfill the life God intended for him.

Many of us have pasts that are painful. We may have done shameful things, or shameful things may have been done to us. Many live a life of regret and guilt or of victimhood and bitterness. We don’t need to live like that.

As with Paul, a bad chapter does not define our whole story.

If we look back, we may trip over our future. My favorite part about today's verse is, "See, I am doing a new thing!" Not only does it say "new," which many of us need, but not once does it say "try harder" or "get more willpower." Nope, it says, "I [our God] am doing a new thing!"

This battle is not ours. Repeatedly in Scripture, there are reminders that the battle may look overwhelming, but it is the Lord's battle. Go to Him for forgiveness and healing. Tell Him you cannot, in your own strength, get out of the pit. Trust His counsel.

He designed you. He has a plan for you. He loves you. He is good. He is faithful. This means God, the Creator, knows you to your soul. He has your future in His hands. He desires the best for you. He is able to make it happen.

Your past and my past are exactly the reason Jesus left His throne, died, and gave us a future. He cleanses and heals. See, He is doing a new thing!

Prayer: God, You restore our aching souls. Your love reaches down into our pit of despair. Help us to reach our feeble hands toward Your outstretched arms. Thank You for fighting our battles and for the grace You give us to live a new life through Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

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