A NEW OPPORTUNITY

I could not believe it, Sifan Hassan had tripped and suffered a fall. It was the final round and he was in the running to qualify for the final 1500 meter race. It was a matter of milliseconds. She stood up quickly and with all her might ran, ran, and ran. Hassan was able to recover and reach the qualification for the grand finale where she won a medal. Several news outlets alluding to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games reported her as the Ethiopian athlete that had fallen, gotten up, recovered, and won the race.

**The importance of perseverance**

According to the words of Solomon the wise, “for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.” (Proverbs 24:16). These words are full of wisdom and display the importance of perseverance. An anonymous author once wrote: “The greatest victories are always for those who prepare, fight, and persevere.”

There is a blessing in trying again. This is the path to growth, maturity, and education. It is here where one learns from their mistakes and can do better. This is easily observed in human nature. WHen a child is beginning to walk and take their first steps, it is normal for them to trip and fall, however, every time they fall is an opportunity to improve and gain strengths. One of the promises that gives us strength in the hard times is, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

**The importance of resiliency**

Another value that is necessary to have to move forward despite difficulties is resiliency. Yes, resiliency is the capacity that humans have to overcome difficult circumstances they come across in life. It is the capacity that allows us to continue despite problems, misfortunes, and adversitis. This can only be accomplished through faith, prayer, and trust in God. The following promise is God telling you that He will renew your strength to continue on, “Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:30,31).

**The importance of forgiveness**

The opportunity to get up and continue on doesn’t only show us the need of every person to overcome, but also speaks about a merciful God. Every day He is giving us new opportunities. According to the prophet Jeremiah, “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed for his compassions never fail.They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22- 23).

God understands that we are sinners. God knows that we make mistakes and has compassion for us. “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.”(Psalms 103:13). He knows that we are sinners, “On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”(Mark 2:17).

God is a forgiver. God forgives our iniquities and heals our wounds (Psalms 103:3). His forgiveness is complete. “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”(Isaiah 43:25)

God freely offers his forgiveness, according to his Word, we are freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). God not only justifies us freely, but also invites each one of us to receive forgiveness and enter into a new life and new opportunity. “Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord.“ Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18). God offers us a new opportunity.

**A story about perseverance and forgiveness**

Have you ever heard the story about the paralytic from Capernaum? Yes, that man who was taken through the ceiling of a roof by his friends in order for Jesús to heal him. (Mark 2:1-12). The story of the paralytic is a story of faith and perseverance of not only the paralytic, but also his friends. What a blessing it is to have friends that bring us closer to Jesus! When they got to the house where Jesús was, they noticed that they could not get through the crowd. They did not give up, they didn’t turn around and accept defeat. Their faith led them to persevere, and look for another alternative solution to be in the presence of Jesus. Jesus knew this, and saw their faith. (Mark 2:5).

It is also a story of forgiveness, because the paralytic was filled with a sense of guilt. He understood that his illness was the result of bad habits. His poor choices had led him to disgrace and had ruined his health and life. He longed to for health, but above all else he wanted to have peace in his heart. What he most needed was forgiveness from his sins. So Jesús told him, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:5). Jesus was giving him a new opportunity. By God’s grace that paralytic held on to the new opportunity, accepted by faith, and stood up and praised the Lord.

**Invitation**

Jesus invites you today to also receive His forgiveness, He knows how many times you have made mistakes and knows you, as well as the condition of your heart. Do you want to tell God today, “Father, thank you for sending Jesus and for His sacrifice, you have forgiven my sins and have given me a new opportunity. I accept you and give you my heart so that you can transform it for your glory.”